



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

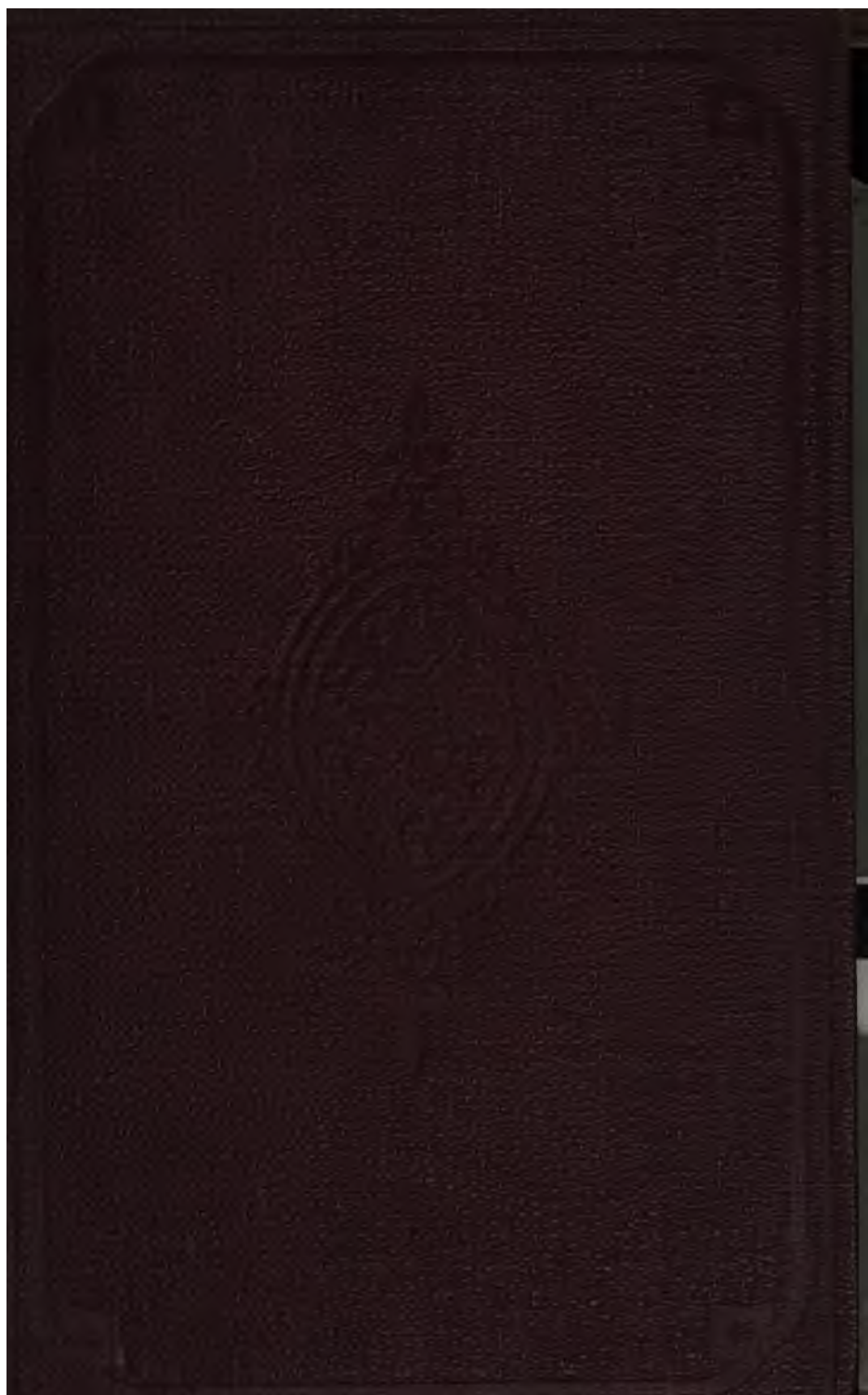
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

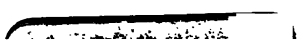
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600058236U





THE
BAR SINISTER.

A TALE.

BY CHARLES ALLSTON COLLINS,
AUTHOR OF "A CRUISE UPON WHEELS," "THE EYE-WITNESS,"
ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

M.DCCC.LXIV.

250. 3. 87.



[The right of Translation is reserved.]

CONTENTS
OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER	PAGE
PROLOGUE	1
I. BREAKFAST	28
II. BETWEEN BREAKFAST AND DINNER	36
III. DINNER	51
IV. A MEETING AND AN ADVENTURE	73
V. FAIRY LAND	96
VI. CROSSING THE FRONTIER	123
VII. MAJOR TRELANE MAKES A MOVE FORWARD	144
VIII. A CRITICAL SITUATION	159
IX. STILL IN DANGER	185
X. A QUIET CHAPTER	213
XI. A STARTLING CHAPTER	228
XII. A SAD DISCLOSURE	250
XIII. DR. LEBGUP'S NEWS	268
XIV. A TREACHEROUS FRIEND	286

THE BAR SINISTER.

A Tale.

PROLOGUE.

TWENTY years ago there stood—nay, there stands still, and will do for many a long year to come—in a certain valley in Gloucestershire, the remains of what was once a noble abbey. It is ten to one that the reader knows it well; knows how much roof is left on the old building, what remnants of windows show through the dense masses of ivy, what traces remain of altar-steps and altar, what inscriptions may yet be found in the more sheltered nooks and corners, how many arches of the ancient crypt are still standing, below, and, above, what turret staircases, powdery with age, lead upwards to the head-quarters of the rooks and daws which wheel and poise themselves, or drift along before the breeze as it sighs through the windows of the roofless choir.

Everybody knows the ruin now ; for those who, in these railway days, have not travelled to the place itself, have, in this age of photographs, seen the old abbey in the shop windows scores and scores of times. There were, however, no photographs in the days I am now speaking of, and lady's fingers did the work which is now executed by pungent chemicals, and did it very badly.

On a certain afternoon in September, just at that particular crisis of the year when it is beginning to be evident that it will not be possible to sit out of doors much longer, a young lady was seated on the steps of the broken-down altar, and engaged in sketching the ruins of the abbey. There is no need to enter into the merits of her performance. Such as it was, it could hardly be said to be entirely her own work, a gentleman being at her side, who would, not unfrequently, lean over her, and either direct her hand with his own (no unpleasant task), or add a few touches himself, which were calculated to render the completed sketch a more coherent achievement than it might otherwise have turned out.

Of this gentleman I am afraid it must be said that his appearance was against him. He was a tall, dark man, evidently a foreigner, and evidently, to a skilled eye, an Italian. Though his features were irregular, almost to ugliness, the unprepossessing character of his countenance was less attributable to this circumstance than to the expression of the whole face. If

this man was not selfish and crafty, if there was not beating in his breast a heart cold and calculating, at the same time that it was sensual and passionate,—a common combination in the worse kind of Italian character—if there was any scruple here, any susceptibility of conscience to limit the suggestions of self-interest, then let physiognomy go for nothing as a science, and never be taken as a guide again. And yet with the uninitiated, the careless, or with those whom no long intercourse with the world had rendered slow to give their confidence, the winning manners of this man would have served to counteract the bad impression which his countenance had at first sight produced. For physiognomy is an instinctive science that acts on everybody more or less; we make our own faces by our lives, and every man bears about with him, between the roots of the hair upon his head and those upon his chin, a letter of recommendation, or of caution, to the world.

Now it was pretty evident that the young lady, by whose side our Italian was seated, had either never felt that this gentleman's appearance was unfavourable, or had got over the impression, or else liked him in spite of it. Indeed to judge by the slow progress of the drawing, its frequent interruption, and by the looks and actions of this young girl, you would at once have pronounced that the foreign gentleman was not only regarded by her

without suspicion, but was to her the object of an ardent love and admiration. She was a fair, almost a beautiful girl, and would have been *quite* beautiful, but for something that was wanting in her which you felt, but could hardly at first define. Was it an absence of repose in the grey eyes that never rested? was there no depth of loyal constancy in them? were they eyes wandering everywhere for admiration? had they no such profundity of trustworthiness in them as should justify an honest man in saying, I give my confidence to this woman, I give it to her now, and give it to her for ever?

The same unrest which has been already spoken of as apparent in this young lady's face was evident in her whole bearing and in all her action. That the trouble of taking even such a part in forwarding the drawing on which she was engaged as to execute what the Italian gentleman directed was too much for her, was very unmistakable. She was for ever fidgeting in her place, constantly leaving off, and then recommencing her labours with languid effort and obvious aversion, till at last she pushed the sketch away from her, and, dropping her head upon her companion's shoulder, though it lay there but for an instant before she moved it away again, she said, in a tone of impatience and petulancy, and at the same time with a sort of hopelessness which surely the small progress of her work was not sufficient to account for,—

"It is impossible, I can't go on with it; nor," she added, presently, "with anything else."

"You must," replied the other, speaking in perfectly good English, but with a strong foreign accent, "you *must*, Rachel; what will they say at the house when they find your drawing no more advanced than when you brought it out?"

"Let them say what they will," said the young lady, sadly, "I cannot do it."

"Then I must," answered the Italian, taking the sketch from her. And soon his skilful fingers were at work producing an effect, which, though untrue enough, and got far more from his own knowledge of what would bring about a speedy result, than from a consideration of the scene before him, advanced the drawing enough to account for the young lady's day. She for her part sat and watched him, with a kind of deference, and with a certain wonder at the methodical coolness with which this man could bend his mind at once to what seemed necessary at the moment.

"There," he said, at last, pausing in his work, "I think that will do for to-day; they will be satisfied with that."

"Oh, Frank," answered the girl—it was part of the Italian's plan to anglicise himself as much as possible, and so his name of Francesco had been converted into Frank during his residence in England—"Oh, Frank!" she said, "this endless

life of deception, how it puzzles and bewilders me."

"It is not for long," replied the Italian; "in another month you will be of age, and then we can set your friends at defiance: you will be mine, and I will make your life so happy that all you suffer now will only be remembered to give a new zest to your enjoyment."

"And Alfred?"

"I will not hear that name," interrupted the Italian, passionately. "If he had cared for you he would never have left you. He would be here. He would have sacrificed everything—profession, prospects, all, rather than lose sight of you for a moment."

"He trusted me," said the girl; "he had his work to do—he went to do it, and he trusted me."

"Work to do!" cried the Italian, contemptuously; "it is like your northern prudence to talk so. There is no prudence in love. You, in this country, know not the meaning of the word; with us, in Italy, love is more than life—not a passion but a worship. Unreal, a standing jest, a theme for laughter in this country, it is with us the only real thing, it is dearer than our honour or our blood; for it, a man would give up his patrimony, sell his birthright, abandon the greatest discoveries of science, the highest achievements of art at the very moment of success, and if the very Philosopher's Stone glittered before his

eyes, and one minute's longer toil would give it to his grasp, would dash his crucible to the floor if he heard the voice of her he loved, calling him to her feet. This, and this only, is love, and," he added, in a lower voice, as he drew the girl to his side, "it is so that I love you, Rachel."

At that moment, thousands of miles away, a young man in the first prime of life, of a tall and handsome presence, and wearing the uniform of a lieutenant in the navy, was walking the quarter-deck of an English brig-of-war. It was night with him. There was little to occupy his thoughts. The ship was in the hands of the master, and the sea was like a mill-pond. As he came, in the course of his monotonous walk to the binnacle, where the little trembling compass quivered under its light, he paused, and looked down on it almost with affection in his glance. Of what was he thinking as he watched this lovely emblem of allegiance and of duty? of a conscience trembling with eager dread of offence—constant in light or darkness, in storm as in sunshine, to one thing—unconscious of all beside. What a monitor, what a teacher, is here. The ship may rise, or fall, or turn, and still it points the same; nay, drag it from this place, damage it, use it as roughly as you will, as long as it can hold together at all, the faithful, loyal heart comes back, unchangeable and true. Was the sailor thinking of these things, as he turned away and said, unconsciously echoing the

words which have been quoted above, "It is so that I love you, Rachel?"

Rachel Pryor was the youngest daughter of a certain retired ship-breaker, who, having amassed a very considerable fortune at Liverpool, had given up business, and purchasing some property in Gloucestershire, spent his whole time and a large portion of his income in perpetual alterations and improvements of the house and grounds which it had long been his ambition to possess, and which his successful career had at last put within his reach. Marrying at the prosperous turn of his life, he had of course, on the invariable principle which rules all human affairs, and gives more to him who has, met with a young lady who brought him a handsome fortune of her own, the whole of which at her decease (which at the time we are describing dated some years back) was settled on her three daughters, to be divided between them, share and share alike, on their coming of age. Of her three daughters, the youngest, Rachel, has already been brought before the reader's notice; the eldest was living, and had been for some years at Paris with an aunt who had almost adopted her, and was rarely at home. On the second daughter, then, Miss Pryor, as she was generally called, devolved the whole care of the household, and in some degree the management of the property, for the old gentleman, altogether immersed in the "improvements" which were for ever going on in some part or other of the

house or gardens, declined altogether to take any share in the conduct of his household affairs.

The superintendence of these improvements was the whole object and purpose of the old man's life. To get any new hint or suggestion in connection with them, he would take any trouble, shrink from no expense. The landscape-gardeners who came from different parts of the kingdom to provide new plans, and to arrange new combinations in the ever-changing aspect of the grounds, were quite a source of income to the local inn, and were so looked upon as a regular portion of the landlord's revenue, that when it was rumoured that the Italian gentleman, who had been superintending the laying-out of my Lord Chalkstone's new gardens, was coming over to assist old Mr. Pryor with the "improvements," it was considered at the King's Arms almost an infringement of treaty, that the old gentleman had asked him to stay at Pryor's Lodge.

He was not long in making himself at home there. He was one of those men who make it their business to be popular, and lay siege to the regard of every one to whom it is worth while being civil. With Mr. Pryor he had easy cards to play; his shrewdness and real talent in the peculiar branch of art—if it may be called so—which he had studied, and in which the Northern Italians excel, his studious deference to the old man's wishes, and the enthusiasm which he professed to feel in all his undertakings,

soon made him an almost indispensable ally, and even a chosen companion with the retired ship-breaker. With his youngest daughter Rachel, the advances which he made were still more rapid. There was in this young lady's character one great defect—a defect so pre-eminently and almost distinctively feminine as to be shared in some slight degree by nearly every woman—but one whose full danger is little known and most inadequately estimated.

With Rachel Pryor the love of admiration was an appetite, a disease. To gain the attention of the last new admirer, and to lay herself out to win him, was with her an act almost unconscious and mechanical. To concentrate herself, to live for one pair of eyes, was an impossibility. Why had there been no one to warn her of her danger, no one honest enough to tell her that even her own poor object would not be gained, that the woman who forgets her own dignity so far as to hunger thus obviously for praise, will never be admired, any more than the wretched spaniel will win approval who fawns alike on all his master's friends?

Profoundly skilled in all that belongs to women, the Italian Francesco Salvi was not slow to perceive the weakness and assailableness of Rachel's character, and to take advantage of it. Cautious almost to an excess in his approaches to her, and his intercourse with her before the world, he was constantly arranging such private meetings with her as should

give him the best opportunities of expressing, in careful language at first, but afterwards in undisguised terms, the admiration which he professed to feel for her; while she for her part was ready enough to listen, and even to give such encouragement to the Italian's advances, as would have been, in the case of one she knew so little, incautious in the last degree, even if she had been free to receive them.

But she was not free. Among the number of those whom this young lady had sought to captivate, there had been one whom she had succeeded only too well in inspiring with a genuine passion. Constitutionally generous and trusting, and as unsuspecting as men in his profession generally are, the sailor, Alfred Trelane, when he joined his ship at Portsmouth, was accompanied to the very boat that bore him away by Rachel Pryor, and left her her betrothed lover. God help him! what did he know of women? His life had been passed on ship-board: was he the man to guess that this Rachel, to whom his soul was bound, had had eyes through her tears for the very midshipman who commanded the boat that came off from the ship to fetch him.

What chance had such a man against our Italian. True, he was his superior in appearance, in being a gentleman, a brave servant of his country, and in all besides, except, perhaps, a certain low cleverness and cunning which he was better without. The

Italian had the power which treacherous men so often have with women. For some women are like this. They, though not wholly vile themselves, will like a man who is so. Generosity, kindness of heart, a sense of honour, are thrown away on such; they will "leave to feed on the fair mountain," and will "batten on the moor."

The reader will have some idea from the conversation in the ruined abbey, which has been reported above, of the length to which things had gone in this intercourse between Rachel and the Italian. Had this intercourse been wholly unobserved? Had no one regarded with suspicion this growing attachment?

Of the family in which Francesco Salvi had succeeded in domesticating himself, there was one member, and one only, with whom he had failed to make himself popular. One person only viewed him with doubt in her regard, and withheld from him that confidence which the rest had bestowed so easily. It was Miss Pryor. This young lady was of a character widely different from that of her sister: staunch and firm in her affection, as in everything else, Mr. Pryor's second daughter would as soon have thought of robbing a church as of injuring, so much as by an unloyal thought, the man to whom she belonged. It was, therefore, ever a subject of anxiety to her, to observe how little the thought of the absent sailor had any vitality or power to influence her

youngest sister's conduct. It was not in the case of the Italian only that she had seen this: indeed, the extraordinary care and precautions which he had used, had prevented her from forming any but the vaguest and, apparently, most unfounded conjectures in connection with his intimacy with Rachel. Vague and unfounded, however, as these suspicions appeared, they yet existed in Miss Pryor's secret heart, and caused her to be the one single difficulty in the path of the Italian, and an object to him both of hatred and of fear.

It was her eye alone that he dreaded. It was for her that all the precautions were taken. As for the old ship-breaker, he was so utterly absorbed in his improvements that he noticed nothing else; and it was evident that the Italian was becoming more necessary to him daily. So much so, indeed, that when one day the Signor announced that it would be necessary to the formation of some fish ponds, which the old gentleman had set his heart upon, that he should go up to town and spend some time in searching for the treatise of Janus Dubravius on fish and fish-ponds, as well as that of the learned Frenchman Dr. Lebault; when this was announced to old Mr. Pryor, he actually shed tears (so weak had he become) at the thought of the stranger's departure; though he acknowledged the validity of the reason for his temporary absence."

The treatise of the learned Frenchman, and of

Janus Dubravius, were so hard to come at, and the field of inquiry, opened by them, was so large, that many delays occurred before the Italian's return, and three weeks had nearly elapsed, when a letter came to announce that in two or three days, at farthest, he would return, having exhausted the whole subject of fish-ponds; and ready, if need were, to construct one, on the shortest notice, as large as the Lake of Constance.

It was just before the arrival of that letter, that Rachel had announced one morning, that it was necessary she should go up to London for a day, having some purchases to make, which she had already delayed longer than she ought. She would go up, she said, with her maid; and, as she could have a bed at the house of an old servant, who let lodgings in Duke Street, St. James's, she would spend one night in town, and come down again the next morning. She told her sister, with the most perfect candour that this was a good opportunity, as the Signor could take care of her on the return journey. She did not exactly ask permission, nor was the other in a condition to withhold it if she had wished; but Miss Rachel did not like to do anything without this sort of communication with her elder sister. It meant nothing, but was felt to be necessary, notwithstanding.

A day was not far distant which was to confirm all Miss Pryor's suspicions, and to reveal to her a

truth worse than the very worst she had apprehended. A letter written by Miss Pryor to her sister's betrothed lover, soon after the period of Rachel's return from their expedition to London, will explain, perhaps, better than anything else, the position which the Italian had now taken up and the success of his designs upon the youngest Miss Pryor.

“MY DEAR ALFRED” (writes Miss Pryor)—“I dare say you will be surprised when this mail brings you a letter in my handwriting, instead of my sister's. I have, indeed, to write to you on a subject upon which it is almost as painful to me to speak as it will be to you to hear. I have to speak to you, dear Alfred, about Rachel. I am most anxious and uneasy about her. I must tell you first of all that, some months ago, papa invited an Italian gentleman, who has been laying out Lord Chalkstone's new gardens, to come over here, and assist him with some of the endless alterations in the grounds which he is for ever making. This Italian came two months ago, and has been here ever since. He has made himself perfectly indispensable to poor papa's happiness, and, what is much worse, I am sorry to say that it appears to me that an excessive intimacy and confidence has sprung up between this comparative stranger, of whom we know nothing, and my sister Rachel. My dear Alfred, I do not write to you on this subject except after long thought, and with deep

sorrow and sympathy for the pain which I know it will give you to receive my letter. I have, indeed, in the desire to avoid torturing you, as I know I am doing, put off already too long the wretched task of communicating with you upon this subject; but things have arrived now at a climax which makes a longer delay impossible. You know that, in three weeks from this time, Rachel will be of age, and will come into absolute control over her share in the property (amounting altogether to about 30,000*l.*) which was left by my poor mother to be equally divided between us three sisters. I hardly expect you to believe that my sister has announced her intention of placing the whole of her portion of this sum in the hands of this Italian, of whom, as I have said, we know nothing, in order that he may invest it for her in some security about which he is always talking, and about which she understands as little as I do. Of course I have expostulated and reasoned with Rachel on this monstrous determination; but to what purpose? The money is, or will be in a few short weeks, entirely under her control, and I am powerless to shake her mad determination. I have even gone farther than this, and have shown her how fearfully wrongly she is acting—situated as she is with regard to you—in taking this step without your knowledge and consent. I have accused her of disloyalty to you, of allowing this dreadful Italian an influence over her which it is a sin against you for

her to permit; I have done all this, but again I say to no purpose. She seems perfectly powerless in this man's hands, and callous to all argument or persuasion. Under these circumstances what conclusion can I come to but the wretched one, that this wily adventurer has succeeded in undermining the hold which I hoped and believed, dear Alfred, you possessed on Rachel's affections, and what can I do but entreat you at any sacrifice, at any inconvenience, to return to England, if the thing is possible, by the next ship that sails, that you may be on the spot to look to the security of those rights which this unhappy girl has so cruelly disregarded, and to save her, if yet it may be done, from the hands of this wicked and unscrupulous man,

“ Yours always affectionately,

“ ANNE PRYOR.”

It was months before that letter reached its destination. Meantime, a great change had come over the wretched girl, who was the subject of it. Attacks of excitement, followed by the most fearful depression, and all accompanied by an unrest, very terrible and painful to witness—these things were continually increasing the anxiety of Miss Pryor for her sister, and throwing a deadly gloom over the whole establishment at Pryor's Lodge. The Italian, and he alone, had any power over her at such times, and even his influence was soon to be withdrawn.

It was some time (perhaps six weeks) after Rachel's coming of age, that Salvi made the announcement that his absence from his own country had now been so long continued, that it was absolutely necessary, for his own affairs, that he should return for a short time to Italy, and he alleged farther, as the reason for doing so at once, that he had received a communication, by which he learnt that his aged mother was seriously ill, and wished to see her son, if it were yet possible, before she died.

From the time of this announcement, a settled and speechless despair seemed to have taken possession of the unhappy Rachel. She would sit for hours together without uttering a word, and from the day that the Italian left the house, she confined herself to her own room, and could by no persuasion or stratagem be induced to leave it.

The day of Salvi's departure was one of those when Nature seems to exhaust her whole machinery of discomfort and gloom at once. It was a November afternoon, and fog, rain, and cold had united their chill hands, as in a bargain, to make the day a bad one. On that afternoon, as the wheels of the carriage which bore Salvi away from the hall, oozed through the wet gravel of the sweep, there was one who, in the secrecy of that chamber from which the sanctity of a woman's purity had departed, bent her head upon the ground in an agony of despair, and called on death to release her from her torment.

Is it to such that Death comes? Is it when the cup is filling fast that the bitter draught is stayed, and that its stream pours no longer?

The weeks rolled on; months passed away, and no change for the better took place in Rachel's condition. Physicians were sent for and prescribed, but to no purpose, and at last the old resource was determined on, and travelling was ordered as a thing that must be deferred no longer than the necessary preparations absolutely demanded. Last resource, indeed,—change of the sky under which we suffer, movement, flight, escape from that to which we have at last to return again—the inevitable facts of our own existence.

The hall of Pryor's Lodge was filled with packages; trunks and portmanteaus were scattered about in all directions, and the full confusion of an approaching journey was in the house. But what a journey! There was none of the delightful excitement of the start here,—it was no holiday party setting off for their summer trip. It was a pilgrimage of despair. The travellers were Miss Pryor and Craven, who were to be accompanied by an old man-servant and a maid. Mr. Pryor, whom it was useless to think of carrying away from the lodge, was to remain there, and his sister, an old maiden lady, was to come and take care of the old gentleman while his eldest and youngest daughters were away. This worthy lady was, on the day

preceding the journey, which is that the events of which we are describing, expected hourly at the lodge; so that when a post-chaise from the neighbouring station, which was at some distance, was seen coming up the drive, it was a matter of some surprise to the servants who had come out to meet it, to see a man's head and arm thrust out of the window, and busy opening the door of the carriage. Before it had reached its destination and stopped at the hall door, Alfred Trelane had jumped out, and, hastily acknowledging the salutations of the servants, had entered the house. They got together after telling Miss Pryor of his arrival, and while Trelane paced up and down the room into which he had been shown, these domestics were talking of his altered appearance, and the pale and set look upon his features. The servants had often of late talked in this frightened way together concerning the events which were going on in the house.

When Miss Pryor entered the breakfast-room, into which Trelane had been shown, it would have been hard to say which of the two wore the saddest expression. Neither of them said a word, but Alfred led her to a sofa, and they sat down hand in hand. At last he spoke, and he could hear, himself, how altered were the tones of his own voice.

“Where is she?” he said.

“Here,” answered Miss Pryor.

There was a pause. He had with difficulty and effort to force himself to ask another question.

“That—Italian—whom you wrote about—is he here?”

“He is gone,” Miss Pryor answered.

“What are all these preparations that I see—for a journey?”

“We are going abroad—that is, Rachel and I. Oh! she is so ill,” the poor girl added after a moment, and sobbing as she spoke.

“Will you see her?” she asked, presently.

The sailor hid his face in his hands; he had confronted the enemy before now without flinching, he had faced hardship, danger, starvation, but he was unmanned here. The mind’s trials and its fears are greater and more formidable than the body’s. There are, however, occasions when we do a thing mechanically, without considering whether we *can* do it or not: we force, at such times, the tongue to speak and the limbs to act.

“Take me to her,” said Trelane, rising; and they left the room.

As they stood outside the door, whose opening was to bring him face to face with Rachel; and as Miss Pryor advanced her hand to the lock, he stopped her, and asked if her sister was much changed.

“She is very much changed,” said Miss Pryor.

“Ought she not to be prepared for this?” he asked again.

"I have thought of that," Miss Pryor answered, "but I am afraid to tell her, lest she should refuse to see you, as she does every one else."

With that, Miss Pryor opened the door, and they went into the room together.

The pleasant room, the gay country bed-room, with its bright chintz and muslin, the snow-white bed and curtains, the sofa, the writing-table, the great arm-chairs, the blazing fire, who could be unhappy here?

Rachel was seated in a great white bed-room fauteuil, and had her back to the door, by which her betrothed lover and Miss Pryor entered. She did not turn or move. Miss Pryor paused.

"Rachel," she said, presently, "here is Alfred Trelane."

"Where?" she cried, turning hastily round.

Their eyes met. She gazed upon him for an instant, with a stony, puzzled look, and then falling forward and burying her face in her hands, she cried,

"I can't see him: take him away or I shall die; oh, would to God," she added, directly, "I could!"

In that moment's glance, altered as she was, and with a stamp almost of guilt upon her face more painful to behold than even the marks which illness had set there, Alfred had seen the countenance of her he loved; it was still Rachel; it was the face he had kissed so often, the face that he had seen in dreams, the face that his fancy had called up in the

watches of the night, hundreds of miles away. In another moment he was beside her, pressing her head to his breast, for his great heart had pardoned her.

“Rachel,” he said, “look up—my love.”

“Oh,” she cried, struggling in his grasp, and pushing him from her; “oh, no, no, you must not speak to me; you must go—leave me—you must, you shall!”

“Leave you!” said the sailor, “leave you; why, I have come to save you; to save you from yourself, to call you back to your better nature, and to stand by and strengthen and help you, till you are so brave and strong that I can leave you safely to yourself.”

Oh, why did she struggle still in his arms? why did she push him from her, and moan and sob, and cry, “It cannot be.”

“Why, Rachel,” he said again, “what is this? I know all, and I have forgiven you; I have forgiven your weakness, dear, and am here to make you well and happy.”

Still struggling in the strong arms—still pushing that good and faithful heart away from her.

“Why, listen, dear,” he continued, “I have laid out all our plan. Such poor services as I have done will get me for a long time, at any rate, some post at home here, which I can fill without leaving you. You will have me near, to watch over and guard you; you will have new interests and thoughts, new

occupations, you will—so soon, my love—get strong and well again; you will——”

“Oh, leave me, leave me,” she cried, struggling more desperately and wildly than before. “It cannot be; leave me, leave me; I say, IT IS TOO LATE.”

“Too late,” said Trelane and Miss Pryor, who was kneeling by her side, both together. “Too late? How can it be too late?”

Once again she pushed him from her, and rising, and tottering across the room, she opened a desk that stood upon the table, and turning presently round and stretching her left hand out towards them, she pointed to a plain gold ring, which she had placed upon her finger and said again,—

“IT IS TOO LATE.”

It was about this time that public attention was much turned to a subject which has now ceased in great measure to occupy it. The Arctic Seas and their capabilities, the scientific researches on which it was thought that light might be thrown by the sending of exploring parties to those regions of ice; it was to these things that many minds were turned, and turned as to a subject not of a desperate interest as we regard it now, but as to one that was full of hope and promise.

In every such expedition, and especially in the wildest and most desperate of them, there was always one officer who could be depended on to shrink from

no danger, and who seemed to court hardship, toil, and suffering, and to hug them to him as chosen friends.

No expedition sailed without Lieutenant Trelane, nor was any one on board more respected as a kind and patient gentleman and an heroic officer.

At last there sailed on this enterprise of discovery two ships, which to this day have sent back to these shores no living soul to tell the sad tale of all those sufferings which preceded the day when one by one the exhausted crew sank upon the ice and snow, to rise no more.

The snow and ice closed in upon a great and manly heart, when the storms of this fearful region drifted them over the body of Alfred Trelane.

The Italian, Francesco Salvi, had not misstated facts when he alleged that his affairs recalled him to Italy. There was one there to whom the church had united him before he left his native country, and who, now finding that entreaties and prayers were unavailing, had at last had recourse to threats of exposure if he remained longer away from her. Rachel's money being secured, and the Italian having no particular reason for remaining in England—the fact being that of the two he preferred his first wife to his second, there being in truth no reason why he should remain where he was, and several, why he should return to Italy—Salvi no longer hesitated to take that course, and beyond a letter which was received from him some time after his

departure, and in which his previous marriage was acknowledged, he was heard of no more.

For Rachel, she did not long survive his desertion. The shock of it came upon her at a time when she was peculiarly unfitted to bear it, and she died in giving birth to a daughter, the unhappy fruit of her false marriage with the Italian. Her death took place at Paris, where she had spent the last few months with that one of her sisters who has been little noticed in this brief narrative, and who was now married to Monsieur d'Elmar, a gentleman of good position and means. Madame d'Elmar took charge of the infant at its mother's death, and M. d'Elmar, to whom the English lady had been an attached wife, dying soon afterwards, the widow retired to Versailles, where she lived in the closest retirement. Rachel's child became her adopted daughter, and was called by her own name, for unhappily she had by right none of her own to be distinguished by. So the child was called Madeleine d'Elmar, and grew up under her aunt's care, the two living in great seclusion in the royal town of Versailles.

In great seclusion indeed. For Madame d'Elmar was one of those persons who have little elasticity under a great sorrow, who prefer rather to hug it to their hearts, to retire into solitude, and there live with it, than to go out into the great world and seek to evade its importunities. Madame d'Elmar

sought no such immunity from grief. She never shook off the recollection of those last months of her sister Rachel's life, and the shame and sorrow which belonged to them took even an exaggerated form in this timid lady's eyes.

END OF PROLOGUE.

* * Between the period when the events here recorded took place, and the time when our story recommences in Chapter I., about eighteen years have elapsed.


CHAPTER I.

BREAKFAST.

WE are at Paris.

The reader whom I take by the hand, and who instantly becomes, like me, invisible, stands by my side in the Café du Cardinal, which is, as most persons know, situated on the Opéra Comique side of the Boulevard, and not far distant from that charming theatre.

It is half-an-hour past noon, and the busy time is just beginning at the *café*. The door, heavy with glass and iron (there is not a chip of wood in its composition) is for ever opening and shutting with a metallic crack as, one after another, the *habituels* of the place enter. Sudden plungers into *cafés* are these, to a man, and with a strong family likeness pervading them all, showing in their manner, their size, their dress, and, perhaps, in nothing more (though we are only in the month of October) than in their being all undisguised sufferers from throat affections.



It is not a cold day either, but, on the contrary, warm and close, and almost inconceivably damp. The Boulevard mud has had a rare time of it lately, and on this particular day is in such force that the shoe-blacks in the streets are obliged to gamble with each other to get rid of their property, and at the boot-cleaning shop in the Passage des Panoramas the unblackened are waiting in rows to be operated on. (It is ten to one that as you leave the shop, the man who has just performed upon your boots gives your coat an affectionate and eleemosynary brush down, with the instrument with which he has been at work on your high-lows.)

It is a grave question whether any meal at any place or at any time can wear a more attractive aspect than a breakfast at the Café du Cardinal. What a room to breakfast in to begin with, what wealth of glass and marble, and white and gold. How pleasant to unfold your snowy napkin as you seat yourself at the little round marble table, and taking up the unimposing newspaper which savours so much more of pleasure than business, to turn at once to the theatrical bill of fare for the evening! What butter, too; what rolls, what oysters, what cutlets, what half-bottles of white wine, what coffee! Young France may well (as it does) crowd into this place; though where the money comes from with which it feasts itself so sumptuously twice in the twenty-four hours is a mystery to him who writes these pages,

and one which he has often reflected upon with reverent wonder as he chips his meek egg at the frugal London breakfast table.

With young France entering the *Café du Cardinal* in a brown beaver great-coat with sleeves sticking up marvellously at the shoulder; with young France enveloped, as to the neck and chin, in a shepherd's plaid shawl, or *cache-nez*, and pinched, as to the nose, by a double eye-glass set in tortoise-shell; with this figure, repetitions of which may be seen at almost every table in the *café*, we have at present nothing to do.

With old France, stouter in the figure, wiser in the breakfast, more inclined to finger all the rolls in the basket previous to selection; with old France, more dyspeptic, and more afflicted, with rheum than the younger children of the Empire, we have at present nothing to do either.

We leave them to their oysters of Ostend, their bleeding cutlets, their melting *fricandeau*, their sorrel, their *chablis*, and their coffee, or, in a word, to the care of the grave waiters, who will not be hurried or bullied into anything, and who are among the most dignified men in the French capital.

Of all the persons assembled in the *Café du Cardinal*, on the particular morning which has been selected for the commencement of this narrative, we are concerned with one, and with one only.

The crash of the door, the clatter of coffee-cups,

the clearing of throats (to put it delicately), the loud giving of orders, and cries of *garçon*; the flitting about of waiters, the bringing in of full dishes, the taking out of empty ones—none of these things shall be allowed to catch our attention, or to divert it from the gentleman who sits there in a corner by one of the windows, and looks out into the Boulevard Montmartre.

About this man there is, at first sight, nothing particularly remarkable. The ponderous German Jew, who sits on his right, and whose throat is decidedly more severely affected than any other in the *café*, is a more eccentric figure to look at; and so is the wily Greek in a fez, who strengthens himself for new villainies at the table nearest on the left hand to him, on whom we are endeavouring gradually to concentrate the reader's attention.

And yet one careless glance a-piece is enough for the German Jew and the furtively feeding Greek, while the eye returns again and again to the figure we have pointed out, and rests on it with interest and satisfaction.

It is the figure of an Englishman. There is no doubt of it. He has just finished a French breakfast, a French newspaper is in his hand; he is *décoré* with the Legion of Honour; he wears a moustache, and is otherwise closely shaven; and yet at the first glance you feel convinced he is an Englishman, and at the second you think that he is a soldier.

He is of the middle height, and of a spare and slight, but upright figure ; there is none of the burly beef-engendered robustness about this person's appearance which foreigners conceive to be inseparable from the English character. Nor is there, in his complexion, that contrast of white and red which so often marks the inhabitants of our island. On the contrary, though his hair and moustache are of a light shade, his face is almost sallow in the darkness of its colour. Surely hotter suns than any that blaze down upon our European soils must have been at work here, and surely that countenance, which is that of a man of two or three-and-thirty only, has been marked so deeply in its lines by suffering and ill-health. It is a great and noble face—a face in which one sees the conflict which has been at work, and which tells how spirit and courage, and strong self-culture, may temper a sensitiveness that would otherwise degenerate into weakness, and a passionateness which, less severely held in hand, would be productive of more deadly consequences yet.

Pervading this man's whole carriage and demeanor, there was a quietness and absence of display, which were partly attributable to his military education. For the reader has not been mistaken in the hypothesis he formed as to the profession of the individual we are observing so closely ; and if he had guessed that our Englishman was an officer who,

after serving for some time in India, was visiting Europe on sick leave, he would have merely guessed the truth.

When it has been added that Major Trelane was a member of a good family and a younger son, enough has been said for the present by way of introduction.

As this gentleman sits, looking somewhat listlessly out of the window of the *café*, with the unread copy of *Figaro* in his hand (a hand burnt as dark as his face, but nervously and delicately formed), there is time for us, as he seems in no hurry to move, to speculate a little upon his character, and to endeavour to gather, from his appearance, some of those deductions which may be got most surely from a careful study of physiognomy, using the word quite in its broadest sense.

Beneath that quiet surface, that undemonstrative exterior, there is a smouldering fire, a hidden depth of passion, a strong ambition, and, its existence hardly believed in by the man himself—a heart. He is one whom nobody mistrusts but himself,—a cynic not from choice, but from conviction. He is a man who, listening to a tale of distress, would open his purse, and while he gave would laugh at himself for being duped. He would not believe, but he would give. Mistrust and pride, and perhaps a certain vein of indolence, are his deadliest and most dangerous faults, and who shall say how much impaired health, and

a delicate and singularly sensitive frame, may have had to do with the hold which these failings have gained upon his nature.

Is it pushing a theory too far to say that those who want but little to make them great, are often placed in circumstances calculated to develop the qualities which they need for the perfecting of their natures?

Consider for a moment this Anglo-Indian sitting in a Parisian *café*, at one in the afternoon, with the lightest of light literature in his hand, and a luxurious French breakfast just concluded, and say whether we have not got before us apparently an epitome of selfishness: a man slowly drifting down the stream of life, without much stake in it or care about it, but hugging the notion of his bachelor existence, its irresponsibility and its freedom closely to his heart, if that is to be called a heart which can hug so cold a sham as this life of Pall Mall and the Boulevard, of English clubs and French *cafés*?

This is the reader's impression. For my own part I adhere to the opinion I have given above, that beneath all this apparent coldness and selfishness there is a heart restless in its inaction, and certain dull embers which may yet be fanned into such a fire as, once kindled, shall burn on in a growing intensity of flame, which shall not be extinguished or even flag again, any more, for ever.

Who knows whether the wind that shall fan that flame may be rising even now? Who knows how

this day, begun so carelessly, shall end? The key that shall unlock this man's heart, may be forging at this moment, the tempest that shall shake his nature to its centre, may be gathering in the sky; who knows?

CHAPTER II. •

BETWEEN BREAKFAST AND DINNER.

“GAY as a street in Versailles,” is an ironical French saying, by which anything especially dull and melancholy is characterized, and certainly that royal town is a great and sad place.

As Trelane handed the copy of “Figaro” to the German who sat next him, and who asked for it intelligibly enough in an interval of throat-clearing, the above-quoted sentence caught his attention, and, as such things will, turned his thoughts at once to the interesting town thus satirically alluded to.

