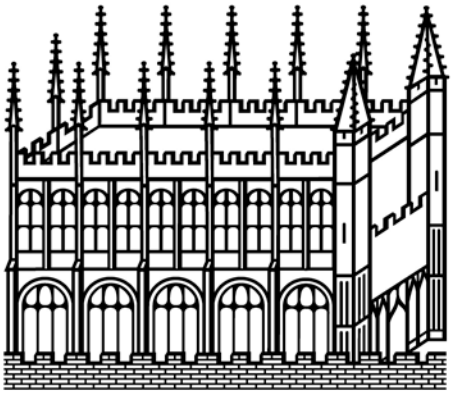

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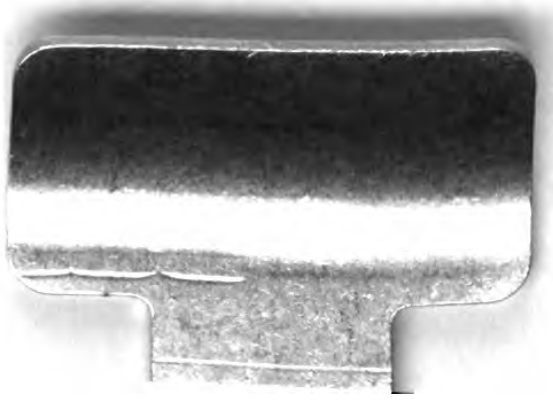

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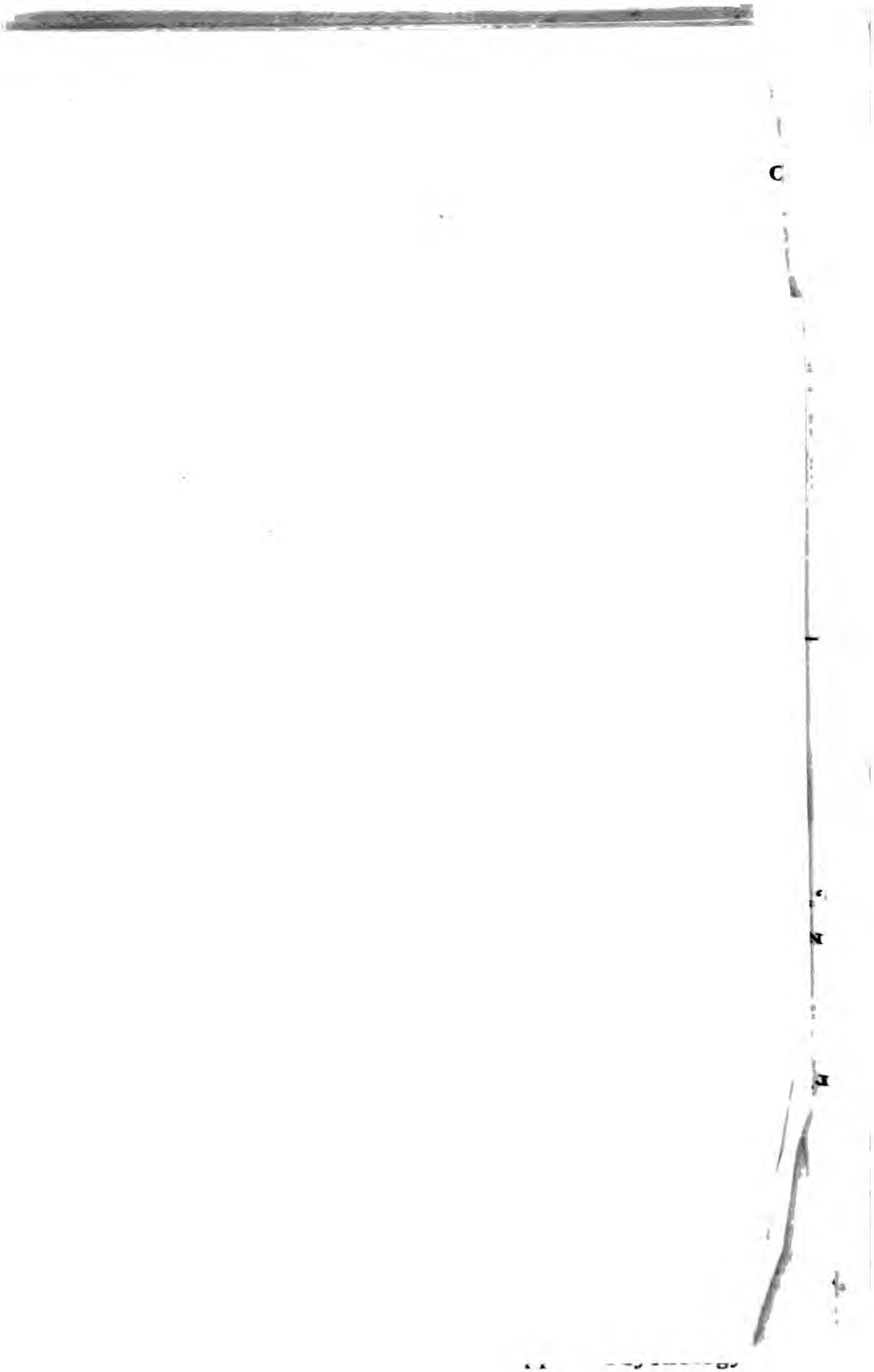