“I may as well go there as anywhere else,” he said to himself, as he carefully cleansed his moustache with the rose-water which the waiter brought for the purpose. “I shall have the gardens to myself on a day like this.”

The metallic crash of the door of the *café* is heard once more as Trelane closes it behind him, and, undaunted by the mud, proceeds at once to cross the Boulevard, and turning up the Chaussée d’Antin,

reaches the Rue S. Lazare, and so in due time the station of the Versailles railway.

It will be some sort of key to the character of our hero—for the reader must accept this English officer in that capacity—it will give some idea of the peculiar nature of that indolence of which mention has already been made, when we state that it was really a great relief to him to find on his arrival at Versailles that he had chanced upon the day in the week when the public was not admitted to the palace, and that though the gardens were open to him, the doors of the splendid galleries of Versailles were closed. There are surely those among my readers who would also have felt this, and who, with all the admiration which every one must feel for this noble palace, would yet experience a sense of relief in escaping from the hands of a cicerone—a kind of functionary who would make any place uninteresting—and getting away alone into the gardens at Versailles.

What gardens they are.

There is, luckily, in matters of taste, as in other things, a system of re-action by which it is brought about, that when the stream of popular feeling has been running too long and too violently in one direction, a change may more surely be looked for in its course than at any other time. If this be true, it may confidently be expected that the moment is not far off when the splendid art of the Renaissance

shall have a larger share in the popular admiration than it has enjoyed of late, and when at least it shall be acknowledged that in the mere fact of its strong individuality, its chronological importance, its characteristic marking of the age to which it belongs, there is a value and a dignity which entitle it to our respect, as its real nobleness and beauty do to our admiration. This is no place for a disquisition on architecture, however seductive and important—it is both—the subject may be; but this much may be said, let any person who is disposed to quarrel with the period whose defence I am taking up, consider before he does so the magnificence of our own Blenheim, and the royal splendour of the palace and gardens of Versailles.

As Trelane passed on to the great terrace which is spread out at the back of the palace, he felt as if he had himself decreased in stature, from the enormous scale of everything round about him. What breathing space was here, and what solitude! The day was one, indeed, not calculated to draw many visitors to the place. It was the festival not of the "*grandes eaux*," but of those smaller waters which seem to be distilled out of the air by every substance with which it comes in contact; so that, though there was no perceptible rain falling, the trees, the shrubs, the statues, and the sentry-boxes, were all as wet as they could be, and the sound of dripping leaves was almost the only one that broke the silence of

the place. It was the apotheosis of Damp. There was not in this vast solitude a living thing to be seen, for even the sentinels who howl to you to keep off the turf had got so deeply into the dark recesses of their sentry-boxes, that they were barely discernible; the birds had disposed of themselves in some wonderful way so as to be out of sight, and as to the fish—this was not the kind of day for a wise old carp to lie and float on the top of the water—the fish were all rooting about in the mud at the bottom, and gave no sign of existence.

It was no subject of regret to Major Trelane that he had that great terrace to himself; but when descending the steps he left the palace behind him, and saw before him those long formal walks leading to the great sheet of water which terminates them, it was then that there seemed to be something almost horrible in the loneliness of the scene, at the same time that it exercised upon him a fascination which made it impossible to turn his back upon it.

Let the reader consider well the nature of this scene and he will own that the word "horrible" which has just been used is in no degree too strong to apply to it. Let him get this place well before him. He has been spared, and shall be in the utmost possible degree, all long family explanations and pedigrees at the beginning of this work; but I cannot let him off every detail, and he must and shall see

the locality with which we are now concerned well defined before his mental vision, or he will understand nothing and feel nothing of what follows.

He must see this long wide walk with its high and leafless trees, and with the great sheet of water at the end of it extending the straight lines of its banks as far as the eye can reach. He must remember that there is a thin mist of damp over everything, increasing all the distances and adding mystery to those regions into which the eye penetrates but partially. As he advances along this great walk, which would look long but for its immense width, and wide but for its prodigious length, he must observe that at every hundred yards or so other paths diverge at right angles from this main one; paths that end some of them in mist and some in fountains, with Tritons riding upon river-horses whose distended nostrils discharge in an unending stream water from the unexhausted stores which well up from the springs beneath. The fountains, the water-nymphs, the river-gods and Tritons are without number in these walks. You come upon them suddenly in the loneliest corners, and in deep recesses of these tall groves find yourself suddenly before some deserted nymph, whom mortal eyes do not light on twice in twice twelve months—the lost Egeria of the place.

But farther on at the end of the great walk which Trelane is following, there are two paths diverging

from the same point. One of them—it was the one which he took—ends after some length of straight progress between trees which grow so symmetrically as to resemble a clipped hedge of monstrous height, in a great circle of marble pillars—a roofless temple of the gods. It is a choice spot. In its first and palmiest days it must have been a melancholy place; even in the days when—it suggests this at once—it was the chosen meeting-place of the pages and ladies of the court, who haunted these regions in the days of the *grand monarch*. Many a tryst has this been the scene of, and many a quarrel has dyed the ground with the blood which the sharp court sword would in those days let out on such small provocation.

Henry Trelane leant against the iron railings which, occupying the space between the marble columns, excluded him from the enclosure itself, and examined this desolate temple with an interest which it would have failed to inspire in many breasts. The grass and moss had grown up between and upon the slabs of marble with which the enclosed circle was paved; the flags themselves were cracked in many places, the pedestals which surrounded the interior space were not always decorated with the busts which had originally crowned them, and some of which were lying in fragments on the pavement, while the central statue itself, which represented Liberty, had escaped with a less share of

mutilation, and had only lost a hand and arm in the battle against time.

It could scarcely be the intrinsic merits of the temple which he was examining that kept our hero so long at this post, and yet there must have been some great charm about it, so affectionately did his eye dwell on all its details. One more look, one sweeping glance around the building as he rouses himself from the reverie into which he has fallen, and he turns to leave the place. As he does so, he becomes aware for the first time that he is not alone in the gardens of Versailles, and that in this very alley that leads to the Temple of Liberty there are other persons present besides himself.

When Trelane turned his back upon this deserted and decaying edifice, and set his face to return to the main walk, from which the sight of the ring of marble pillars had caused him to diverge, he found himself face to face with two figures who were advancing towards him, and who had, hitherto, been concealed from him, as he from them, by the column against which he had been leaning.

In the dress, appearance, and rank of these two persons—both women—there was a great difference, but not in their ages: they were both young.

The warm woollen shawl, the close, small bonnet, with its plain black ribbon, and the dark silk dress of the younger of the two, though not indicative of any great luxury, or suggestive either of wealth or

splendour, marked yet that the wearer occupied a social position considerably higher than that of her companion, who was dressed as neatly and cleanly, it is true, as a woman could be, but who had on her head no covering but a cap of inconceivable whiteness, and which, seen out of doors and associated in other respects with out-door costume, showed at once that she was a servant. In a word, the pair were a young lady and her *bonne*.

Somewhat startled at first by the sudden appearance of a stranger in such a lonely and unfrequented spot, the young lady was yet swift to recover herself. Not so the *bonne*, who stood open-mouthed, as if an apparition from another world had dawned upon her. They had passed in another moment, and Trelane was standing in the *allée* of the Temple of Liberty, and looking involuntarily back at the retreating figures of the young lady and her servant, who, passing swiftly round by the back of the temple, turned into a side walk which led to another part of the gardens, and were lost immediately to his sight. In another moment, Trelane could have believed that this meeting had never taken place, and that it was all an affair of the fancy together.

And what was this vision that had passed before the eyes of Henry Trelane? It was simply that of a young lady of about twenty years of age, with dark grey eyes and a fair and quiet face. There was really nothing in this figure to keep our hero rooted

to the spot where he was standing when it passed out of his sight. Why should that face haunt him? Had he ever seen it before? No. Was it of a dazzling and remarkable beauty? It was certainly a beautiful face, but not dazzlingly so. It was a sweet face; a face to have opposite one, day after day, and with every hour to get to like it more. It was a countenance full of a heavenly truthfulness, of a keen and highly organized sensitiveness. It is not pushing theory too far to say that in her whole demeanour, and even in her dress, the tone of the young lady's character made itself felt. Hers was essentially a gracious presence, marked most strongly by a womanly reserve that veiled from all, and from some hid altogether, the warm and feeling heart and the profundity of strong affection that lay beneath.

And how, it will be asked, had Trelane found all this art in such a brief glance? A skilled and habitual physiognomist, a profound observer, and one who traced external things to their internal origin by a process of thought, almost mechanical in the swiftness of its action, Henry Trelane had detected in the circumstances of that brief interview, all that has been noted above. He had observed that this young lady, in her rapid recovery from her first surprise, had made no forced attempt to appear at her ease by talking, or pretending to talk, to her servant. He had noted that no glance towards himself as she passed told of a curiosity about him, or a wish to

observe what effect she herself might have upon him. There was no fault in this—not even that of a boastful self-possession, and this was what Trelane felt, and felt most keenly, though not reasoning it out as I have done.

Will the reader think that this is too minute a way of dealing with what was, when all's told, but a sudden rencontre between two strangers in a garden? Let me hope that he will come to no such conclusion. "*Qui spernit modica paulatim decidet;*" and all these little signs reveal the truth so surely that they can hardly be dwelt on too carefully.

The loneliness of those solitary walks seemed to our Englishman to have increased immeasurably since it was broken by the sudden appearance and disappearance of the two figures which had crossed his path. When he returned to the great walk, and pursuing it to the end, looked through the closed iron gates that separated him from the outer park which lies beyond them, it seemed to him that the place was unbearable in its sadness and solitude, and he turned to retrace his steps.

As he did so, he noticed that with the declining light, the mist which had lain over the gardens all the day was thickening, and that the moisture which had seemed to hang suspended in the air had taken at last a form, and was descending upon the earth in a fine soft rain.

Quickening his pace, our wanderer advanced

rapidly along the great central avenue which has been already described, and had nearly reached the first flight of steps which leads to the palace, when he perceived, advancing towards him, a figure which he could soon make out to be that of an officer in the Imperial army.

This little gentleman, for he was of short stature, was decorated with all that inconceivable smartness which characterizes a French soldier. His shoulders exaggerated to an enormous and disproportionate width by a huge pair of epaulettes, made the smallness of his tightly-girded waist the more remarkable. Nor was this wasp-like quality in any degree diminished by the immense and compensatory expansion below the girdle of the red trousers, which, starting in ample folds, diminished almost to a point as they reached the feet. This gallant officer's equipments consisted, in addition to a great clattering sabre and a pair of spurs, of two umbrellas, one of which he carried open over his head, and the other furled under his arm. His age seemed about that of Trelane.

The French officer had no sooner got within speaking or rather shouting distance of Trelane, than he called out in French, touching with the handle of the furled umbrella the upturned brim of his smart military cap,—

“Has monsieur by chance encountered a young lady and her *bonne*? Hold!” he added, directly

afterwards, starting suddenly back, and staring wildly at our hero, "What is this?"

"D'Elmar—is it possible?"

"Ce cher Trelane," cried the little officer, throwing down both the umbrellas, in his eagerness to embrace the Englishman; "this dear friend," he continued, getting him again at arm's length, in order to see him better, and shaking hands violently, "this brave comrade that I 'ave not seen since we fought side by side before Sevastopol. Where do you arrive from? How long 'ave you been in France? Where are you staying? at Versailles, at Paris—where?" he began again, before Trelane could express a word of the pleasure it gave him to meet an old friend in this unexpected manner. "This dear comrade, it gives me sore eyes, as your Scotch say, to see you so good."

With this liberal paraphrase of the well-known Scotch proverb, the little Frenchman once more took our hero in his arms and saluted him with a cordial hug.

"And where are *you* to be found?" asked Trelane, as soon as his friend's violent demonstrations of affection gave him time and breath to speak; "are you quartered here?"

"No, no—not here," answered the other; "at Vincennes—but what am I about?" he added suddenly. "I am forgetting in my joy that I ought to be in pursuit of a young lady, who gets wet now while I

talk, and for whom I bring this umbrella," and he picked it up from the ground as he spoke.

"What sort of young lady?" asked Trelane, with some curiosity.

"A fair English—a compatriote of yours—who came to take her walks here with her *bonne*, as she does every day; and the rain coming on, her parent sends me with the shelters, as you see."

"You know this young lady, then?" asked Trelane.

"Know her—by example, I think I know 'er, she is ma relation, ma niece. But I must go, she is getting wet, I will see you again."

"Your relation," said the other, thoughtfully; "and she was walking here alone with her servant? I think I have met them in the path at the end of the great avenue that leads to the Temple of Liberty."

"It is her favourite walk. I go to the research at once, but first, when shall I see you again?"

Trelane was on the point of proposing to assist his newly found friend in his search. The words rose to his lips, but he repulsed them with a strange sensitiveness that he could not account for, and was just going to name the *Hôtel du Helder*, at which he was staying, and to arrange a meeting there with the Frenchman, when suddenly the object of his friend's search stood before him, and he saw once more the vision of the Alley of Liberty—the young lady and her *bonne*.

They had emerged from a walk which joined the

main avenue, just at the point at which Trelane and his friend were standing, and before they had made any arrangement for a meeting were close upon them.

It was impossible not to perceive from d'Elmar's manner that he had some reason to wish that this meeting with his relative should not have taken place under its present circumstances; and it was equally evident that he intended to bring it to as speedy a termination as was compatible with any sort of courtesy towards his old comrade.

"Ah, my dear," he cried, "I was just seeking you with this umbrella, with which your aunt despatched me in search of you—when, meeting monsieur here who is an old comrade of pension and in arms, I arrested myself one moment to speak to him."

"Don't let me take you away now," said the young lady; "I can get home perfectly with Victorine."

"By no means," said the little man, "by no manner of means—I come now, at once; mon cher Trelane, we must meet—when, where, to-night? What say you? Hein!"

"Let us dine together," answered the other.

"Agreed, where?"

The Englishman was going to suggest Véfour's, but on second thoughts he proposed Champeaux's, in the Place de la Bourse.

"And the hour?"

"Half-past six."

"*Va, pour six heures et demi,*" shouted the little

man. The young lady bowed slightly; Trelane raised his hat and responded as well as he could to another embrace from his enthusiastic friend. In another moment the little officer, his niece, and the bonne were ascending the flight of steps at the right extremity of the great terrace, and Trelane, taking those on the left, was soon out of the gardens, and in a few minutes more on his way back to Paris.

CHAPTER III.

DINNER.

THERE are few places more favourable to reflection than a first-class railway carriage. It is probable that most persons who read these pages have, at some time in their lives, been so circumstanced that certain events of real or fancied importance have immediately preceded their starting on a journey alone. Those with whom this has been the case will know that the moment the door has been slammed upon them they will throw themselves back in the corner, which it may have been their luck to secure, and call up all the events that are just over, weighing them and reasoning upon them in a more deliberate and careful fashion than they would in any other situation in which they could be placed.

Trelane leant back in the carriage which was to convey him to Paris, and gave full sway to the thoughts which the occurrences of the day suggested to him. Those occurrences had been simple enough—a walk in the garden at Versailles—a rencontre

with a young lady and her servant—a meeting with an old friend who turns out to be connected with this young lady and who seems decidedly anxious to keep her to himself. Her uncle too. In all the time that Trelane had known him, either in the old days when they were at school at Boulogne, or when their friendship was revived under the canvas of the Crimea, d'Elmar had never alluded to his having any connection with English people, had never spoken of this niece, this fair young English girl. It was very odd, so intimate as they had been; for the reader must know that the friendship which had existed between the two boys at Mons. Ferrulus' school at Boulogne had, when the men met under the walls of Sebastopol, ripened into some degree of intimacy and into such confidence as exists between men whose lives are in constant danger. D'Elmar, too, was of such a communicative and careless nature, as it seemed. It was certainly very odd. A girl, too, that any man might be proud of.

That was the ever returning memory. In all Trelane's thoughts that meeting was still in his mind; it pervaded everything. That face was constantly before him. The single sentence which he had heard from her mouth rang in his ears. It was nothing; the words were common-place words enough: they were not addressed to him, and yet there *they* were, and there that face was: the words still in his ears, and the face before his eyes.

It must be acknowledged that Trelane made no effort to clear his memory of either. Far from it. The very stoppages at Sévres and the other stations were an unpleasant interruption to him, and the final arrival at Paris was almost like a shock.

Our Englishman was first that evening at the rendezvous. Champeaux's was crowded, and it was with difficulty that our hero could secure a small table in a corner for himself and his expected friend. Having done this and sat down, in order to keep the places, he had leisure to look about him and take note, if he felt inclined, of the different occupants of the room.

From the Café du Cardinal where he had breakfasted, to Champeaux's where he was about to dine, there was just one little step of descent in the social scale. The *bourgeois* element was stronger here. It was but a fine shade of difference, but still there *was* a difference. To say that there was more of the Bourse here would be to say little; the Bourse is everywhere at Paris. All the men who are not sub-lieutenants with small waists seem to live upon the steps of the Bourse, and a very good thing, to judge by their tavern life, they seem to make of it. Here was the same liberal expenditure in dinners in the evening that took place with regard to breakfasts in the morning; everybody dining every day as we in England dine sometimes—for a treat. How is it done? The writer of these pages solemnly implores

the French nation to delegate some person with authority to tell him how they manage—all of them—to live in such luxurious style. The stomachic part of the difficulty he understands, for he has observed that your Frenchman when past his first youth is a dyspeptic and a bilious man, but the pecuniary question is one which it is difficult to solve. The two gloomy men who are sitting at the next table to that occupied by Trelane have just partaken of a snack consisting of Ostend oysters, Julienne soup, brains and black butter, an out-work of slices of cold sausage, a sole *aux gratins* (mark its position in the bill of fare), a *fricandeau* of veal with sorrel and a maraschino cream. They will breakfast at 12.30 on the following morning, and dine at seven to-morrow as well as they are dining at six to-day. The writer—mindful of his yesterday's chop and potatoes—asks again, how is it done?

The domestic Frenchman a little further on, who is treating his wife, his daughter (*la jeune personne*), and his little boy—the inevitable French family, this—is going to work on a more frugal scale, and orders but two portions of everything for them all, to the great dismay, when the moment for the Charlotte Russe arrives, of his son and heir. As for the *jeune personne*, who seems invariably a perfectly good and unexceptionable creature, and a great credit to the French nation, she takes what is given her with a good grace and a good appetite,

and, fresh from the rigour of her "pension," is slow to quarrel with anything. They have their jokes, this family, among themselves, and are perfectly cordial and familiar; nor is their domesticity interfered with one bit by this occasional admixture of tavern life, which we in this country should view with such suspicion, as subversive of our "hearths and homes."

The irritable old solitary at the next table to this pleasant party is hard to please, and not agreeable to dine next; for besides trying all the "breads" in the basket before he finds one to his taste, fingering and pinching them mercilessly in the process, his ideas as to the different uses of napkins and pocket-handkerchiefs appear to be in a somewhat confused and undefined condition. He objects, too, to every dish, and has many of them changed to suit his palate and his absent teeth. Finally, he taxes the bill, and has the landlord sent for, and, underpaying the waiter, leaves that functionary (who will not stand much nonsense in France), cursing him by his gods from between his set teeth. It is possible that that particular waiter's temper has been already a little tried by an English traveller who has upset the order of nature by beginning his dinner with a "bit of fish," taking no soup, which alone is an unpardonable outrage; and who, finding a *bifteck aux pommes* not enough for dinner, and being of those persons who like to dine off one thing, has ordered another "to follow."

Trelane had time enough while waiting for his friend to notice all these things if he had felt inclined, but I much question whether, observant as he was, they were not, at this particular moment, lost upon him. I much question whether he was free to notice anything; whether the figure of a young girl with dark grey eyes, and soft brown hair, had not got possession of his eyes, and a sentence in the English language uttered in a soft, low voice, of his ears.

The entrance of Alexis d'Elmar, with a loose hooded coat thrown over his uniform, and which, owing to the protrusion of the epaulettes beneath, caused him to look about four feet wide across the shoulders—the rapid entrance of this personage broke in at last upon Trelane's meditations, whatever they may have been, and brought him back to the affairs of the present, and to an attention to those immediate necessities of our nature which are often of great service to us in forcing us to face the more practical aspects of life.

“A thousand pardons,” Alexis began, almost before he had got into the room. “I am late, I know it. But the criminal of a train, it was not my fault. And you have been waiting, this dear Trelane? I hope you are not as hungry as I am. Hungry—*sacré pomme de terre*—but I am hungry. *Garçon, la carte!* Let us see, what is this to be? My friend, you shall ordain the dinner.”

Trelane having declined this office, the resilient Frenchman began again.

“Aha, you leave it to me, hein! Now for a little cared-for banquet. Look you, sir, you *garçon*, a potage of vermicelle, another for the friend, then (these other English like their fish directly after their soup, it is madness, but what will you?) a dish of smelts, a civet of hare, a poulet with cresses—that is good for the friend—a course of vegetables, a *soufflée*, anything, everything, but above all, quick! I am famishing, and so is the friend, I can see. This dear comrade. Is that the dinner for my friend? Hein! and now tell me what are you doing in Paris? When did you arrive?”

Trelane explained to his friend that he was home on sick leave to recruit his health, and that as he never lost an opportunity of a visit to Paris, he had come over to spend a few weeks in that capital as soon after his return to Europe as the necessary attentions to his family and his affairs would permit him.

“And you,” he added, turning the subject with all possible despatch to that in which he was so deeply interested, “how is it that you never told me that there was between us the additional bond of union of your being connected with England by family ties?”

“But how?” asked Alexis, with an air of assumed innocence.

“Your niece—she is English?” said Trelane.

“Ah, my niece! Yes, oh yes. And so you have come to stay two, three weeks; we will be together; you must come and see me at Vincennes. We will dine there, and after go to the bal, to l’Idalie. You shall see l’Idalie, cost what cost; when will you come?”

“We’ll settle that presently,” answered the Englishman; “but I suppose you are a good deal at Versailles?”

“At Versailles?”

“Yes. You go I suppose very often to see your relations there.”

“Oh, Versailles—ah—no, not much. Shall we say to-morrow for Vincennes, to-morrow for l’Idalie, hein!”

Was there some reason why the Frenchman would not speak about Versailles and his niece? Surely there must be. But what could it arise from? How did it happen that this man, ordinarily so communicative, so unguarded, became suddenly cautious and silent directly this family connection was mentioned? Taken with his hurry to get her out of the way in the gardens at Versailles, it was most remarkably and strongly suggestive of a wish on the part of d’Elmar to make a secret of the very existence of this young lady as far as it was possible.

Trelane was the most delicate and honourable of men, and would have shrunk with horror from the

thought of endeavouring to extort a confidence from any one, however he might be interested in the subject of it. "If," thought Trelane, "I am mistaken in supposing that he really wishes to keep this young lady and everything connected with her a secret, I shall find out my error by his making some allusion to her in the course of conversation; for such allusion I shall be on the look-out, but I shall make no further attempt to introduce the subject myself."

It would have been useless to attempt to introduce any subject at the particular moment which had now arrived, except the subject of dinner.

"Garçon, the wines," Alexis was crying; "ma friend, what is our wine to be? This is a great occasion; this is no day for Vieux Maçon. This is a day for Bordeaux, for Château Lafitte, Larose, Leoville, St. Julian, Médoc—hein! You say Larose—you say well. Larose will fit me like a glove to-day."

Rattling on in this way, commenting on the dishes as they appeared and disappeared, occasionally varying the subject by turning for a few moments to the old times when he and Trelane had been together under such different circumstances, the Frenchman kept up an uninterrupted monologue, which his friend but seldom interfered with. In all this, however, there was no allusion to the subject which had so strangely and powerfully taken possession of our

hero's thoughts; except, indeed, on one occasion when d'Elmar happened to mention that he had that day, in coming up from Versailles to Paris, brought two ladies under his escort.

This, which certainly was not much, was all the information that was to be got. At the conclusion of the repast, nothing would do but an adjournment to the opera to have some music. This was, in the opinion of the Frenchman, the only conceivable way of celebrating, properly, the meeting of the two friends. It was a great occasion; some festivals might be celebrated with Vieux Maçon, and an expedition to the Porte St. Martin, but this with Bordeaux wine and the opera.

The theatre of the Opéra Comique was well filled, and it was with difficulty that Trelane and his friend, who were late, could get places at the back of the pit. The performance was just about to begin, and the vendor of opera-books and of the *entr'acte* was threading his way among the seats for the last time with the usual monotonous cry, "*L'entr-r-r-r' acte. Analyse de la piece-s-s-s, Pr-r-é aux Clercs.*" The ladies, accepting the fashion of the moment, whatever it might be, were disguised more than usual; their hair parted at the side; their bonnets—there are few things uglier than a French bonnet or prettier than an English one—their bonnets of wide circumference in front, standing out from the head, and with hard empty crowns sticking out behind. No shawl or

cloak to give to the figure that corresponding enlargement which is always indispensable when the size of the head is increased by the bonnet. Everything, in short, that could be devised to make woman unattractive, was exhausted in the toilet of the ladies assembled that evening at the Opéra Comique, and Trelane felt secretly proud as he thought of the different appearance presented by his own countrywomen on similar occasions.

As Trelane completed his survey of the theatre, and made some of the reflections which are quoted above, his eye happened to alight on a box in the second tier, and within two of the proscenium, in which were seated two ladies, an old and a young one. This last was seated with her back towards him, and might, as she was much hidden by the curtain, have escaped his notice altogether, but for the circumstance that she was dressed in a manner different from any one else in the theatre, and unmistakably in the English mode.

For the rest, her costume was simple enough, it is certain. All that Trelane could see of it was part of a low dress of black silk; while, of the wearer, he saw a well-formed shoulder and the back of a head, decorated only with the soft brown hair which was gathered into a large knot arranged with perfect simplicity; there was not much in this to catch the attention, and if it did so, it must have been as a triumph of that plainness which is the most dignified

of all things, and which will hold its ground against all the splendour of ornament in the world.

It has been said that the box which had attracted our hero's attention had, besides the young lady just described, another occupant. This person was not seated, as might have been expected, at the corner of the box opposite to her companion, but in the middle, and rather at the back. She was, consequently, but little seen and almost always in shadow.

She appeared to be a lady of about fifty years of age, and of a grave and somewhat sad countenance. She had on a grey silk dress and wore a cap. This was all that Trelane could make out.

There was little in all this to arrest his eye in its progress round the theatre; so after observing what has just been set down, and after settling perfectly, in his own mind, that these two ladies were both English, our Englishman began to look in other directions, and was ready to accord to his companion, who had been talking all this time, some of that attention on which the Frenchman made such large demands. D'Elmar was justly proud of the theatre.

"The pretty *salle*," he said, caressingly, "it looks well to-night, and the women, death of my life! but they are pretty—not so pretty as in England, you will say, but what *toilets*! The English misses are pretty, I accord you that, but their regard is too bold; they are not severe like our *demoiselles de pension*, who are severe, but how severe! The English miss is often full

of a certain audacity; she is—what you call it? —bomp-tious, hein!”

“Not all,” said the Englishman, unable with a strict regard to truth, to enter into a more complete defence of his countrywomen. “You must I am sure have met with some whose modesty, both of outward demeanour and of real character, left nothing to be desired.” Perhaps Trelane was thinking of a certain pair of modest grey eyes, he had seen that day in the palace gardens at Versailles.

“Oh, doubtless there are some, but when I was for a brief sojourn in London—there is General de Bonne-vay, my chief of division, I fail to catch his eye—when I was in London, and in your Yde-park, I saw your ladies of a matchless loveliness, it is true, but such regards of audacity as they lean back in their barouch, their britzka—what will you? Hold, I catch the eye of my general—he bows—he is a brave boy; but to return, your ladies——”

“Hush!” from a dozen voices, and “Monsieur, it is necessary to be silent; the music commences,” from an irritable amateur, seated next to Alexis, and indeed the curtain had risen while d’Elmar was talking, and the attentive audience was eagerly drinking in every note, and every word of Héroid’s delicious opera, *Le Pré aux Clercs*.

“Mark ma words,” hissed the silenced Alexis in our hero’s ear, “your English misses are bomp-tious. Pretty? yes—shy? no!”

Trelane smiled, and postponing the discussion to some more convenient opportunity, set himself to listen to the music with the attention it deserved.

A perfect specimen of the combined play and opera, in which the delicious French school of music triumphs, this *Pré aux Clercs* will almost always fill a Parisian theatre. As Trelane followed the plot which he knew so well, and listened to the music which suits the charming sentiment of the drama so perfectly, he became absorbed almost to self-forgetfulness, and touched, as any one with a heart must be, by the tender influences of the sounds to which he was listening. There are few persons who could find anything to object to in that delightful first act of the *Pré aux Clercs*—that music alternately so brilliant and so tender; that plot which moves so briskly, the locality, that renowned part of old Paris opposite the Louvre, with the Seine between; the period, unprincipled enough, it must be acknowledged, but full of a strange and indefinable attraction: all these things are very delightful to get away to in this much better, but sterner and more practical age, and must be felt to be infinitely attractive, or there would not be so many plays and operas written in which most of the elements just mentioned form such important ingredients. On a nature like Trelane's, keenly alive to every form of beauty in the world, none of these things were likely to be lost. His was no limited view in anything, and especially not so in matters of

taste. In an English cottage garden he could wonder and be delighted as he could in a pass among the Alps. The temples at Pæstum, the cathedral at Rouen, and the work of Christopher Wren, were all revealed to him in their separate beauties; he could derive pleasure from Titian, from Hogarth, or a great modern caricaturist, as he could from Handel, from Meyerbeer, and from Verdi. All beauty was revealed to him, except the beauty of a dilettante revival of things done well once, the spirit of which is gone for ever, and which men should attempt no more.

Upon such a man the opera to which he was now listening was not without its effect, and as it advanced, as the sorrows of the banished Isabelle broke out at last into a ballad of inconceivable tenderness, and the delicious refrain, "Rendez moi la Patrie," broke upon his ear, he could not help looking up to that box in the second tier which he had determined was occupied by two of his countrywomen, to see whether they gave any signs of that emotion which this song might reasonably be expected to awaken in any breast in which the love of native country held any place at all.

When Henry Trelane looked up to that box he saw a sight which, for the moment, rendered him insensible to all that was going on around him.

He saw, sitting in that corner of the box which has been described before as being unoccupied—with

her back to the stage, and her face towards him—the French *bonne* whom he had seen with her young mistress that morning, in the gardens at Versailles.

Trelane was a man who united in a very marked degree those qualities of strength and sensitiveness which are not often seen together. To such a character, especially if the person possessing it be tolerably well bred, self-control as to any outward display of emotion becomes, especially at the age attained to by our hero, a second nature.

It must be acknowledged that the moment had arrived for putting this quality to the test.

Trelane's first impulse was to call his companion's attention to the fact which he had just discovered. His next, and that which he acted upon, was to wait, and at any rate make himself perfectly sure that he was labouring under no mistake before he spoke. Mistake! how could he be mistaken? There was the same pair of black blazing eyes, the same round good-humoured face, the same red cheeks—even the same cap. Everything was there which he had observed in the morning, except the cloak, which she had doubtless removed on entering the theatre. He had not seen her, it was true, when his attention was first drawn to this box, but there were a thousand ways of accounting for that; she might have been at the back of the box, and only have come forward when the performance began. She might have been sent

to get a programme, or book of the opera. This was no difficulty. Besides, and which was more to the purpose, he felt a conviction that it was the same woman—a conviction which was simultaneous with his detecting her at all, and which all his cross-examination of himself was inefficient to shake.

This, then, was the *bonne*; but was the young lady with her back to him the same whom he had seen that morning? was she his friend's niece? Trelane had only seen her in out-door costume, it must be remembered, with a bonnet on, and there was nothing of her visible to him now but the back of her head, her ear, and, as has been said, one of her shoulders. How could he arrive at any conclusion, with his powers of observation so limited? What could he make of such a mere glimpse as this and with a curtain constantly coming between him and the object of his scrutiny, and hiding her altogether?

And yet if any one could have looked into our Englishman's inmost soul, he would have read there the strongest possible conviction that this young lady and she of the Versailles gardens was one and the same. The circumstantial evidence was certainly very strong. She was dressed, to begin with, just as he was certain she would be dressed on such an occasion. She was accompanied by an elderly lady, and an "aunt" or "a parent" had been spoken of by Alexis d'Elmar when Trelane first met him. Then, again, his friend had mentioned that he had

escorted two ladies from Versailles to Paris; what so likely as that those two persons should be this lady and her niece? Then, strongest of all, here was the same servant. There could be no doubt about it. The young lady who had so powerfully and strangely awakened his interest was up there in that box on the second tier.

It will be remembered by all those of my readers who are familiar with Hérold's opera of the *Pré aux Clercs* that the beautiful song which has been alluded to as having led indirectly to the discovery which Trelane was now satisfied he had made, occurs towards the end of an act. By the time the curtain fell, the train of reasoning which has been briefly recapitulated above as having passed through his mind, had come to a conclusion, and left our hero perfectly free from any doubt or uncertainty upon the subject.

"The time has arrived," he said to himself, "to decide the question which has before occupied me: whether my friend Alexis here is desirous of keeping up a mystery about this cousin of his and everything connected with her, or whether my impression that he wishes to do so is a false and mistaken one."

"Now," said d'Elmar, who had been fidgeting under the restraints put upon his tongue throughout the act, and who seemed inexpressibly relieved when the curtain fell, "now let us return to the subject of your English ladies."

“Stop a moment,” answered Trelane; “if you look up to that box, on the second tier next but one to the proscenium, I think you will see two English ladies whom you know something about.”

As Trelane spoke, he looked himself towards the box in question, and saw, to his annoyance, that the *bonne* had disappeared again at the end of the act, and that the figure of the young lady was now so shrouded by the curtain that she might as well almost have been out of the theatre for all purposes of recognition. The old lady, sitting far back, and in deep shadow, was scarcely more visible than her granddaughter.

The Frenchman, at Trelane's first words, had turned like lightning to the part of the building which had been pointed out to him, and our hero thought that he detected in his demonstrative countenance some indications that the figure of the elder lady, indistinct and barely visible as it was, had been recognized by him. It was soon evident, however, that, even if this were so, d'Elmar was not disposed to admit it.

“Ma dear friend,” he said, “at that distance, and with my near sight, I can make out nothing, and it even seems to me that there is nothing to make out. But what English ladies of my acquaintance do you mean?”

“I saw just now,” answered Trelane, “sitting in the corner of that box nearest to the stage, the servant

who was walking this morning in the gardens at Versailles with the young lady of whom you were in search. I concluded that the figure seated behind that curtain was the same person whom you called your niece, and that the other lady, whom I can see still, might be the 'parent' to whom you alluded as having sent you to seek her."

"Oh, no," said the Frenchman, decidedly, and in a tone very different from that in which he usually spoke; "oh, no—very unlikely—impossible; not at all a place they would be likely to come to. You are mistaken."

"I am quite sure," answered Trelane, "that I was not mistaken in the *bonne*."

"But there is no *bonne*," said the other, with an expostulatory shrug.

"Not now, certainly; but a moment ago she was sitting there," said the Englishman.

With this, the conversation dropped, and d'Elmar began to speak of the news contained in the *entr'acte* which he held in his hand. But Trelane thought he saw his eye wandering from time to time, to the box on the second tier, and glancing eagerly into the dark shade in which the figure of the old lady who occupied the centre seat was enveloped.

"Look!" said Trelane, as the curtain rose, and the *bonne* appeared again in the same place, "look now, Alexis, and tell me what you think. Is that your friend's servant or not?"

“Ma friend, I tell you I am so short of sight that if the *bonne* you speak of were my own mother, I should not know her at that distance.”

It was impossible to press the thing further. The performance had begun again, and Trelane endeavoured to concentrate his attention on the stage. But it would not do. The thing had lost its charm. A vague desire to penetrate this mystery had taken entire possession of him, and he could not shake it off. The Frenchman, for his part, seemed as fidgety as Trelane, and to the full as inattentive to the progress of the opera. Indeed, the act had not advanced far, when he suddenly pulled out his watch, and, whispering to Trelane that it was necessary he should at once return to his quarters, rose to go.

“Shall we say to-morrow for Vincennes?” he asked, as he was leaving.

Trelane assented, and six o'clock being the hour fixed upon for the meeting, the Frenchman took a hurried leave and disappeared.

Left to himself, our hero was more incapable than ever of fixing his attention upon the performance, or of withdrawing it from the box on the second tier. He had now no doubt whatever as to who were its occupants. A sudden change of position on the part of the young lady, who was seated with her back towards him, had revealed enough of her profile to convince him, beyond the shadow of a hesitation

even, that it was the same face which had taken so strange and entire a possession of his mind.

If any doubt had remained upon this subject, it would have been instantly removed when, in a minute or two after d'Elmar had left him, Trelane saw the whole party, on whom his attention had been so long fixed, turn suddenly towards the back of the box as people do when a new comer enters, and when shortly afterwards they all rose up, and the *bonne* was seen enveloping her young mistress in her cloak. In another moment the box was empty.

Though sure in his own mind that the disappearance of his friend, and the departure of these English ladies from the theatre, were two circumstances connected together by the links between cause and effect—though finally convinced that d'Elmar, on leaving him, had gone to the box on the second tier, and that its occupants left the theatre at his suggestion—Trelane yet felt that he had no right to dog his friend's footsteps, or to ensure the correctness of his surmise by such conviction as he might have obtained by leaving the theatre at that moment.

He remained in his place then as long as he could bear the restraint, and then, finding that neither music nor acting had any hold on his attention, he gave it up as hopeless.

He was soon in the boulevard, and in five minutes more had gained the Rue du Helder and his hotel.

CHAPTER IV.

A MEETING AND AN ADVENTURE.

WHEN Trelane woke up the next morning, he experienced that sensation which is, doubtless, well known to most of my readers—the sensation that something had happened. It was not that dreadful feeling which makes the heart sink as if a leaden hand were laid upon it, and which belongs to the first waking after some new misery has come upon us. It was simply a sense that there was something different in his state from what it had been the morning before—that he was scarcely the same man he was yesterday.

It was a fresh and lovely day, and as our Englishman threw his window open the soft air which before winter had begun seemed to have in it a hint of spring, the clear, fresh air of Paris, so different from that of our smoky and business-like capital, came into his room, and gladdened his heart within him. The day's life had well begun in the Paris streets, early as it was. The laundresses in the washing

establishment opposite were hard at work ironing, talking, and laughing; the smaller cafés, where earlier breakfasts are required than at those of more fashionable resort, were already open and doing business; the postman, so different from similar officials in England, was going from house to house with his tray of letters strapped in front of him, looking like a pedler or vendor of sweetmeats, and the distant glimpse of the Boulevard des Italiens which Trelane got at the end of his street showed him a multitude composed of soldiers, shoe-blacks, *sœurs de charité*, frequenters of the Bourse, priests, and artisans. The place was alive, and the scene was so inviting that Trelane quite longed to be out and on the alert along with the rest. There is this feeling at Paris. It is wonderful how completely alive the people are, and what a contrast they present in this respect to the inhabitants of our dreadful capital. Let the reader, we will suppose for the first time, get into a London omnibus, and suffer his eye to travel down the range of faces on each side of this exhilarating carriage. What an anxious set! what an overwhelming sense of responsibility is upon them! what apprehensions about their future or regrets about their past are preying upon their minds! Now let us turn from this double row of suicidal countenances to the faces which brighten up the Paris vehicle. How eager, how observant, how ready for the enjoyment of any incidental fun,

and—in this so different from the Britannic humorist, who, when he is amused, is always ashamed of it—how ready to show that they are enjoying the joke!