THE THREE SIGNS

AND

OTHER AMERICAN STORIES

BY

HAWTHORNE, IRVING, AND POE

PUT INTO BASIC ENGLISH

LONDON:
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & Co., Ltd.
BROADWAY HOUSE, CARTER LANE. E.C.
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TO THE READER

Hawthorne, Irving, and Poe—the three most important American writers in the 50 years before the Civil War—were as different as possible from one another in birth, training, and outlook.

Nathaniel Hawthorne came of an old Puritan family whose great days were in the past, and, breathing the grey air of Salem, Massachusetts, untouched by the new and happier ideas of his time, he gave his mind to the bitter questions of wrong-doing and punishment.

Washington Irving, the son of a man of some position with a house in New York, saw everything through the good-humoured eyes of a man of society. He was a person of wide interests who took a pleasure in long journeys, and he made use of all his experiences in his writings.

The mother and father of Edgar Allen Poe were on the stage, and from them he probably got his tendency to strongly-coloured ideas and his love for things unnatural and strange. In his belief in himself, and in the deep love and respect for women which is seen in much of his best work, he is representative of the

South, where he was living for most of his short existence.

But different though they are from one another, these three writers have one common quality—a way of seeing all existence as it is *not*. In the ' Romantic ' school of writing, of which these three stories are examples, everyday things take on new forms and colours, and common men and women become beings with bright wings or forked tails. These effects are dependent in a marked degree on the feeling-value of words, and it is interesting to see how far they are possible in the controlled language of Basic.

For reading this selection only the 850 words of Basic English, printed at the front, are necessary. They are worked by the rules given for learners in *The ABC of Basic English* and a full list of other words on Basic English is given on the last page. For the Basic form of " The Three Signs " and " The Glasses," Mr. J. Rantz, the writer of *The Sounds and Forms of Basic English*, is responsible. " The Shade of the Dead Lover " was put into Basic by Miss K. Newmark.

C. K. OGDEN.

The Orthological Institute,
10, *King's Parade,*
Cambridge, England.

THE THREE SIGNS

In the red gold light of the end of a summer day, a tall dark form, to which much journeying in far off places had given a strange look, was coming into a small town in our quiet New England. The stick in his hand had been with him from the day it had been cut from its branch in the woods of Hindustan: his dark face was still shaded by the hat which had kept off him the sun of Spain: his neck had been burned brown by the winds of the Arabian waste, and touched by the cold breath of the Arctic. From long journeying among violent men, he had under his short coat the blade which he had once sent into the throat of a false Turk. Every strange country had taken from him something of his New England qualities, and from every country he had unconsciously taken something of its colour; so that it was not surprising that when the walker through strange lands came again into the streets of his town no one had any memory of him, though he

was looked at with interest by everyone. But when by chance his arm was touched by that of a young woman going in the opposite direction, she gave a step back, almost crying out.

"Ralph Cranfield!" was the name she half said.

"Is that my old school friend, Hope Egerton?" he said to himself, looking round, but without stopping.

Ralph Cranfield, from the time he was a boy, had been certain that he was marked for great things. We do not say how he got the idea—if it was uncovered to him in sleep, or by powers greater than man's; or if he was only taking for the voice of a Sybil[1] the desires of his mind. But he had the fixed idea that three great events of his existence were to be made clear to him by three signs.

The first of these events, and probably the one to which he had given most thought, and with most pleasure, was the discovery of the one Woman who, of all women living, would be able to make him happy by her love. He was to go journeying across the earth till, meeting a

[1] Woman, in Roman Religion, who had a power of reading the future.

beautiful woman who had round her neck a chain on which a jewel was hanging, in the form of a heart, he was to say to her: "Woman, I come to you with a heart of lead. Will you take it, and give me rest?" And if she was to be his—if they were to be joined here on earth, and joined with even stronger bands in the hereafter—she would say, with her finger on the jewel: "This, which has been round my neck so long, is the sign that I will."

And secondly, Ralph Cranfield had a fixed belief that there was a great store of gold somewhere in the earth, of which he and no other was to make the discovery. When his feet came to the secret place, there would be a hand in front of him pointing down—he was not certain if it would be of stone, or cut in great size on the side of a mountain, or a hand of flame in the air; but, at least, he would see a hand, the first finger pointing down, and under it the Latin word EFFODE—*Make a hole*! And making a hole, his work would be rewarded by the gold, or the jewels, or whatever of value was stored there.

The third and last of the strange events in this existence of high purpose was to be his coming to a position of power and

authority over others. The future would make clear what this position was to be—he might be a king, and the father of kings; or he might be chief of a great nation fighting to be free; he might be the teacher of a new and truer religion. When he was to be given the sign that this high position was his, three old men would come to him. The chief among them, a respected and important person in the dress of the wise men of old times, would have in his hand the long stick of a seer.[1] First, the old man, with this stick, would make a certain design in the air, and then he would give the Word which, if Ralph did as he said, would take him forward to great things.

With this high future before him, young Ralph Cranfield, full of hope, had gone out to the discovery of the Woman, the Gold, and the Wise Man with his offer of unlimited power. And had he made the discovery? It was certainly not with the air of a man who had had a fuller existence than others that he now went down the road to his mother's house, but with the sad look of one fighting against hard and bitter conditions. He was here again;

[1] One who has the power to see into the future.

but only for a time—to put down his stick hoping that his tired body would get back a little of its old force in the place where his high future had been pointed out to him.

Little was changed in the town: it was not one of those places where a year's good business makes more mark than a hundred years of slow wasting away; but a quiet little town, full of old unmarried women, and old twisted trees, and old roofs touched with green. Putting together all the changes ten years had made, it seemed little more than if Ralph Cranfield had gone away that same morning, had been sleeping till night-fall, and was now turning back again. But his heart was cold; because the town seemed to have kept no memory of him as he had of the town.

"The change is *here*!" he said sadly, his hand on his heart. "Who is this man of thought and care, tired with journeying over the earth, and weighted with broken hopes? The young man comes not back again who went away so happily!"

And now Ralph Cranfield was at his mother's door. Letting himself into the garden, he came to a stop under a great tree,

playing with his desire to go into the house as one does at those times when the years seem minutes. He took a long look at the house, its windows bright with the light of the sky, its doorway and the stone step, and the uncertain line of the footway curving from the door to the street. The tree against which he was resting was an old friend, and looking at it, his eye was taken by something which made a sad smile come to his lips. It was a half rubbed-out Latin word—EFFODE—the cutting of which had been a full day's work when as a boy he was starting to give thought to his great future. It might be looked on as a somewhat strange fact that, over the word, the tree had put out a growth formed not unlike a hand with the first finger pointing down. Or so at least it seemed in the half light.

"Now, a man who had belief in such things," said Ralph to himself, "might say that the store of gold for which I have been looking all over the earth is, after all, at the very door of my mother's house. There would be humour in that, truly!"

He gave no more thought to the thing; because now the door came open and an old woman was on the step looking out

into the dark to see who it might be who had come into her garden. It was Ralph Cranfield's mother. We will say nothing of their meeting—which made the one so happy, and to the other gave hope of rest.

But in the morning he got up with a troubled mind. Because his brain, sleeping and awake, had been full of pictures and memories. All the fires had been lighted again with which as a boy he had been burning to go to the discovery of the three great secrets of his existence. All his early thoughts seemed to have been waiting for him under his mother's roof, and now that he was here again, came dancing round him. In the room so fixed in his memory—on the bed where as a baby he had been put to sleep—he had had a more troubled night than ever in Arabia's waste, or in the dark woods of Hindustan. The shade of a woman had come to his bedside and put her finger on the jewelled heart: a hand of flame, burning in the dark, had seemed to be pointing down to something in the earth: an old Wise Man with a lifted stick had given him the direction to a seat of power.