As Trelane passed out of his hotel and joined the throng upon the boulevard, on his way to breakfast, he began to reflect over the events of the previous day, almost with a feeling of shame. Was it possible that, at his comparatively mature years, a face seen but for a few seconds should affect him so strongly? Why, he had thought of nothing but that meeting at Versailles for a whole day. It was true that on thinking the matter over he could not deny that the face was a very lovely one, and that there was about it a strange attractiveness of expression more captivating than even physical beauty. It was true that there was something in the whole bearing of this young lady which was most winning and beautiful. All this was unmistakably and certainly the case; but was this enough to justify a man of three or four and thirty in allowing a perfect stranger, a girl whom he had never seen before and might never see again, to get such a hold upon his thoughts? But, then, the fact of her being his friend's niece, what a curious coincidence that was! and the evident mystery in connection with her! Why was Alexis so unwilling to speak about her? Why, when he left the theatre, had he not mentioned that he was going up to that box on the second tier? Why had he denied that he knew who were the persons *in* that box at the very

moment when he was going to take them away with him? Why, again, so anxious that they should leave the theatre? What could it all mean? It was enough to excite the attention and to occupy the thoughts of any man in the world.

Trelane had resolved that morning that, as he was obliged in the course of the day to find himself at Vincennes, he would first take the opportunity of having a long ramble in the country which lay about and beyond that suburb, and that he would make his visit to d'Elmar's quarters the termination of a somewhat lengthened pedestrian excursion. Starting as soon as he had breakfasted, our hero pursued the boulevard as far as the Château d'Eau, and, then turning into the Faubourg du Temple, made his way at a good pace towards the suburb which lies beyond it.

I wonder if the reader at all feels as if he were beginning to *know* this Henry Trelane? That the acquaintance should be a gradual and growing one is quite my wish, because I have always noted that the friendships which progress slowly and evenly at first are those which last the longest and are the firmest in their hold. The reader will understand this man better and grow, I hope, to esteem him more as he gets better acquainted with him and as his character develops under the circumstances in which we shall see him placed. Is there not much in circumstance? Is there not many a man who

has passed for a trifle, as our Anglo-Indian may have done at first, who has had the latent energy and strength of purpose brought out of him by favourable circumstances? The force and the capability were there all the time, but a key was wanted to unlock the store-house in which they lay concealed.

Pursuing the suburb by which the country outside was to be reached, Trelane soon commenced the tolerably steep ascent of the hill which begins soon after the *Barrière de Belleville* has been left behind. With almost every step the character of the street seemed to alter, to savour less of Paris and more of provincial France, till at last, when the top of the hill was reached, it seemed to our Englishman as if he were not near the metropolis of France at all, but was in one of those old places, half towns, half villages, through which he had passed as a boy in the old days of diligences.

It had happened that during the whole of this ascent, our pedestrian had been annoyed by what may appear a trifling cause, but which, on reflection, will, perhaps, seem more serious than might at first be supposed. He was pursued by the haunting presence of a man who was going in the same direction as himself, and whom he was unable so to regulate his pace as to get rid of. There are few persons who have not experienced this small trouble, and who have not felt the unpleasant nature of its effect upon the nerves.

The stranger is walking exactly at your ordinary pace. You quicken it and for a time lose sight of him; you forget him, and, subsiding into your usual manner of walking, find him presently close beside you again; you slacken your pace to try what that will do, and then you get so tired of his back that you push on again in front; but not for long. A stoppage in the street or at a crossing, or perhaps on your own part, to take note of something in a shop-window—these things delay you, and the haunting presence is there again in front of you. It is not at such times that your mind is in its most amiable mood. You begin to question this stranger's right to be walking your way. What can he have to do in that neighbourhood? What business has he to adopt your pace? (it never occurs to you that he might consider *you* were adopting *his*). What right has he to wear that particular kind of coat? His legs are aggravating, the back view of his hair insupportable, his hat a positive insult.

The man who was in the present instance going the same way as Trelane was one to whom it would be excusable in any person to take a dislike. He was a great heavy foreigner with a gross and at the same time an underhand and furtive air which was extremely unprepossessing. He was a powerfully built though clumsy man, and wore a loose coat called a *cabane*, with a *capote* or hood to it thrown over his shoulders, fastened by a hook and eye under

his beard, but with the sleeves, into which he had not taken the trouble to thrust his arms, hanging loosely at each side.

Now this was just the kind of figure which would become most unbearable under the circumstances which have been described above. So it happened that when Trelane had reached the top of the hill and saw a lane turning off to the right which appeared to lead to an eminence from which it seemed probable that a good view of Paris might be obtained, our hero took instant advantage of this opportunity of diverging from the main road, in the hope of getting rid of the unpalatable stranger who he knew was not far behind him. The plan seemed to answer. When Trelane looked back, after advancing a little way along the byway into which he had turned, the man in the hooded coat was not to be seen.

The small thoroughfare whose course Trelane was now following began, as he looked more attentively about him, to assume an appearance which at once convinced him that he was in the immediate neighbourhood of one of those district cemeteries which are to be found in most of the suburbs of Paris. The road was bordered on each side by establishments for the sale of funeral wreaths and for the supply of tombstones, wooden crosses, and other sepulchral wares. The burial-ground itself was not more than two or three hundred yards from the main

road, and Trelane soon found himself standing before the entrance of the cheerful little cemetery of Belleville. Not being pressed for time, and abandoning himself to a sort of impulse, he passed through the open gates and entered this garden of the dead, of which, as far as he could see, he appeared to be the only living occupant.

Most persons who read these pages are, either by personal knowledge or description, well acquainted with the appearance presented by a French cemetery, and its great difference in every respect from an English burying-ground. Is there not the same sanguine element in the one nation and tendency to gloom in the other which has been already illustrated in this chapter, apparent even in the funeral appurtenances of the two countries? As Trelane passed on among these hopeful-looking graves, and advanced towards the farther end of the cemetery, he was struck more and more by the happy look of the place, and by the thought that it was what he should have conceived would be a child's notion of a child's burying-ground rather than the form of sepulchral design chosen by grown-up people.

It was not till Trelane had been wandering for some time in this garden where the flowers called "immortal" never fade, that he became aware that he was not quite alone in the place, and that at the extreme end of one of the paths was the figure of a woman standing by one of the graves, alone.

Merely noticing that, though not dressed in colours, she was not in mourning, and rather wondering at this, Trelane with an instinctive dread of intruding upon any one so situated, turned aside into another path, and stopping every now and then to read an inscription, or to theorize as to the reason why some of the wooden crosses were so much more profusely decorated with wreaths than others, made his way to another part of the enclosure, but still keeping within its walls, the place having a strange attraction for him.

“*A mon ami* :” here was a cross perfectly covered with wreaths—not an available knob or projection of any kind on which there were not as many as could be hung upon it, and some for which there was no room were even lying near upon the ground. This man must have had great attractions, and must have been popular with hosts of friends. There could be no other reason for these votive offerings. The man was dead, there was nothing to be got by flattery, and this must have come from real regard. Next to this monument there is another, decorated but with two garlands, and those exceeding old and faded, but with the same inscription as the last, “*à mon ami*.” Some old hunks this, disliked by everybody, tolerated during his life for his money, which at his death was left to two friends equally odious, who, having got what they wanted, came and hung up these two wreaths out of decency, and then abandoned the place

for ever. "*A ma fiancée :*" the mass of garlands thus inscribed can necessarily only have been placed on this young girl's tomb by one hand—that of her betrothed lover. They are numerous enough, but all of one date; from their appearance none have been added lately, and the inference is that Adolphe is consoled. But here is a monument which tells a different tale—the tale of a woman's constancy. On this cross is hung one wreath—a fresh one—"à mon bien-aimé." The monument is an old one, *dating ten years back*. One wreath upon it, and that placed there but a day ago. This constant soul must come to wreath her lover's grave with ever-living flowers, replacing them as they still decay. But where are the old ones? They have not accumulated on the cross, nor are they strewn about the place or thrown on the refuse heap against the cemetery wall. They hang, those faded garlands, that date for ten years since, in the woman's chamber like a shrine. Her love-garlands are the chaplets of a grave.

As those and the like reflections, suggested by what he saw, were passing through Trelane's mind, and as in this speculative mood he wandered on from grave to grave, he approached unconsciously again the spot where he had seen the solitary woman's figure, and as he did so became suddenly aware of voices near him, and presently of a stifled scream, and then, in a woman's voice of agony—a cry for aid.

Instantly turning towards the spot from which the

sound came, our Englishman saw that to get to it by the path would involve the adoption of such a circuitous approach as would involve a loss of time that was not to be thought of, and that his only chance of being immediately useful was to overleap every intervening obstacle, and reach the place by the shortest means of access, passing among the tombs and monuments, or climbing over them as best he could.

Adopting this course and shouting as loudly as he could that aid was at hand, Trelane was soon on the spot, but some time had necessarily elapsed; the cries had ceased with the raising of his own voice, and when Trelane reached the path from which they had come, the young lady, whom he had noted from a distance, standing by herself before one of the monuments, was the only person he saw.

She was standing wholly alone and unsupported, yet trembling from hand to foot, as a ship will quiver throughout after recovering from the assault of some wave whose crash has almost broken her asunder. Her eyes were fixed upon Trelane as he approached her, in a sort of catalepsy of terror. In those eyes there was no recognition, there was scarcely sight, but they were eyes which Trelane had seen before.

The young English lady of the day before, of the Versailles Garden, of the Opéra Comique, was here confronting him. There was no doubt, no moment's doubt of it. It was she.

Trelane's surprise was, as may be imagined, excessive ; but there was no time to indulge it. The young lady with whom he was thus singularly brought in contact for the third time, within so short a space, was standing before him in such obvious terror and alarm, that it became necessary now to think of her, and of her alone.

Trelane advanced towards her, and taking one of her cold hands in his, said,—

“ You have undergone some terrible alarm ; it is most fortunate that I, who I hope you remember am not wholly a stranger to you, should be here to help you. How can I do so ? ”

There was no answer. Her eyes were still fixed upon his face, her lips moved as if she wished to speak, but no sound came from them. Trelane could perceive that she recollected something of him, and that she knew enough to feel that whatever had happened she was safe now. Still holding her cold and trembling hand, he spoke once more.

“ You are sadly frightened, and shaken,” he said, “ by something that has happened. If, by the help of my arm, you can leave this scene, which is associated with such terror to you, it will be better.”

She made no answer still, but advanced a few steps, supported by his arm. She *could* not speak, as Trelane knew. It was his part to help her with all the force of his mind and character. Men have this power to quiet and to soothe ; and women experience

at such times the confidence that a child will feel in its father's strong arms. After a few paces they stopped again.

"I must remind you again," Trelane continued, "that you must look on me, not as a stranger, but as a friend. You are my countrywoman; we have met before, no longer ago than yesterday, as you doubtless remember, and Monsieur d'Elmar, with whom I then saw you, is one of my oldest friends."

An instinctive moment's withdrawal of her hand from his arm. It was replaced, however, immediately. But still no words. They advanced a few steps further, evidently by a violent effort on her part, and then stopped again. The moment had arrived when that great relief which nature gives to women was to come to her aid. They were close to a monument, surrounded by a low wooden railing. She left his arm, and propping herself against the support as best she might, bent her head forward, and burst into an agony of tears.

Trelane knew how good this was for her, and that this was no moment for such words of consolation as he could offer. He withdrew to a short distance and waited till such time as this passion of past terror should have had its way, and these tears should have done their healing work.

With the first change of position on the part of the young lady with whom he was now by such an extraordinary coincidence again brought in contact,

with her first hurried look round, the first staunching of her tears, Trelane was again at her side. She turned towards him her face, wet and flushed with tears, and rising at his approach, gave him her ungloved hand.

"What can I say? How can I thank you?" she said. Her tongue was loosened at last.

"You have nothing to thank me for," he said. "My timely arrival was a perfect accident. Does it distress you now to think of what has happened, or may I ask you to tell me what it was that gave you so terrible alarm?"

The tale was soon told. A man—a perfect stranger, but one by whom she had been twice similarly annoyed before—had come up to the place where she was standing, and after passing and re-passing her more than once, which had awakened somewhat her alarm, he had at last stopped before her and addressed her. He had said that he must and would speak to her, and, becoming more and more excited in his manner, had spoken of a claim he had to be heard. She was dreadfully frightened, and attempted to leave the place, but he stopped her. It was upon this and upon his attempting to take her hand that she had screamed for help. The man had still refused to let her pass, in spite of her cries and her efforts to escape; but at the moment that Trelane's voice was heard answering to her screams, and announcing that help was at

hand, the man had suddenly quitted her, and turning rapidly out of the path, was lost to sight in a moment among the monuments and shrubs with which the place was crowded.

In answer to further questioning, Trelane gathered that the man, though acting in this strange manner, had not been rude or insulting either in his words or manner.

“Was he a young or an old man?” Trelane asked.

“He was neither—a middle-aged man, perhaps about fifty years of age.”

“Was there any special mark or characteristic in his dress or appearance which might lead in any way to his identification?”

“He was rather a tall and strongly built man,” the young lady answered; “but what I remember chiefly about him was that he wore a loose coat with a hood to it, and that his arms were not thrust into the sleeves, which hung down on each side empty.”

The question instantly suggested itself to our Englishman's mind whether this could be the man whom he had noticed, and of whose presence he had become so impatient in the Belleville suburb. A strong conviction forced itself upon his mind that it was so; yet there was little to ground it upon. The one identifying circumstance of the hooded coat was of so little value as a distinguishing sign,

the kind of garment just mentioned being, as every one who has travelled knows, so common among foreigners, and being so ordinarily worn, as in the present case, with the sleeves hanging empty at the sides. Still the impression remained that the man now spoken of by this young English lady, and he of the Belleville suburb, was one and the same person.

Trelane's speculations on this subject were now interrupted by the arrival of one of the men who kept the place, and who had been attracted by the screams which Trelane had heard also. The man was briefly informed of what had happened, and a description of the person who had caused the young English lady so much alarm being given to him, he was requested to make search about the cemetery for any one answering to the description with as little delay as possible.

Trelane endeavoured as soon as the gendarme had departed on his search, to gain, if possible, some additional information from his companion about the appearance of the man by whom she had been insulted, and also as to what had happened on those two previous occasions when she had before been brought in contact with him. It was, however, evident that the subject was one on which this young lady found it extremely painful to speak, and Trelane could only learn that on both occasions she had been alone at the time of his addressing

her, and also that beyond the insult conveyed by his speaking to her at all, there had been no rudeness in his manner towards, nor any attempt made to intimidate her.

Trelane saw that to pursue the subject now at any rate was quite impossible, and feeling sure that the sooner his companion left the place where she had sustained so severe a fright the better for her, he ventured now to urge her departure.

“Are you enough recovered to leave this place? At the entrance we shall perhaps find a fiacre—or have you a carriage waiting?”

“No,” she answered, “I have no carriage.”

“Did you come here on foot, then?” asked Trelane, in some surprise.

“I came in a fiacre,” answered the young lady; “but thinking I might be here some time, discharged it at the gate.”

“And you are here alone?”

“Yes, quite alone. My *bonne* accompanied me to the gate, but her friends live close by, and I gave her permission to go and see them while I came to the cemetery.”

There was a moment's pause.

“You will forgive me,” said Trelane, again, “if, in what I am going to say, I should seem to be offering advice which I have no right to give; but was it quite wise in you to do so?”

“It was most unwise.”

"I have not offended you by what I have said?" asked Trelane, almost startled by the quickness of this acknowledgment.

"Offended me!" she said, looking quickly up into his face, and blushing as she did so. "How can you think it possible, after what has just happened? It was very unwise in me to be alone here at all; but I thought that in such a place every one must be safe."

"One would have thought so, indeed," said Trelane. But seeing that even this slight reference to what had just occurred was extremely painful to his companion, he promptly changed the subject.

"Where can we find your servant?" he asked.

"I have no doubt," the young lady answered, "that by this time she is at the entrance ready to meet me." And, indeed, as they approached the gates of the cemetery, they saw the poor girl in eager conversation with the man whom Trelane had sent in search of the unknown. He now advanced to relate the issue of his search, which had been perfectly unsuccessful. Footsteps had been traced to the wall of the cemetery, which it was evident the stranger had scaled, and there all trace of him had disappeared. Trelane rewarded the man for his trouble, and learning his address, told him to let him know, without delay, if any tidings of the object of his search should be hereafter obtained.

Meanwhile, the poor bonne was caressing her young mistress much as a faithful dog will leap about a

newly recovered master. Nor was the honest girl disconcerted when Trelane approached the place where the two were standing. On the contrary she thanked him as best she could, and in such English as a long residence in this family had given her command of, and which it must be owned was very indifferent.

“Ah, mademoiselle,” she said presently, turning to her mistress; “madame, too, will she not thank also this brave sir?”

The young lady who was thus addressed was evidently much embarrassed for a moment by this question, which yet seemed, under the circumstances, so natural; and, indeed, so inevitable a result of the scene which had just occurred. Her hesitation was so unmistakable that Trelane came to her aid.

“I have no wish for thanks,” he said; “but I shall be most anxious to inquire for your health, after what has happened; why, even now, you are hardly able to stand. I should like also to have the opinion of the lady you speak of as to whether this affair should not at once be placed in the hands of the police.”

“Indeed, I am better and stronger than you think,” the young lady answered. “When may I say that you will come?”

The last words seemed spoken almost with reluctance.

Trelane reflected for a moment. Had he consulted his own inclination, he would have proposed

to accompany the young Englishwoman at once to her home, but when he looked at her, and felt what need she had of being for a time perfectly quiet and alone, he decided to put off his visit till to-morrow. A fiacre, which the Englishman had sent for, having now arrived, he assisted the young lady into it.

“I know I may leave you in safety to the care of your *bonne*,” he said, smiling as he spoke, “and that, just now, you are better without my protection than with it. May I call to-morrow to inquire after you?”

“We are living in the Rue Pompadour, Versailles. At what time shall we see you?”

“If I may come so early, at twelve o’clock.”

The young lady bowed, still with an air of some embarrassment, and Trelane was just giving the driver the necessary directions, when she spoke once more.

“May I ask you,” she said, blushing violently as she uttered the words, “if you should see Monsieur d’Elmar, to tell him—nothing—of what has occurred to-day.”

“Your will is enough,” said Trelane.

The young lady bowed once more, and sank back in her seat. The carriage drove off, and our hero was left standing alone before the entrance of the cemetery.

It will, doubtless, be somewhat of a surprise to the reader to hear that, instead of abandoning a scene

which, it might have been expected, would have had little attraction for him, our Englishman had no sooner seen the carriage depart than he passed again through the gates of the cemetery, and even turned once more into the paths which led directly to the spot where he had first observed the figure of the young lady from whom he had just parted.

Impatient of the mystery by which she seemed to be surrounded, Trelane had some idea that the tomb before which the young Englishwoman had been standing, when his attention was first drawn to her, might afford him some clue to her history. That there *was* a mystery attached to her, he now felt sure. Under what circumstances of striking contrast had he seen her? At the Opéra Comique in the evening, in the cemetery of Belleville on the very next morning. Then there was always that unmistakable determination on the part of Alexis d'Elmar not to speak of her, and her own request, just uttered, that he should not be informed of this meeting in the cemetery. What could it all mean?

The tomb—that might throw some light upon this difficulty. She had, evidently, some strong reason for visiting it. Had she not been standing motionless before that one grave all the time that Trelane was in the cemetery? Yes, that tomb and the inscription upon it—there was his chance. He has reached the place now—what does he read?

“Jean Amédée d'Elmar.” That was all; all,

except, lower down, and in smaller figures, the date, some years ago, when the deceased person had died. So this was all. "Jean Amédée d'Elmar;" no further clue by which to find out with certainty what was the precise nature of this young lady's relationship to Alexis d'Elmar. It did, indeed, seem probable that he who lay buried in this place might have been the brother of Alexis, but then what had been this dead gentleman's relationship to the English girl herself? This inscription proved positively nothing, though the presumption from it was that the deceased person was this young lady's father and the brother of Alexis. All this might be, certainly, but it was equally possible that it might not; in a word, there was nothing proved, but a strong impression was, nevertheless, left on our hero's mind that the English girl's father lay buried beneath this stone.

How quiet was this place now, that had just been the scene of such terror and alarm! What a contrast it was! How inconsistent what had taken place seemed with the repose of this cemetery. The quiet now, the silence, only broken by the winter-thrush singing a requiem for the dead, and by the faint dull sound, far off, of the strokes with which the grave-digger was hewing a fresh cell for some worn-out brother or sister coming here to rest.

Trelane stood in this place as if fascinated and unable to leave it, till a slight shudder passing

through his frame reminded him that he was in the month of October, and that the events of the last hour had caused him to be in need of some refreshment and repose before he proceeded, according to the previous day's appointment, to join his friend d'Elmar at Vincennes. There was nothing to be gained by remaining longer where he was, and after one more searching and ineffectual examination of the simple monument before him, Trelane set off for Paris and was soon seated before some blazing logs in his bed-room at the Hôtel du Helder.

CHAPTER V.

FAIRY LAND.

WHEN Trelane reached Vincennes that evening it was so dark that the great black forest which lies behind the château was hardly discernible, and the wall of the fortress itself frowned gloomily enough upon him as he passed over the moat, and entering the large barrack, made inquiry for le Capitaine d'Elmar's quarters. They were not very easy to find in this vast place, and Trelane had to ask his way more than once before he could succeed in tracing his friend to the part of the barracks set aside for the residence of the officers. As he wandered about and heard the pleasant martial sounds which struck upon his ear at every turn, the clang of arms, the bugle-call, the roll of the drum, old associations were awakened in the Englishman's breast, and that strong professional feeling was appealed to which should dwell in every man's breast who has a calling to belong to, and which certainly is not likely to be wanting in the hearts of those who are devoted to that profession of

arms, which appeals more strongly to all the natural instincts of man than any other.

Trelane's mind had been occupied during his journey to Vincennes with many doubts and misgivings as to how, in his intercourse with his friend, he should keep himself from some allusion to the subject of the morning. How painful it is, as everybody knows, to be in company with a person who has the means of gratifying your curiosity on some subject in which you are powerfully interested, and yet never to be able to approach it! Nothing is more embarrassing or fatal to social enjoyment than a tabooed topic. Trelane, too, was scarcely himself that day, and gave, at this particular time, undue importance to the contemplated difficulties of his intercourse with d'Elmar that evening. He turned over in his mind all the subjects on which they *might* talk, and found that in the peculiar state in which he then was, they all seemed, however remotely, to lead at last to that one which must not be approached, and which had, of course, from the mere fact of the necessity there was for avoiding it, a very increased fascination and attractiveness. The recollection that Alexis had spoken of an adjournment in the course of the evening to some rustic ball-room, called by the classical name of *L'Idalie*, and the possibility that some of his friend's brother officers might be invited to meet him, and so the subject which he longed to touch upon might be rendered unapproachable; these

things were some mitigation of the contemplated difficulties of the evening, and operated largely in preventing our Englishman from turning tail altogether, and sending an excuse to his friend for his non-appearance.

Such is the moral cowardice of the mind under peculiar circumstances, and in certain conditions; and it is thus that men, who will face the dangers of a campaign without a second thought, will shrink before some small annoyance, just as a certain brave soldier, well known to the present writer, came back from encountering all the hardships and perils of the Crimean war, and broke an appointment with his dentist (which cost him one pound one shilling), out of simple and undisguised fear.

When any subject of apprehension has been weighed and dwelt upon with undue consideration—when it has been thought over in every light, and twisted and turned in every conceivable and inconceivable manner—it is not unfrequently the case that it will suddenly dispose of *itself*, in some way which had never been anticipated, and that it turns out that a great amount of speculation and mistrust has been thrown away upon nothing.

When Trelane reached his friend's quarters, he found a letter informing him, with many expressions of genuine regret, that he had been suddenly ordered off on a mission connected with the inspection of a new caserne, and that this, with other military

duties, into which it is unnecessary to enter, was likely to keep him absent some little time from the neighbourhood of Paris. He ended by entreating his friend to let him know by a letter directed to him at Vincennes, if any change took place in his residence at Paris, in order that d'Elmar might be able to look him up immediately on his return.

Strange inconsistency of everything human! Trelane had no sooner finished reading this letter than he was seized with the strongest possible desire to see the little captain. Why had he ever wished to avoid this meeting—a meeting in the course of which he might have gained a mass of information about what was so strongly piquing his curiosity? For, after all, he was under no pledge to abstain from an approach to this subject of which his mind was full. The young lady to whom he had that morning rendered so important a service had by no means urged him to avoid all allusion to her in his intercourse with Alexis. She had simply requested that what had taken place in the cemetery might be kept from his knowledge. About everything else he was at perfect liberty to speak, and he would have spoken. He would have openly asked his friend to tell him something of the history of the young lady, in whom he was, since the events of the morning, interested, in a manner which he could now admit, after what had happened, to be not only natural, but perfectly reasonable as well.

Revolving these things in his mind, Trelane crossed once more the moat of the Castle of Vincennes, and found himself standing in the main street opposite the fortress, with no very clear notion what was to be done next, or how the evening was to be passed.

He was not long in determining to remain where he was. There was nothing to be gained by a return to Paris. It was impossible to make any advance that evening in that one direction, towards which he felt so strongly drawn. Nothing could be done till the next day. A compulsory inaction was upon him, as far as the young lady of the cemetery was concerned, and there was nothing else to take him back to Paris. He would remain where he was.

The large restaurant opposite to the Castle of Vincennes was well filled, and with a great sprinkling, as might be expected from the situation of this tavern, of members of the military profession, chiefly of the grade of the sous-lieutenants who answer to the subalterns in our English army. There was plenty of talking as well as eating going on, and it was impossible not to be struck by the contrast between the nature of the conversation among these French soldiers and that which would be heard in a similar gathering of young English officers. These last would be found to be talking of everything but their profession, while the French soldier speaks of nothing else. The fact is, that, in the one case, it is

a profession, and, in the other, it is rarely so. The French officer regards war as his business, and talks about it, and in its most technical aspects too, as other professional men will do when they get together. The English officer is a gentleman who "has entered the army," and there's an end of it. His talk is not of fighting, which does not interest him till it comes, but of the one overpowering subject which supersedes and absorbs all others with our young Englishmen—sport; sport in all its bearings, but especially as connected with the turf. This is the universal topic, though there are, of course, some others. There are some in the mess-room who "go in" for art, music, acting, cigars, billiards, women, but *the* one subject is decidedly what our trans-Channelian neighbours call *le sport*—the gun, the fox-hound, the out-rigger, the cricket-bat, the fishing-rod. And this, which is remarkable among the officers of the two nations, is so in a still more marked degree among the men. Who ever heard a group of English private soldiers talking of military tactics and glory? Yet the present writer remembers hearing a set of common soldiers, whom he met with when he made a certain journey to Paris, who were talking of nothing else for the two hours in which he occupied, during a heavy rain, the same cabaret with these honest and valiant campaigners. It is a consolatory thing, however, and a circumstance showing, as does everything else, the small value of talk, to reflect

that our English troops have, in spite of their apparent want of interest in their profession, come out of one or two actions not altogether disgracefully, if the annals of warfare are at all to be trusted.

When Trelane had finished his meal, in the course of which he had been the subject of some occasional looks of suspicion and dislike—passions with which an Englishman is not unfrequently regarded when in mixed French society—he left the tavern of the Pied de Mouton, and strolled out once more into the street of Vincennes. There was a bright moonlight now, and it lit up the great castle and the wood behind it in a manner which was becoming enough, though not without a certain ghastliness and grimness which to some would have been repelling, but to some infinitely grand and attractive.

That great enclosed wood of Vincennes, stretching its length out behind the immense fortress, is a fine and dreary sight. A wood is ever suggestive to him who writes these words, even by daylight, of supernatural occupancy; but in the night-time, and when the soft outlines of the forest are hardly defined, who shall say, then, how certainly the spaces between the tree-trunks, and the nooks and corners in the undergrowth are peopled by gnomes and other spirits, and how the great white stag that stands in the clear space in the very middle of the wood is as surely a spiritual fact to the writer, as the table-rapping of this day is an unspiritual fiction?

It was after a short excursion out of the town to get a yet better view of the forest and the castle as they were shown, dusky and indistinct, in the spectral light, that Trelane's attention was caught just as he again neared the entrance to Vincennes by seeing at the side of the road a certain small gateway, distinguished from others in its immediate neighbourhood by a dismal illumination consisting of four small oil lamps, of which one was green, another red, and the other two of a dim and bilious yellow shade.

I suppose that most persons who read this book are acquainted with the peculiar gorgeousness of effect presented by such a display as this which I have hinted at. Those who have not crossed the Channel have had the opportunity of studying illuminations of the kind in this country, and will be aware that the accompaniments of a path covered with trellis-work, with a sparse allowance of coloured lamps hanging from above, and with a pigeon-hole for money-taking at the side, will commonly indicate the entrance to some tea-garden or other pleasaunce to which people go in moments of unusual hilarity, and find that on their departure they have commonly left that commodity behind them. With these humane contrivances for relieving extra ebullitions of the animal spirits, and the substitution of a chastened melancholy for a boisterous and unbecoming levity, the environs of London are tolerably well provided,

while in the immediate neighbourhood of Paris such places abound—in consequence of the higher animal spirits of the French nation—in a still more remarkable degree.

The illuminated gateway just spoken of as attracting Trelane's attention was the path of admission to a scene of classical and fairy enchantment which bore the title of L'Idalie, and purported, according to the announcement outside, to provide, for the amusement of the inhabitants of Vincennes and such Parisians as might feel inclined for a frisk, a series of balls or entertainments, taking place on the evenings of Sundays and other festivals of the Church throughout the year, an expenditure of three-pence per evening being the economical rate at which all this enjoyment was to be had.

Our Englishman had no sooner made out that this gloomy portal before which he stood was the entrance to L'Idalie, than he remembered the proposal of d'Elmar as to how their evening was to have been spent. For a moment he stood undecided at the mouth of the gorge which led to this enchanted ground, and then, having no superior claim upon his time, and it being necessary to get through the evening, he resolved, in spite of the unpromising aspect of the place, to go in and estimate for himself the attractions of a ball in the environs of Paris.

Having parted with the six sous which made him free of all the pleasures of Idalie, and having

received the good wishes for his evening's enjoyment which the money-taker bestowed upon him, smacking his lips as he did so as if he envied him and wished *he* had the chance of going inside too, our hero proceeded along the narrow and trellis-covered pathway, which, leading up to a pasteboard-looking façade, was the ordinary means of approaching the suburban ball-room, an ingress to which had now become his happy privilege.

The scene which the pushing open of a swinging door now disclosed to Trelane's eyes was, perhaps, scarcely so gorgeous as he might have been led to expect.

To be lighted at all, perhaps no place could have been more dimly and inefficiently illuminated than this *Idalie*. The oil lamps to which the reader has been already introduced outside were to be found also within, where they emitted a yet more bilious and uncertain brilliancy than was cast upon the night air by those with which the entrance gate was ornamented. It was a satisfactory thing, though, to find that what was wanting in brilliancy was amply made up for in smell, the perfume thrown out by these illuminations being of a powerful and pungent nature, and of the fishy rather than the animal order of scents. But be this as it might, there was light enough to see all that was to *be* seen, and this, after all, was the great point.

There was light enough to see a low circular

enclosure, not unlike the tent of a travelling circus ; but having in its centre a sort of pen or cage, in which the orchestra was placed, and from which, when Trelane entered, the sounds of a polka were being cast out upon the evening air. A number of persons were seated upon benches, placed round the outside of the circle, and between them and the central musical enclosure was the space reserved for the dancers.

The company assembled to enjoy the festivities of L'Idalie was by no means numerous ; but it was intensely and surprisingly respectable. At the Café du Cardinal, at the restaurant of Champeaux, we have seen two somewhat different classes of French social life. Here was a third. Champeaux's was a descent from the Café du Cardinal ; here again was a descent, and a very marked one, from Champeaux's. Still here, also, was observable that singular domesticity which takes its "hearths and homes" out with it into the world, and to which allusion has already been made as remarkably characterizing the French nation. Here was the inevitable family again. Here was the father and mother—small tradespeople in this case ; here was the "*jeune personne*," and the son and heir, and sometimes also the old grandmother, or the maiden aunt. This group, repeated *ad infinitum*, was to be found on the benches of this suburban ball-room : the father and mother looking on with intense excitement at whatever was going on ; the son and

heir forming acquaintances or maturing them, as the case might be, with other sons and heirs; and the daughter, either dancing or silently fidgeting in her seat, in earnest longing for an invitation from some cavalier to engage in that pastime. Presently the cavalier approaches. He is probably a shop-boy; but how different from an English youth of this class! Short of stature possibly, he makes up for this deficiency by an upright and defiant carriage. His position, by no means an important one, he carries off by an enormous and consolatory self-respect, and a high opinion of his own value as a citizen. This individual, with great graveness and dignity in his demeanour, draws near the family group, and invites "*la jeune personne*" to dance, with an interrogative look towards the father, as much as to say, "always, it is well understood, with your permission." The young girl puts this look into words, the permission is granted, and off the young couple walk, solemn yet excited and believing. They are not awkward about it; they are not ashamed of amusing themselves, as English persons of this class are; nor do they think they want an excuse for being in this place at all. Did they think so they would probably not be found here.

At the end of the building, opposite to that at which Trelane entered it, was a kind of additional wing, devoted to refreshment, consisting of "chopes" of Strasbourg beer, lemonade, cakes, sweetmeats, and the like innocent restoratives, and also to testotum or

humming-top tables, Chinese billiards, and other games by which certain small sums might be imperilled, and certain remunerations won. These last were of that high order of value and usefulness which ordinarily characterize the wares which those who play at "the sticks" on our English racecourses set before them as the noble end of their exertions. Dolls, pin-cushions, pots of pomatum (convenient pocket companions these during a polka), boxes of bon-bons, bottles of scent, certain (happily) to evaporate five minutes after use, and leave no trace behind; these, and other similar temptations, were spread forth in a grand display to tempt the unwary, the speculative, the sanguine, to come and stake their half-francs against the owner of the table.

There were plenty of victims; and the spurious billiard-table was especially frequented by customers, who displayed all the various emotions and habits which characterize persons who play at games of skill with the public eye upon them. The cue was never idle, for when the visitors to *L'Idalie* flagged in their patronage, the proprietor himself would play against himself and prove to demonstration how easy it was to win. Then there was the brilliant player, who advanced to the table, and, taking the cue in hand, sent the ball dashing in among the others in a manner calculated to excite the admiration of the by-standers, but not, apparently, equally calculated to fill his pockets with the pomatum pots and other articles of

vertu for which he was playing. There was the elaborate player, who made pauses and took aims, and then at the moment when the coup was going to take place left off, walked up to the other end of the table to inspect the exact position of the other balls and ponder once more over his stroke, and who, when at last his stroke was made, did none of the things he had intended. There was the talkative and explicatory player, who passionately argued that the stroke which did not succeed ought to have succeeded, and who explained to the world, with much gesticulation, how it was that it hadn't, and how it was the fault of the cue, the balls, the table—of everything, in short, but himself. And lastly, there was the unassuming player, who made no fuss about chalking his cue; who did not frown, or stand in attitudes, or keep an ever-wandering eye on the surrounding spectators; but who minded what he was about, said nothing, and was the only person who won his game.

The whizzing, Brobdignag teetotum or humming-top amusement was, perhaps, as popular as the spurious billiards. People liked to see this great buzzing engine, which would fly from the ferociously pulled string, would bump itself against the barriers, and knock down a pin, and then plunge into another compartment and knock down several more, and which, when it seemed to be going into the division where the subversion of the pins counted highest, would screw itself out again, would give dying

wriggles, would rally, would sputter aside, and, in its death kick, would perhaps do more execution than in any other period of its career. This was a popular sport, and drew far more than the sloping table, up which you were to drive a ball, which was, in its return, to drop into one of certain divisions; and it was just as likely to drop into the compartment which counted fifty as into that which was numbered one; but somehow it never did.

Even this game, however, had its players; and round this, as round the other tables, a group of spectators were assembled who commented on the success of the players, watched the game, and enjoyed a good share of the excitement without paying a farthing or exposing themselves to the critical eye of the public.

Trelane was "getting through" his evening. He had watched the dancers and those who belonged to the dancers long enough, and he now approached the tables of small sport and of petty gambling which have just been described, and amused himself by observing the play and the players, as the games, and those occupied in them, succeeded each other. The conversations between the table-proprietor and his patrons were of this sort,—

"I must have that stroke again; the cue slipped."
"Take it again: I rearrange the balls as before."
"Again bad, criminal of a cue!" "Monsieur should chalk it." "I chalk it, till it is all chalk." "Now a new stroke." "Desecrated potatoes!" yet another

failure; what luck is this?" "Monsieur is nervous; monsieur should retain his calm." "I am calm; more chalk." "Now for a great success; this shall be a coup, but such a coup!" "It is no better than the last; this is a table of bedevilment!" "On the contrary, monsieur will not find in the salons of Paris so good a table." "I say the table is crooked." "Monsieur talks at random: the flatness of this table is a flatness of excess, the sea is not so flat." "To the devil with your flat table, I have had enough of it! What have I to pay?" "Monsieur is indebted to the table the sum of two francs fifty." "Speak to me of that! two francs fifty centimes for this table, which is a table of bedevilment; and my prizes, what are they?" "Monsieur has won altogether two prizes of the third class." "Of the third class? what shall the third class be of that whose first is pollution?" "Monsieur should remember that the first-class prizes are valued at two francs each." "Two francs, bah! two centimes would buy up the whole collection—first, second, and third classes. What is my choice in this miserable third class?" "Monsieur can have a pin-cushion of satin; a doll, charming present for an infant of his friends; a ball inflated with gas; a box of matches ——" "Ah, my life and soul! give me news of this; a box of matches and a balloon of gas! This man is a murderer; he is not content to take my money, he wants my life. I sit down; the ball of gas, where is it? it

bursts in my pocket. I walk about; I dance; the matches ignite with the friction, they fire the gas, and where am I? I blow up, explode, fly through the ceiling of L'Idalie and am heard of never more; but this man is a murderer, a convict." "Monsieur will remember that I am, on the contrary, a man of honour; monsieur forgets himself; these are of the things one does not say to another." "Well, once again, what can I have? Let me have scents, pomatums, the perfumes of rigour, which I shall use for my toilet of society." "Monsieur can have none of these things; they are prizes of the first and second classes. Hold! come now, monsieur shall have for his two third-class prizes, if he will, one prize of the second order." "Ah, the gallant man! give me quick a prize of the second order." "Monsieur shall have it. Hold! there is a pot of pomatum will render the life of monsieur one long train of successes among the ladies; speak to me of the smell of this pomade; is monsieur content now, hein?" "Give me the pomade of success, I am a lady's man; I am that or nothing; it is my speciality, my weakness, my strength, what will you? the pomade is my affair. Aha! now for the polka; this will be a ballast; it will give me a certain solidity, an *aplomb*!" "Good! Monsieur is at length content. Now who is next for the table? who is next for the great Chinese billiards—for the prizes, first, second, and third? who is for the pomatum of success? who——?"

More victims, more complaints of the cue, more reluctant payments, more disappointment at the nature of the prizes; and all over and over again, as long as the reader likes to imagine.

Our Englishman stood by, forming one of the group of spectators who looked on at the Chinese billiards, and becoming gradually so much amused and interested in the scene before him that he failed for some time to notice the figure of a man who, standing exactly in front of our hero, but with his back towards him, might, had he been less occupied with what was going on at the table, have attracted his attention sooner. It was at the point in the preceding conversation when the dissatisfied billiard-player had used the word "convict" that a sudden change of position, and a brief exclamation of impatience first drew Trelane's notice to this man. He had no sooner cast his eyes upon him than he wondered that he should not have observed him sooner.

The figure before him was that of a man who, judging from his back, which was all that Trelane could see, was somewhere about fifty years of age. He was a powerfully built man and somewhat above the middle height. His hair and those parts of his beard which our hero could see had once been black, but were now grizzled with grey. This, and that the stranger wore a coat with a hood to it and with the empty sleeves hanging loosely down at each side, was

all that Trelane could, in his present position, make out. It was enough, however, as the reader may suppose, to pique his curiosity in no ordinary degree. The mere fact of the man's dress would have been enough to recal to his memory the figure of the morning and the description given by the young English lady of the man who had accosted her in the cemetery. But the dress was not all. The height, the age, the stature, so exactly corresponded both with his own recollection and with the before-mentioned description that Trelane, even before seeing the man's face, was convinced of his identity. Determined, however, to make quite sure on this point, he was just thinking how he should get out of the crowd in which he stood and round to the opposite side of the table, where he could get a sight of the stranger's face, when the man himself saved him any further trouble or doubt about the matter. Hastily changing his position at the moment when the conversation quoted above had come to an end, and when a new player was about to take up the cue, he happened accidentally to bring one of his heels in sudden contact with our hero's foot, and turned quickly round to apologize.

"Pardon, monsieur," said the stranger.

From this moment, all uncertainty was removed, and Trelane recognized, beyond the shadow of a doubt, in the person before him, the man with the hooded coat, the stranger of the Belleville suburb.

It would be a difficult thing to present an exact

analysis to the reader of the different emotions which the conviction of this man's identity gave rise to in our Englishman's brain. The first tendency of Trelane's mind was, naturally enough, to implicate the stranger in the charge brought against some unknown person by the young English lady of the Belleville cemetery. Yet, on a moment's reflection, the absurdity of such a proceeding became most unmistakably obvious. What right had Trelane to bring this charge? How was he to connect the man whom he had observed in the streets of Belleville and whom he now saw before him in a twopenny ball-room at Vincennes with the offence of the morning? It was true that there was a certain presumptive proof, and that the description given by the young lady whom the stranger had annoyed tallied in every particular with this person's appearance. It was true, also, that Trelane himself felt the strongest internal conviction upon the subject; but what was the worth of such evidence? It would be the merest folly on such small grounds to address a total stranger, and to bring against him a charge which he was wholly unable to substantiate.

This was the rational view of the case, it was certain, but yet it was not wholly satisfactory to our hero's mind. There, in spite of all the reasoning in the world, remained the strong impression which he could not shake off, that this was the man. He felt that this was so, though he could not prove it.

Meanwhile, the stranger was preparing to move, and was evidently about to leave the table by which he had been standing for so long a time. It was necessary that Trelane should come to some decision, and adopt some course at once. He could not address this man, it was certain, but it was equally certain that it would not do to lose sight of him. The circumstantial evidence against him in the Englishman's mind was strong enough to make him resolve that it was highly desirable that he should have some clue to the stranger's whereabouts; and this could only be got by following him.

There are few things more distasteful to a rightly-constituted mind than the being *en faction*, or, as we should say, on the watch: the necessity there is at such a time of regulating your movements by another man's; the impatience you feel of the delays which are sure on such occasions to take place; the desire you instantly feel to leave the situation in which you find yourself, though, probably, you would have been contented to stay where you were an hour or two longer under ordinary circumstances; all these things, combined with the sensation that, however excusably, you are acting the part of a sort of spy, will not fail to make you very uneasy and to tempt you fifty times in the course of the first half-hour to abandon your post in disgust.

To a man of Trelane's character the position in which he was now placed was peculiarly distasteful

and his impatience became almost unendurable as he found himself compelled to wait while the object of his scrutiny, who seemed in no hurry to leave, moved in a leisurely manner from one of the tables described above to another, apparently bent on forming an accurate estimate of the relative merits of the different games, and the ability of the various players. It was most aggravating. The man seemed really to do it on purpose. He would come back to a table after going away from it; he would prepare to leave at the conclusion of a game, and linger to see how a new player got on, looking all the time as if he was on the point of moving off, but still not doing so. Nay, when he had got tired of watching these games, he would stand leaning against one of the wooden pillars that propped the roof, and observing the dancers, who were performing a quadrille with an energy known only to Parisians and to the inhabitants of the Parisian suburb. But, worst of all, when every source of delay seemed exhausted, and Trelane really thought that his tormentor was about to depart, he suddenly discovered a new means of lingering in the refreshment room, and, sitting himself down at a small table, gave an order for a *grog de vin* and commenced a dilatory manufacture, and still more dilatory consumption, of a half-dozen or so of cigarettes.

There is an end at last to all things in this world, and by the time that Trelane had reached that stage

of irritation when a sort of callous obstinacy comes on that would keep a man at his post through the night of the twenty-first of December — by this time, I say, it being then about ten o'clock, the man with the hooded coat seemed to think that he had had enough of the pleasures of L'Idalie, and, drawing his garment about him, rose to depart. Trelane was out in the open air, and in pursuit of the stranger, as soon as prudence would allow.

At a short distance from the entrance to L'Idalie, a huge French omnibus was waiting at the door of an office almost on the point of starting for Paris. Into this vehicle the stranger got; Trelane, being fortunately in time to get a ticket at the before-mentioned office, was not long in following him, and the great, jingling, clattering machine was soon in motion, and conveying its passengers at a tolerably rapid pace back to the metropolis.

This vehicle, with no greater interruption than that caused by the necessary examination of the passengers at the barrier, proceeded straight through to Paris, and deposited its living cargo at that memorable spot where the Boulevard Beaumarchais terminates, and where the prison of the Bastille once frowned upon the passers-by. At this point, then, everybody got down. The man with the hooded coat, whose road lay along the boulevard, started

at a rapid pace, and Trelane set off to follow him as closely as he could without running any risk of being detected in his pursuit.

It was no easy matter to keep "the chase," as nautical men phrase it, in view. The boulevard was crowded with the people who just at this time were let loose out of the theatres, and when they arrived at that particular point on their road where five theatres used to stand side by side in a continuous row, our Englishman thought several times that he had lost sight of the man in the hooded coat to recover him no more.

Through all these difficulties, however, our hero had managed to keep some clue to the stranger's movements, and was beginning to congratulate himself on his success, when, on arriving at the open space in front of the entrance to the *Ambigu Comique*, he found himself involved in fresh intricacies, and became conscious that he had begun to felicitate himself earlier than he was justified in doing.

Trelane was in the thick of the crowd which was pouring out of the theatre before he knew where he was, and found himself in altercation with a *marchand de coco*, against whose silvered temple and glasses he had been rather roughly pushed.

"*Monsieur faut pas culbuter les gens comme ça,*" was the French equivalent for the "where are you

shoving to?" of the Englishman. Trelane had had the misfortune to knock over and break one of the glasses which the marchand de coco carried in front of him ready to supply his customers with that, to our ideas, strange beverage which it was this functionary's business to provide for the thirsty theatrical amateurs. The accident set every bell jingling afresh on the cocoa-temple, and caused generally noise and confusion enough to attract quite a separate little crowd to the spot.

By the time that Trelane had paid for the damage he had done, and a small compensatory pourboire had restored the soon appeased marchand de coco to good humour—by the time that our hero had done this, and extricated himself from the throng of people round about him—he had lost all trace of the stranger whom he had been at such pains to keep in view.

Our Englishman ran ahead; he turned and came back; he looked up this street and down that one. But it was all, unhappily, in vain. The man in the hooded coat was nowhere to be seen. Trelane had entirely given up all idea of seeing him again, and was reproaching himself with not having taken some step, though what step he hardly knew, to make sure of the stranger—he was bending his steps, I say, in this mood towards the hotel, when the man in the hooded coat once more appeared before him.

This time he was standing in front of a certain café, one of that numerous row which line the Boulevard Poissonière, and staring wistfully through the window. If he was undecided as to whether he should enter the building or not, he did not long remain so, for he passed on presently with a shrug of the shoulders, and, as if deeming the café too ostentatious a place for him to enter, turned into a neighbouring cabaret or wine-shop, and, calling for a glass of brandy, drank it off rapidly, and, paying for it over the counter, once more emerged into the night. Trelane had seen him with the light strong upon his face, and had observed a remarked peculiarity in his appearance which he had not noticed before. His beard was of a grizzled black tint, and at each corner of his mouth there was a flake of almost white hair, which stood out quite distinct from the rest of his beard and had a marked and peculiar effect.

The man with the hooded coat and with the flakes of white hair in his black beard turned down the Rue Montmartre and thence went away into the labyrinth of small narrow streets, which lie near that thoroughfare, and at last entered a house in one of the narrowest and dirtiest of them. He had to ring, of course, at the great door, which was shut. The porter admitted him by pulling a string, and the stranger, passing in, closed the door behind him.

Trelane noted the name of the street and the number of the house, and felt that if, as he believed, this was the man he was in search of, he had now, at any rate, got a clue by which he might hope to be able to trace him.

CHAPTER VI.

CROSSING THE FRONTIER.

WE will now, with the reader's permission, transfer the scene from Paris and its immediate suburb to the town of Versailles, and to a suite of apartments in one of its streets, which we will call the Rue Pompadour.

To all persons tolerably well acquainted with the royal region with which we have to do, the mere mention of a suite of apartments in Versailles will convey at once the idea, which the writer wishes them to conceive, of a set of rooms of vast size, lofty, hard to warm, easy to ventilate, and decorated in the somewhat florid style in vogue two centuries ago.

The particular apartment with which we are at present concerned was one which presented in an eminent degree all the characteristics which have just been enumerated, but which was yet a delightful, and even to a certain extent a comfortable, room to live in. It is true that, examining it with the eye of an

Englishman of the present day, one might have been inclined to complain of a want of snugness, but not of an absolute deficiency of comfort. It was a room in which everything was so high as to seem out of reach. The chimney-piece was so tall that it was impossible to lean your elbows on it, and the fireplace itself was so high that the smoke got quite faint from the amount of atmosphere which mingled with it, in the immense space between the flame that gave it birth and the blackened aperture in which it was finally lost. The windows again were so tall that it seemed out of the question that any of the upper panes could be cleaned by mortal agency, or that anybody could ever get at the top regions, where they always stuck in opening, to remedy that defect. Then the wainscot was so high that a child of moderate size might have committed suicide by hanging itself from the bell-handle which appeared over the top of it; and as to the ceiling, there were Cupids and Nymphs, and Gods of War, and wreaths of flowers upon it in all parts; but it was only on favourable occasions, and in particularly clear states of the atmosphere, that you could see these decorations. In short, to put the matter in a light that will be familiar to every one, it was one of those rooms in which one feels short, and in which the tallest people do not look more than equal to the occasion.

And yet, as has been said, there was no discomfort

in all this. If this apartment was not snug, you could at least breathe in it, and if it was vast, and sometimes colder than could be wished, there was yet between it and such saloons as it sometimes falls to a traveller's lot to occupy in an Italian journey, and which strike their bareness and their chill into one's very soul, all the difference in the world.

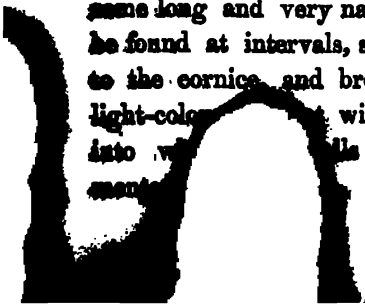
We have been hitherto so much occupied with the altitudes of the room which we are describing, that we have neglected all mention of its floor, which was a parquet of inlaid and polished wood, covered in the centre only with a bordered carpet; which presented in its faded flowers of vast size rather the appearance of old and worn tapestry wrought by hand, than that of the product of an ordinary carpet loom. In fact it was of the Aubusson web.

The furniture which was distributed about the room, was principally old-fashioned, and, though really plentiful, made but little show, in consequence of the great space round about it. The chairs, which were placed against the walls of the room, were high enough to be able to assert themselves, in spite of the loftiness of the wainscot, with which they were brought in such immediate contact. They were not carved chairs, but were made of that wood which looks of an almost greenish brown, and concerning which it is difficult to decide whether it is old oak or walnut. The tables were mainly composed of the same material; and were, as was the case with the

high-backed chairs, inlaid with coloured words, in imitation of wreaths and bouquets of flowers.

The only modern articles of upholstery in this apartment, were a grand piano, and two or three fauteuils placed about the fire-place, and the muslin curtains which (as is often the custom in France at all seasons) were hung in front of the windows, and two or three fauteuils which were placed upon a Persian rug, which lay in front of the fire.

Our background is nearly complete, but before proceeding to introduce the two human beings, into whose immediate neighbourhood we were brought in our last sentence, it is necessary to say a word concerning the decorations of the room which has been thus minutely described. There is no one who has read what has been written above, but will immediately anticipate me, when I say that certain specimens of old and valuable china were to be found, both placed about upon the chiffonnières, and other articles of furniture, which stood against the walls, and in a certain glazed closet, set across one of the angles of the room. I shall also be conveying no very startling surprise to the reader, when I mention that some long and very narrow looking-glasses were to be found at intervals, stretching from the wainscot to the cornice, and breaking the monotony of the light-coloured paper with which the compartments into which the walls were divided were ornamented.



There was, however, one decoration of the apartment in the Rue Pompadour which few persons would have expected to find there, and which certainly did look a little out of place. This was nothing less than a portrait of a lady as evidently an Englishwoman as the picture itself was obviously a specimen of the French school of the earlier part of this present century.

It has been said that this picture was that of a young English lady, and, indeed, there could be little doubt of this. It was not only the fair brown hair, the fresh and pink complexion, and the plump oval contour of the face that would lead the spectator to this conclusion. These might be evidences, it is true, but not infallible ones. It was rather the general look of the person here represented that impressed you with the conviction of her British origin than anything that could be defined or specified in so many words. It was a face full of beauty, but of a beauty which you grudged to it while you looked, and which did not prevent you from regarding the picture with uneasiness and dissatisfaction. There was no depth, no repose in the countenance. It was expressive of restlessness, and of a certain worldly hardness even, that made the beauty of the features void of its effect. For the rest, the portrait was of the size of life, and showed about half the figure; but the effect was much marred by some fancy of the painter's, which had

led him to show only one of the hands—the right one. The other was covered with the mantle which was brought across the left arm, and the remarkable part of it was that this defect in the picture seemed to have been an after-thought of the artist, for a curious observer would have been able to detect that the hand had been originally shown, and had afterwards been covered up. The piece of drapery already mentioned had been brought over the hand, and in some lights—so clumsily had the thing been done—you could see the outline of the effaced hand showing, as I have said, underneath, in the thickness of the paint. The portrait was evidently a striking likeness. The picture was hung rather high up, immediately over the chimney-piece.

We now come—our background being at length finished—to the living occupants of the room: for as to the exact pattern of the tea-cups in the china closet, the precise number of the little Dresden shepherdesses, and of china lambs under their care, which were to be found about the room, I must decline to enlighten the reader, seeing that these have nothing to do with my story.

Two ladies were sitting in front of the fire in the apartment which has been so carefully described, surrounded by books and by the materials for writing and working. The elder of the two might possibly be about forty two or three years old, but to judge

by the impression made at first sight, would be more likely to pass for some seven or eight years older. There was a gravity and sedateness about this lady's appearance which was very remarkable, and which only just stopped short of sternness. That it did so, however, and that this last-named quality, though nearly approached, was really no part of this lady's character, any skilled physiognomist would have perceived at once.

There is no person living whose faith is larger in Time than his who writes these lines. There is something almost of an achievement of the impossible in the way in which the effects of a great sorrow or a great loss are obliterated by the lapse of years. Time is the great healer, the great test. Time brings out real greatness, while littleness shrinks to nothing under its application. Time reveals all that is in a man, and proclaims with trumpet-tongue all that is wanting. Time obliterates the memory of past misfortune, and restores the sufferer to a strangely powerful interest in the things of the present moment. It does this in all cases—except a very few.

Except a very few. There are probably within the experience of every one who reads these words some instances—only two or three, perhaps, in his whole circle of acquaintances—of persons whose sorrow Time has never healed. This must not be misunderstood. Those here spoken of are far from manifesting any petulance or rebellion at their lot.

They never complain: The blow is borne resignedly, but it has been a blow that has struck home to a vital place, and left its mark—as far as this world counts at any rate—for ever: There are some people who have sustained a great bodily shock from which they have never wholly recovered. There are those who have been attacked by animals—either wild beasts, or those we tame and keep about us—whose nerves have been so damaged in the moment of the assault, that the vengeful form of the deadly beast by which the injury has been inflicted, has dwelt before their eyes for years afterwards, and come between them and their peace. It is thus, at times, with certain mental assaults. They stun and scare the sufferer for life. They deepen the gravity, they chasten the mirth, they quiet the tone, at all times, in all places, and under all conceivable circumstances.

In some cases this mighty influence which is strong enough to resist the test of Time has been exercised by the death of some object of unusual love and affection; in others, by a series and complication of sorrows all coming together; in others again, by a great sin repented of; and in yet a few, by the sin of those much dearer to us than ourselves. The father whose son has been guilty of dishonour; the mother whose daughter has come to shame; these persons will, in some cases, to use a strong colloquial phrase, “never hold up their heads again.”

It would be difficult, very difficult, to define in what particular way, such sorrows or sufferings as have just been spoken of, will leave their mark externally on him, or her, who has sustained them. In the case before us, for instance:—This lady seated in an arm-chair by a comfortable fire in a handsomely furnished apartment at Versailles, had that in her face which would tell of sorrow, even to the person of the most ordinary capacity with whom she might be brought in contact. How did this lady's face tell its story? Where did its power of impressing you with sorrow lay? How was it that you saw, not only that there had been a heavy blow struck, but that it had been struck through another? Perhaps it was the pureness of her countenance that told you of an unselfish grief. It was a glorious face. Thin and delicate almost to unhealthiness; in its contour it was yet perfectly just and true in its proportions, and characterized by such a finish and definement of the separate parts and features as sets the despoilment of Time at defiance. What could Time do with that open forehead, except to record, by a few delicately ruled lines that he had passed over it and tried his worst to injure it, in vain? What could he do to mar the truthful eyes? He had brought the margin of the sockets out in stronger assertion than they were a score of years earlier; he had increased the depth of the upper eyelid, and caused it to lie a degree more heavily on the eyeball, which had sunk back at the

same time a little into its ample socket. He had drawn the cheeks in somewhat, and dragged the skin a little where the nostril joined the meagre flesh that lay over the bones of the upper jaw. Time had done all this, and slightly drawn the mouth, straining it over the teeth which it so completely covered, and forcing it the least bit in the world to one side. The lapse of years had dealt then in its severest fashion with the lady's face; but it was not a jot the worse for it. No mean marks of calculation, no sordid greed, no worldliness had been at work to sharpen the expression and harden the look; no sensuality had rendered the face gross, no angry passions of jealousy or envy had pinched and soured it.

But if the passions and emotions which have just been enumerated, had been wanting in the history of this lady's life, as told by her countenance, there was yet, as has been hinted above, a stamp upon her face which distinctly proved that this resulted from no absence of marked character, no habitual apathy or torpid indifference. What was it, then, that you read there? It was fear!

Is this expression—through which, as I have written, I have half-a-dozen times felt inclined to dash my pen—is it, I ask, too strong, or does it convey any false impression to the reader? Let me guard it carefully before it does so. It was, then, no active assertion of present fear that was traceable in

this lady's countenance. It was no fidgety nervousness or inconsistent apprehensiveness. It was the timidity of one who had had cause for mistrust; the shrinking of the burnt child from the fire; of the man who has been lacerated by a tiger's teeth from even the caged beast in the menagerie. In a word, there was in this woman's face, the fear of a world which had shown itself to her through some terrible experience in its most terrible aspect. That experience might have been her own, or that of one very dear to her.

The rest of this lady's appearance may be soon described. Her simply parted hair gathered under a white cap, something like a widow's, was of a brown shade, and very little lined with grey. It is one of the commonest of mistakes to suppose that care and sorrow are an infallible recipe for turning the hair to a white colour. Both grey hair and wrinkles are constitutional. It is not denied that persons whose hair and skin have, in the one case, the tendency to turn grey, and in the other to wrinkle, will have these qualities developed sooner by grief and suffering. This may be so; all that is contended is, that a smooth face and a head of hair without a silver line in it may consist with bitter anguish of heart, and, alas! with much protracted care and sorrow.

For her costume, the lady was dressed in gray silk, and wore black ribbon in the cap which has

already been mentioned. Her hands were very thin, and were characterized by a somewhat yellow and faded whiteness.

Such, as nearly and accurately as words can tell, was the appearance of Harriet d'Elmar, a widow lady and the elder of the two women whom it is my business to describe.

With the other, who was seated opposite to her, and who was, indeed, this lady's niece, the reader is already somewhat acquainted. Any lengthened description of her is at present unnecessary, but one circumstance in connection with her appearance it is needful should be insisted upon. It was mentioned a little while since, in describing the decorations of the apartment in which these two ladies were seated, that a portrait hung over the chimney-piece—a portrait of a lady. Now the remarkable thing about this picture was that, in spite of many points of expression in which it differed widely from the two women who were seated before it, there was yet, on the whole, a strong resemblance observable between these three faces. There was no sort of doubt about it—you could not be in the room without remarking it.

The likeness between the portrait and the younger lady was, however,—probably from the picture being of a young lady—the most remarkable. Yet when you had compared the features and settled that this was so, the next thing that struck you, most in-

fallibly, was the *un*-likeness. The living girl seemed to possess all that the painted image wanted.

Of this young lady it is, as has been said, needless to give at present a protracted description. The reader has seen her already in the Gardens of the Palace of Versailles, at the Opéra Comique, and in the Cemetery of Belleville; it is enough to say that, seen in the morning, and in in-door costume, she lost nothing of the attractiveness of her appearance.

The two ladies who were seated thus in front of a fire of smouldering and crumbling logs, were both engaged, as far as their fingers were concerned, with needle-work—a kind of occupation which left them perfectly free to talk whenever they felt inclined. The conversation between them was, however, not of a continuous kind, but simply consisted of an observation made and answered at intervals; and yet, to any person who had been present, it would have been obvious, even in the few remarks that dropped occasionally from one or the other of these ladies, that there was no restraint between them, and that the tone of love and confidence was perfect and without flaw.

“I was half sorry,” said the younger lady, “I was half sorry, aunty, that Victorine, with her usual impetuosity, made the proposal she did; and yet it was almost impossible, after what had happened, to let this gentleman go away without some better

acknowledgment of his service than I was capable of at the moment."

"My dear Madeleine," answered her aunt, "you could not do otherwise than you did. This gentleman's proposal of asking my consent before putting the thing into the hands of the police, alone made it necessary that I should see him. The police," added the lady, thoughtfully, "I should hardly think it was any use applying to them in such a matter."

"Oh, aunty, it is not necessary; it surely is not necessary. You will not let that be, dear aunty, will you?" said Miss d'Elmar, speaking very earnestly.

"My own darling, I should shrink from such a thing as much as you would, but what you have told me of your having been annoyed, as you think, by the same person once or twice before, makes me question whether it is possible to help it."

"Dear aunty, let us try. It would be so wretched to make it public; I am sure," added the young lady, with the sanguine confidence of inexperience, "that it will not happen again. I will not make such long expeditions in future, and will take care always to have Victorine with me."

"Well, dear," said Madame d'Elmar, smiling, "I must own that in yielding to you about this, I am quite consulting my own inclination as well as yours, while at the same time I much question whether we

are doing wisely. You see even to-day you are afraid to go out."

"Oh, it is not that, aunty: I am tired to-day; I shall be better in-doors."

"Yes, dear, that may be; but you can't always remain at home, and I am, unfortunately, not strong enough to take such exercise as is right and wholesome for a young girl like you. It happens very unfortunately that Alexis should have been ordered away just now."

"It was very odd that he said so little about this gentleman whom we met in the garden at Versailles," said Madeleine, thoughtfully.

"He said that they had served together, did he not?" asked her aunt.

"Yes, dear," the young lady answered; "but I don't think (unless I have forgotten it) that he ever mentioned his name."

"Monsieur Trelane," said Victorine, opening the door of the room and announcing our hero's name, just as it was being made the subject of conversation.

As the girl pronounced that name, the elder of the two ladies started, as though some sudden spasm had passed through her frame, and turned deadly pale. She recovered herself, however, very quickly, and advancing to meet the stranger, held out her hand.

"My niece has told me," she said in a low voice, "of your kindness to her yesterday."

"You will not think," answered Trelane—"I

sincerely hope you will not think—that I have come here to-day with the thought of receiving any thanks for doing what everybody else in my place would have done. I have come,” he continued, turning to the younger lady and touching her proffered hand with his own, “first of all to inquire after your health.”

“I am quite well to-day,” Miss d’Elmar answered, blushing as she spoke. “Only a little tired,” she added, looking at Trelane gratefully for a moment, and thanking him.

Trelane took the chair which the *bonne* had placed for him, and began talking at once upon indifferent topics. Feeling, with that fine tact which characterized him in all things, that it would be extremely painful to the young lady with whom he had been brought in contact on so distressing an occasion, to have the circumstances of their meeting discussed, Trelane exerted himself to keep the conversation upon other subjects. The difficulty which he had experienced in gaining admission to the house in consequence of his ignorance of the name of the ladies he was visiting; the timely arrival of the *bonne*, who happened to come in from market at the moment, and who both supplied him with the information which he desired, and convinced the porter of his claim to enter the house; the performance at the *Opéra Comique*, at which, it will be remembered, both these ladies had been present;

the rapid ordering away on military duty of d'Elmar—all these things furnished plenty of matter for discussion, and the embarrassment which is ordinarily felt at a first interview was hardly experienced by any one present.

Though essentially quiet and subdued in her manner, and at no time a great speaker, Madame d'Elmar was too well-bred a woman to fail to *exert* herself at a moment like this. Enough fell from her to inform Trelane that this lady and her niece were not mere visitors to Versailles, but that it was, and had been for some time, the place of their continual residence. They very rarely left it, and the recent journey to Paris, in which Trelane had surmised Alexis had accompanied them, was quite an event in their lives, and was simply an affair of necessity, Madame d'Elmar having business to transact which required her presence for a day in the metropolis. The expedition to the Opéra Comique in the evening had been an after-thought, and had been almost forced upon Miss d'Elmar by her aunt, in the belief that some change of the sort was good for her.

It was a curious circumstance, that as she spoke, Madame d'Elmar would seem at times to lose for a moment the thread of her subject, pausing as if some other matter were pressing so hard upon her attention, that it would not at all times be denied.

The mention of the name of Alexis d'Elmar, in the course of conversation, led the talk naturally enough to the subject of the intimacy between Trelane and that officer, and in recounting something of the history of its origin when both were schoolboys at Boulogne, and its subsequent revival under the walls of Sebastopol, many things could not fail to come out which were interesting both to Madame d'Elmar and her niece. So that when at the end of a quarter of an hour, the young lady rose from her place and left the room, it was certainly not from any indifference on her part to the conversation to which she had been listening, but simply because she felt that Trelane had something to say to her aunt which he would prefer speaking about in her absence. As our hero watched her retreating figure, he thought he had never seen a more perfect symmetry of form or a more womanly carriage and demeanour.

There was indeed this about everything connected with Madeleine d'Elmar; in her whole appearance as well as in her manner and character she was every inch a woman—a woman in the best and most beautiful acceptation of the word. And how was this shown? It would be a difficult matter to give the reader a just idea of this young lady's character, and indeed there is but one way of doing so. We must watch her closely, we must observe her at trying times. We shall never know her otherwise. Strictly, almost severely brought up, and

kept always in a rigid seclusion, there was such a modesty and reserve in all her words and actions that, till the strong influence of passion or a sense of duty shall tear this aside, till she shall have found some one to whom she shall reveal herself, we can hardly know her altogether as she is. There are circumstances and situations which disclose unmistakably the real character of those who pass through them, and there are relations in life which render the unveiling of her real self a duty as well as a joy to the most reserved of women. In the nature of Miss d'Elmar there dwelt a depth of loyal affection and a profundity of passion which he who should call them forth would alone discover. It should be so with all a woman's treasures; they should be kept in store; they are not for all the world, but they are there for *one*. This young lady's education had had much to do with the development of the qualities here described, and had tended to produce a great shyness and a shrinking from observation and comment, which were very rare and precious gifts. The abdication, the breaking down of all this before the force of passion is a wonderful thing to see, and the moment when this comes to pass produces such a change in a woman's nature as makes it resemble a second creation.

With the withdrawal of this young lady from the room the conversation took altogether a new turn, and the real object of Trelane's visit was made the

subject of discussion. Madame d'Elmar then expressed to Trelane her great unwillingness that the matter should be made the subject of police investigations, and at the same time the apprehension she felt at the thought of the influence which the previous day's alarm might have in keeping her niece from the enjoyment of the air and exercise which was necessary for her. Trelane's announcement of his having traced the stranger on whom his suspicion had fallen to a house near the Rue S. Martin, seemed to render an application to the police a less hopeless proceeding than it would have been in the absence of that clue; while the extreme uncertainty of the evidence on which this man's identity rested was again a thing impossible to ignore. It was finally determined that the matter should rest thus: that Madame d'Elmar should wait for a day or two, and if she observed that her niece manifested any repugnance to leave the house, and that it was otherwise evident that she was under a fear of some recurrence of what had previously alarmed her, that then her aunt should communicate with Major Trelane, who left his address for that purpose, and he should instantly lay the case before the police authorities and apply to them for such information as they could afford as to the character of the man whom Trelane had met with at Vincennes.

"I trust," said Trelane, in taking his leave, "that during the absence of le Capitaine d'Elmar you will

not hesitate to apply to me in any difficulty in which, had he been on the spot, he might himself have assisted you, and that you will believe that I shall consider it a great and important trust to be in this, or anything else, employed in your service."

CHAPTER VII.

MAJOR TRELANE MAKES A MOVE FORWARD.

It was four days after the visit described in the last chapter that, as Trelane was leaving his hotel to go to dinner, a letter was put into his hand by the porter. It ran thus :

“DEAR SIR,—

“I AM obliged, after all, to trespass on your goodness, and to avail myself of the offer of assistance which you were kind enough to make when you were here some three or four days ago.

“My niece, as I suspected she would, has manifested, during the period which has elapsed since her unfortunate visit to the cemetery at Belleville, a great and invincible reluctance to leave the house, and although she is far from stating that the alarm which she experienced on the occasion which I have just named, and a dread of its recurrence, are the reasons for her unwillingness to go out, I yet have

my own opinion on the subject, and am inclined to believe that the slight indisposition of which she complains is rather the result of her staying at home than the cause of it.

“Under these circumstances, I am obliged to come to the distressing conclusion that it will be right to try at any rate what the police can do in this affair. For my own part, I think they can do little or nothing, but it may be well to consult them at any rate.

“I know that it must seem very strange in me to come to you for aid in this matter, but in the absence of my brother-in-law I really hardly know any one but his old friend and comrade to whom I can apply. I shall be at home this evening and tomorrow and very anxious to hear any information you may be able to obtain. With many apologies for thus troubling you, and entreating you to study entirely your own convenience in granting me the favour which your kindness alone has emboldened me to ask,

“I remain,

“Yours very faithfully,

“HARRIET D'ELMAR.”

“*Rue Pompadour, Versailles.*”

Trelane's first proceeding after reading this letter was to go to the Bureau de Police of the quarter to which he had succeeded in tracing the man with the

hooded coat, and to represent his business to the local superintendent, or chief of division. Our scene being laid in France it is quite unnecessary to mention to any person at all acquainted with that country that before he could be listened to, before he could gain access to the official whom he wished to consult, before he could open his mouth almost, it was necessary that he should go through every conceivable and inconceivable formality and ceremony, and submit to every possible investigation about himself and his own affairs; that he should be sent from one person to another, and treated generally as if he were a highly suspicious character himself. The superintendent, when he at last reached him—a grave gentleman in spectacles—was much mystified at the nature of the business.

“Mais savez-vous, Monsieur Trelane,” said he, “que vous jetez des soupçons sur la caractère d’un individu, dont il me semble que vous ne connaissez rien, absolument rien.”

Trelane admitted that he knew nothing of the man on whom his suspicions had fallen. He reverted to the similarity of the person in question to the stranger whom the young lady had described, and especially to the marked characteristic of the two flakes of white hair in his beard corresponding exactly to each other on either side of the man’s mouth.

“There might be plenty of men with flakes of white hair in their beards,” the chief argued.

Trelane agreed that there might, but not exactly similar to these.

“He might dye the white hairs; he might shave off his beard, and so destroy his identity in a moment,” said the chief. “However, if Monsieur Trelane was determined, his men should make inquiry, and get him the necessary information about the house and its inhabitants. Monsieur Trelane would be responsible for the charge.”

With this Trelane was, for the present, obliged to rest satisfied, and having been directed to call again in two days from that time, he was ushered out of the great man's presence, the employés and sergeants de ville about the place eyeing him with never-forgetting glances as he passed among them, and seeming almost reluctant to let him slip through their fingers.

It was too late that evening for an expedition to Versailles, but early the next day Trelane started, with a view of communicating what he had done to Madame d'Elmar. He found this lady alone. It is very frequently the case that we do not see the full propriety of doing a thing till after we have done it, and this was so in the present instance. Madame d'Elmar was evidently very glad of the step which had been taken through Trelane's agency, and most grateful to him for his alacrity in responding to her request. Her niece, she said, still kept the house, and, without being absolutely ill, was unmistakably

suffering from this confinement, and from a want of the air and exercise to which she had been accustomed.

As Trelane listened to Madame d'Elmar's words, he was held by a strong interest in the subject on which she spoke, and an idea suggested itself to him which he yet hesitated for the present to speak of. It crossed his mind whether there would be any impropriety in his offering his own protection to this young lady, and in his proposing to Madame d'Elmar that he should accompany her niece and the servant, who was her ordinary companion, in an occasional walk through the gardens of Versailles. It has been said that Trelane hesitated to make this proposal, rational as it seemed, and this may require some explanation. The fact is, that a certain native pride and dread of anything approaching to unwarrantable advances, or what is ordinarily called "pushing," were marked features in our Englishman's character, and the position in which he now found himself, and which was forced upon him by irresistible circumstances, was one which made him often call himself to account to examine how far the acquaintance which seemed to be growing up between these ladies and himself was justifiable, and caused him to be more watchful over his words and actions than he would have been under ordinary circumstances.

And yet when at this his second visit to the house

at Versailles, he was once more brought in contact with the young lady towards whom his attention had now been directed by so remarkable a chain of incidents, Trelane could not help acknowledging that he should have been sorry if the events had not transpired which procured for him the right of associating on any terms with one in whom he felt already so much interest. When Miss d'Elmar entered the room in which her aunt and her visitor were sitting, Trelane was struck with her altered appearance, and the proposal which has been referred to above, once more rose almost to his lips, to be, however, once more rejected.

There was something about the slight indisposition under which this young lady was suffering which seemed, even while Trelane regretted it, to make him admire her beauty the more. There was something about the air of languor, the delicacy of the complexion, and the increased fineness of the features (though this last was but the affair of a hair's breadth), which was no bad substitute even for the brilliant glow of health. But it spoke of illness and confinement.

Trelane remained, by Madame d'Elmar's request, to share the mid-day meal of the two ladies, and then after some conversation on indifferent subjects, took his leave, having promised, before the entry of the younger lady, to return in a few days with any fresh intelligence that he might be able to obtain.

The law's delays, Trelane now found, were not without their counterpart in matters connected with police investigations, and our Englishman paid many visits to the Bureau de Police before he obtained even the unsatisfactory amount of information with which he was, for the present, obliged to remain satisfied. He learnt, indeed, that the house to which he had succeeded in tracing the man with the hooded coat was one down in the police books, as being of rather a suspicious character, and that it was inhabited to a great extent by foreigners who were chiefly Italians. The porter, a Swiss, had no distinct recollection of whom he had admitted on the particular night in question. So many lodgers lived in the house, and so many persons of all descriptions came to visit them, and were constantly backwards and forwards, that he really could not say who he had admitted and who not. At any rate, even if such a person as was described had entered that night it must have been as a visitor, for certainly there was no one *living* in the house who answered to the description given by the police. That, at least, was certain, the man did not live there.

This porter either was, or pretended to be, excessively stupid, and there was very little to be got out of him. If the person described had come to the house he must have asked for some one living there, or he would not have been admitted. He might have asked for Monsieur Such-an-one and been

admitted, and might then have come away much later. People came to that house at all hours; he had something else to do, and think of, besides examining the beards of every one who came and counting the number of white hairs in them.

From this fruitless questioning of the porter, the police authorities proceeded next to an examination of the different lodgers, which was equally unproductive. None of these locataires had any recollection whatever of having received, on the night in question, a visitor of any sort or kind. The memories of these good people seemed, indeed, to be as defective as that of the porter who took care of the door. There was one among them who was known to the police as having passed a portion of his life in a certain seclusion, known under the name of the galleys; and to his share a severer amount of questioning had fallen than had been thought necessary with the other lodgers. His memory was not more active, however, than that of the other inhabitants. He really was not certain, he said (between two puffs of his pipe), whether he had been at home on the night in question. His avocations—they were suspected by the police to be intimately mixed up with the billiard-playing, and illicit theatrical ticket-selling interests—his avocations might have kept him out that evening, he could not say: bah! he was not on oath, he supposed; what did he know? He had visitors occasionally, oh, yes: and at all hours; he was a bachelor

and a comrade might knock him up at any time and drop in for a game at dominoes without giving offence, he supposed ; and as to the description of the stranger, and the white flakes of hair in his beard, he might know such a man or he might not. He knew men with every conceivable kind of beard, and with every conceivable kind of white flakes in them : bah ! if it came to that, he knew men, brave fellows too, whose beards were composed of nothing but white flakes ; were they the worse for that ?

This, and information such as this, was all that Trelane was able to obtain, and even this was not got without, as has been said, much delay and many journeys backwards and forwards to the police office. Here then, for the present, the thing must rest. All that the police could do was to promise that they would keep a more vigilant watch than ever over the suspected house, and especially over the gentleman already mentioned as being troubled with such a singularly short memory. If anything new should transpire, Monsieur Trelane should be informed of it.

With these scanty tidings, which were collected at different times, Trelane made more than one journey to his new friends at Versailles, and was brought more and more in contact with the young lady in whose service he was all this time engaged. The subject, however, which was the cause of these visits, was never spoken of before Miss d'Elmar, and when

she was present the conversation was always turned to other and pleasanter topics.

The more our hero saw of the two ladies with whom he was thus in continual intercourse, the more powerfully did he become interested in them, and the greater was his surprise at the extraordinary and hermit-like seclusion in which they appeared to be living. They saw literally no one, they spoke of no friends or even acquaintances, either at Versailles or at Paris. It was impossible to live in more complete separation from the world. It was a solitary confinement of two.

Trelane was one of those men who have experienced in the midst of a life of travel and adventure intervals of leisure which had been devoted to the cultivation of a naturally refined and delicate taste. At the school at Boulogne, at Eton, at Sandhurst, Henry Trelane had always been renowned for his picture gallery and his library. It is true that the first of these had but a small beginning, and that at the educational establishment first mentioned it consisted mainly of a collection of woodcuts from cheap illustrated works, cut out and fastened to sheets of pasteboard. They were however well chosen, and it was always a popular amusement with the other lads to go through the English boy's "gallery," and form their own conjectures as to the subjects of the different pictures of which it was composed. As Trelane advanced in years, and passed from the care

of Monsieur Ferrulus to the higher dignities of Eton and Sandhurst, the glories of his collection became more developed, and prints from the works of our best artists took their place about the walls of his bedroom; a space being always left however for the hanging-shelves on which lay the works of his favourite authors. Such was the boy. That the man retained the same tastes and feelings may be shown by the mention of one circumstance which, trifling as it is, is valuable as being one of those indications of character of which trifles are the strongest proofs. Trelane never travelled without a certain flat oblong case, made to fit into the top of one of his chests. It contained a work of art which in its deep pathos, its profound sympathy with sorrow, and its indignant satire on the weakness of human affection, has no equal in the world. It was the print from Landseer's picture of the Shepherd's Chief Mourner. This engraving, which had been the boy's treasured possession at Eton, had accompanied the soldier to the scene of Eastern warfare; and in the hold of the *Himalaya*, on the hump of a camel, or the elephant's back, had been with Trelane, the ensign, the lieutenant, the captain, the constant companion, and the valued friend which it now was with the experienced soldier newly returned from that Indian campaign which had gained for him so early the rank of major, and associated his name with an especial honour and distinction. The Shepherd's Chief Mourner, trans-

ferred from the sea-chest to a travelling portmanteau, lay at the moment we are speaking of, on the table of Trelane's room in the Hôtel du Helder.