The same shades, though less clear by day, still went about the house, moving

in and out among the happy faces of the friends who had come to give Good-day to the son, out of respect for the mother. They saw him, a tall, well-made man with the look of other lands about him, kind in his talk and in his behaviour, but with an eye which at times seemed to be seeing what other eyes saw not.

And all the time, Mother Cranfield went brightly about the house, happy in her heart that she had again somebody needing her love and care, for whom she might again take on herself the little troubles of everyday existence. It was almost the middle of the day when, looking out of the door, she saw three persons of note in the town coming down the street through the warm sun and the shade of the trees. When they got to her garden they came in. "See, Ralph!" she said, with a mother's pleasure in her son, "Here is Squire Hawkwood with two other committee-men coming on purpose to see you! Now do give them a good long account of what you have seen in other parts."

The first of the three, Squire Hawkwood, was a very self-important but good old man, the head and chief mover in everything which went on in the town, and said

by all the townsmen to be one of the wisest men on earth. The hat he had on was a three-pointed one, of a sort no longer in common use, and he had a silver-headed walking stick which seemed to be used more for waving about in the air than for helping the work of his legs. The other two men were old and highly respected men of the town, who, having the old-time respect for money and position, kept a little at the back of the Squire.

When they came up the footway, Ralph Cranfield, from his seat, looking half unconsciously at the three, saw these quite common men through the mist of his thoughts.

"Here"—and he gave a smile at the idea—"here come three old persons, and the first of them is a wise old man with a stick. What if these three have the news of my future?"

While Squire Hawkwood and the others were coming in, Ralph got up out of his seat and took a step forward as a sign of respect; and his tall form and dark face had a natural authority quite different from the foolishly self-important air of the Squire. The old man, with a wave of his stick, took off his three-pointed hat to

put his hand over his heated face, and at last, made clear the purpose for which they had come.

"This committee," he said, "has important reasons for coming here today. For three days past we have been giving thought to the selection of the right person for a most responsible position, one to take upon himself authority and rule which, rightly looked at, may be said to be no lower than those of kings and presidents. And because you, our townsman, have a good brain well trained by journeying in far-off lands, and because you have by now no doubt given up certain wrong and foolish ideas of your early years—taking all these things into account, we are of the opinion that Chance has sent you here at this time for our very purpose."

While this talk was going on, Cranfield was looking fixedly at the Squire, as if he saw something strange and not of this earth in his self-important little body, and as if the Squire had been dressed in the long loose dress of a wise man of past times in place of a square-skirted coat, wide collared undercoat, *breeches*,[1] and silk stockings. And there was reason

[1] Tight trousers coming to the knees.

enough for his fixed look, because the Squire's stick waving in the air had made the very design which was to be the sign of the Wise Man for whom he had gone looking round the earth.

"And what," said Ralph Cranfield, his voice shaking, "what is this position which is to make me the equal of kings and presidents?"

"No less than teacher of the town school," was the answer, "the place being now open because of the death of old Whitaker, after 50 years of teaching."

"I will give it thought," said Ralph quickly, "and you will have my decision inside three days."

After a word or two more the men went away. But to Cranfield their forms seemed still to be present, and to take on more and more of the overpowering quality of the shades which had first come to him in his sleep, and which, in the daylight hours, had taken on an everyday look among common things. He kept his mind upon the face of the Squire till it got mixed with the face of the Wise Man of his sleep, till the one became for him only the shade of the other. The same face, it seemed to him, had sent its look upon him from the

Pyramid of Cheops: the same hand had given him a sign in the gardens of the Alhambra: the same form he had seen through the steam of the Great Geyser. At every turn of his memory he saw again some quality of the Wise Man in this self-important little great man of the town. With such thoughts, Ralph kept in the house all day, giving only half answers to his mother's thousand questions about his journeys and experiences. At sundown he got up to go for a walk, and going by the old tree, his eye was again taken by the hand pointing down at the half rubbed-out EFFODE.

While he was walking down the street of the town, the level rays of the sun sent his shade far before him; and it came to him, that, as his shade was walking among far away things, so there had been a shade of what was to come moving in front of him all his days: and when he came near the thing over which his tall shade had gone before him, it was every time seen to be one of the common memories of his younger years.