The reader will, it is hoped, pardon this digression, and believe that it was indispensably necessary to our story and to that development of its hero's character which it is the design of the writer to bring gradually to light, just as it is his intention to reveal by degrees such portions of Trelane's history, previous to the period with which we are concerned, as it is proper and needful for those who read this narrative to be acquainted with.

To the two ladies with whom Trelane was now brought in contact, the conversation of such a man could not fail to be most interesting. A growing confidence, the result of the peculiar conditions under which their acquaintance had commenced, and by which it had been maintained, became developed far more rapidly in little more than a few days, than would have been the case under ordinary circumstances in the same number of months. And when one day Trelane, after noticing the long confinement to the house which Miss d'Elmar had been undergoing, proposed that she should walk out under his protection, and accompanied of course by Victorine, there seemed nothing forced or unnatural in his offer.

It was brought about thus. A letter had been received by Madame d'Elmar on the morning of the day in question from her brother-in-law, in

which the little officer had expressed himself as being for some weeks very uncertain in his plans, and half inclined, being so far on his way southward as Lyons, to pay a visit to Nice, where his aged mother whom he had not seen for some length of time was living. He was not quite sure, however, whether his military duties would permit of this arrangement, but he would write again as soon as the question was settled. Meanwhile, he requested that no letters might be sent to him till they heard from him again, as his movements were very uncertain.

It was a beautiful day in the latter part of October—one of those days which are numbered by twos or threes only in the course of a winter when there is sunshine without frost, and a certain genial warmth without dampness. It was weather such as you get not unfrequently during winter in Italy, but very seldom elsewhere.

On such a day as this the idea of remaining at home would be particularly distasteful to any one, and it was evident that Miss d'Elmar felt the privation she was undergoing in no ordinary degree. It was very sad to see her pale cheeks, and to observe the wistful gaze with which she looked from the window.

“What a lovely day, and how I should like to go out,” she said, almost involuntarily.

Her aunt sighed, and looked towards the window.

It was then that Trelane spoke and made the proposal which had been on his lips many times before, speaking at the same time of the extreme uncertainty of the period of d'Elmar's return, as shown by the letter just received, and the obvious injury inflicted on the young lady's health by her long confinement.

As Trelane spoke, Miss d'Elmar looked quickly and anxiously at her aunt. It was but a momentary action. Madame d'Elmar for her part seemed for a time undecided. A glance at her niece's pale cheek appeared, however, to convince her of the necessity of agreeing to this proposal; and after an instant's hesitation it was gratefully accepted.

At the moment when it was so, a deep flush spread itself over every part of Madeleine d'Elmar's face and neck.

Her aunt seemed to notice this, and became evidently embarrassed and uneasy. In the interval between her niece's leaving the room to put on her bonnet and her return, there were many awkward pauses, and Madame d'Elmar was absent and *préoccupée*. Once she got up and rung the bell, and Trelane, who now almost regretted the step he had taken, thought that she was about to retract the permission which she had just given. When Victorine, however, answered this summons, Madame d'Elmar merely bid her get ready to accompany her young mistress who was going out.

"Mademoiselle is going out?" shrieked the girl, clasping her hands in an ecstasy of joy. "Ah! but I am glad. I have missed those walks so much, so much."

"This gentleman is going to accompany mademoiselle, and to take care of you both," the lady explained.

"Pardon, monsieur," said the girl, abashed a little at the expressions of enthusiasm into which she had been betrayed. "Monsieur is very good," she added, as she withdrew. It was not long before she re-appeared ready for action in a snowy cap and a warm woollen shawl.

Miss d'Elmar entered at the same moment, dressed for out-door exercise.

Her aunt rose from her seat and kissed her. This lady had evidently not regained her composure.

"You will not be long," she said; and then turning to Trelane she added, "I know I may ask you to take great care of—of my treasure."

CHAPTER VIII.

A CRITICAL SITUATION.

THERE are very few things more delightful than the first escape from the house after a long confinement.

To Miss d'Elmar it was more than delightful. An ardent lover of nature, little initiated in the life of towns, accustomed to few and simple pleasures, this young lady had ever found in those which *were* within her reach a far greater enjoyment than that which persons whose range of recreation (or rather dissipation) is on a wider scale are able to derive from the most highly seasoned gratifications. If people would but cultivate these simple pleasures, which are without alloy, they would be astounded at the amount of joy which is to be got out of them. If people would but find out what they are intended to do, and do it, they would discover the secret of happiness. The ordinary course of an ordinary day is charged with delight to those who will but look out for it. The day's work, the curse of

labour, is turned into a blessing, for it, and it alone, will render the mind capable of enjoyment. A good walk after this period of confinement, the return to a meal seasoned with love, the evening dedicated to some light kind of occupation, or to total recreation—in this simple routine there is more joy than in all the exciting pleasures which people run hither and thither in search of, wasting their energies, destroying their health, and not enjoying themselves after all. An abstinence from these things, and a return to a course of diversions of the simpler kind, would make them ten times as happy.

And Madeleine was happy. She had forgotten her fears; the exhilarating effect which the fresh air, and the sunlight, and the blue sky, exercise mechanically upon the mind was to be seen at a glance in her already altered face as well as in her voice and manner.

“Where are we going?” asked Trelane, after they had been walking away from the town for about five or ten minutes. “Have you any particularly favourite walk about here?”

“The Gardens,” answered Miss d’Elmar. “I walk in the gardens of the palace oftener than anywhere else. Indeed, I think I have till lately spent some time in them every day during the years we have been living at Versailles.”

“Years !” repeated Trelane. “Madame d’Elmar must be very fond of the place?”

“My aunt has got quite to love it, I think, and so have I, in spite of its desertion and emptiness.”

“And yet,” said Trelane, “to most people there would be a melancholy about Versailles which would make them dread a residence in it. It seems a place of the past, a town that *was* and is no longer—the ghost of that important colony of courtiers which it used to be when these half-inhabited streets grew up about the palace gates.”

“Yes,” said Miss d’Elmar, “I suppose to any one coming here as a stranger it must appear both lonely and melancholy. It hardly seems so to me, perhaps because I am so used to it.”

“Do you know many people here?” asked Trelane.

“Not a soul, with the exception of the governess who used, till lately, to come three times a week from Paris to teach me, and Monsieur d’Elmar, my aunt and Victorine here are almost the only people I have spoken to during the whole time we have been living here.”

“Mademoiselle lives like a nun,” Victorine put in. “So much the worse: she is kept up by madame too much.”

“You must not say that, Victorine,” answered the young lady. “My aunt gives me everything I want. She is an invalide, and has the greatest dread of society.”

“Ah, never mind, it is a shame,” argued the

bonne, sticking to her point with the audacity of a favourite; "mademoiselle should see the world, should have her balls, promenades, theatres, operas."

"You forget, Victorine," said the young lady, smiling, "how lately we were at the theatre; you forget the Opéra Comique, the *Pré aux Clercs*."

"If I forget it," answered the bonne, in great indignation, "when there enters that merciless monsieur, the uncle, and orders us all out of the box just at the best part of the opera. Oh! I don't forget that."

"Is it fair to ask," said Trelane, "how it happened that you got tired of the opera so soon on the evening Victorine is speaking of?"

"My uncle, Monsieur d'Elmar, came to the box in a great hurry, and, without explaining why, said that he had a particular reason for wishing us to leave the theatre directly. He did not give his reason, but seemed to make a great point of it, and my aunt, who always acts on his suggestions, seemed to be of his opinion, and we left at once."

"Ah, the pretty opera!" sighed Victorine. "I shall never forgive monsieur the uncle."

Trelane was silent. He was reflecting on the singular conduct of his friend in this matter, and his evident desire, perhaps shared by this young lady's aunt, to keep her in a strange and utter concealment.

"You are very obedient to your uncle," he said, presently.

"We are guided by Monsieur d'Elmar," answered the young lady, "in almost everything; indeed, he is a sort of guardian to us."

"I wonder," said Trelane, "that he never spoke to me of you when he and I were together so much. He never even mentioned that he had any English relations."

"It was not," answered Miss d'Elmar, "till somewhat recently that we have seen so much of him. When my aunt's husband was living we hardly ever saw him at all. But," added the young lady, presently, as if to show that it was not owing to d'Elmar's influence that they lived in such retirement, "we were almost as quiet and were as much alone when we were at Paris as we are here."

"And you like this place better than Paris?"

"I did not at first," answered Miss d'Elmar, "but before we settled here we had been travelling about so long and moving from place to place so continually that I was really glad when it was decided that we should come here in order that I might have a Parisian governess, and that we might be more frequently within reach of my uncle than we should have been elsewhere."

"Were your travels very extensive?" asked Trelane.

"No," answered the young lady; "they were chiefly from one town or village in France to another. But we were always moving, and I think that six weeks

at Avignon was the longest time given to any one place in the course of the whole two years during which we were travelling."

"And Madame d'Elmar and you were alone in these journeys?"

"We had at that time an old servant to whom we were much attached," answered Miss d'Elmar; "dear old George, he followed us everywhere, till at last at Avignon he was taken ill suddenly and died. I think," she added, after a moment's pause, "that his loss had something to do with the termination of our wandering life."

They had now entered the gardens of the palace, and, descending a flight of steps, were in that long central avenue which was described at the commencement of the narrative.

"To me," said Trelane, after a short pause, "there is a wonderful charm about Versailles, and *I* can understand any degree of attachment to the place being felt by a long resident here; but I own it is a surprise to me that it should have such attractions for you."

There was a moment's silence, and Trelane went on.

"The charm of this place," he said, "would have been, I should have thought, only felt by one whom years had tamed and subdued, and who had learnt to prize a negative happiness by losing faith in many positive enjoyments, or, at least, in what he

had believed to be such. In short," added Trelane, changing his tone, and speaking with more gaiety, as an Englishman will do when he thinks he is becoming demonstrative, and exposing that secret store of feeling which we all guard so carefully and so rightly from sight—"In short, I should have thought that the balls, and plays, and operas, spoken of by Victorine here just now, would have had greater charms for a young lady like you than these lonely gardens, these solemn avenues, and sombre and unfrequented walks."

The young lady smiled, but did not answer.

"It was, by-the-by, in these gardens," said Trelane, "that I first met you on the day when Monsieur d'Elmar was seeking you with an umbrella in each hand. It was near the Temple of Liberty, if I remember rightly?"

"Yes," interposed Victorine, who was ever ready for a little conversation, "and monsieur coming upon us like an apparition almost made my heart jump out of my body with fright."

They were now approaching the turning which led to the deserted temple, and were walking along in silence. It was, however, that pleasant silence which succeeds conversation—one of those pauses in enjoyment which is a new enjoyment itself. Trelane was busy with his own thoughts. They had been strangely occupied of late with one subject; and our hero could have persuaded him-

self that the short time which had elapsed since the day when he had first met his present companion in that very garden was a period to be counted by months instead of days. The impression of the duration of time is given undoubtedly, not by the number of hours that pass over our heads, but by the events, or, still more, the emotions, by which those hours are marked. Who has not experienced this, and noted how there are days of much change, or characterized by striking and remarkable events, when the incidents of the morning appear in the evening like things that have happened half a score of days ago? Trelane, as he thought of that first meeting in these gardens, of the Opéra Comique, the cemetery at Belleville, nay, even the dinner with Alexis at Champeaux's, and the Bal de l'Idalie at Vincennes, could have persuaded himself that these things had taken place quite at a distant period of time, that he had spent all his life at Paris, and that England, his family ties, the campaigns in Russia and in India, were the creatures of his imagination, and had either never existed at all, or had concerned him only in some former state of existence. This young lady, too, who was walking by his side, was it possible that he had only known her a few days? This Miss d'Elmar in whom he felt so deeply interested, and towards whom he was at that moment almost in the position of a guardian or protector, could it be

that a fortnight ago he had never even seen or spoken to her? How strangely had this intimacy sprung up. How strangely, and yet how naturally! There was nothing forced or strained in any way in the history of the chain of circumstances which had brought about the existing state of things. What could he do but assist this young lady as he had done in the painful situation in which he had found her at that first interview? What could he do but consult the relative under whose protection she was living, before he took any steps to trace this man, the dread of whom was so strongly impressed upon her mind? Then, again, with the natural guardian of these two helpless ladies suddenly removed from them, how could he do otherwise than offer his assistance in the matter which had brought him so frequently in contact with them; and to whom in their turn should Madame d'Elmar and her niece look more naturally than to the old friend and comrade in arms of their near relative and the person who was also mixed up in the very affair in connection with which they stood in need of both advice and assistance. Perhaps Trelane was something of a fatalist. Perhaps more of us are so than acknowledge it. Perhaps he thought that this intimacy *was to be*. At all events, he could see that it had been none of his seeking that the circumstances which had led to it had had an irresistible force in them, and that it was, strange

as it seemed, perfectly natural that that young lady should be then at his side, and that he, Henry Trelane, should be there to protect her, perhaps as much from her own fears as from any repetition of the alarm which had—— What's this?

A hand laid suddenly upon his arm; a stifled cry from Miss d'Elmar; a scream from Victorine, the *bonne*, as she suddenly moved forward and placed herself before her young mistress.

Trelane, who had been for some time plunged deeply, as we have seen, in reflection, brought back to the present by these sounds, looked hastily up, and saw before him the man who had unconsciously brought about the train of events with which his thoughts had just been occupied, standing in the path before him.

He had emerged suddenly from a narrow walk which joined that in which Trelane stood at right angles. The thick and closely cut hedge had prevented the stranger from seeing who was approaching, and had veiled the man himself from observation till the very moment when this meeting took place.

At sight of Trelane and the two women whom he accompanied, the stranger turned round to retrace his steps. The Englishman, however, without pausing to ask for an explanation of Miss d'Elmar's alarm, swiftly passed in front of him, and interrupted his retreat.

“What do you come in my way for?” said the

man, roughly. He spoke in the French language, but it did not appear to Trelane—for we notice these small things at moments of great emotion—that the words were uttered by a Frenchman. “What do you come in my way for?”

“Look at mademoiselle, there,” was the Englishman’s answer, “and you will know.”

“I know nothing of mademoiselle.”

She was standing trembling from head to foot, as she listened to this dispute. Trelane looked towards her, and that sight gave new force to his determination.

“This is the man?” he asked.

She did not speak.

“It is the man who addressed mademoiselle before,” interposed Victorine.

“Let me pass,” said the stranger, making a movement towards Trelane.

“I will not leave you till you are in custody,” was the answer.

The man stepped swiftly forward and tried to push Trelane on one side; and at the same moment, Miss d’Elmar, hastily advancing in an agony of fear, cried out to Trelane to let him go. The Englishman, however, was not to be persuaded from his intention, and a struggle of the most violent kind immediately commenced.

Trelane was no match, either in size or strength, for the stranger; but there was no time for any such

reflection, nor would it have had any weight at such a moment even if it had suggested itself. A righteous rage, that seemed to endow every muscle in his body with tenfold its real force, boiled in the Englishman's blood, and nerved with a momentary strength that was almost supernatural the arm with which he seized his antagonist by the throat and flung him against the trunk of one of the trees which grew at the entrance to the path where the encounter took place.

The advantage gained by Trelane was a brief one. Recovering quickly from the first bewildering effects of his fall, the stranger now flew upon him with the rage of a beast of prey. Encumbered by the hooded coat which has been so often mentioned—a garment of great size and weight, and the fastening of which, at the neck, appeared to have become so entangled that he could not at the moment undo it—he was in this trifling respect, and this alone, somewhat at a disadvantage, the Englishman being dressed in clothes which hampered his movements less. In every other respect the Frenchman or Italian, whichever he might be, was, as has been said, more than a match for his antagonist. His plan of attack too was different from what an Englishman is prepared for; his object seeming rather to overwhelm and crush his opponent with the hug of a bear, and with the tearing action of a wild beast, than to strike or wrestle with him. In this mode of attack the size and weight of the

stranger gave him immense advantages, and though Trelane was possessed of greater activity and youth, and was less encumbered by clothes, the struggle was still an unequal one, and it became more and more evident every moment how fearfully the odds were against him.

Meanwhile the young lady who was the cause of this terrible strife, overpowered and frightened as she necessarily was, had, however, presence of mind enough still left to know that the man who was involved in this struggle through his courage in helping and defending her was himself in great and immediate danger, and that her present duty was to do what in her lay to aid him, or rather to summon those who could. After a moment's hesitation on the part of Victorine at the thought of leaving her mistress alone at such a moment, the honest bonne set off at her utmost speed towards the keeper's lodge, which lay not far off, while Madeleine herself endeavoured, by loud and continuous cries, to draw to the spot any distant passer-by who might be within hearing. These efforts were not made in vain.

It was just when the struggle between Trelane and his antagonist was at its worst, and when the danger to the Englishman was most apparent, that a shout was heard answering the English lady's cries, and a man, who seemed to be one of the keepers of the gardens, appeared at the far end of the walk in which the two men were battling hand to hand, locked in

that deadly entwinement of enmity, which looks like some hideous mimicry of the warm embrace of friendship.

At sight of the new comer the stranger, while the man was still far distant, made a desperate effort to escape, and would, perhaps, have succeeded but for the encumbrance already spoken of, the heavy-hooded coat hanging from its fastening at the neck. Between this fastening and the throat which it encircled Trelane had obtained a hold, which he still kept, less by force of muscle than by that strength of will which supports the Englishman under the severest punishment, that dogged determination which renders him who possesses it almost insensible to pain, and which relaxes only with the approach of insensibility, or with the infliction of some mortal injury. The position in which the stranger found himself was becoming a desperate one, and, unhappily, the man who was placed in it was a desperate man.

“Will you let me go?” he gasped, getting the words out with difficulty.

“No,” was the answer.

For one instant Trelane saw a bright gleam of steel close to his eyes, and then he felt the cold air rushing almost, as it seemed, into his brain, through a wound that had laid his face open from the temple to the chin. He heard a woman's scream of agony from beside him; he knew that his hold had relaxed, that his opponent was gone, that his mouth was full of

some warm fluid which should not be there, that the icy air which seemed to blow through his face had found its way into his arm also, which was hanging at his side weak and useless; and then he knew, though he could not see plainly because of a strange film which was before his eyes, that there was a woman near him, that a handkerchief (the sweet smell of which he noted) was put to his face, that it was drenched in a moment, that the face of the woman who was gazing upon him so earnestly wore an expression which he had not seen on it before. And while he tried to understand all this, and to make some re-assuring movement towards her, he found that the ground was lifting and falling alternately beneath him; that it was turning round, that a deadly sickness was upon him, that the woman's face was changed into a man's, that some one was supporting him, that the trees which grew about the place were waving and swaying before him, that they were mixed up with the human figures which he saw, another man, and a bonne with a white cap; and surely he was being borne along—but how? Why, among the tree tops first, and then below the level of the ground; and then was he asleep, or what was it? And what was this place where more faces gathered round and bearded soldiers were about him, and more bandages were bound about his face and about the cold arm. Presently more movement forward; among houses now, but still alternately

high up among the roofs and chimneys, and then down again as if below the level of the pavement, and then more sleep; and after that a stoppage and a difficult ascent of many stairs, and then—and then——

The sensations thus dimly and confusedly felt by Major Trelane, have, as here described, probably conveyed to the reader some impression of what it is now my office to describe somewhat more intelligibly.

In the first place, it is necessary to insist very strongly on the fact that the scene, which it has taken the reader a comparatively long time to read, was in action only an affair of moments, and but very few of them; so that the man, who it has been mentioned appeared at the end of the path in which the struggle between Trelane and the stranger was taking place, had not made a dozen steps towards the scene of this strife before the blow was struck which brought it to an end. Trelane's opponent, finding it impossible to shake off the Englishman's hold, had pulled out a weapon which had previously been concealed, and striking at the arm which held him, had (so closely were the two men locked together) wounded the Englishman in the temple in the passage of the knife-blade to its destination.

The man, who had thus brought the struggle to a close, was out of sight before the scream which broke from the lips of Madeleine at the sight of his weapon had ceased to ring in the air, and long before

the arrival of the keeper, who was running as fast as he could towards the scene of this disastrous contest. The condition of Trelane, when this man reached the place, was such, that it was impossible to leave him, even to go in pursuit of the stranger; and the keeper, at Miss d'Elmar's earnest solicitation, remained to support him, and to assist in staunching the blood which flowed from the wounds in his face and shoulder in alarming quantities. The face which Trelane saw bending over him was the face of Madeleine d'Elmar, and in the expression which it wore, and which, even half-unconscious as he was, he had taken some confused note of, might have been read by any dispassioned person who had been at hand to study it something more than pity surely, and stronger even than gratitude.

It was not long before more help arrived, and Victorine, returning with another of the keepers, Trelane's wounds were bound up as well as circumstances allowed, with handkerchiefs, the bonne's apron, and some part of Miss d'Elmar's under-clothing torn hastily into strips. He was then supported to the nearest gate, where the bandages were newly adjusted, and the soldiers on duty were informed of what had happened, and supplied with a description of the man who had inflicted the injuries under which Trelane was suffering.

It was at this time that it became necessary for Miss d'Elmar to decide where the sufferer was to

be taken. But one course suggested itself to her ; but one seemed even possible. The house in which the apartments occupied by her aunt and herself were situated was not far from the gate at which they emerged. It was to that house that he must be taken. What her aunt might think she did not know. There was no one present to consult but Victorine, whose head was thoroughly lost in her despair at this accident, and who, of course, was not likely to see any objections to this proposal. Trelane himself, who had made several attempts to speak, both immediately after the reception of his injury and at subsequent periods, was unable to make himself understood. He had made great efforts to walk away from the spot which was the scene of the accident, and had for some time been able to do so, supported only on each side by the two keepers ; but latterly he had been quite unable to move, even so sustained, and at last, and by the time they had reached the house in the Rue Pompadour, had become so weakened by the great effusion of blood, as to be almost in a complete state of insensibility.

Miss d'Elmar now felt it necessary to hasten on and prepare her aunt for the painful surprise that awaited her. The story was told in a few words. The stranger had been encountered once more, a struggle had taken place between him and Trelane, in which the latter had been wounded. It was necessary that some place should be found immediately

where his wounds could be attended to; he was even now being brought up the stairs that led to their suite of apartments.

The astonishment and distress of Madame d'Elmar on hearing the account given by her niece of what had happened were unbounded. One thing, however, her niece was not prepared for, and this was an evident consternation and apprehensiveness on the part of her aunt, at hearing of the destination to which the sufferer was being brought. It was not so much from anything that was said, that the young lady gained the impression that her aunt was disquieted at the step which she had taken, as from the expression of alarm which she saw on Madame d'Elmar's countenance.

"Your uncle," said this lady, "I hope he will not be displeased. I must write to him at once."

There was, however, no time for reflection. The news of Trelane's approach had hardly been communicated, before the feet of the two men who were carrying him between them, were heard outside, and in another minute the sufferer had passed the door which communicated with the staircase, and was laid upon the bed in Madame d'Elmar's room, as unconscious of where he was as the pillow on which his head reposed.

The surgeon, who had been sent for by a messenger from the guard-house, was quickly in attendance, and the porter, who was in a state of the most violent excitement and curiosity, was hastily selected as

the fittest person to assist him in his examination of Trelane's wounds. These two then went into the room together, and the door was shut.

The two women, Madame d'Elmar and her niece, remained motionless, sitting on each side of the fire in the saloon which has been described as their ordinary sitting-room. Victorine was standing with the handle of the door in her hand, ready to be of use if she should be called. From time to time she uttered some exclamation of distress at what had happened, of apprehension as to what might be the nature of the injuries received by Trelane, or of admiration at the Englishman's courage. Neither of the two ladies spoke, but sat listening to the dull sounds which came from the adjoining apartment. Miss d'Elmar's dress, her sleeves and hands were covered with stains of blood; she seemed, however, quite unconscious of this. Her aunt's gaze was fixed upon these stains; but it is a question whether she saw them.

Now and then, the door of the adjoining chamber would be opened, and orders would be given for fresh supplies of water, for clothes, or lint; after which, all would be quiet again for a while.

Presently a message came that the elder lady was required in the next room, and Madeleine was left alone. When her aunt returned she had no intelligence to give of Trelane's condition. She had been sent for merely to give out some linen that was

wanted for bandages, and which was in a drawer in her apartment. She had not even seen the sufferer, the surgeon was leaning over the bed and concealing him from view.

Another long, long interval, and then the door is heard to open again, and immediately afterwards Victorine appears and announces that Doctor Leboeuf wishes to see the ladies of the house. He is instantly admitted.

Doctor Leboeuf is an admirable specimen of the old learned French doctor. He is a short, stoutly-built man of about fifty or sixty years of age, with closely-cut hair and a thick beard, both of which were once intensely black, but are now much grizzled with grey hairs. Doctor Leboeuf wears spectacles, which are so strong that his eyes, as you look at them through these glasses, are extraordinarily diminished in size. He exists behind these spectacles as if he were intrenched within fortifications and is impregnable. You cannot get at him for these glasses. They keep you quite in the dark as to his real opinion, and you are obliged to put up with what he chooses to tell you, and to make the best of it. They are a great professional property to him.

Doctor Leboeuf is very cautious in delivering his opinions. He darts one look at Madame d'Elmar, and instantly knows the whole history of her constitution. He knows where the shoe pinches as well

as the wearer. He knows all about her tendencies to asthma, and where that particular loose screw in her frame is oscillating in its socket. Another glance shows him the white lips and the pale cheeks of the niece as she sits breathless and trembling, awaiting his verdict. He knows all about her, too, what year it was when she had the measles, how much the sanguine or the nervous preponderates in her temperament, what increased action of the heart it is that has left the lips so bloodless and the cheek so white. All these matters he makes himself master of as he takes a seat, and a great many more.

Doctor Lebœuf, in spite of the fierceness of his appearance, which is very great, and which is produced by a combination of the beard, the spectacles, and a gravity which is never relaxed, whatever may be the nature of the conversation—Doctor Lebœuf is, in spite of these things, the most amiable and considerate of human beings. It is evident he is not going to say much about his patient before Miss d'Elmar.

“Monsieur will do very well, no doubt; but why doesn't mademoiselle go and get rid of the stains upon her dress? She is ill herself and the sight of those stains makes her worse. Oh, certainly she must go and get them off her.” And before the young lady knows what she is about, Doctor Lebœuf has handed her to the door, and closing it on her, has hastened back to his seat, which he resumes,

and sits waiting in silence for Madame d'Elmar to begin cross-examining him.

Even now, though much questioned by that lady, he is not to be persuaded to enlarge upon the case. He is provokingly full of questions himself. He wants to know all about the accident. His curiosity is unbounded. His notion of gratifying the curiosity of others most limited. Victorine is sent for, and questioned at length by the doctor in her own language. "She was not present when the blow was struck. She had gone in search of help. When she returned, the man by whom the wound was inflicted had got away." "How was that?" says the doctor. "It was impossible," the girl continues, "for the keeper who came, attracted by her mistress's cries, to pursue him, because he was wanted to assist in supporting Monsieur Trelane. The other keeper, on his arrival, was also obliged to remain for the same purpose, it being important to get him removed as soon as possible, the blood flowing so fast. At the gate full particulars had been given of the strange man's appearance, and messengers were despatched to search the park, and others to the railway station, to give directions for the arrest of such a person, if he appeared there.

"But, Monsieur le Médecin," says the poor girl at last, in desperation, "why do you not answer the questions of madame about this brave gentleman's wound, instead of asking how he got it?"

"Quite necessary that I should know," says the doctor; "now go and help mademoiselle to get rid of her stains, and see, there is one upon your own cap-ribbon—one upon your own cap-ribbon!"

With this Doctor Leboeuf goes out of the apartment and into the bed-room, to take another look at his patient.

On his return he gives the usual directions. "The gentleman must be kept quiet, perfectly quiet; must not speak. The porter and his wife, who are constituted his nurses, have received directions what to do."

"But, sir," Madame d'Elmar asks, "is his injury a dangerous one? at least tell me that."

"Impossible to say; can't tell before night. The wound in the shoulder is in a slanting direction towards the chest, has narrowly missed a vital part, but it *has* missed it. There is every prospect of his doing well, but it is not certain."

"One more question," the lady says she *must* ask. "When is it probable he will be fit to be moved?" She speaks with much hesitation.

"Quite impossible to say," the doctor answers, "everything depends upon the night which he passes." The doctor will call in the evening, if any bad symptoms appear, they are to send for him at once.

"What bad symptoms?"

"Feverish symptoms. He may become feverish

and delirious. He is quite in his senses now. But night in such cases is the trying time."

With this the doctor departed, and this was all the information which Madame d'Elmar had to give to her niece, who hastened back into the room directly the doctor had left it.

"Aunty, darling aunty," the girl said as she threw herself down at Madame d'Elmar's knees, and put her arms about her neck, "you don't think I have done wrong in bringing *him* here, do you?"

"I don't see how you could do otherwise, my child," was the lady's answer; "I am only afraid of what your uncle may say. You know how quietly he wishes you to live."

"What could I do, aunty, so brave, so careful of me?"

"How strangely it has all been brought about," said her aunt, musingly, and as if talking to herself, "how strangely, how inevitably. I ought not perhaps to have allowed her to go out. It was so hard to look at her and see her suffer, but I am afraid it was wrong."

Madeleine raised herself upon her knees, and looked into her aunt's face.

"He is very good," she said, "he is very good, aunty. How can you have done wrong? you will nurse him, aunty, won't you? and I will help you, when I may."

Madame d'Elmar drew her niece's face towards

her, and kissed her. There was little in the action, but it loosened the pent-up emotion which had been so long restrained in the girl's bosom, and she threw herself upon her aunt's neck in an agony of tears.

"God grant no harm may come of it," said the elder lady; "God grant it—God grant it!"

CHAPTER IX.

STILL IN DANGER.

DOCTOR LEBŒUF had rightly stated that Trelane was now in possession of his senses. He was, however, though conscious of what was going on around him, in that sort of dreamy weakened state, that left him almost indifferent to everything but rest. In this condition he remained till the evening began to draw on, when, as the doctor had predicted might be the case, a certain restlessness began to show itself, very painfully combined with an effort at self-control, which became, with every advancing half-hour, of less and less avail.

When Doctor Lebœuf came in the evening, it was possible, in spite of the disguise of this accomplished but harmless dissembler, to perceive that he thought his patient worse.

“The fever is coming on, I am afraid?” asked Madame d’Elmar, who had been at various times into the room. The sufferer had at first tried to speak to her, and had even articulated some words expressive of his regret at the trouble he was giving, and of

anxious inquiry as to how her niece had borne the fright she had undergone. He had latterly, however, given no such demonstration of a recognition of her presence, and she even thought that she had detected certain tendencies to ramble in his words.

"The fever is coming on?" she inquired.

"Eh?" asked the doctor, apparently astounded at the question. "Eh? oh, no, a little hot perhaps and restless—a little hot and restless—but you mustn't mind that. Perhaps he'll talk nonsense, you know, now and then, but that's nothing—nothing at all. Who doesn't talk nonsense sometimes?"

"You mean that he will be delirious?"

"Oh, no, not delirious, a little abroad—hardly quite certain of what has happened to him—well, what of that? anybody might be so who had had an unpleasant accident. Why I hardly know myself where I am sometimes, you know, when I wake up from a horrible dream. There's nothing in that—nothing at all."

"What shall we do in such a case?" the lady asked.

"Oh, take no notice of it; take no notice. Don't let him talk if you can help it, because it will derange the bandage round his face. Now where does he live? because, you know, I must write off to his hotel at once, to say what has happened. They won't know what's become of him."

"I am afraid Doctor Lebeuf, your patient is worse than you allow?" said Madame d'Elmar.

“Oh, not a bit, not a bit. Now will you give me a sheet of paper, and I will write to the hotel-keeper at once. Thank you. There, ‘Monsieur Trelane vient de subir un accident un peu grave’ . . . Hum, ha, we must send this at once—where did you say; Hôtel du Helder, hein! a capital hotel, I know it perfectly. If he should get much worse, send for me at once, madame; I don’t mind getting up in the night the least; I rather like it, in fact. It makes one sleep so well afterwards. Hôtel du Helder—Rue du Helder—Boulevard des Italiens—voilà! Now, I’ll go and see him again. How is your young miss?”

“She is quiet and well now,” said Madame d’Elmar, “but I have advised her to keep her room just for the present.”

They had passed into the chamber in which the sufferer was laid, and spoke now in hushed tones as they approached his bed-side.

Trelane was lying with the arm on the uninjured side out of bed, and the fingers of it were constantly folding and unfolding the edge of the sheet in ceaseless motion. His eyes were closed, but as if by a violent effort. When the doctor and his companion approached, and bent over him, he opened them for a single moment, and then instantly violently closed them again. Doctor Lebœuf felt the pulse of the hand that lay outside the bed-clothes, but said nothing. He then peeped under the bandage, which was wound round Trelane’s face and head.

“The strapping holds well,” he said, “now the composing mixture, and let us hope a quiet night, after all.”

Still with that strange resoluteness *not* to wake, the sufferer when lifted up by the porter from the pillow, that he might swallow his medicine the better, kept his eyes firmly shut, and only opening them once when the glass touched his lips, sank back again upon the bed.

Who knows what was going on in his mind? what effort, what striving for the sanity which seemed temporarily endangered? There was something in the frown with which his brow was contracted, and the puckered lines about the eyelids, which told that this closing of the eyes was not a thing arising from drowsiness or exhaustion, but a question of force and of constraint.

“You will send for me,” the doctor said once more, as he was leaving, “you will send on the instant if he should become at all violent.”

“Violent?” said the lady, slowly.

“I do not say he *will* be violent, but he may. If the bandages should by hazard be stirred, or any new effusion of blood should take place, you will let me know at once. Meantime, remember, there is every prospect of his doing well, only he must not be left—on no account, left for a single instant. Now, courage, madame, and bon soir; I will see that the letter is sent off to Paris at once to Monsieur Trelane’s hotel. Bon soir, bon soir.”

For a short time the composing draught which Doctor Lebœuf had administered seemed to take effect. The movement in the sufferer's fingers gradually ceased, and he seemed to be at last fairly asleep. His breathing, it is true, was loud and hard, and his face wore still a locked and uneasy expression, but still he slept; there was no doubt of that, and his hostess felt justified in leaving him for a time with the porter's wife alone, to watch him and supply him, if necessary, with the drink which stood by his bed-side. The porter's wife, it had been arranged, should keep watch half through the night, and should then go down-stairs and send up her husband to take her place. It was no new thing for these good people to be employed in Madame d'Elmar's service: the wife ordinarily acting in the capacity of cook for this lady and her niece, and the porter himself being made generally useful in a variety of ways. The English lady, therefore, left Madame Charvet, which was the portress's name, in charge, with perfect confidence, while she herself went to lie down.

When Madame d'Elmar's apartment had been appropriated to the service of Major Trelane, a hasty arrangement had been made, by which the room ordinarily occupied by Victorine was made fit for her mistress's use. Victorine herself was to share the chamber of Miss d'Elmar, and it was to this apartment that Madame d'Elmar now turned her

steps, wishing to administer such comfort as she could to her niece before herself seeking the repose which her habitual ill-health, and all the alarm and confusion she had recently undergone, made so specially necessary.

The oath which slipped from my Uncle Toby in his distress at the thought of Lefevre's death, is said, by the Reverend Mr. Sterne (who ought to know) to have been blotted out by the recording angel's tear, as soon as it was written down. It is so surely with some acts of deceit. When Madame d'Elmar, in her wish to quiet her niece's alarm, gave a more favourable account of Trelane's condition than the state of the case exactly warranted, she was guilty of one of those deceptions which are lawful enough, and of one of those falsehoods which are so white as not to stain the brightest robe that innocence can wear.

On leaving her niece's apartment, Madame d'Elmar repaired to that which had been made ready for her own temporary occupation. It was in vain, however, that she sought for rest. There are conditions of the mind and body when the very fatigue and trouble which make sleep most necessary banish it most certainly from the worn-out eyelids that are so anxiously awaiting it. It was so in the present case with this anxious lady. It was in vain that she attempted to banish the thoughts which kept her awake, in vain that she cultivated those of a more

sedative character. She was at the mercy of her own mind, and her own mind was disposed to deal very mercilessly with her. The strange events of the day, and the thought of how they had terminated, the anxiety which the precarious condition of one who had incurred a great danger in the service of a member of her family, naturally awakened; all these things and many more occupied and distressed her mind, and served to keep her from her rest so completely that after half-an-hour of tossing restlessly in bed, she determined to abandon the sleep project for the present as hopeless, and to get up and do something.

Madame d'Elmar had not yet executed her intention of writing to her brother-in-law an account of what had happened, and she now determined to take this opportunity of doing so. There was no fire in the room which she was occupying, and, it being impossible to sit up without one, the English lady came to the conclusion that it would be her best plan to go and write her letter in her own apartment, which, it will be remembered, was that which had been temporarily appropriated to the use of Trelane. She would have her writing materials, too, and everything else that she wanted about her there, and, while she was engaged in her task, she might allow the portress, Madame Charvet, to take a nap in her easy chair.

Tired as she was, it was a positive relief to this

restless lady to be up and doing. She found Madame Charvet already dozing at her post; for it is one of the characteristics of sleep that it is ever ready to favour those persons who have little need of it, and especially at such times as they wish to be particularly on the *qui vive*. The wakefulness of Madame Charvet as soon as she became aware of her patroness's presence in the room was something almost supernatural. "She had not been asleep, oh, dear, no! she had been sitting with her eyes closed on account of the glare of the fire—her poor, weak eyes, she was constantly obliged to close them, but she was a bad sleeper, very. But how was it that madame was up? was she anxious about the wounded gentleman? Oh, he was quiet enough—he had not stirred."

Madame d'Elmar briefly explained that she had a letter of importance to write, and that as she could not sleep she had resolved to take the present moment for the performance of that duty. Madame Charvet had better avail herself of the opportunity to seek a little rest. The portress was most grateful. She had little hope of being able to sleep, she said, but she would try, as madame was so kind as to wish it, and compose herself.

Before settling herself to the task, Madame d'Elmar approached the bed on which Trelane lay, and stood for a while gazing in silence at the sleeping man. His condition seemed to have altered but

little since she last looked at him. A degree more of distress perhaps in the expression of his face; a more flushed and anxious look; a tumbled appearance about the sheet, where his hand lay upon it as if his fingers had been fidgeting again with the linen; his breathing, perhaps, a degree harder and quicker than it had been. This was all. Madame d'Elmar remained long by the bedside, and seemed absorbed in a most careful study of the countenance of the wounded man. Presently, she went to a cabinet which stood in the room, and, unlocking a drawer in it, brought out a miniature in a case, and, returning with it, opened it as she stood beside the bed. It was a well-executed miniature of the kind much in fashion at the earlier part of the present century, and was the portrait of a young and gallant-looking gentleman, in the dress of an officer in the navy. Madame d'Elmar seemed occupied in comparing this portrait with the countenance of Trelane. She examined it in all views, and even knelt down at last that she might see it in profile. She retained this position long after she had ceased to look at the face before her, and when she at last arose and left the bedside, she sighed with that broken interrupted sigh which comes only from the lips of those who have suffered, and suffered deeply.

The efforts of Madame Charvet to compose herself had been attended with such a measure of success, that Madame d'Elmar, on returning to the

fire-place, found that good lady in a condition of perfect and blissful unconsciousness. Drawing a table to the fire, and carefully shading the light, lest it should disturb Trelane's slumbers, the lady now unlocked her desk, and, seating herself with her back to the bed on which the sufferer lay, commenced writing. It is unnecessary to give a transcript of the letter which she wrote. It was, as has been said above, to her brother-in-law, and contained a faithful account of the growth of the intimacy between "his friend Major Trelane" and herself and niece. It also spoke of Trelane's kindness, and how he had supplied the place of their absent relative, and went on to a narration of the events of the day, and an announcement of the fact, that the wounded man lay at that moment in the room in which these very words were being written.

She had proceeded thus far with her letter, and was sitting thoughtfully gazing into the fire, turning over in her mind the things which it was yet needful she should communicate to d'Elmar, when she suddenly heard these words uttered in a voice of agonized entreaty,—

"Alfred! Come back!"

Madame d'Elmar, scared and alarmed, turned quickly round, and saw that Trelane had moved, and was evidently awakening from his feverish sleep. His hand was moving uneasily, and passing from time to time swiftly across his forehead, as a man would

drive away some obstacle that hindered his sight from before his eyes. Alas, there was before the eyes of his mind a mist, which thickened as he tried to clear it.

Madame d'Elmar rose from her seat and moved to the bedside. Trelane opened his eyes for a moment and looked eagerly at her, but evidently not recognizing who she was. Closing his eyes again, he turned his head away; still the same expression of force about the shutting of the eyes; still the same action of the hand across and across the forehead. Presently he began to mutter to himself again, speaking, however, less intelligibly than he had done when he uttered the words which first attracted the English lady's attention.

"Come back," he said, "she's not worth such sorrow."

One would have thought that the care-worn and anxious face of Madame d'Elmar would hardly have admitted of a change that could make it look more care-worn and more anxious. And yet such a change seemed to pass over it as these words reached her. She turned, and went back to the fire-place where she had been before, but remained standing, and with her face towards the bed. Trelane continued to mutter still in the same manner, and the action of his hand did not cease.

"Her name was—what was it?" he cried, presently. "It was—it was—RACHEL!"

Madame d'Elmar started, not as one starts in surprise, but as one who has a settled pain in some diseased nerve, winces when a sudden touch or pressure increases the torture by a degree more.

"Oh! why has this come upon me?" she said, in a voice of agony. "Why has this sorrow found me out again after so long?"

"He died in the frost and snow," said the voice, with less violence. "Whose fault was that?"

These last words, uttered in a loud and harsh key, awakened Madame Charvet, who, starting suddenly up, inquired what had happened, and seeing Trelane evidently much excited, hastened to the bedside.

"Oh, mon Dieu!" she cried; "he is tearing at the bandage on his face."

There was no time for thought. Madame d'Elmar was by his side in a moment.

"Quick," she cried. "Not an instant is to be lost; run at once for Doctor Lebœuf, and send your husband here."

Madame Charvet was out of the room in a moment.

Trelane's position was now sufficiently alarming. His speech was becoming constantly more and more incoherent, and seemed to indicate that his mind was running upon other things than those which had occupied it when Madame d'Elmar's attention was first attracted by the words quoted above. His restlessness, too, was much greater, and showed itself in a disposition to pluck and tear at the band-

age round his face. He seemed now inclined to rave about scenes of violence and mischance, and the memory of many hair-breadth escapes encountered in his previous military career, and of emergencies in which he had been involved in great dangers in distant lands, were present to him, as if occurring at that moment,—present, too, with all that added horror which our dreams give to real scenes, and with that hampering and confusing sense, pervading all, of impossibility, of fettered inaction, in moments when life depends on swift despatch. It was curious, that though the dangers to be encountered in the trenches before Sebastopol, and the treacherous cruelties connected with Indian warfare, were present in his mind, yet the accident of the day which had revived these memories bore no part in his ravings. No word alluding to the events of the past day passed his lips: no such figure as that of the man who had inflicted the injury under which he was suffering, haunted his vision.

The hand with which Trelane was now constantly endeavouring to free his head and face from the bandage which enveloped it, was burning hot when Madame d'Elmar tried to hold it. The head that those bandages fretted and distressed so much, was hotter yet. The fever was at its height, and it was a great relief to the frightened lady when Monsieur Charvet appeared.

Monsieur Charvet, the porter, accustomed to be

disturbed at all hours, possessed the quality, which such habits invariably give, of never being surprised or seriously discomposed at anything. At his wife's summons, he had tumbled out of bed in an instant and, having taken off nothing but his jacket and shoes when he went he rest, came ready for action in a moment. There are hundreds of such men as these in France, pale, phlegmatic men, strangers to refreshing sleep, who live in a perpetual atmosphere of keys with labels, numbered candlesticks, and brooms. They slumber with the string that opens the door in their hands; they open to you at your ringing; they see who you are through a little pane of glass; as you light your numbered candle, they call to you if you take a wrong candlestick, and all apparently without waking. The fact is, they are never fairly asleep, and never thoroughly awake. They are fluey and sallow in their appearance; they always wear aprons, but never have a clean one, and are almost invariably civil to strangers.

It was such a person who now came to Madame d'Elmar's assistance. One would have thought, to judge by his manner, that his life had been passed in hospital practice, so little did he appear to be discomposed or bewildered by this sudden call from his own pillow to that of a man raving in a fevered delirium. It was certainly time that some assistance arrived. Madame d'Elmar's strength was wholly insufficient, even to moderate the force with which

the poor sufferer was pulling at his bandages, and the blood was beginning to show again on the linen about his temple, proving, beyond doubt, that the strapping had been damaged.

"Leave me," he gasped, as the porter forced him down, and bringing his arm to his side, held it there with all his weight. "I'll have this bandage off. They want to blind me."

The porter, with all his force, could hardly master one of Trelane's arms. The other arm was the wounded one, or rather that on the same side with the shoulder into which the knife had entered. Trelane now began to make great efforts to move this arm also.

"Let me go," he cried; "they are binding me for their tortures. Torture me if you will, but you shan't bind me."

More struggling, and as it seemed with the growing fever an increase of force. It was almost more than the porter could do to maintain a hold at all.

"They want to blind my eyes, I tell you, before they blow me from a gun," cried Trelane. The punishment inflicted on the mutineers in India seemed now, by a curious confusion of ideas, to be threatening himself. No doubt the fearful memory of the infliction of this penalty, of some death by this terrific mode of execution, was revived by the fever and the horror associated with himself.

"Let me go," he shrieked, once more, "I WILL SEE."

And with one tremendous and irresistible effort, he broke from the porter, and tearing once more at the bandage, would most certainly have succeeded in another instant in freeing himself from it, had not the practised hand of Doctor Lebœuf at that moment seized him firmly by the arm, and forced him down upon the bed, from which he was just about to spring.

Doctor Lebœuf was followed, when he entered the apartment, by an elderly man, apparently occupying the position of his servant. He was, however, more than this. He was the doctor's factotum and familiar spirit, filling the offices of valet, assistant-surgeon, dispenser of medicine, cook, and housekeeper; all in one. Doctor Lebœuf, fearing from Madame Charvet's account that his patient might be in danger of becoming violent, had brought this man with him as an assistant.

Meanwhile, as may be supposed, the noise and confusion which had been going on in the house had not failed to reach the apartment occupied by Miss d'Elmar and Victorine. The latter had ascertained from Madame Charvet the real state of the case, and though she had endeavoured to soften it as much as possible in speaking of it to her young mistress, this young lady had learnt enough to know that the danger to which Trelane had been subjected by his gallantry in her service, was only now at its height, and that the worst was far from being over. Miss d'Elmar knew this, but she knew also that a season like this

was not the time for her to think of herself. She *must* restrain herself; she must not give way; she must give trouble at such a time to no one. Who shall say what she suffered as she sat listening to the noises which broke the stillness of that dreadful night?—the hurried steps of Madame Charvet; the shutting of the staircase-door behind her; the arrival of the porter; his entrance into the bed-chamber; the muffled sounds of voices; the arrival at last of Doctor Lebœuf, and the sound audible at *last*, even in the room in which she sat, of the harsh and altered voice of Henry Trelane. We may not venture to say yet what were her feelings towards this man, or what strength those feelings gained with every new circumstance which forged a fresh link in the chain of events which bound those two together. We may not enter at present on a consideration of all the emotions which during the long hours of that sleepless night found a place in this girl's pure and virgin breast, perhaps she could not have told them herself; but in the figure of that trembling speechless woman, in her enforced quietness, her compelled inaction, we may surely read something that will tell us the real condition of her heart.

When Doctor Lebœuf, assisted by his servant and by Monsieur Charvet, had succeeded in forcing Trelane back upon his pillow, the skilful assistant whom the doctor had brought with him, and whom we have just described, occupied himself in re-adjusting the

bandage about the sufferer's head. There was no diminution in Trelane's efforts to get free or in the obvious violence of the fever which boiled in his veins, and the doctor after looking at him for a moment, and feeling his pulse, took Madame d'Elmar aside and spoke to her thus,—

“Madame will do well now to join the young ‘miss’ in the next apartment, who is doubtless in want of her attention. Before she goes, however, it is necessary that I should inform madame, as one in authority, that I am going to take a step which may seem strange to madame, but which I consider imperatively necessary.”

“What are you going to do?” asked the lady.

“I am going,” said the doctor, “to bleed this gentleman.”

“To bleed him?” cried Madame d'Elmar.

“To bleed him!” the doctor replied.

“What!” said the lady, emboldened by surprise into arguing on a medical matter with a medical authority, “what! bleed a man who has already lost so much blood as this poor gentleman has? You will pardon my saying so to a gentleman who doubtless knows, but it seems to me most extraordinary.”

“It is because it must appear so, madame,” the doctor answered, “that I owe it to you to say that I have done so before in the case of a gentleman wounded in a duel, with great success, and that

it is a practice highly approved in certain cases only, be it understood, and under certain restrictions, by the highest medical authorities in Paris."

Madame d'Elmar hesitated for a moment, and looked towards the bed. The sufferer was struggling violently in the hands that held him, and words such as those already quoted, but much more rapidly uttered, were following one another in dreadful and inextricable confusion.

"You believe this step to be necessary?" said Madame d'Elmar, hastily.

"I will not answer for the consequences," answered the doctor, "if it is omitted."

"Then in God's name try it," said the lady, "and may He grant that your work may prosper."

With that she left the room, and the doctor closed the door behind her.

Much depended on the events of the next few minutes.

When Madame d'Elmar left the room in which the conversation just narrated took place, she went at once to the apartment occupied by her niece, and there the three women—the aunt, the niece, and the servant—sat in speechless anxiety, awaiting the first intelligence which was to be had of the effect of Doctor Lebeauf's new remedy, and trying to find hope and comfort in each other's faces.

They were destined to remain long in suspense. For some time the muffled sounds that came from

the adjoining room proved that there was still some degree of stir and movement among its occupants, but after a while these sounds ceased, and there was a great quietness. There seemed some hope in this, since it was an evidence, at any rate, that the violence of Trelane's ravings had abated, as, had it been otherwise, his voice must have infallibly made itself heard. With this poor amount of comfort, Miss d'Elmar and her aunt were compelled to content themselves, as they watched through the first half-hour that succeeded Doctor Lebœuf's announcement of his apparently desperate determination, noting the slow movement of the clock upon the chimney-piece, and listening to the tick with which it proclaimed the death of each succeeding second. Who has not occupied himself at such times with such sounds, and really, strange as it seems to say so, with little else? Who has not formed the click which he is listening to so eagerly, into a refrain, into words, or a tune? Who has not, with some hideous anxiety preying upon his mind, found that mind entirely busied with defining what are the different kinds of ticks by which different time-pieces are characterized? how there are some clocks that tick gaily, and apparently even (though, of course, it is not so) quicker than others, recording in high spirits the flight of the minutes, enjoying themselves thoroughly, and careless altogether how the time slips by, while there

are other clocks whose tick is of a business-like, methodical quality, measuring the time out justly and calmly, and others yet which try to arrest each cog of the wheel of time as it passes, with passionate force, and note each second as it breaks away in its resistless strength with a little cry of sorrow.

It was to the ticking of a clock such as this last described that Madame d'Elmar and her niece were listening. For some time they bore the suspense in which they were kept with some degree of patience; but when the first half-hour was succeeded by another, and then by another, and still no news reached them, the delay became wholly insupportable, and Madame d'Elmar, at the earnest entreaty of her niece, left the apartment, and knocked gently at the door of that in which the sufferer lay.

This summons was replied to after a short delay by Madame Charvet, who came out of the room, closing the door softly behind her.

"Well?" asked the lady, eagerly.

"He is quiet now," said the portress.

"Yes, but how is he? and why did you leave us so long with no bulletin of the patient?"

"Monsieur le Médecin," answered Madame Charvet, "thought it better you should hear nothing till a more decidedly favourable report could be brought to you."

"He is worse, then?"

"No," said the portress, "he is perfectly quiet; but he has now sunk very low, and Monsieur Lebœuf is watching anxiously the effect of certain restoratives which he is administering, but very cautiously."

"Doctor Lebœuf will not leave him?" asked Madame d'Elmar.

Just as this question was put, the door of the chamber in which Trelane lay was once more opened, and Morlot, the doctor's servant, came out of the room, shutting the door after him.

"Monsieur le Médecin," he said, in answer to Madame d'Elmar's question, "will remain with the wounded gentleman throughout what is yet left of the night."

"How is he?" the lady asked, hoping to get more information from this initiated person.

"He is tranquil, at present," said Monsieur Morlot.

"But is he better?" she asked again.

"His condition is more composed than when madame was in the room."

"But is he in any immediate danger?" urged Madame d'Elmar.

Madame must excuse him, Monsieur Morlot answered. He was really not able to answer that question. He was, madame would remember, not a doctor himself, but merely the doctor's servant. He was even now sent by his master for certain

drugs, and as there was great need for them, madame must excuse him if he left her somewhat abruptly.

Monsieur Morlot had disappeared silently and swiftly almost before the sentence he had uttered was completed, and Madame d'Elmar was compelled to return to her niece with no more extensive or definite information than that which the reader has just heard. She did not leave Madame Charvet, however, without first extracting a promise from her that she should have instant intelligence of any change either for the better or the worse in the condition of the patient directly it occurred. The portress undertook that her husband, who was to remain in the room while she went for a while below, should communicate from time to time with madame, and went back into the room to impress him with the necessity of doing so, while madame herself returned to her niece's apartment.

The night wore on, the long November night, with little change in Trelane's condition. At intervals of about an hour Monsieur Charvet appeared according to agreement with his report; but for some time there was little variation in it, and the patient was still alternately restless or sunk in a sort of stupor. It was not till that period when the morning, beginning to advance, generally brings sleep to the most sleepless, and ease to the most uneasy pillow, that there was any change of importance to communicate; and then it was that Madame d'Elmar learnt

from the lips of Dr. Leboeuf himself, that his patient had at last sunk into a quiet and refreshing sleep. The honest doctor had, till this time, kept out of sight, and had seemed unwilling, till he had some good news to communicate, to encounter the anxious faces of the English lady and her niece. When he at last entered the room in which they were sitting, it was evident that his mind was very much more at ease than when Madame d'Elmar had last seen him.

“Eh, mon Dieu!” he said, with his usual provoking readiness to talk about anything but the case in hand; “what is this, mademoiselle? up and dressed already?”

“She has been up all night,” said Madame d'Elmar.

“Up all night,” cried the doctor, “and why?”

“We were so anxious and disturbed,” the young lady said, smiling, “that I thought it useless to go to bed; but now that you bring a better report, I shall lie down for a while.”

“Lie down; you ought to have been lying down all this time; you will destroy your complexion, have lines in your face, black marks under your eyes, all sorts of horrors, if you do this sort of thing. Come, you must go to bed at once; it is half-past six and dark as midnight, so you must pretend it is yet night, and not remember for a moment that the industrious world is up and doing. Bah! I also, like

a lazybones, am going home for a snooze just as honest people are getting up."

"And you think your patient may now be left with safety?" asked Madame d'Elmar.

"Most certainly," said the doctor. "There is my familiar spirit, too, Monsieur Morlot, who is a deal cleverer than I am, and he, who never wants sleep or anything else that ordinary mortals require, will remain with your Englishman while the porter takes himself off to his morning avocations."

"And we women can be of no use at all?"

"Of none whatever. There is but one thing to be done, which is to keep these apartments quiet that nothing may disturb his sleep, on which everything depends, and which should be prolonged as much as possible. I shall be here the first thing to-morrow—for we must keep up our fiction that it is still yesterday night—the first thing to-morrow ready to greet monsieur at his waking."

The doctor took his leave, and Madame d'Elmar and her niece lay down, as he had suggested, to take a little repose. As to Victorine, she had for some hours been fast asleep in a great arm-chair, in which state of unconsciousness she was mercifully allowed to remain.

When Trelane awoke, late on the morning succeeding his accident, he was, though in the last degree exhausted and weak, free from fever and in

the possession of his senses. He was, however, perfectly torpid, and in that state of debility in which sleep is succeeded by a kind of stupor which is hardly to be called a waking condition. All danger was now over; the almost desperate remedy applied by Dr. Lebœuf had perfectly answered, and nothing remained now for him to do except to keep his patient quiet and to get up the strength which had sunk so deplorably low.

This was, of course, a work of time. It was some days before Trelane was even allowed to sit up, and the slightest tendency to conversation on his part was for some time carefully repressed.

Meanwhile the police authorities had been busy in their endeavours to discover some traces of the stranger by whom the wounds from which Trelane was suffering had been inflicted. Their efforts had been hitherto in vain, and though constantly backwards and forwards at the house in the Rue Pompadour, it was rather to obtain information than to bring it that their visits were made. In all these arrangements the worthy doctor was of immense service to the two ladies, and with his ready good humour and constant cheerfulness soon became a great favourite in the house.

Once every day at first, but latterly somewhat oftener, Madame d'Elmar paid a visit to her guest. She was herself far from well. The shock and alarm which recent occurrences had caused her had

told upon her weak and nervous frame, and she was frequently obliged to spend much of her time lying down in the room which had been temporarily appropriated to her use. The same disturbance and trouble, which have been already described as manifesting themselves in her earlier interviews with Trelane, were, since the night when she had been so powerfully agitated by his delirious raving, more distressing than ever. Under such circumstances as those which caused Trelane's presence in the house, it was, indeed, impossible for this lady to be otherwise than most kind and grateful in her attendance upon him; but there was a suggestion of constraint and of something amiss about these interviews which Trelane could not fail to perceive.

"My dear doctor," he said one day when his medical attendant was just on the point of leaving him, after his usual daily visit. "My dear doctor, when do you give me permission to move and restore this apartment once more to its rightful owner?"

"Speak to me," cried the little man, "of the restlessness of some people! Here is a man with every comfort about him, and a house-full of people devoted to his service, and he wants to escape from it all."

"I want," Trelane answered, "to let Madame d'Elmar have once more the use of her own bed-chamber; a privilege out of which I have already—especially in her delicate health—kept her too long."

"You must keep her out of it then a little longer

yet," said the doctor; "it would be insanity for you to think of moving your quarters at present; but as a small relief I'll tell you what you shall do—you shall move to-morrow into the next room, the sitting-room, where you may in future spend your days. That will be more cheerful for you, and if you are not satisfied then, heaven help you!"

When Madame d'Elmar heard of Trelane's scruples about occupying her apartment, she hastened at once to reassure him, informing him that arrangements had been made by which the room she temporarily occupied had been rendered excessively comfortable, and that as it now was, with a good fire and with all the things she chiefly needed about her, she was as well off as she desired to be.

The day on which Trelane was first permitted to move from the bed-room to the salon was so far memorable, that it was the occasion of his first interview with Miss d'Elmar since the occurrence of the events which had thrown him wounded and helpless on the hospitality of her aunt and herself.

CHAPTER X.

A QUIET CHAPTER.

FROM the moment when Doctor Lebœuf sanctioned the removal of his patient from the bed-room to the sitting-room, the meetings between our hero and Miss d'Elmar were very frequent.

Every day, generally in the afternoon, Madeleine came from her aunt's apartment, where she passed the greater portion of her time, and sat for a while—Victorine being one of the party—in the salon, which was the room occupied by Trelane. Here Trelane passed his time chiefly in reading, and occasionally in writing such letters as were rendered necessary by his prolonged absence from England. These were not numerous, and related chiefly to matters of business, and to the management of a certain small property which, though a younger son, was entirely his, having been bequeathed to him by an aunt with whom Henry had always been a great favourite. As to his communications with his family, these were of a perfectly affectionate kind, but cer-

tainly neither very frequent nor very lengthy. Trelane had, as most men have, a dread of letter-writing, and this weakness of his was well understood by his family. The members of it were all devotedly attached to our hero, but they only expected a letter now and then, and at rare intervals. They liked to hear from him, to know that he was well and enjoying himself. More was not expected.

Trelane then had little to trespass on his attention or occupy his thoughts. The visits of the excellent Doctor Lebœuf were now more rare than they used to be; the occasions of his seeing Madame d'Elmar were also unfrequent; so that even as affording a change in the monotony of his existence only, the opportunities which he enjoyed from time to time of seeing and talking to his younger hostess would have been very precious. But this was not all. We have said that from the first Trelane had been powerfully interested in the young English girl, anxious always to know more of her, and to gain opportunities of seeing and associating with her. As these had become more numerous, Trelane had got to value them more, and to feel grateful to the remarkable chain of circumstances which had so strangely linked his lot with that of Madeleine d'Elmar, and, above all, to the happy chances which had enabled him on more than one occasion to assist and serve her.

Swiftly, indeed, had intimacy sprung up between

these two persons, and swiftly had the interest and admiration which Trelane had felt from the beginning developed, now that he knew Madeleine better, into feelings of a warmer and more tender sort.

And Madeleine—what did she feel? Was it gratitude to the man who had protected her? Was it interest in one who had been of late so often her companion? Was it curiosity such as might naturally be awakened by her meeting with almost the first specimen of an English gentleman she had ever seen? There was more than this. Bound to him by great obligations, taught by circumstances of a most remarkable kind to look to him for protection, and to find it—she loved him.

She loved him!

Troubled and perplexed in her mind, hardly conscious of the meaning of her own most new and strange sensations, uninitiated in the lore of the circulating libraries, untaught except by her own fine and unerring instinct—she loved him. What was this man? Were others like him? Were others so strong, so great, so high in tone and aspiration, so perfect in achievement? Surely not. She loved him so humbly, too. She would like to sit at his feet and learn of him and be made wise by him.

There was something in the love of Madeleine d'Elmar of that wonder which belongs to seclusion. When the knight comes for the first time into the

presence of Undine, when Miranda sees Ferdinand, these untaught maidens worship and wonder at once and without disguise. There is infinite loveliness in this. And there was little disguise; there could be little in Madeleine's love for Henry Trelane; there was a great change in the girl. Compared with her former existence, her life now seemed to be so strong, so intense, so enjoyable. Her spirits rose, her power of appreciating all things seemed to increase, she had a new regard for every one about her. And yet the house to some might have seemed a dull one. There was sickness in it. Trelane himself was miserably weak and suffering. Madame d'Elmar was ill, and her spirits, at all times much subdued, had now less buoyancy than ever. And yet Madeleine was happy, radiantly, wonderfully happy.

For *he* was there. Yes, she had got her prize in her own keeping. When she lay down at night, the pure girl thought that the same roof was over Henry Trelane and herself; when she woke in the morning, a great joy and happiness of some kind broke upon her, as if the sun-light was streaming into the room. "He was there. She would see him before long—see and speak to him."

The days, then, of Trelane's convalescence were to two people days of great, if quiet, enjoyment. When the hour arrived for Miss d'Elmar's visit, the major's papers and books were thrust aside

bodily, together with the small table on which they lay, and which, with his invalid fauteuil, occupied one side of the vast fireplace. It must be owned that Trelane's appearance was somewhat forlorn. He had wasted a good deal. The fever and loss of blood had weakened him. His hands were unnaturally white and transparent-looking. Then one of his arms was bound tightly to his side, lest by any sudden movement the wound in his shoulder, now cicatrised over, should be disturbed; and for the same reason his face was bound up, and in a great measure concealed from sight. There was then only half a very pale face, three quarters of a moustache, and nearly the whole of two rather sunken eyes, visible. Trelane was unshorn, and his hair was tangled and deranged, as is generally the case with the *coiffures* of those who are obliged to recline much on a pillow. His clothes hung loosely about him, and his coat was cut distinctly in half, having been used in that unceremonious way when it was originally necessary to take it off without disturbing his injured shoulder.

And yet that forlorn figure, how did it show in the eyes of Madeleine d'Elmar? Ah! you might have brought the best got-up dandy at that moment prancing along the Avenue de l'Impératrice, or the handsomest guardsman from the Row, and planted him there beside our disfigured friend, and Madeleine would have eyes neither for one nor the other.

When Miss d'Elmar entered the room, it was Trelane's custom to rise and take her hand, and to answer in a very few words her inquiries after his health. It was the custom of Victorine, too, and one from which she never by any chance departed, to cast up her eyes to the ceiling at sight of him, to heave a great sigh, and exclaim, " Ah, mon Dieu ! "

As soon as Miss d'Elmar was seated, and had produced her work, Trelane would get back into his fauteuil, and try to talk a little. He was, however, strictly forbidden to speak more than was absolutely necessary. The cut, which it has been said extended almost from the temple to the chin on one side of his face, had affected, to some extent, the salival gland, and this being a serious injury and one peculiarly difficult to heal, it was necessary to use the extremest caution lest the hardly-closed wound should break out again. So Miss d'Elmar, knowing this, felt it incumbent on her to do the talking as much as possible, and exerted herself in her simple way accordingly to the utmost.

There was her aunt's health to tell about. There was the last report of the learned Doctor Lebœuf to be discussed, together with all that he had said about his patient; the hopes he had held out of Trelane's being able to get abroad and take the air; his goodness and tyranny to be commented on. And sometimes it would even happen that matters of a more domestic sort would, for a moment, come forward,

and that Trelane would be privileged to listen to some snatches of conversation between Miss d'Elmar and her confidential servant on household mysteries, and other matters of a like delicate nature.

It was on one of these occasions that a new performer of one of the smaller parts in our little drama was brought for the first time on the scene.

It happened, that after a short pause in the conversation, Miss d'Elmar had inquired of her maid whether a certain warm dress, which she stood in need of, had been brought home. It was wanted, by-the-by, to take the place of one which, on that terrible day in the garden of Versailles, had become so stained and spoilt as to be no longer available for Madeleine's use.

"Mademoiselle," said the bonne, in reply to Miss d'Elmar's question, "it is no use denying the fact that Ponsard's behaviour is disgraceful."

"What, she has not brought it home, then?"

"No, mademoiselle, and what is worse, she is off on one of her expeditions to Paris. She was, by rights, to be back the first thing this morning. I have not heard whether she has arrived though."

"Madame Ponsard is certainly the most tiresome woman in the world. Do you know, Major Trelane," continued Madeleine, "that I have fallen into the hands of a dressmaker who tries my patience sadly. She is the most unpunctual and provoking person possible, and yet I can't make up my mind to give

her up; in fact, I cannot help, in spite of her defects, taking a sort of interest in her."

"That woman is the strangest mixture," continued Miss d'Elmar, after a short pause. "She is at times wonderfully steady and industrious, in fact, is generally so; but every now and then she has a sort of wild attack of spirits, when, as she says herself, she feels as if she *must* enjoy herself a little. After all, her enjoyments are of the most harmless kind."

"Dressing up and dancing," suggested the bonne.

"Yes," continued her mistress, "and, perhaps, an occasional ride on a wooden horse in a roundabout, and a visit to the play. But the worst of it is, that these fits may come upon her at any moment, and whatever the amount of work she may have on her hands, off she goes; her customers may get on as they can."

"She is very good to her old mother, *mademoiselle*," said Victorine.

"It was that which first drew my attention to her," Madeleine went on. "I used often to meet her on the staircase here, for you must know that she lives in this house, at the very top of it, and I always noticed that among the vegetables and other matters which she brought from market, there was invariably a bunch of flowers. They were cheap ones of course, a great lump of wall-flowers, a bundle of anemones, marigolds, anything that looked bright, and was to be had for a few sous. One day I spoke to her on

the stairs. 'You seem very fond of flowers.' 'Yes, mademoiselle,' she answered, 'they cheer one up a little at one's work.' So I asked her what her work was, and then she told me that she was a dress-maker, and then I asked the porter's wife downstairs about her, and she told me that these flowers were really got, not for Ponsard's enjoyment, but for that of the old woman, her mother; but I am tiring you," said Miss d'Elmar, interrupting herself suddenly.

Trelane hastened to reassure his young hostess on this score, and Madeleine went on to tell him how Madame Ponsard had had a good-for-nothing husband who had deserted her, and left her with no means of support; how she not only kept herself, but her old mother and a young sister, who was as yet not of much use except in helping to look after the old lady, and in attending to the necessary household affairs, which Ponsard had not much time to superintend.

"So," Miss d'Elmar added, in conclusion, "I gave her some work to do, and as she did it very well, for she is very skilful and clever in her business, I gave her more and more, and my aunt employed her too—in fact, she is our dressmaker in ordinary, and but for these strange outbreaks, there would be nothing to complain of in her at all."

At this moment, and almost before Madeleine had ceased to speak, there was a knock at the door, and Madame Charvet, the portress, put in her head.

"Mademoiselle is wanted," said this functionary.

"How odd it would be," said Miss d'Elmar, "if it should be Ponsard herself. Who is it, Madame Charvet?"

"It is Madame Ponsard, who wishes to speak to mademoiselle."

"The extraordinary coincidence!" cried Victorine.

Miss d'Elmar was rising to leave the room, when Trelane made a suggestion, that if the business was not of a very private nature, it might be carried on here in the salon.

"Not the least private," said Madeleine. "She is only come to apologize, no doubt; but are you sure it will not disturb you?"

"Not in the least," said the invalid; "on the contrary, I am sure that it would amuse me very much. I should like to see this curious combination of a bee and a butterfly."

Madeleine smiled, and directed Madame Charvet to show the recreant Ponsard into the salon.

Madame Ponsard was a woman of about six or seven and twenty. She was not the least good-looking, or rather she was not the least pretty. Good-looking she was, for she looked the embodiment of good-humour and cheerfulness; she possessed moreover, a pair of eyes unnecessarily bright for purposes connected with needlework, and which would have betrayed that love of fun which was her great weakness, even if Trelane had not heard some-

thing of this characteristic already from Miss d'Elmar. Ponsard had, however, now put on quite a demure look, and was evidently rather expecting to be found fault with.

"Well, Madame Ponsard," asked Madeleine, "have you brought home my droquet?"

The eccentric modiste was evidently somewhat anxious to evade this question, and rather desirous of turning the conversation into a different direction. She appeared to think that Trelane's condition required her sympathy before all other things.

"Ah! Good heaven! The poor gentleman. Ah, how ill he looks—how pale! one would say he was half dead."

Madeleine glanced at Trelane hastily. She was grave enough now.

Victorine said something in French to the modiste.

"Ah, the brave Englishman," ejaculated Madame Ponsard, "who protected mademoiselle. Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, how he has suffered!"

"Madame Ponsard," interrupted Victorine, "you have not answered the question of mademoiselle. Have you at length brought home her dress?"

"Pardon, mademoiselle, the dress—but I was struck by the paleness of the gentleman; he has the air of having suffered so much."

All this time Madeleine was silent, but Victorine was not to be denied.

“Madame Ponsard, mademoiselle inquires about her dress.”

“Mademoiselle,” the culprit began at last, “the dress is not *perfectly* completed.”

“And yet, Madame Ponsard,” said Madeleine, rousing herself and speaking again, “though you knew I was so much in want of it you could go away to Paris and leave it unfinished.”

“Mademoiselle, the fact is that I wanted a small morsel of trimming, without which I could not confectionate the robe entirely to my taste. That trimming I could not get *without* going to Paris.”

Miss d’Elmar looked at Trelane. He could not help smiling at the woman’s ingenuity.

“Ah, Madame Ponsard, was that why you went to Paris so suddenly?” urged Madeleine, with a merciful smile, however, on her kind countenance.

“Mademoiselle, I vow and declare—stay, I have the trimming here, no, I have left it upstairs. I will go and fetch it to convince mademoiselle,” and she actually turned about to leave the room.

“You need not go Madame Ponsard,” said Madeleine. “It is not necessary, we believe you.”

Ponsard had resisted doubt, she could not resist trust.

“Mademoiselle, I did go to get your trimming for one thing; but I own that was not all. Stay, I am going to tell you. The fact is that I have a friend; she is herself an artist in corsages, and a dancer—

what a dancer! Well, she invited me to accompany her to a certain fête—a fête in the Banlieue, which was to be brilliant, all that could be conceived of brilliant; and I thought—well, I thought that it would be a good opportunity to go to Paris, and to get your trimming—yes, verily to get your trimming; and at the same time, mademoiselle, one must amuse oneself sometimes. I thought the proposal of the friend was charming, and why not accept? Ah, mademoiselle, one must have distractions. In England, perhaps not; but we others, without distractions we perish.”

Trelane thought of Vincennes and L'Idalie, and it did appear to him that if Madame Ponsard's fête was at all of that sort, it was not a kind of “distraction” likely to prove very refreshing to the animal spirits.

Trelane turned to the mercurial Ponsard and inquired whether the fête had come up to her expectations.

“Monsieur, it was beyond them all. It was magnificent. It was—what shall I say?—it was GORGEOUS! Mademoiselle herself needs distraction; I wish she could see such a scene. Conceive, monsieur, conceive, mademoiselle, an entrance-gate decorated with the most brilliantly coloured lamps, arranged in the loveliest of patterns, a long grotto-like vista lighted in the same fashion. You pass through the entrance, you plunge into the vista, and then at its termination you find yourself in a scene

of Eastern splendour—a vast circular pavilion, an amphitheatre, what you will. It is decorated with evergreens, with tropical plants; the walls, the ceilings are gaily striped with divers colours, the most luxurious seats are ranged round it, while from its ceiling hangs a chandelier, again of lovely colours, and which sheds a tinted light on everything. Then conceive that to these attractions is added music, an orchestra, the most invigorating airs played by the most skilful musicians; while, as if this was not enough, in an adjoining apartment, itself a spectacle of brilliant illumination and sumptuous splendour, there are the most exquisite refreshments, and the most ingenious and exciting games for those to play at who care not—poor misguided persons!—for the dance; the dance that raises the heart, and lightens the spirits, and dispels the cares, and helps the circulation, and restores the health; the best of amusements, the chiefest of distractions, the—but pardon, mademoiselle,” added the enthusiastic Ponsard, beginning to think she was talking too much, “I am wearying you, and monsieur here who is sick. Mademoiselle, I was only seeking to excuse a little my having lost an evening which should have been devoted to mademoiselle. But, ah! if you knew what wretchedness I fall into if I go too long without distraction; how everything seems dark and dismal, and everybody cross and disagreeable, and how I seem to have the crispations in my limbs, and the quick-

silver in my elbows, mademoiselle would forgive me, I feel sure."

Forgive: there was not much difficulty in gaining Madeleine's forgiveness at any time, and now when she was so happy!

"But, Madame Ponsard, you will really let me have my dress now as soon as it is possible, I am sure."

"Mademoiselle, I go this very moment to put on the trimming, and this evening, or at latest to-morrow morning, it shall be ready, sans faute."

"And Madame Ponsard," said Trelane, speaking as this energetic lady was leaving the room, "may I ask just one question before you go to work?"

"Monsieur, why not?"

"Well, then, I should like to know where this wonderful and brilliant fête, which you have described so well, was held."

"Monsieur, it is told in two words. It was held at Vincennes, and the ball-room and garden go by the name of—of—

"L'Idalie?" suggested Trelane.

"Monsieur, the same," replied Madame Ponsard, and with a profound curtsy she retired upstairs to her work.

CHAPTER XI.

A STARTLING CHAPTER.

It was my endeavour in the last chapter to give some sort of idea of the kind of home-life which Trelane was now leading. This is a very quiet moment in our story. A rough time has preceded it. Now there is quiet and rest, sunshine and calm after the storm.

To our hero this quiet was especially delightful. He had not had much of it in his life, and he enjoyed it the more. He was, as I have said, one of those to whom the attractive side of most things was impartially revealed. The wild excitement of a campaign was delightful, and so was an hour passed among works of art or with a favourite author. He found pleasure on a Highland moor, with the scented air blowing in his face, and the grouse whirling up from his feet; pleasure among his friends in the London club; pleasure in an Alpine glen, on the boulevard, in the Versailles Gardens. And now introduced into this English home, all the more remarkable from its

being planted on a foreign soil, he found pleasure and enjoyment most of all.

I believe there is no need to dwell longer on the details of this peaceful time. Such a glimpse as we allowed ourselves in the last chapter is enough for every purpose. I must say—having the interest and the happiness of my characters at heart—that I wish the happy time might have been indefinitely prolonged. That, however, was not to be. Mention has been made in a previous chapter of a certain letter which Madame d'Elmar had written to her brother-in-law, and in which she had described the remarkable circumstances which had brought Trelane to be a guest under her roof. That letter in due time was carried to its destination. The little captain, at the time of his receiving it, was acting as what is called recruiting captain, and could not for the moment get away; but he wrote a letter off immediately to his sister-in-law, with which, or its results, we shall have something to do presently.

It was some three or four days after the performance of the little scene described just now, in which the amiable Madame Ponsard made her appearance, that the answer arrived to that letter of Madame d'Elmar's. As the lady opened it, a sense of misgiving pressed heavily on her anxious mind, and as she read on, the matter treated of in that ugly French writing seemed to increase her trouble not a little. One or two passages in the letter we may as well translate:—

"I do not blame you exactly," the writer said, for what has happened; that is to say, I do not blame you for affording shelter to a man who was badly hurt almost at your door; but what I do blame you for, and what inexpressibly annoys me, is that you should ever have allowed this Englishman to have anything to do with your affairs or Madeleine's; that you should have allowed yourself to be served by him, and so be placed under just such obligations as you ought to be the last to contract. As to what you say of the annoyance to which Madeleine has been subjected, and the necessity of taking some steps to put an end to it, I think you make the matter of too great importance. Better, far better, that she should have been confined for many weeks a prisoner to the house, better even that the annoyance should have been repeated out of doors, than that this Englishman should be located under the same roof with her, and be continually in the habit of seeing her. . . .

"You will conclude, no doubt, from what I have said that I am displeased at what has happened, and you will conclude rightly. Your judgment has been at fault, and I see now that I cannot depend upon it, or trust you to do what is wisest in my absence. You know, as well as I do, that no good can come of this, and that much mischief may. Suppose that Madeleine should take it into her head to fall in love with this Englishman, or that he should take it into

his head to fall in love with her, I should like to know, under the circumstances, how *that* would be likely to end?

“Now, listen to me. You have got into this scrape, and you must get out of it again. Well or ill, you must get rid of this Major Trelane. Wounds are not such serious things to men of war as you may imagine, and by this time the Englishman ought to be quite capable of undergoing a change. *In fact he must.* You must get rid of him. Tell him, if you like, that you are going away yourself, which will be perfectly true, for directly I can get leave myself, I think it will be desirable that both you and Madeleine should make a small excursion, in what direction I will suggest afterwards. At all events, get rid of him; and, if by any chance you have been weak enough, which I am afraid is possible, to allow any interviews to take place between Madeleine and the Englishman, you must, by all means, put a stop to them for the future. Any resistance to this arrangement on the part of Madeleine will indicate that already the mischief to which I have adverted as possible is brewing. Any symptoms of this sort, then, you will look out for, and should it appear that the girl has got any nonsensical notions into her head, you must perforce root them out again without loss of time, explaining to her that the thing cannot be, and, if necessary, even telling her *why*—yes ALL the why. Perhaps this is the moment for an explanation

with her ; but that I leave to your discretion—a quality which I hope you will now be able to convince me that you are possessed of. . . .

“ With regard to your guess as to who the man is by whom Madeleine has been thus besieged, I take it for what it is worth. It may be—or it may not be.”