He had a memory of every turn of the way. Even the more changing parts of the picture were the same as in by-gone

days. A group of cows were taking their food in the grass at the side of the road, and he was conscious of their sweet-smelling breath. " It is even sweeter," was his thought, " than the sweet smell which came to our ship on the winds from the Spice Islands." The small round form of a baby came rolling from a doorway, laughing, almost to Cranfield's feet. The tall, dark man took up the baby and gave him back to his mother's arms. " The little ones," he said to himself with a smile, " are to be in my care." And with a river of warm feeling running through his heart, he came to a house at which he had to go in. A sweet voice which seemed to come from a deep and warm heart was ending a sad little song.

With bent head he went in through the low door. At the sound of his foot on the doorstep a young woman came out of the dark room, at first quickly, and then with a more uncertain step, till they were face to face. These two were strangely different —he, dark and weathered, like one to whom existence had been a fight, and marked by all the suns and all the winds ; she, sweet and beautiful, and quiet—quiet even in her strong feeling, as if all her

existence had been touched by the peace in her heart. But their faces, different as they were, had a something which seemed not so different—a heat of like feeling flaming up again from half dead coals.

"I am happy that you have come!" said Hope Egerton.

But no answer came from Cranfield: his eyes were fixed on an ornament in the form of a heart which was hanging from a chain round her neck—the same in design as the jewel of the Woman of his Future. It was made of white stone, and it came back to his memory that it had been cut by himself from one of those pointed bits of stone used by the Red Indians—before he had gone off on his journey after shades he had given this jewel fixed in gold to Hope Egerton.

"So, Hope, you have kept the heart!" he said at last.

"Yes," she said, colouring—then more happily: "and with what new thing do you come from over the sea?"

"Hope!" said Ralph Cranfield, saying the words on an impulse outside his control, "I come to you with a heart of lead. Will you take it, and give me rest?"

" This, which has been round my neck so long," said Hope, with her finger on the heart, " is the sign that I will."

" Hope ! Hope ! " was Cranfield's cry, taking her in his arms, " you have given me light where before all was dark."

Yes, the unquiet sleeper was awake at last. To come upon the store of gold he was to put the plough to the earth round his mother's house and take its produce : in place of military power or the authority of kings he was to have rule over the little ones of the town ! And now the Woman had gone from his mind, and in her place was the dear friend of his early years.

THE SHADE OF THE DEAD LOVER

On the top of one of the Odenwald mountains, a rough part of Germany about which strange stories are recorded, and at no great distance from the meeting place of the Main and the Rhine, there was to be seen, in days gone by, the great stone house of the Baron von Landshort. Now it is very old, and no one takes the least care of it. It is almost completely kept from view by thick trees, over which may be seen its old round look-out building, doing its best to keep its head up, like the owner of the property, so as to get a view of the country near it. The Baron was a dry branch of the great family of Katzenellenbogen, and the last bits of the property, together with his high opinion of himself, came to him from his fathers before him. Though the lands of the family had become much smaller through their frequent desire for war, the Baron still made an attempt to keep up something of their

past position. There was peace in the land, and the German chiefs had given up their old stone houses, which, placed among the mountains like *eagles*,[1] gave little comfort, and had better houses on the lower land. But still the Baron went on living in his house on the mountain, keeping up the memory of all the bitter fights and arguments of the past, so that the persons living near were unable to be his friends, because of what had taken place years earlier between their fathers' fathers before them.

The Baron had one daughter, and being an only daughter, it was not surprising that she was a person of very special qualities. All the women who were used to taking care of little girls, all her relations, and all the women who had a love for talk came to her father, saying that no one in all Germany was as beautiful as his daughter—and who had better knowledge than they? In addition, she had been looked after with great care by two of her father's unmarried sisters, who had been for some years at the house of certain German princes, and were wise in all the branches of knowledge necessary for the

[1] Great birds which put to death small animals for food.

education of a woman of good birth. Under their teaching, she had become able to do a great number of things very well. By the time she was eighteen, she was an expert at beautiful needlework, and in her pictures stitched on silk with coloured thread might be seen histories of persons of religion, with such troubled looks on their faces that they seemed to be going through the bitterest punishment. She got on well with her reading, and had gone through a great number of church stories word by word, and almost all of the Heldenbuch.[1] She was even very good at writing, and was able to put her name on paper, letter by letter, so clearly that her father's sisters were able to see it without eye-glasses. She was very good at making all sorts of small, delicate things of no special value ; she had a knowledge of the hardest dances of her time, and was used to playing songs on the *harp*[2] and *guitar*.[2] In addition, she had a very good memory for all the sweet verses of the great song-writers.