When Madame d'Elmar read the letter, of which I have given these few extracts, the trouble of her mind became very great. The reader will have observed by this time, that this lady was of rather a weak and timid nature. Her late husband had been a cold, stern man, and she had been accustomed to do his bidding in all things, and to be a good deal bullied into the bargain ; and now she had fallen under another tyranny, that of her husband's brother. This man's influence over her was enormous. He had found out her weak points, and was in the habit of taking advantage of them continually. And now she had offended him. By her wretched imprudence, by her want of common care and forethought, she had involved herself in an intricate mass of circumstances, from which extrication was a painful and difficult process. What was she to do ? How was she to get rid of this fatal Englishman ? Could she turn this man, who had behaved so gallantly, out of doors ? And her niece, her dear Madeleine—for Madame d'Elmar really and devotedly loved her niece—was trouble in store for her too, and had a time come when she must know ?——

Madame d'Elmar sat with that letter in her hand, and with doubt and misgiving pressing heavily on her heart. Presently she rose from her seat and rang the bell.

It was answered, after a little delay, by Victorine.

"Victorine, where is mademoiselle?"

"Madame, she is in her room."

"Will you tell her that I should like to see her."

Madame d'Elmar, like many other people to whom it is a labour to come to a decision, sometimes, and especially when she had received some impulse from outside, acted without having come to one at all.

In a short time Miss d'Elmar entered the room. She went up to her aunt and kissed her tenderly. As she did so, her eye lit upon the letter which was lying in Madame d'Elmar's lap.

"You have had a letter from my uncle," she said. It is hardly needful to say, that as Madeleine was only Madame d'Elmar's niece, the Capitaine d'Elmar was not really her uncle, but only her aunt's brother-in-law. He used, however, to be called her uncle when she was a child, and the thing went on now when she was grown up.

"You have had a letter from my uncle."

"Yes, dear," Madame d'Elmar answered, "and it was about it that I wanted to speak to you."

"He is not coming back, is he?" asked Madeleine, with a sort of strange and inexplicable misgiving.

"Not quite immediately, dear; but he talks of

being here soon, and—he wishes us to prepare for a move.”

“For a move, aunty?” and Madeleine’s countenance fell. “But Major Trelane, aunty, what will become of him?” As the girl spoke, she blushed deeply. She felt that she did so, which of course made matters worse.

Madame d’Elmar looked at her niece, and her heart sank within her.

“My dear,” she said, hesitatingly, “I think that Major Trelane must be by this time sufficiently recovered to be able to move without risk. I will see Dr. Lebœuf to-day, and endeavour to find out from him whether it is not so.”

“Oh, aunty,” said the girl, almost reproachfully, “it is not possible that to any one you can speak of—of—what might seem to show——”

“To show what, Madeleine?”

“Why,” said the poor girl, making an effort, “that we want our guest to leave us.”

There was a short pause, and then Madame d’Elmar spoke again.

“Madeleine, your uncle wishes it.”

“Wishes what?”

“Why, that Major Trelane should leave us.”

“Oh, aunty,” cried the girl, “you can’t mean that! You can’t mean that uncle Alexis could be so—so ungrateful, aunty; he does not know about Major Trelane. He cannot.”

“My dear, I have told him all the circumstances, and knowing them, he does not hesitate to express his desire.”

“But, aunty,” cried Madeleine, with something of indignation almost in her tones, “why is it that we are to be dictated to, and told what we are to do in everything by my uncle? How is it that he has such utter control over us? what right has he to bid us stay, or to bid us go, just as he feels inclined?”

“My dearest Madeleine,” Madame d’Elmar was beginning to say, and doubtless many things of importance were then near to be revealed, and would have been revealed if this interview had not been broken in upon. But just as Madame d’Elmar was speaking, there came a ring at the outer bell of the apartment, and as it was just the doctor’s time for coming, Madame d’Elmar hurried out to tell Victorine that she wished to see Dr. Lebœuf before he went in to examine his patient.

Madeleine retired now to her room with a sad face; she was in no humour just then to encounter anybody. The doctor was ushered into Madame d’Elmar’s apartment, and the two were closeted for some time together. When Doctor Lebœuf came out from that conference, he wore rather a perplexed expression on his shrewd features, and he shook his head and coughed dubiously as he walked along the passage towards the door of the salon.

Trelane was not quite so well that day. In the

life of an invalid there are fluctuations not always easy to account for, and in the major's case there was on this particular day a fluctuation for the worse.

"Well, Monsieur le Major," the learned doctor began, after he had spent the usual amount of time in investigating the condition of his patient, "are you as anxious as ever to make your escape from these comfortable quarters?"

"Why?" asked Trelane, quickly; "would it be no longer an imprudence?"

"Oh, I don't say that, mind," said the doctor, cautiously. "I won't affirm that; that would be compromising oneself."

"Then why did you ask?" said Trelane, smiling.

"Oh, I only wanted to know whether you were still in the same anxiety to move."

"And what if I had been?" asked the major.

"Only that the thing would be impossible as yet, and that nothing would induce me to sanction it," said the little man, impetuously; and with that he jumped up and bustled away out of the room.

He stopped when he came to Madame d'Elmar's door, and, knocking for admittance, just put his head in, and said,—

"Impossible; it would not be safe. He might take no harm, but he might be thrown back seriously."

"What, have you not hinted at what I suggested, then?" asked Madame d'Elmar.

"No," said the little man, stoutly; "and what is more, I don't mean to do so till the right time comes. Madame, j'ai l'honneur," and the doctor was gone almost before Madame d'Elmar knew what he had been talking about. She sat for a long time thinking and thinking what she had best do. At last she came to the conclusion that she would go and see Trelane herself. "I will tell him," she said to herself, "that we are going to leave Versailles for a time, and I will put the apartments at his service after we are gone; there can be no harm in that, at any rate."

It was drawing near to the time when it was usual for Miss d'Elmar and her bonne to pay their customary daily visits to the salon. Trelane had got to look forward to that happy hour more and more eagerly. It was the bright spot in the day. And on this particular day he did more eagerly than ever anticipate pleasure from Madeleine's visit. He was, as I have said, not quite so well as he had been; he was fidgety and nervous, and he knew that Madeleine's soothing presence was, under such circumstances, the safest and most certain of anodynes.

So when the door opened, and, instead of the face he had been longing to see, that of Madame d'Elmar appeared, it is no disparagement to the latter lady to say that Trelane was sadly disappointed. It was a curious fact that these two had

never been on what may be called altogether comfortable terms together. It was not that there was any dislike on either side. Far from it. Trelane saw in Madame d'Elmar a worn, timid person, who seemed to have known sorrow and suffering. He was grateful too—for Trelane was of a grateful nature—for the kindness and attention he had received since he had been this lady's guest. On the other hand, Madame d'Elmar was far from wanting in a due appreciation of the obligations under which she and her niece lay towards Trelane; but still there was something wanting—there was something wanting or something present that a little spoilt it all. There was a restraint, an appearance of absence of mind and pre-occupiedness, if the expression may be permitted, in the lady's manner when she was in company with her guest; and this was not without its effect. "I wonder if I shall ever get to know that subdued and timid lady better?" Trelane used sometimes to think to himself. But Madame d'Elmar never questioned herself in the same terms as to the probability of her becoming intimate with Henry Trelane.

There was more restraint and embarrassment than usual about Madame d'Elmar's manner on this particular day. She had an unpleasant thing to say, for, be the reason what it may, it is always an awkward thing for the first intimation that a parting between host and guest is necessary to come from

the former—an awkward thing for both parties, put it as you will. So Madame d'Elmar's inquiries after Trelane's health were wanting somehow in fulness of interest, and his replies, though received with a due amount of sympathy, seemed to fall upon an attention only three parts bestowed.

"And now, Major Trelane," said Madame d'Elmar, after our hero's health had been sufficiently discussed, "I have a proposal to make, which I hope you will quite understand; for it—it is an awkward one rather for me to speak of." These last few words the lady might just as well have left unsaid.

Trelane hastily muttered some words intended to reassure his hostess, but he himself felt that an unpleasant moment had arrived. Those few words dropped by the doctor had haunted him, and he had been twisting and turning them in all sorts of ways.

"I want you," Madame d'Elmar went on, "to look upon these apartments for a time as your own; to forget that I have anything to do with them; in short, not to consider yourself less a welcome guest in this house because your hostess is no longer here to entertain you."

Trelane was weak and ill, and he coloured suddenly and felt hot all over, as sick people and convalescents will. He said, quickly,—

"Oh, but I assure you, Madame d'Elmar, I am strong enough to move now; indeed, I was thinking

just before you came into the room that the time had arrived when——”

“No, no, Major Trelane,” interrupted Madame d’Elmar, herself terribly vexed to see how her words told, “you must not think of that. Indeed, Dr. Lebœuf says you must not; and you must attend to him, you know.”

“I think Dr. Lebœuf is over cautious; indeed, I am sure he is,” Trelane argued.

Madame d’Elmar was in great trouble. The reader must not get to hate this poor lady. If it has not been guessed already, it will not be long now before it appears what other reasons Madame d’Elmar had for what she did, besides the strong injunction laid upon her by her brother-in-law. She was a kind, hospitable woman; she loved her niece; she was grateful to this Englishman. Her present position was a most painful one.

“Major Trelane,” she said, “you must not, indeed you must not, talk in that way. You make what I have said seem so basely ungrateful and inhospitable. Now see how comfortable you may be if you will only listen to what I propose. You will be attended to here in our absence just as you are now. Madame Charvet and her husband will be entirely at your service. There is the doctor living close by, he will be for ever backwards and forwards. You will have your books and newspapers just as usual from the *salle de lecture*.

Now why not consent to this? Where could you be better taken care of? where indeed, without returning to your own country and home, could you be so well? I am sure you will consent—will you not?”

Trelane was a proud man, and perhaps a little obstinate. He was ill and nervous. He had taken it into his head that he must go, that it was the only course open to him. Perhaps—nay, why perhaps? of course, he thought of what the place would be when *she* was no longer there, and when he could no longer look forward to that happy hour which used to make his daily sick-man's life so full of joy. He was, however, as I have said, able to say but a few words at a time. He had made up his mind, and tried now to give another turn to the subject. This pleasant phase of life was done with. Was there to be any hope for the future?

“When—do you leave—immediately?” asked the sick man.

“It depends upon circumstances very much,” was the answer. And then Madame d'Elmar, feeling that she owed some approach to an explanation to her guest, went on, “I received a letter this morning which has rendered a journey necessary: the next post will probably decide when it is to take place; meantime it will be needful that all our preparations should be made, and that we should hold ourselves ready for an immediate departure.”

"I am afraid the presence of a stranger, even for a few hours, will at such a time be very inconvenient."

"How can you distress me, Major Trelane," said his poor hostess, "by talking of such things? As if your presence could be inconvenient; as if, supposing it were, we could think of inconvenience when we remember what we owe to you."

Trelane shook his head. I will not, because he is our hero, say that he did so firmly, but will candidly state that he shook his head obstinately.

"Well, Major Trelane," said Madame d'Elmar. "I see you are tired and are not fit for more conversation, and therefore I will not disturb you further; but remember, if you persist in this determination, you will inflict a cruel misery upon me at a time when, I may tell you, I am not without other causes of suffering. I shall give all directions, mind, as if you were going to yield to my request, and I am sure that when you have had a little time to think of it, you will not be so cruel as to pain me by a refusal."

With that Madame d'Elmar got up and gave her hand to Trelane. He rose and followed her to the door of the room to close it after her. And when he had done this and had returned to his chair, he sank down into it with the action of one who is weary, but has not found rest.

Then he set himself to think—to think of active measures; he who was compulsorily inactive; to

think how he would risk all and go. He called to mind all the unpleasant things which we most of us keep in odd nooks and corners of our brains; he summoned these before him, and let us do such conceits the justice to say that they are generally ready to respond to our call. He thought of his friend d'Elmar, the captain—was he really his friend? How curiously he had behaved to him. How unmistakably he had sought to keep him from making the acquaintance of these Versailles ladies. How almost rudely he had refused to respond to his questions about them—questions of the simplest and most ordinary kind. He had carried them off out of the opera because he (Trelane) was in the building. What was the reason of this? Had he—and here our poor invalid again became hot all over from head to foot—had he—was it possible that he had some design of—of allying himself to that fair young girl? By heaven! it might be. He was not really her uncle, though she called him so; but even if he had been, it was common in France for uncles to marry their nieces; but he was not her uncle, only a sort of remote cousin. Yes; there must be something of this sort preparing, else why should he try so hard to keep these two ladies in such utter seclusion? Why make such efforts to keep his old friend and companion in arms from meeting them? And could such a prospect as this be agreeable to *her*—to Madeleine? Impossible; yet what influence he had

over them. They seemed entirely obedient to him, altogether in his hands—in his hands. Stop: Madame d'Elmar had spoken of a letter; a letter was the cause of her intended departure. A letter! Why, d'Elmar was away. That letter might be from him. It *might* be. It *was* from him, at least Trelane felt convinced of it. Who else would be likely to order these ladies away so suddenly? Who else would they obey thus implicitly?

Now, here were thoughts for an invalid, for whom quiet and rest were desirable. Yet these had got into Trelane's mind, and they stuck there. He turned them over and over; the more he pondered the more probable his conjectures seemed.

Besides, the day wore on and wore on, and Madeleine d'Elmar did not appear. What could that mean? It was the first day since he had been allowed to come into the salon which had elapsed without his seeing her. Yet the hours passed and that gentle face came not. Victorine appeared at the hour of dinner, but was unusually silent. In reply to Trelane's inquiry after Miss d'Elmar's health, she merely said that "mademoiselle was well, she was in her room;" that was all. It was a wretched day. Later in the evening Madame Charvet came in with *La Patrie*, journal du soir, and once again Victorine appeared with the tea equipage, and so the day came at last to an end, and Trelane retired to his room, but not to sleep.

The next day he was, of course, worse. He did not own it. He had a settled purpose in his mind. Not even to the good doctor would he acknowledge that he was suffering more than usual. Probably that learned man found this out for himself. Certain it is that he muttered to himself as he felt his patient's pulse, "Too sharp and hurried—too sharp and hurried; a little fever here; you must keep quiet—keep very quiet." It is not unlikely, also, that he noted an increased wanness in the sufferer's face, and a haggard look about the eyes. But if he did, he said nothing about it. He was not very communicative on professional matters, as we have seen.

And, later in that day, Trelane was visited by Madame d'Elmar. Again the poor lady tried all her eloquence to persuade her guest to accede to the proposal of yesterday; but she was unable to shake him, or at least to win from him any positive assurance. He seemed much interested in inquiring whether her plans had received any new influences, whether she had received the letter she expected, and which was likely to affect them. To these questions the lady answered in the negative.

Trelane had yet another visitor. He was sitting weak and exhausted, thinking over and over again the same thoughts which his sick fancy seemed to please itself with twisting first this way and then that way, when there was a tap at the door, and Victorine, appearing with something approaching a smile upon

her face, announced that Madame Ponsard was at the door, and desired speech of him.

“What in the world can she want with me?” he thought. But he was glad of any release, even for a moment, from his own thoughts, and he gave the order for her admittance.

“Ah, mon Dieu!” sighed Madame Ponsard, pausing at the threshold and turning with a dismayed regard to Victorine, “Monsieur has the air of being even worse than ordinary.”

“Well,” replied Victorine, “it was not to tell him that, that you wished to see monsieur.”

“Ah, pardon!” cried the sympathetic Ponsard; “monsieur, it was to demand a little favour that I have ventured to ask permission to intrude.”

“Well, what is it?” asked Trelane, good-humouredly; “do you want me to dance a quadrille with you at Vincennes?”

“Ah, monsieur, would that it were possible! when monsieur is stronger, no doubt the dance would do him good. But, monsieur, it was not that which I was thinking of; it was—it was—but you are sure you will not be offended?”

“I don’t think it is very likely,” said our hero, smiling.

“Then, monsieur,” said Ponsard, bursting suddenly out with her proposal, as if she feared to trust herself with a longer delay, “I must tell you, that I remarked the other day, when I last had the pleasure

of seeing monsieur, that his coat was divided from end to end. Now, if monsieur would only allow me to have that coat away for the half of a day, it should be returned in such a condition that monsieur should look in vain for the place where the rent had been."

Trelane hesitated for a moment; he was much amused, but the kindness touched him too, for he was weak.

"Monsieur could wear his robe de chambre," Ponsard went on. "A robe de chambre would look admirably on monsieur."

But Trelane was waiting that day in the hope of a certain interview with one whom every passing hour made him long more earnestly to see. His old military habits were powerful with him, and he had no idea of wearing a dressing-gown in a lady's drawing-room. So poor Madame Ponsard had to be denied. Of course Trelane thanked her for her kind and characteristic proposal, and administered some comfort to her as she left the room in a disconsolate frame of mind, by saying,—

"Perhaps later, Madame Ponsard, I may yet call upon you one of these days to carry out your proposal," with which promise the modiste was fain to content herself.

All that day Trelane waited, and waited in vain. As on the previous day, his dinner was brought to him by Victorine, his evening paper by Madame Charvet, and tea again by the bonne. But Madeleine

came not, and when Trelane again asked if she was ill, Victorine again looked a little confused, but replied that she was not.

And so the time wore on, and the short light gave place to protracted darkness, and the long day was succeeded by the long evening, and Trelane got more and more uneasy. He tried all sorts of occupation, but altogether in vain, and at last he abandoned all, and sat turning over his own unpleasant thoughts like the pages of a dreary book, and listening from time to time to the noise which came from the adjoining apartments, and which sounded like the moving about of heavy luggage. At length it was time for him to retire for the night, and to go through the weary form of lying down to rest. And now the house was quiet all over.

Madame d'Elmar was aroused the next morning by Victorine, who knocked hurriedly at the door.

"Madame! madame!" she said, "let me in pray—at once."

Her mistress hurried to the door and opened it.

"Oh, madame! what do you think has happened? monsieur! the Englishman! Monsieur Trelane!"

"Well, what of him?"

"Madame, he is GONE! Monsieur Charvet, the porter, was on the staircase in the early morning, when Monsieur Trelane suddenly opened the door, and, confronting him with a face, as he says of death,

compelled him to assist him to descend the stairs. He remonstrated, he wanted to inform you, but the gentleman would not allow it. He descended the stairs with difficulty, and supported by Monsieur Charvet, and waited in the lodge while a carriage was fetched by Madame Charvet. Then he was assisted into the vehicle, and the coachman was directed to drive to the best hotel in Versailles, which, as madame knows, is the Hôtel du Grand Monarque. But, oh, madame! it will kill him, surely it will kill him, so ill as he was, and in the cold early morning."

Madame d'Elmar signed to Victorine to be silent, and, the girl turning round, saw that there was one listener more to her words than she had counted upon.

Madeleine d'Elmar was standing at the door of her room, with a face as pale as the white robe in which she was clothed.

CHAPTER XII.

A SAD DISCLOSURE.

THE statement made by Victorine in the last chapter was strictly true; indeed, Monsieur Charvet, in narrating what had happened, had only suppressed one feature of the case—the pecuniary reward, namely, with which his services of the morning had been remunerated.

Two very sagacious things the worthy porter had done of his own accord. He had first of all mounted on the box of the carriage in which Trelane was placed and, accompanying him to the Grand Monarque, had taken care to impress upon the authorities there the great importance of looking well to the comfort of the invalid. Indeed, when Trelane arrived at the hotel, his weakness and exhaustion were so great that it was necessary to get him to bed with as little delay as possible, nor did Monsieur Charvet leave him until this was accomplished. The second wise thing that the porter did was to go straight away from the hotel to the

residence of Doctor Lebœuf, in order to inform that learned man of what had occurred and to beseech him to lose no time in visiting his patient in his new quarters.

Great and vehement was the indignation of Doctor Lebœuf. He bounced off to the hotel, to vent it on his unlucky patient before it should have time to cool down. He was outraged, he had been insulted, he had never been so treated before. The English had no respect for professional etiquette. It was a country without government, and its inhabitants were ungovernable in consequence. They knew no restraints, they were even uncivilized. And all this time the old gentleman was feeling Trelane's pulse, and groaning over its quick beating, and arranging the pillows, and screening his patient from the light, and in every way showing the keenest anxiety to minister to his comfort, and the warmest interest in his case.

"The case was nothing to him now," he said; "it had virtually been taken out of his hands. If people were going to doctor themselves they had better not send for a medical man. If people asked for professional advice they should take it—otherwise, why send for it?"

"Don't scold me, doctor," said Trelane, feebly; "I will do anything you direct now."

"Yes, now, and how do you know that *now*, as you call it, it will be any use? And how did you get

here, pray—did you walk, or come on horseback?” The doctor was beginning to get ironical, which was a good sign. “If that idiot Charvet had done his duty, he would have locked the doors of the house and not have let you pass.”

“Doctor, doctor,” said the sick man, “I will be the most obedient of patients now, and I am sure I shall get well sooner here. I wanted—some—change—so much.”

“And he must be talkative, too, if you please,” said this sarcastic little sage, looking round about to the furniture for sympathy. “He must needs talk now to make matters worse, and tell me that he knows what will do him good better than I do myself. Now come, no more about this. Perfect silence; close your eyes. First, however, swallow this dose, then lie down and close your eyes, and keep perfectly quiet, and—we shall see—we shall see.”

Doctor Lebœuf sat himself down behind the curtains, getting up every now and then to peer round them and see how his patient was doing. He resisted, however, any attempt on Trelane’s part to speak, and as there must be two parties to every conversation, the sick man soon abandoned his part of the dialogue. A quiet feeling, too, was beginning to steal over him.

After about the fifth or sixth examination of his patient, effected in the most furtive manner round

the curtains, the worthy doctor seemed to be satisfied, and after winking and nodding to himself with much evidence of gratification, he retreated on tip-toe from the room, muttering to himself,

“Poor fellow, poor fellow! they’re a gallant set, those English—pity they’ve no government, pity they’ve no government!” and so he made his way out of the room, and closed the door very softly after him.

Presently afterwards he was to be found in the kitchen of the Grand Monarque, lecturing the whole corps d’hôtel on the importance of keeping that wing of the building in which our hero lay as quiet as was at all possible. He had a joke for the femme de chambre, a solemn injunction for the maître d’hôtel, but his last words were for the cook.

“Now, M. le Chef, this gentleman must have the best of everything, mind, the most nourishing, the most succulent, but, above all,” and here the doctor laid his finger on his nose, “not a particle of grease!”

“Ah, Monsieur le Médecin,” expostulated the injured chef, “you do not know my cuisine. Go to—there shall be no more grease than you will find in the waters of the Atlantic.” And it is but fair to add that this magniloquent promise was entirely carried out, and that Trelane’s broth was altogether free from those small oily circles which too often adorn the surface of an invalid’s nourishment.

And now we must leave our hero succumbing to the influence of the powerful sedative which Doctor Lebœuf had thought proper to administer, and return to the apartments in the Rue Pompadour from which the Englishman had withdrawn so suddenly.

Madame d'Elmar was sitting in the salon which Trelane had recently occupied, waiting for the time to come when her niece should join her there. The room was in confusion. It had a bare look. All sorts of things that were movable had been put away. The household was there, but the household gods were for the most part wanting. There were boxes and parcels, too, about the room, and other evidences of an impending move.

Madame d'Elmar was ill at her ease. A moment which she had been long dreading, and which, to say the truth, I have been long dreading also, was now at hand. She had something—a painful something—to communicate to her niece.

On that morning the first approach to anything like disagreement that had ever come between the aunt and the niece had thrown its chill shadow on the surface—only on the surface—of the love which each bore to the other. When Madeleine heard that Trelane had left the house, the misery which weighed her down was shown so plainly on her face, that it was impossible for any one to see her, and not to read it there. At any rate her aunt could read it, and did read it.

And then, as I have said, the first words that were not all of love were spoken. And it was not wonderful that there should have been something like indignation in the girl's heart as the thought rankled there that her aunt had acted ungratefully towards Trelane. The thought was there, and she spoke of it. Of d'Elmar, her uncle, as he was called, she spoke with bitterness and animosity, and to her aunt in terms of reproach. She reproached her with insensibility, with ingratitude even, in turning this man out from under the roof, whose shelter he had earned with the very blood out of his veins.

I do not care to dwell long on this painful scene. Madame d'Elmar was hurt, but she made no reply to the indignant girl. She was above all things astonished to see her niece so changed. The reason of that change did not escape her; she could no longer doubt that some feeling stronger than mere gratitude had found its way into Madeleine's heart. Nothing but the introduction of a new element into the girl's character could have altered her so much. And so Madame d'Elmar bore her niece's reproaches without a word, and the tears which she shed were for the trouble that was coming—that had come—upon Madeleine, and not for any sorrow of her own.

Madame d'Elmar was in the salon busy with her own reflections. The hour was drawing near when her niece would join her there. At last the lady roused herself by a great and very painful effort.

"The time has come," she said. "Lord have mercy on her! and Thou wilt, for with her there is no guilt, and mercy needs not to be restrained by the hand of justice."

Madame d'Elmar rang the bell, and Victorine appeared at the door.

"Bring me some water," said her mistress,—“some water and a cloth.”

The order was obeyed.

"In five minutes tell mademoiselle to come to me here in the salon."

It has been already mentioned that in this room, which it will be remembered was described in an earlier page sufficiently minutely, there hung over the chimney-piece a picture. It was mentioned that the picture was a portrait of a lady, of a young lady, and a curious feature of the picture was then alluded to. One of the hands, it was remarked, had been painted over, a piece of drapery had been brought over it, and the work had been done so hastily, as it seemed, that the outline of the hand—the left hand it was—could be faintly traced in the thickness of the paint beneath.

"It seems as if," Madame d'Elmar said to herself, as she drew near to the picture—"it seems as if that proposal of the artist to cover the hand with water-colour, or distemper, or whatever it was that would wash off, was made on purpose to help me at this time. How well I remember his little vanity

about it, and his saying that it was the best hand he had ever painted, and that he could not bear to cover it up permanently. He said that hereafter, perhaps, my fancy for having it covered would pass off, or that the picture might get into the hands of persons who would value it as a work of art merely, not even knowing whom it represented. Then, he said, he should like the picture to appear in its completeness."

"Yes," said the lady, "it will help me, for I hardly know if I could speak the words."

Madame d'Elmar dipped the napkin which Victorine had brought into the water, and then applied it to the surface of the picture. She passed it over the place where the hand was indicated once or twice, and immediately the colour which had hidden it began to disappear. After the fourth application the hand was brought out as fresh and brilliant as on the day when it was first painted.

"The artist was right," thought Madame d'Elmar; "it *is* beautifully painted. Poor Rachel!" she said, aloud, "how like her hand!"

It was, in truth, well enough painted. It was a soft white hand, very delicately formed. There was no decoration about it of any sort or kind, no bracelet on the wrist, no ring on any one of the fingers.

Madame d'Elmar remained before the picture some time in earnest contemplation. Presently she heard

footsteps in the corridor outside, and hastily putting out of the way the basin and the cloth which she had been using, she resumed the seat which she had left.

Almost immediately afterwards the door of the room opened, and Madeleine entered. Poor soul! what a sad spectacle she presented as she stood in the doorway. It was not quite that scared look of the morning, and there was no appearance of anger—there was sorrow in the girl's face marked legibly enough—but no anger. Indeed, her eyes were red with weeping, and she looked pale and wretched with long confinement to the house as well.

“Madeleine,” said her aunt, “I have heard again from your uncle, and he writes that we should start at once—to-morrow morning, that is to say. We ——”

“Aunty, can you really mean that nothing is to be done to show him—to show Major Trelane our deep regret for what has happened? Is he to be left at an inn, and with strangers only about him?”

Madame d'Elmar was silent. “Poor child,” she thought, “that name again—she thinks of nothing else.” After a little pause she called her niece to her side, and Madeleine knelt down by her aunt's chair. Madame d'Elmar drew the girl towards her, and kissed her fervently; then Madeleine laid her head upon the elder lady's breast, and listened to

the fluttering of her heart till she thought her aunt must be ill, and looked up hastily in her face.

"Aunty, what is the matter?" she cried, quickly, for her aunt's face was troubled, and there were tears standing in her eyes. But Madame d'Elmar only bade her lay her head down as it had been before, and so smoothing her niece's hair with her cold thin hand, she spoke at last.

"My darling, this English gentleman—how full your mind is of him—how is it that all the thoughts of your heart seem now to be turned in one direction?" It was Madeleine's heart that beat the fastest now.

"But, aunty," she said, "you forget surely what cause I have to be grateful to him, and how much there has been to make us both admire and respect him."

"Admire, respect, gratitude! My pretty one, are you sure that that is all?"

The girl hid her hot face now in the folds of her aunt's dress.

"I was afraid of this," said Madame d'Elmar. "Madeleine, my darling," she continued, after a short pause, during which she had sought to take in new supplies of force for her task, "you were surprised when two days ago I expressed a wish that you should not see Major Trelane while he remained under this roof—you were surprised and hurt. Madeleine, I have now to tell you that it

will be better—far better—that you should see him no more—at all.”

Madeleine lifted her head from where it lay, as if she mistrusted what she had heard, and sought to listen better. She seemed about to speak, but her aunt hindered her.

“No, not now, Madeleine; you mustn't speak now. Wait—wait till you have heard more. Madeleine, my pet, you know me; you cannot begin now to doubt my love for you. You know that I would do anything—anything in the world to make you happy. And for this gentleman, too, believe me, dear, that I *do* see how much there is to admire and respect in him, and that he has—as he should have—my heart's dearest gratitude. But still, I say, that were his claim on our regard stronger than it is a hundredfold, still you must see this man no more.”

“But, aunty,” cried the girl, at last, and it was the voice of one “perplexed in the extreme,”—“why, what reason is there—why do you say these—these words?”

“Oh, it is my fault,” said the poor lady thus earnestly addressed. “Why did I let it happen? Why did I not check the first beginning of this? Better have run any risk—better anything than this.”

“But, aunty,” the perplexed voice said again, “why—why is this?”

“Madeleine, my child, my darling, you must know now; you are old enough to understand. I must tell you that there are reasons why, under any circumstances, I should guard your heart against the approach of—of—love, but in this case more—more a million times than in any other.”

Madeleine seemed spell-bound; her head was raised, and she listened like one under the influence of fascination.

“Madeleine,” said her aunt, and she spoke thickly, and with shortened breath, “turn round and look at that picture; you know, it is your mother’s.”

The girl obeyed mechanically.

“Ah,” she said, springing to her feet, and approaching the picture, “there is a change—what is it?”

“The hand,” said Madame d’Elmar, speaking slowly and with difficulty,—“the left hand was—was covered up. Now you can see it.”

“But why was it ever covered?”

“Madeleine,” said the lady, and her voice trembled, “it is the portrait of your mother.”

“Before she was married?” said Madeleine, hesitatingly, and she seemed to distinguish the picture less clearly, and a dizziness seemed to pass over all her faculties.

“*After* her marriage,” said Madame d’Elmar.

“But there is no—no ring,” the girl said. Madame d’Elmar hesitated, and when she spoke her tones were lower and more agitated.

“That marriage was a false one—Madeleine—Madeleine—my angel,” cried the lady, for Madeleine had thrown herself on the floor, and, with her head clasped in her hands, was moaning like one who is wounded in a vital part. “Madeleine, my sweet one, my pet,” said her aunt, kneeling down beside her, and trying to separate her hands and draw the girl towards her—“my darling, you must listen to the rest; your mother—your mother was not guilty. She contracted that marriage, believing it to be a true one, and it was not till months afterwards, not till near the time when you, my pretty one, were born to be my joy and comfort, darling, that she knew that she had been deceived, and that your—your father, when he sought and won her love, was already married to another.”

The girl seemed stunned. There was no alteration in her attitude, though her aunt sought to draw her nearer to herself.

“Courage, my darling, come, you are young yet. This blow is a heavy one—a terrible one. But there is comfort for you yet, depend upon it.”

Madeleine only shook her head, and still from time to time that moaning cry was wrung once and again out of the extremity of her misery. At last she spoke, muttering, as it seemed to herself,—

“He would despise me.”

“Madeleine, my child, you must not—my darling—you must think of him no more.”

“But how do you know?” she cried suddenly,

looking up at her aunt, and throwing back the hair which had fallen over her face—her altered agonized face—“how do you know he would despise me? He is so good, so merciful, so generous—and—and aunty, *it is not my fault!*”

With that pathetic cry the girl burst now at last into a flood of tears, and hid her face once more on her aunt's aching breast.

“My child, my child, I have told you that there lies no hope that way. I have told you something of what belongs to your history, but there is something more to tell you yet.”

“More?” And again the tortured face was lifted in an agony of attention.

“Yes, more. By a strange and terrible fatality, it happens that this gentleman—this Major Trelane—is one whose destiny is mixed up through one member of his family with ours—with yours—with your mother's!”

Madeleine did not move or speak.

“My darling, I will tell you in the fewest words I can—but I must tell you. Some twenty years ago a brother of this Henry Trelane's——”

Madeleine shivered as she heard his Christian name spoken. Perhaps she had spoken it herself, alone, before now, as she laid her head upon the pillow at night.

“A brother of Henry Trelane's, very much this one's senior, was engaged to be married to your

mother. She broke through that engagement, in order to make that other fatal marriage on which her heart was set, and Alfred Trelane never got over it. Not long afterwards he was lost in the Arctic Seas."

Madeleine sank once more upon the floor, and, hiding her face in her hands, laid her head upon her aunt's knee. Madame d'Elmar leant over her, and twined her hands in the girl's dishevelled hair.

"Madeleine," she went on, "there is no doubt about this thing. I was in the room when Henry Trelane, in his delirious fever, spoke of the circumstances of his brother's death, and of what had brought about his misery. Young as he must have been when he heard the story of his brother's unhappy love, all that happened at that time seems to have been burnt into his memory. And even your mother's name was upon his lips that dreadful night."

There was a faint cry of pain from Madeleine, but her aunt went on.

"My child, is this a case in which there is room for hope? Is this man, on whose mind the story of his brother's unhappiness has left so strong a mark—is this the man to whom you could tell the tale of your birth, and reveal that you are the daughter of one whose—whose very memory he has learnt to regard with detestation?"

“Oh, no, no!” cried Madeleine, without lifting her head, and the words seemed to come from a heart out of which the very life had gone. “There is no hope—no hope.”

Madame d’Elmar flung her arms round the poor girl’s neck, and covered her head with kisses. She had spoken what she had to say, and now had there been more to add, her tears would have made speech impossible. She could only kiss that poor head, and smooth the disordered hair.

Presently the sweet hopeless face looked up once more.

“Aunty, did not you say we were not going somewhere?—some journey?”

“Yes, my pet, my darling.”

“Well, let us go, then. Come, I am ready; mayn’t we go now, at once?”

“My poor, poor child.”

“And, aunty, I was unjust and wicked to you this morning, dear, because I thought you were—ungrateful—to him.”

“My darling, don’t speak so—you break my heart.”

“But you will forgive me, won’t you, dear—because—because then I did not—know—but I know now that you were right.”

Well, *they* were at one again, at any rate. In all that misery and suffering, there was that love left untouched at heart. Long they remained locked

in each other's arms, and, beyond occasionally a whispered word, entirely silent. At last Madeleine looked up, and spoke once more.

"But, aunty, we *are* going away, are we not?"

She seemed haunted now with this wish to be away. What she had been dreading so short a time ago was now the only thing she looked forward to.

"My darling, before the morning breaks we shall have left this place."

And now after a time a sort of dreamy half-unconsciousness seemed mercifully to descend upon poor Madeleine's strained faculties. Gradually her weary head sank upon her aunt's knee, and a kind of slumber stole over her,—not perfect repose, though, for she would move and start continually in her sleep, and sometimes even would utter a mournful and moaning cry. And there, through the long hours of the afternoon, the elder lady sat and watched the slumbers of the younger, and every now and then would bend down her head, and kiss the troubled brow of the sleeping girl.

As often as this happened, a sort of half smile would pass over Madeleine's features.

And then the daylight—the short daylight of early November—began to fade, and the Vesper-time came, and from a chapel hard by, the sound of the organ and of the choristers' chant came pealing through the walls, as the psalms for the evening

were sung. The English lady bowed her head as she listened to that sound, and Madeleine's hands stole gently together, and the slender fingers were interlaced, and still she slumbered on.

CHAPTER XIII.

DR. LEBCEUF'S NEWS.

TRELANE had prophesied more truly than either he himself or the doctor had imagined, when he sought to pacify the learned man by affirming that he believed the change he had made so imprudently would in reality do him good. For a time, indeed, his symptoms were unfavourable, and the night succeeding that day of torpor which the doctor's narcotic had procured for him, was a sufficiently bad one. The fever ran high, and there was again a tendency to wandering in the patient's mind, so that it was deemed prudent that Monsieur Morlot, the doctor's confidential servant, should remain with him all night."

When that discreet gentleman came to report himself to his master next morning, the following short conversation took place between the two worthies :—

"Well, Jacques," the doctor began, "what have you got to say?"

"I have got to say that I wish, before I had entered this diabolical service, I had taken a dose of hydrocyanic acid, and made myself comfortable on a slab at the Morgue."

"Why, what's the matter now?"

"Matter! another night with one's clothes on, listening to a string of idiotcies uttered in a language of so crabbed and break-tooth a sort, that it must have been invented by a council of fiends, for the express use of a nation of maniac Englishmen. Bah! give me the life of a soldier, of a miner, of a convict even, before this."

"Brigand of laziness! Why don't you go away, then?" asked the doctor.

"Go away, indeed! Speak to me of this man! And what would become of you, I should like to know? Why, you'd have to give up practice; you know it. There's your chocolate getting cold, didn't you see me bring it in? Why, you wouldn't know where to put your hand upon anything, if it wasn't for me. And who else, I wonder, could keep you quiet, and prevent anybody from coming near you when you are at your precious studies? Who else could keep your papers in order? Who could help you with your experiments in the laboratory? And then he asks me why I don't go. I like a grateful man—I always did."

"Why, you grumbling infidel!" cried the little doctor. "You know that you're making a fortune

as fast as you can. You know that you get all sorts of perquisites out of my patients, and that you'll take care you're well paid for this last night's work that you're grumbling about. You know that you are not spending a farthing, and are putting by mints of money in some hole or corner. You know, too, you old sinner, that you like the life, that you like people to think you are in my secrets, and that you yourself are something of a medical authority; and as to experiments, you can't deny that you are fonder of assisting at them than I am myself—ay, and I believe you carry them on yourself when my back's turned, and that one of these days you expect the philosopher's stone to turn up in the bottom of one of my crucibles."

These little tiffs between master and man were by no means uncommon. They lived upon pretty equal terms, as the reader sees. They were continually abusing each other, and yet I verily believe that if anything *had* happened to separate them, neither the one nor the other would long have survived the parting.

"But come," said the doctor, after a minute spent in imbibing his chocolate, which minute Monsieur Morlot devoted to the utterance of a series of imprecations on human ingratitude, "come, let us have no more of this nonsense. You say that you've spent the night in listening to a string of idiotcies. The Englishman, then, has been delirious again?"

"Bah! not delirious exactly, but talkative."

"Violent at all?"

"No."

"I suppose you couldn't understand what he talked about?"

"*Par exemple!* who could understand such a language as that? I heard him speak the name of the girl up there."

"Stupid! what do you mean by 'up there'?"

"I mean the English girl. I heard him say 'Madeleine.'"

"And that was all you could make out?"

"Not another word."

"Very well, then, you may go now, and see how many patients there are in the waiting-room, and which of them it is really necessary I should see. And mind, Monsieur Morlot, no partiality; rich or poor, they must all be done justice to."

Monsieur Morlot gave a grunt of dissatisfaction, and left the room. The doctor laid his right fore-finger on the right side of his nose, and looked down into his empty chocolate-cup, with a countenance of unfathomable cunning.

Then Doctor Lebceuf received his patients. He was a just man, and took as much pains and bestowed the same profound consideration on the case of the poorest amongst them, as on that of the most wealthy. Indeed I believe the persons belonging to this latter class fared the worst of the two. Then,

when the last patient had been attended to, the doctor made a famous *dejeuner à la fourchette*, and after that he combed his beard into a very fierce *attitude*, if the expression may be allowed, and was ready to go out. First of all, he went to the Rue Pompadour, and had a talk with M. Charvet, and then he went to the Hôtel du Grand Monarque.

Doctor Lebœuf found our hero in a very restless and feverish condition. He had slept a little in the morning; indeed Monsieur Morlot, who was the best of nurses, had not left him till he was asleep, but now he was awake again.

"I think I shall do something desperate, doctor," he said, "if I don't get well soon. This inaction is destroying me."

"Nonsense, nonsense," said the doctor, "you are getting well as fast as you can. You have thrown yourself back a little by that foolish escapade the other day. But you will be well again *now* very soon, if you will only keep yourself quiet."

"Quiet," echoed Trelane, "that's just what I want to be. But I can't be quiet."

Doctor Lebœuf sat down in his old place behind the bed-curtains, and again smote his nose with his right fore-finger. Sitting there still out of sight, he gently laid his fore-finger on Trelane's arm, and said,—

"*I believe*, now, you're bothering yourself about something."

Trelane denied it, but his words hardly carried conviction with them.

“I am *sure* you are,” continued the doctor. “What then? do you suppose I can’t see? Why, I have been forty-five years—yes, forty-five years—looking at tongues, and listening to palpitations, and studying peoples’ faces, ay, and their hands and their gestures too, and all the rest of it. And do you mean to tell me that I don’t know what’s the matter? Come, let’s hear all about it. I might be able to help you. I daresay I’m an old fool—if you were to ask Dr. Cruchot in the next street, he’d tell you so, no doubt—but still the old fool might be able to help you a bit.”

But the Englishman still evaded the question. It would make anybody uneasy, he said, to lie there so long, unable to do anything, or go anywhere.

“Well,” sighed the doctor, with a resigned air, “if you won’t tell me what’s the matter, you won’t, and I must give it up.” But he did not give it up, nor even had the least intention of doing so. Pious frauds have been practised by the profession, no doubt, ever since the time of Galen. “We’ll talk about something else,” said the artful little man. He was still sitting behind the bed-curtains. “How suddenly our friends in the Rue Pompadour have taken themselves off.” Dr. Lebœuf might well talk of watching people’s *hands* as well as their faces. When those words were spoken, Trelane’s hand,

which was laying outside the bed, made quite a convulsive grasp at the sheet. The doctor winked in his retreat in a manner which it would have done any philanthropic heart good to see.

There was a short pause.

"They *are* gone, then?" said Trelane at last, but he did not speak in his usual voice.

"Yes," replied the doctor. "They started, as I have learnt since, this morning—very early too, before daylight."

Here there was another pause.

"Do you know where they have gone?" inquired Trelane.

"No," said the doctor; "I have not the least idea."

"But the porter knows, I suppose?"

"No, indeed, for I asked him. He saw them as far as the station, of course, but they only took tickets for Paris. What their ultimate destination might be was uncertain. But they would hardly get up so early in the morning, if they were only going so far as Paris."

A longer pause now than ever.

"Doctor!" cried Trelane, suddenly, and springing up in bed he snatched the curtain aside, and caught the doctor with his cabalistic finger actually on his nose. The learned man, however, made a successful feint of being engaged in scratching the organ in question, and Trelane spoke on,—“Doctor, I

must get well; I must be able to move about. If I remain here I shall go mad."

"Aha, my friend," said the doctor, rising from his seat, and gently forcing Trelane to reassume a recumbent position. "So, my friend, you see you have told me all about it after all."

"All about what?"

"About what is troubling you, what is fevering you, what is making you so restless and imprudent. Hein! hein! it is the young English lady, then, who is disturbing monsieur's repose. *Ma foi, ma foi*, I am sixty-five years old, and he would not tell me. Well, well, he is English—that accounts for everything."

Trelane was sorry to have hurt the excellent man by his want of confidence. He reached out his hand and grasped that of the doctor, who was soon appeased.

"Pardon me," said the Englishman; "why should I not speak freely to *you*. Well, I must own that there is a mystery about it all that does puzzle and annoy me more than I can express. I am sure that poor young lady is not happy in being carried away in this sudden manner."

"Monsieur," said Dr. Leboeuf, speaking gravely, which was very unusual with him, "depend on it, she is not *unhappy*."

"And why not?" asked Trelane, hastily.

"Monsieur le Major, I have lived a long time,

and seen and heard a good many strange things, and the result of it all is, that I have come to the conclusion that there is no *great* unhappiness where there is no guilt, and that young 'miss' is as innocent as the lilies are."

Trelane again grasped the little man's hand very fervently.

"Doctor," he said, "thank you with all my heart for saying that. She *is* innocent and good, if that may be said of any earthly creature. Doctor," he continued, presently, "I must see her again—I had no idea—I did not know till lately what she was, or how much my seeing her so often had made me—made me——" and Trelane stopped, for after all he was an Englishman, and he did not like talking about his own feelings.

"Well, well," said the doctor in that comfortable tone which medical men know how to assume so well, "we shall see; it is not easy for people to destroy all trace of their whereabouts. We must make inquiries—we must make inquiries."

"But tell me," asked the invalid, "when do you think I shall be well and able to go about? You know everything—do you know that?"

"I have nothing—now mark me—I have nothing at all to do with it. We doctors are of great use in some cases, and of the least in the world in others. True, you wanted me when you got those ugly cuts, and you want me still to watch you

and keep you in order, and to peer into your secrets, and prevent you from doing yourself harm, but otherwise the case is mainly out of my hands, and *in* your own. If you will keep quiet by an act of the will—and I don't see now why you shouldn't—if you will do as you are bid, resolutely banish all thoughts that make you restless, and cultivate those that keep you easy in your mind, I believe that very, very soon you will be able to get about, will get out to take the air, and after that you will mend much more rapidly than in an earlier stage. See, now, I am only speaking the language of reason. You want to attain a certain object, and I have shown you the means of doing so. Now, then, if you talk any more, or excite yourself any more, you will throw yourself back, so I shall leave you. I shall come in again in the evening and see how you are then, and bring you the news of this brilliant capital."

And from the time of that interview with Doctor Lebœuf there was a great change for the better in Trelane's condition. He was relieved now that he had spoken of what was on his mind. It was a comfort to him to be able to talk of those two English ladies to the good doctor. He liked to hear Lebœuf's account of his conversations with them; he liked to hear him speak of their good qualities. As to any news of Madame d'Elmar and her niece, the doctor had none—could get none. The

apartments had been left in charge of the porter and his wife, but everything had been put away as if the absence of the ladies from their temporary home was likely to be a long one.

Perhaps even this absence of a clue by which Madame d'Elmar and her niece might be traced to their present place of residence, wherever it might be, was also in Trelane's favour. If he had known what to do or where to go, he might have been more anxious than he was to be up and doing; whilst at present, even if he were quite well and able to get about, it would be sufficiently difficult for him to know how to act. So he really did as the doctor had advised him—set himself to work to get well, and he prospered so well in this enterprise, that very soon he was able to take advantage of a day unusually mild and warm for the time of year, and get out for a short drive in the doctor's cabriolet.

After this his improvement was, as the learned physician had predicted, very much more rapid; and it was not long before Trelane found himself on a certain fine afternoon walking up and down one of the terraces of the Versailles Gardens, with the delicious winter sun to warm and cheer him. It would be pleasant to dwell on that period of our hero's convalescence—to speak of the delights of recovered freedom, to tell how all sorts of common pleasures, ordinarily too much undervalued, were

to him who had been so long deprived of them, sources of the wildest enjoyment; so that the song of the birds among the trees of the garden, the broad streaks of sunlight on its paths, the sensation of the soft air blowing on him with many a suggestion of spring in its delicate perfume—nay, even the sound of the bugle call from the caserne or the cheery rattle of the drum—all and each of these things carried joy with them to the Englishman's heart of hearts, and seemed to bring him a sense of pleasure of which he could surely never have enough, if he spent the rest of his life in the open air. We should enjoy life much more than we do if we sometimes pictured to ourselves an existence without some of the enjoyments which we look upon as mere necessities of life, and value hardly at all, because we are so used to them. What a thing a sturdy walk would be to a man whose limbs are paralyzed! What a sensation to the convict with years of gaol monotony before him, to have his prison doors thrown open, and to hear that he was free!

But he who undertakes to tell a story has little right to intersperse his narrative with reflections which the reader can at the right moment make for himself. We will not dwell longer, then, on this point of our story. With every day that passed, Trelane gained new strength, and at last there came a day when he actually had the audacity to tell his

medical attendant that he thought he was well enough now to travel half over Europe.

It was on the day when he went out for the first time with no bandage about his face that our hero made this announcement, and no doubt that was a sort of turning-point in his convalescence. The scar now uncovered for the first time, that air and light might work their final healing influences on it, was one which I suppose would be considered a great disfigurement. It extended down the whole of one side of our Englishman's face, from the temple, in a curved direction, narrowly missing the corner of the eye, nearly to the chin. It had as yet a red and angry look, and presented that puckered appearance which is always seen in newly healed wounds. It was, however, doing well, and was likely soon to lose that depth of colour which at present characterized it, though never likely to be anything but a conspicuous scar. Trelane's beard had grown during his illness, and this shaded the wound to some extent, and screened it somewhat from observation.

Before Doctor Lebœuf made any answer to the major's suggestion, his patient had to submit to a long and rigorous examination of the condition of his health. The wound upon his cheek was ruthlessly tested, the skin being dragged this way and that to see if it would bear any strain that might accidentally be put upon it, and his arm was moved in all sorts of directions to prove the soundness of

the injured shoulder. The result of all this was that the doctor pronounced that our hero would do well enough now, if he took care of himself.

"And now," continued the doctor, "that you may be told without much risk to your health, I may as well mention that I believe there is a faint possibility of your being able to get some sort of information as to the direction, at any rate, in which your two compatriotes, the English lady and her niece, have been travelling."

"What!" cried Trelane, "is it possible that you have been possessed of information, and have not told me?"

"No," answered the doctor, laconically.

"Then what do you mean?" said the other, with considerable impatience.

"I mean," replied the doctor, "that there is information to be had—a very small scrap, however—but that I declined to receive it."

"And why, in heaven's name?"

"In order that I might not be able to impart it to you till the right moment. Now put on your hat, and behave reasonably, and come along with me; but mind, if you're not reasonable, I will go straight away, shut myself up in my study, and then—you may get past Monsieur Morlot if you can."

This conversation took place in Doctor Lebœuf's own abode. There was nothing for it but acquies-

cence, so Trelane had to wait, burning all the time with impatience, while the doctor combed his beard, and gave directions about all sorts of intricate matters to his familiar, and drew on his gloves, and made himself look respectable, as he called it. Then at last he gave the signal for a move, and the two passed out together.

“Where are we going?” asked Trelane at that moment. “I suppose I may make that inquiry, at any rate?”

“To the Rue Pompadour,” was the doctor’s answer. And it was delivered in a tone which seemed intended to discourage any further conversation on the subject.

Doctor Lebœuf’s paces were not very brilliant, but he and his companion were not long in performing the journey from the doctor’s house to the late residence of Madame d’Elmar. How strange it felt to Trelane to be once more approaching that house in the Rue Pompadour, to be again about to enter it. It is true that during his convalescence he had constantly, in the course of his walks, passed the door, and had even entered into conversation with Monsieur Charvet as he stood outside his lodge; but the threshold he had not crossed. The last time he had entered those apartments, he was carried into them wounded, helpless, and unconscious.

“Bonjour, Monsieur Charvet,” said Doctor Lebœuf,

appearing at the door of the porter's lodge, "here is the English gentleman come to see you."

"Enter, gentlemen, enter, I pray of you," said Madame Charvet, appearing from some inner penetralia hidden from the vulgar gaze, and here, if a parenthetical exclamation may be allowed, I would say, Heavens! what dark corners there are in the lodges of French porters, and in what black holes are they and their wives in the habit of sleeping, and cooking, and living! The two visitors entered, and were accommodated each with a velvet-covered chair in excellent condition. There was a very handsome carved cabinet, too, in a corner of this dark and confined apartment. The French are more particular about their furniture than their residences.

"Well," said the doctor, after the most polite and affectionate inquiries as to the state of Trelane's health had been made and answered—"well, Monsieur Charvet, any news of the travellers?"

"Ah, monsieur!" replied the porter, "I wish there were. Neither madame nor the young lady was very fit for travelling when they left, and I should be glad to hear any tidings of them."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked the doctor, and if he had not put the question, Trelane would have been obliged to do so himself. "What do you mean by saying that the young lady was not fit to travel? Her aunt, I know, has for some

time been in delicate health—in fact, she is never strong—but Mademoiselle Madeleine was different.”

“Yes, monsieur le docteur,” said Madame Charvet; “but for the last day or two before they started mademoiselle looked most wretchedly,—so pale and so wan; and then she seemed so unhappy, poor thing, her eyes were always red with tears.”

Trelane could bear no more of this.

“I told you, doctor,” he said, “that this young lady was unhappy in being thus hurried away.”

“Ah, no, monsieur, it was not that,” interposed the porter. “I myself attended them to the station, and I heard madame asking mademoiselle whether she was really well enough to go that day, whether they should not even then go back and wait a little. But still she kept on saying, though the tears were in her eyes as she spoke, ‘Oh! no, no, let us go, let us go; let us not go back for worlds—let us go, whatever happens.’ Oh, I could understand that well enough. It is not much English that I know, but I have picked up enough to make out that.”

“Doctor,” said Trelane, impatiently, “is this all the information that is to be had—you spoke of—”

“Hist, hist!” ejaculated the doctor, with desperate eagerness, and then came the awful threat—“Upon my word, I think I must go back and shut myself up in my study for a time.”

Trelane was once more compelled to be patient, for he could see pretty plainly that the doctor would

do whatever he was going to do in his own way, or not at all. But he thought of those words which he had just heard quoted, and more than ever he longed to fathom their meaning, and more strongly than ever he determined that if it lay within the power of man, he would do so.

At last the doctor made a move to go.

"Is Madame Ponsard by any chance at home?" he said, as he rose from his seat.

"Monsieur le docteur, she is upstairs in her apartment."

"The other day she called and said she wanted to speak with me. As it was not about medical business, I could not see her then; but I have a little time to spare now."

"It is a long way for monsieur to ascend," remarked the porter; "shall I ask her to come down?"

The doctor looked about him a little and hesitated. "Ask her to come down to the apartments of Madame d'Elmar. You have the keys, I suppose, and can let us in, can't you?"

"Mais, monsieur, of course I can; gentlemen, take but the trouble to follow me a little," and seizing a bunch of keys which hung upon a nail in the lodge, Monsieur Charvet proceeded to lead the way upstairs, and Trelane was soon standing once again upon that well-known landing, and at the threshold of that well-known door.

CHAPTER XIV.

A TREACHEROUS FRIEND.

SURELY the furniture and adornments of our houses may be looked upon, to some extent, as having a sort of sensitiveness, as belonging in some degree to the class of servants and dependants. How cheerful all these objects look when in use, as we call it, and enjoying the sunshine of the master's presence; how dismal when he deserts them, and leaves them to the care of an unsympathetic charwoman. They seem, too, to resent such neglect, wearing rather an injured aspect, and sometimes even running to seed, and getting out of repair in a purely vindictive spirit.

Forlorn and dreary in the extreme was the aspect of that salon with which Trelane had so many stirring associations, when he entered it that day in company with Dr. Lebœuf. All sorts of things of the lighter sort had been put away, and those objects which were left had been hastily covered over by Madame Charvet, the great cleansing

which was to come off before the apartment should be again occupied having been put off by this good lady for the present. Even the ashes in the fireplace had not been interfered with, but they also had been covered up, and were very nearly entirely hidden by the chimney-board, an invention of the demon, which is much patronized by domestic servants all over the world. There was plenty of time to take note of all these things while the porter was gone in search of Madame Ponsard. Trelane remarked too, that even the picture—the picture—which used to hang over the fireplace had been removed, and was nowhere to be seen.

The worthy doctor seemed to feel the depressing influence of the scene. He fidgeted about the room, lifted up the corners of some of the coverings which lay on the different articles of furniture, looked first out of one window and then out of the other, and finally established himself on an arm-chair, which, being filled with footstools and other matters, and covered over with a sheet, left him only a small and slippery ledge about six inches broad to perch upon.

Even the mercurial Ponsard, when at length ushered into the room by Monsieur Charvet, seemed to feel the influence of surrounding objects.

“But, gentlemen,” she observed, glancing round the apartment; “were it not for the stairs, you would almost be better in my poor abode; there is a

morsel of fire there, and here it is triste in the extreme."

The doctor, however, was rather an asthmatic subject, and seventy or eighty stairs were certainly a consideration. So he remained propped against his perch, and began to open the inquiry at once.

"Well, Madame Ponsard, and what may *your* news be? Have you anything likely to amuse this gentleman, who is as restless as convalescents usually are?"

"Monsieur," remarked Madame Ponsard, "has the air of one rescued from the jaws of death by medical genius?"

"Much obliged, Ponsard," remarked the doctor; "I flatter myself that *is* the state of the case. But about your news?"

"Have you heard anything," asked Trelane, impatiently, "likely to throw any light on this journey undertaken by Madame d'Elmar and her niece?"

"Now, monsieur le major, no interference," interrupted the imperturbable doctor; "you leave the excellent Ponsard to me; she is going to tell me everything she knows."

"Alas! monsieur le docteur, everything I know is so little."

"Well, so much the better," observed the unmanageable little man, "it will be all the sooner told."

Trelane could not repress a movement of impa-

tience. Madame Ponsard bestowed a look of sympathy upon him, however, and began,—

“Gentlemen, a coincidence of rather a curious kind brought a certain small scrap of information within my reach, not very important in itself, but which may, perhaps, lead to something better. Gentlemen, it is the custom of us poor sempstresses to seek occasionally a little relief from the monotony of our ordinary life.”

“I suppose you have been scampering off to some of your balls or Ducasses, in order to get rid of a little of your superabundant cash,” remarked the doctor.

“No one is better aware than Monsieur le Docteur, that change is sometimes necessary for the health both of mind and body,” responded the lady.

“Well, never mind that,” argued the little man, observing that Trelane was again about to interpose; “never mind that—get on with what you were going to say.”

“Messieurs, you will see that good may come even of one’s little enjoyments occasionally. Gentlemen, it was my good fortune to be present some few evenings ago at a certain fête of a very superior kind at Sevres close by. It was a fête of the most distinguished order, gentlemen, one of those for which *une toilette élégante* is indispensable. Also, could nothing exceed——”

At this point Trelane could bear it no longer.

“Madame Ponsard,” he cried, “you can tell us about the fête afterwards—let us hear now what it was that you learned there.”

“What, again!” said the doctor, menacingly. “Go on, Ponsard, this gentleman has got the fidgets.”

“Messieurs, I will tell you in two words, that at this fête at Sevres, there happened to be present one of my friends; but a friend the most valued and the most admirable. Indeed, she had agreed to meet me at this ball, for, messieurs, you will agree that to go alone to such places, however distinguished, would be hardly agreeable to the rules of etiquette.”

“Etiquette, by all means,” remarked the doctor, sardonically; “let us have etiquette, whatever we do.”

Trelane winced at this delay, and Madame Ponsard observing it, went on,—

“Messieurs, Mademoiselle Ernestine, that is my friend’s name——”

“Not such a bad one,” muttered the merciless Leboeuf.

“Mademoiselle Ernestine was at the ball when I arrived, and after the first greetings and mutual examination of our respective toilettes had taken place, I was somewhat surprised to hear her say, ‘So your patroness and neighbour, Madame d’Elmar, and her niece have gone on a journey.’ Ernestine has often heard me speak of these ladies, but I wondered

how she had heard of their departure, and asked her where she had derived the information. 'But how?' was her answer; 'through my brother, of course. You know that he is employed on the railway, and is at certain times on duty at the terminus of the Orleans chemin de fer. You know, also,' said Ernestine, 'that he is acquainted with Victorine, the *bonne* of Madame d'Elmar, having, on more than one occasion, met her at certain fêtes, at which we also have assisted. Well, it happened, naturally enough, that he being at the station when Madame d'Elmar, her niece, and the captain——'

"The captain," interrupted Trelane. "What captain?"

"Monsieur le Capitaine d'Elmar, the uncle of mademoiselle."

"But I thought he was absent," said Trelane.

"Apparently, then," replied the modiste, "he must have returned, for, by my friend's account, he met these ladies at the station."

For a moment Trelane seemed lost in thought, and for a wonder the doctor did not interrupt him.

"Well, gentlemen," continued Madame Ponsard, resuming the thread of her narrative where it had been broken off, "the brother of my friend, naturally enough, recognizing his friend Victorine, went to the assistance of the party to which she belonged, and saw to their luggage, and otherwise

made himself useful to them at the time of departure."

"And this was how it happened, then," remarked the doctor, "that your friend was able to greet you with this remark concerning the journey undertaken by your neighbour and patroness?"

"That was precisely it, Monsieur le Docteur; she had it from her brother, the official at the railway terminus."

"And does she know—does your friend know," inquired Trelane, hastily, "for what place these ladies were bound—does she know whether the uncle—whether le Capitaine d'Elmar travelled with them?"

"Monsieur, as to the last point I did not question her; with regard to the first I did, and her reply was, that she had not herself made the inquiry of her brother, but that doubtless he would be able to tell, if asked."

"Where is he to be found?" asked Trelane.

"Monsieur, he is on day duty, I believe, at the station just now. I do not know where he resides."

"I must find him out at once," said the Englishman.

"There is a plan, if monsieur did not object—it would, for the rest, be a saving of time."

"What?" demanded Trelane; "tell me at once."

"If monsieur—but perhaps he would object."

"No, no. What is it? Tell me without delay."

"Monsieur, to-night—this evening I should say, rather, there is a certain ball of a character the most distinguished."

"Bless that woman and her balls," groaned the doctor; "it is a monomania."

"And you expect to meet these people there?" said our hero, speaking in the unceremonious manner which is so peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon.

"Monsieur," replied Madame Ponsard, with a momentary dignity, "at the distinguished ball of which I am speaking, I believe it is the intention of Mademoiselle Ernestine, and of monsieur the railway employé, her brother, to assist without fail."

"And where is it?"

"Monsieur, it is to be held at Clichy."

"And you think if I were to go to that, I should be sure to see the brother of your friend?"

"Monsieur, I have no doubt of it—none whatever."

"Then, I'll go," said our hero, energetically enough; "that is," he added, turning to the little doctor, "with Doctor Lebœuf's permission."

"Oh, you think of my views on the subject at last, do you?" retorted the touchy doctor. "Pray don't trouble yourself about them. Go, by all means; and, of course, you intend to dance; you will find Madame Ponsard, here, a capital partner."

"Ah, monsieur," interposed the lady, "it is not

right to make game of one in that fashion, as if the gentleman would think of such a thing."

"Oh, let him dance—dance away all night, get thoroughly heated, he will find plenty of draughts to cool him again. Speak to me of this man!"

"Doctor, you know perfectly well——" Trelane began. The doctor, however, would not hear him, and went on asserting his injured dignity till he thought he had sufficiently disturbed the peace of mind of his patient, when he came round altogether, and said that of course it was necessary, if Trelane wanted to trace these ladies, that he should get 'all the information about them that was to be had, and that, with that view, it was certain that he must see the brother of Madame Ponsard's friend with as little delay as possible.

"Monsieur will find the fête to be everything that can be conceived of most distinguished. Of course, in consideration of the time of year, it will be under cover, and the warmth of the temperature will be duly studied."


And so, with many mutual expressions of goodwill, and with many assurances on Madame Ponsard's part, that she would do anything and everything that lay in her power to further the end which Trelane had in view, the party broke up, and our hero, after thanking the little doctor heartily for coming out of his way to assist at the interview with Madame Ponsard, returned to his hotel to seek a

little repose, to think over what he had heard, and to make plans respecting his future conduct.

These meditations, and a little dinner served in the "Grand Monarque's well-known style," occupied him till it was time to go to the fête.

It is unnecessary to give any account of the fête at Clichy. It was, in almost all respects—for things of the same class are in France very little various—the same as the memorable *Idalie* of Vincennes, into whose precincts the reader has already been introduced. It is enough to state, that our hero went, that *Mademoiselle Ernestine* and her brother were both present, that *Trelane* was solemnly introduced to them by *Madame Ponsard*, and that the behaviour of the railway official throughout the conference that ensued was characterized by a degree of mysterious dignity and gravity, far beyond what in England would be displayed in the conduct of an important diplomatic transaction.

Two pieces of information of which he was in search, our Englishman, however, was able to gain. He learnt, first of all, that the passengers concerning whom he made inquiry, were booked, as was their luggage also, for *Bourges*; and, secondly, that *monsieur le capitaine* was only at the station to see them off, and did not accompany them in the train. With this amount of knowledge, *Trelane* was compelled for the present to rest contented, and, having acquired it, and not finding the attractions of the ball-



room at Clichy sufficient to retain him longer within its magic circle, he withdrew at an early hour, and returned to Versailles, and the Grand Monarque.

And the time was now at hand when the Grand Monarque and Versailles, both, were to be deserted by him whose fortunes we are following. Trelane had now determined that on the following day he would make a move to Paris; that there he would endeavour to find le Capitaine d'Elmar, who was most likely to be heard of at his old quarters at Vincennes; that having found him, he would ask, point-blank, what had become of his sister-in-law and his cousin, and if Alexis refused to give him information on this subject, he would then set off at once for Bourges, to which place he had already succeeded in tracing these two ladies, and thence continue his researches, with the advantage of such information as he might be able to pick up on the spot.

Next morning Trelane paid a visit to his excellent friend and physician Doctor Lebœuf, and broke the news of his intended departure. The little doctor felt his late patient's pulse, examined his appearance critically, fidgeted about the room, and uttered many inarticulate sounds expressive of doubt and apprehension. It was rather soon to begin thinking of a journey, he said, for a man who had been so long an invalid. Could he not wait a few days longer? He was getting on so nicely. It was a

pity to run any risks. It was not so very dull now he was able to get about.

“Well, well,” he said at last, seeing that the Englishman had made up his mind, “I suppose it’s no use talking. The English are such people. But, tell me, are you thinking of travelling alone? Not even a servant?”

“Well,” replied Trelane, “I *was* thinking of doing so. Do you conceive that it would be imprudent?”

“I think you would be much better with a companion, somebody who could take some part, at any rate, of the trouble of travelling off your hands.”

“I confess that the idea has crossed my mind,” said the Englishman, “of engaging a servant for a short time to travel with me. I hardly know, though, where I should be likely to find a man who would serve my purpose.”

Dr. Leboëuf reflected for a little time in silence.

“What should you think of my familiar, Monsieur Morlot?” he said at last.

“Monsieur Morlot,” repeated the Englishman. “But would he go? Could you spare him?”

“I think I could manage for a time. The reason why I mentioned him was that he is such a wonderful nurse, that if you *were* to be ill, he would be of priceless value to you. Then he is something of a doctor, too, you know.”

“Oh, I have no doubt that he would be invaluable,”

said Trelane; "the only question is, whether it would be possible to persuade him to go."

"You leave that to me," replied the physician. "You are going, you say, to Paris to-day, and to your former quarters at the Hotel du Helder. In the course of the evening, I think you may expect Monsieur Morlot's turning up, and establishing himself as travelling physician, and general assistant and aide-de-camp to Monsieur le Major Trelane."

"Doctor," said Trelane, "I don't know what I am to say to you. You overwhelm me with favours."

"Nonsense, nonsense! Now, you know, you must take great care of yourself, and mind you are to eat a great deal, you know; that's the best physic now, plenty of meat—plenty of meat. And don't over-fatigue yourself, mind; it's very important you must *not* over-fatigue yourself."

"And now, my dear good physician," Trelane went on, "I have to approach an awkward subject between friends."

"Let it alone, then. Let it alone," said the little doctor, bustling about the room, as was his wont when nervous. "Come, it's time you were off. Come, you'll lose your train."

"No, no," persisted our hero, "you won't get rid of me like that. I know it's always unpleasant talking about money between friends, but——"

"Then don't talk about it," burst out the other. "I don't want your money, and what's more, I won't

have it! Come, now, I mean what I say, and you know I'm easily offended—so no more of it.”

“Dr. Leboeuf, I tell you, the thing cannot be. Why am I to make use of your valuable time and invaluable services, and to go away and make no acknowledgment of them? I tell you it cannot be.”

“Now, Mister Englishman,” said the doctor, coming suddenly to an anchor in front of Trelane, “are we to be friends?”

“Yes, I know what you are going to say,” replied our hero. “Friends, as far as I am concerned, we must always be; but that has nothing to do with my walking off in a mean manner, and making no acknowledgment of—”

“Then I'll tell you what,” burst out the little doctor, rummaging among some papers, as if a new idea had struck him, “if you want to make acknowledgment, here is the only one I will hear of. Here is the report of a certain hospital at Paris, in which I am much interested, and which I often visit. Come, you shall make them a present, since you are so anxious to get rid of your money, and there's an end of it.”

We are not going to be our hero's trumpeters, so we will not make mention of the exact sum which he contributed to the funds of that hospital. When—this transaction over—he shook his kind physician warmly by the hand, I believe that both doctor and patient were unfeignedly sorry that the

time for parting had arrived. At this last moment it was arranged between them, that if any intelligence of importance came to either one or the other, the information should be mutually communicated. And with that they parted, and in another hour Trelane was on his way to Paris.

He just stopped at the hotel to leave his luggage and order his room, and then he went on to Vincennes. He found his way to the quarters where he had on a former occasion sought his friend, and inquired if le Capitaine d'Elmar was there.

To his surprise he was answered in the affirmative, and invited to walk in.

Trelane could not help feeling some sense of awkwardness and embarrassment now that he was so soon to see this man who had once been, if not a friend, at all events something more than an acquaintance, and who now, he could not help thinking, was turned into his enemy. And yet of this he had no proofs. The reader must please to remember that Trelane knew nothing of that letter which Alexis sent to Madame d'Elmar; his suspicions made him believe that some such letter had been written, and that his friend had been instrumental in the breaking up of that little home at Versailles, just as he had been in the breaking up of the little party in the theatre of the Opéra Comique. Still he had no proof that this man had played him any trick. He had no open cause of quarrel with him—nothing

more strong—and what is more strong?—than *conviction*; an internal conviction that d'Elmar was not really his friend.

All these reflections passed through Trelane's mind as he sat and waited in a very small ante-room in his friend's quarters, and listened to the sounds which came from an adjoining apartment, and which, being compounded of a great stamping of feet, a considerable amount of shouting, and much clashing of weapons, seemed to indicate that a fencing-bout was going on within.

It continued for some time, and as Trelane knew that his visit had been announced, having actually heard his name spoken, and noted the pause in the sounds already mentioned which succeeded the announcement, he could not help feeling a little annoyed at being thus intentionally, as it seemed, kept waiting.

"Perhaps," thought the Englishman, with a grim smile, "he wishes me to take note of his being in the habit of using his sword, that I may know what I have to expect if I get in his way at all."

At last the warlike noises ceased, and after a little more time had been consumed in subdued mutterings and a certain amount of covert laughter, the door communicating between the room in which Trelane was waiting, and that in which the fencing-bout had been going on, was opened, and le Capitaine d'Elmar entered, accompanied by another personage

dressed in military costume, and who, it might be presumed, had been his late antagonist. He was not a prepossessing-looking individual—tall and dark, and always staring at you and smiling.

Alexis was somewhat different from his usual self in manner that day. He was not in that excited rampant state of cordiality which had characterized him when last Trelane saw him. It was not a cold greeting with which he met our Englishman, but it was a sort of leisurely greeting, if the reader will allow the term.

“And how may you have been all this time, my friend?” he asked. “Have you been at Paris since I saw you? By-the-by, I was sorry to be obliged to depart on that day when I asked you to come here; but what will you? it was a matter over which I had no control. *N'est ce pas, mon ami?*” he continued, turning to his friend. The friend, who had got into a dark place, with his back to the light, had never taken his eyes off Trelane. He now looked away for a moment in order to reply to Alexis, and, smiling in a most evil manner, answered in the affirmative.

“*Monsieur le Lieutenant Tronchet,*” said d'Elmar, “let me introduce you to *Monsieur le Major Trelane?*”

The two gentlemen bowed, and *Monsieur Tronchet* stared more than ever.

It must be owned that d'Elmar's position was

rather a difficult one. His cue was ignorance. He was not going to acknowledge that he knew anything of Trelane's adventure, of the injuries he had sustained, or of his residence under Madame d'Elmar's roof. He did not mean to allude to any of these things; yet of these things his mind was full, and this made conversation difficult. Then Trelane's altered appearance since the captain had last seen him, and that great scar on his cheek—these things seemed to call for comment; in fact, it struck the Frenchman that he must take some notice of these matters, as it would otherwise look as if he knew all that had happened, and was trying to keep off the subject.

"But, my friend," he said, at last, peering into Trelane's face as if he were near sighted, "what is the matter with your face, you have sustained some injury?" The word he used was "*égratignure*," a term chosen purposely to underrate the importance of the wound; indeed, it means little more than a scratch.

"What?" asked the Englishman, "have you not heard?"

"Heard? No. What? Have you been fighting a duel?"

"I thought you might have heard," replied Trelane, whose suspicions were now becoming confirmed, "through Madame d'Elmar, of the injury I had received at Versailles, and how I came in conse-

quence to be indebted to her, for some time, for shelter and hospitality."

"Faith, I may have heard something—indeed, I fancy I did; but I had really forgotten all about it."

Now this was surely a disconcerting way of treating the subject. The magnitude of the risk which the Englishman had run was lost sight of, and no sort of importance attached to the part he had taken in a troublesome and dangerous transaction. Trelane was annoyed and irritated; but there was nothing to be done. He could not be the trumpeter of his own deeds, nor was he the man to make the most of his own sufferings. He was determined, however, not to protract unnecessarily an interview in which he felt that he was occupying a false position.

"Perhaps, then," he said, after a moment's delay, "as you seem to possess so little information with regard to proceedings in which Madame d'Elmar and her niece are concerned, you may also be ignorant of the journey undertaken by those ladies, and of the direction in which they have gone?"

"Pardon me," replied the other, in a very provoking tone, "these are matters concerning which I may, or may not, have information; but you know," he added, epigrammatically,—“you know, mon cher, that people don't always wish to have their plans made the subject of public discussion."

There was nothing more to be said after this. Trelane saw that by pursuing the subject further,

he should simply be subjecting himself to a sort of treatment which our proud and reserved Englishman was not inclined to risk. So the conversation was carried on after a lame and halting fashion for a short time longer, and then Trelane rose to go.

“Do you remain much longer in Paris?” inquired his host, in an inquisitive manner.

“No, I think it unlikely,” was the answer.


“And in what direction do you think of travelling?” asked Alexis, with an assumption of carelessness in his tone.

This was rather too much. Trelane’s anger had been well concealed hitherto, but this was an opportunity not to be resisted.

“Pardon me,” he said, “if I quote your own observation in answer to your question. ‘You know, mon cher, that people don’t always wish to have their plans made the subject of public discussion.’”

Trelane smiled as he uttered these words, and so did Alexis, and so did his friend, but not one of the three wore an expression that was altogether agreeable to contemplate. These, however, were the last words spoken by any of the party, and a very short time afterwards Trelane passed out of the great gates of the fortress of Vincennes.

END OF VOL. I.



LONDON :
PRINTED BY SMITH, ELDER AND CO.,
LITTLE GREEN ARBOUR COURT, OLD BAILEY, E.C.

SMITH, ELDER AND CO.'S
NEW PUBLICATIONS.

ARISTOTLE: A Chapter from the History of Science, Including Analysis of Aristotle's Scientific Writings. By GEORGE HENRY LEWES. Demy 8vo.

QUEENS OF SONG; Being Memoirs of some of the Most Celebrated Female Vocalists who have appeared on the Lyric Stage from the Earliest Days of the Opera to the present Time. To which is added a Chronological List of all the Operas that have been performed in Europe. By ELLEN CREATHORNE CLAYTON. With Six Portraits, engraved on Steel. Two handsome Vols. Demy 8vo. 32s.

MILITARY ENDS AND MORAL MEANS: Exemplifying the higher Influences affecting Military Life and Character, the Motives to Enlistment, the Use of Stratagems in War, the Necessity for Standing Armies, and the Duties of a Military Force aiding the Civil Power. By Colonel JAMES GRAHAM, Author of "The Art of War." One Vol. Demy 8vo.

THE LIFE OF GOETHE. By GEORGE HENRY LEWES. New Edition, partly Re-written. One Vol. 8vo. With Portrait. 16s.

SAVAGE AFRICA: Being the Narrative of a Tour in Equatorial, South-Western, and North-Western Africa. With Notes on the Habits of the Gorilla; on the Existence of Unicorns and Tailed Men; on the Slave Trade; on the Origin, Character, and Capabilities of the Negro; and on the future Civilization of Western Africa. Second Edition. By W. WINWOOD READE, F.R.G.S. With Nine Illustrations, by Messrs. WOLFF and ZWICKER, engraved by DALZIEL. And a Map. Demy 8vo. 21s.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEWS OF SOCIETY. Sixteen Engravings in Outline, Designed and Drawn by RICHARD DOYLE, Engraved by DALZIEL. With Descriptive Letterpress. Oblong Folio. Half Bound. 15s.

LONDON PEOPLE; Sketched from Life. By CHARLES BENNETT. With Numerous Illustrations. Fcap. 4to. Elegantly bound. 7s. 6d.

BATTLE-FIELDS OF THE SOUTH, FROM BULL RUN TO FREDERICKSBURG. With Sketches of Confederate Commanders, and Gossip of the Camp. By an ENGLISH COMBATANT (Lieutenant of Artillery on the Field Staff). With Two Maps. Two Vols. Post 8vo. 21s.

OUR OLD HOME. By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, Author of "The Scarlet Letter," "Transformation," &c. Two Vols. Post 8vo.

THE SPORTING RIFLE AND ITS PROJECTILES. By Lieutenant JAMES FORSYTH, M.A., Assistant Conservator of Forests, Central India. With Three Plates. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d.

ON LIFE AND DEATH. Four Lectures, delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain. By WILLIAM SAVORY, F.R.S., Assistant-Surgeon to, and Lecturer on Anatomy and Physiology at, St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Crown 8vo. 5s.

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65, CORNHILL.

NEW NOVELS.

I.

THE HEKIM BASHI; or, Adventures of Giuseppe Antonelli, a Physician in the Turkish Service. By Dr. HUMPHRY SANDWICH, C.B., Author of "The Siege of Kars." Two Vols. Post 8vo.

II.

MR. AND MRS. FAULCONBRIDGE. By HAMILTON AIDÉ, Author of "Rita," "Confidences," "Carr of Carryon," &c. 2 vols. Post 8vo.

III.

HESTER KIRTON. By the Author of "Chesterford," "A Bad Beginning," &c. Three Vols. Post 8vo.

IV.

LEO. By DUTTON COOK, Author of "Paul Foster's Daughter." Three Vols. Post 8vo.

V.

UNCLE CROTTY'S RELATIONS. By HERBERT GLYN, Author of "The Cotton Lord." Two Vols. Post 8vo.

VI.

ANNIS WARLEIGH'S FORTUNES. By HOLME LEE, Author of "Against Wind and Tide," "Kathie Brande," &c. Three Vols. Post 8vo.

VII.

CHESTERFORD. By the Author of "A Bad Beginning." Three Vols. Post 8vo.

VIII.

SKIRMISHING. By the Author of "Who Breaks — Pays," "Cousin Stella," &c. One Vol. Post 8vo.

IX.

A SIMPLE WOMAN. By the Author of "Nut-Brown Maids," &c. One Vol. Post 8vo.

X.

FORBIDDEN FRUIT. Two Vols. Post 8vo.

XI.

ARROWS IN THE DARK. By the Author of "Said and Done." One Vol. Post 8vo.

XII.

ADRIAN L'ESTRANGE. One Vol. Post 8vo.

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100