Her father's sisters, having made a plaything of love when they were young,

[1] " Book of Great Men."
[2] Instrument of music.

were very ready to take special care of the behaviour of their brother's daughter; because there is no one so truly upright and so ready to take the straight and narrow way as an old person with a knowledge of love's little tricks. They kept an eye on her all the time; she never went outside the walls of the house without someone going with her, or watching her. Again and again she was talked to about good behaviour, and the value of doing a thing readily when ordered. She was to keep men at a distance, and to have no belief in them, so that, without the authority of those about her, she would not have taken a look at the best-looking man on earth, even if he was breathing his last at her feet.

The good effects of this system were clearly seen. The young girl was quiet in her behaviour, and everything she did was right. While others were wasting themselves in material pleasures, in danger of being uprooted and put on one side by first one and then another, she was coming into flower, changing in her quiet way into a beautiful young woman, under the care of those unmarried women who were so narrow and so upright in everything

they did. She seemed like a small *rose*,[1] pushing out from among the sharp points around her. She gave great pleasure to her father's sisters, who had a very high opinion of her. They said that though all the other young women on earth might do wrong, so far God had been kind, and the girl who would one day have all the property of the Katzenellenbogen family was safe from " that sort of thing."

But though the Baron had only one daughter, his family was not a small one, because chance had given him a great number of poor relations. Their natural impulses were loving, as is common with poor relations, and having a great love for the Baron, they took every possible chance to come in great numbers, and to make the house bright and happy. These good persons kept all the birthdays and other family events, with the help of the Baron's money; and when they were full of good food, they would say that nothing on earth gave them so much pleasure as these family meetings, when all their happy hearts were united.

The Baron, though a small man, had a great heart, and he was uplifted by the

[1] A sweet-smelling flower of that name.

pleasing thought that he was the most important person among all those about him. It was a pleasure to him to give long accounts of the old fighters whose serious faces were looking down from the walls. No one gave him better attention than those who took his food without payment. He had a great belief in strange things, and in all those stories of the unnatural which are recorded throughout the country parts of Germany. Those who came to his house were even readier of belief than he : with eyes and mouths open, they gave their attention to every strange story, and were surprised again and again, even though they had had the stories a thousand times. This then was the existence of the Baron von Landshort, who was the great man of the family, the ruler of his house, and happy most of all in the thought that he was the wisest person of his time.

Now, all the family had come together to the great stone house for a very important event—to see for the first time the man who was to be married to the Baron's daughter. The Baron and an old Bavarian of good birth had made an agreement whereby the daughter of the one was to be married to the son of the other, so joining

the great names of the two families. Everything necessary had been done before the event. The young persons had given their agreement without even seeing one another, and the day was fixed for them to be married. The young Count von Altenburg had come from the army for the purpose, and was on his way to the Baron's house to see the young girl. They had had letters from Wartzburg, where chance had kept him, saying what day and what hour he was coming.

Everyone in the house was working hard to get things ready for him. The beautiful girl had been dressed with special care. Her father's sisters had done everything for her, and had had arguments all the morning about the details of her dress. In this way, she had a chance to make the decisions herself, and happily, her taste was very good. She was looking beautiful enough to be desired by any young man, and the hope in her heart made her attraction even greater. From time to time a soft colour came into her face, the quiet motion of her breathing was seen, and her eyes had a far away look. One might clearly see what was going on in her little heart. Her father's sisters were near

her all the time, because they naturally took a great interest in an event such as this. They were making a number of suggestions about what she would be wise to do and say when she saw her lover at last.

And the Baron himself was getting ready. Truly, he had nothing to do; but he was used to moving about quickly, and was unable to take a rest when others about the place had so little time. He went up and down the house in great trouble of mind; he kept the servants from getting things done by requesting them, again and again, to be more hard-working. He went through all the rooms, without resting, but doing nothing, like a great blue fly on a warm summer day.

By this time, a fat young cow had been skinned and got ready; the horns of the Baron's men had been sounding through the woods; the cooking-room was full of good things; from the wine-rooms under the house came great vessels of Rhine-wine and Ferne-wine, and even the great Heidelberg Tun[1] had been a help. Everything was ready, in full measure, for

[1] A vessel under the Great House at Heidelberg in which, in days gone by, 46,732 gallons of wine were kept.

the important person, because Germans are naturally kind to newcomers—but there was no sign of him. Hours went past. The sun which had been giving its bright warm light to the tall trees of the Odenwald, was now seen touching the mountain tops. The Baron went to the highest point of the building, and kept watching for a sign of the Count and his servants. At one time he seemed to see them; the notes of horns came up from between the mountains, which gave back the sounds for a long time; far away, a number of men on horseback were seen, coming slowly up the road, but when they had got almost to the foot of the mountain, they went off quickly in a different direction. The last ray of sunlight had gone—the *bats*[1] were moving in the half light. The road became darker and darker, and nothing was seen on it but, from time to time, a countryman coming slowly from his work.

While the old house of Landshort was in this trouble, events of interest were taking place in another part of the Odenwald. The young Count von Altenburg was making the journey quietly and slowly, like a man whose friends have taken from

[1] Small night animals with wings.

him the trouble of love-making, with its uncertain outcome. He had the knowledge that the young girl to whom he was to be married would be waiting for him at the end of his journey as certainly as the meal which would be given him. At Wartzburg, he had come across a young friend named Herman von Starkenfaust, who had been in the army with him and was now going back to his family. This man was very strong, without fear, and much respected. His father's house was not far away from the great house at Landshort, but because of an old argument the relations between the two families were not good.

With the warm feelings of young friends who have not seen one another for a long time, they went over all their past experiences, and the Count gave his friend the full story of how he was to be married to a young girl he had not even seen, but of whose good looks everyone was talking. The two men were journeying in the same direction, so they made a decision to go the rest of the way together. To have as much time as possible, they got away from Wartzburg at an early hour, the Count giving directions for his servants to come on after him.

On the way, they made the hours go by in exchanging memories of their military experiences, but the Count made his friend a little tired at times by talking about the beautiful girl who was waiting for him and the happy times he would have. In this way, they came into the mountains of the Odenwald, and were going across by a narrow foot-way where it was quiet and shaded with trees. It is common knowledge that the woods of Germany have, at all times, been full of violent men who have taken the property of others, and that the shades of the dead have been seen in most of the great stone houses. At this time, there were a great number of these rough men who had been in the army and were now going about from place to place. So it does not seem strange that the two horsemen were attacked by a band of them in the middle of the wood. They kept them off without a sign of fear, but were almost overcome, when the Count's servants came up, in time to give help. Seeing them, the attackers quickly went off, but not before the Count had got his death-blow. Slowly and with great care, he was taken back to the town of Wartzburg, and they sent to a house of religion near by for a man

who was noted for his power to give help to mind and body. But half of his knowledge was not needed: it was clear that in two or three minutes the unhappy Count would be dead. With his last breath he made a request that his friend would go to the house of Landshort as quickly as possible, and give an account to the Baron of the events which had kept him from coming to the girl who was waiting for him. Though not a lover of very strong feelings, he was a man who took the greatest care about small details of behaviour, and he seemed very serious in desiring this thing to be done as quickly and as kindly as possible. "If this is not done, I will have no sleep in my last resting-place," said he, over and over again in a strangely serious way. His request, at such a time, had to be undertaken. Starkenfaust made an attempt to to put his mind to rest, and gave him his hand and his word truly to do as he said.

The man who was so near his end took the hand in a strong grip; but not long after, he became feeble in mind, using foolish words and crying out about the girl and his agreement with her. He sent for his horse, so that he might go to the house of Landshort, and he was in the act

of getting on it, or so it seemed to him, when Death took him.

With a sad heart Starkenfaust gave thought to the delicate undertaking for which he had made himself responsible. His mind was sadly troubled, because he was coming unrequested among persons who were not his friends, and clouding their pleasure with news which would take away all their hopes. But he himself was somewhat interested in seeing this noted and beautiful girl of Katzenellenbogen, so safely shut away from everybody. He had certain strange qualities which made him ever ready to undertake any sort of experience, and women had a great attraction for him.

Before he came away, an agreement was made with the brothers of the house of religion to have his friend put under the stone floor of the great church at Wartzburg, near some of his respected relations; and the sad servants of the Count took care of his dead body.

It is now time for us to go back to the old family of Katzenellenbogen, who had a great desire to see this strange young man, and an even greater one to have their meal. We see the little Baron, taking the air

on top of the look-out. Night came, but still no sign of anyone. The Baron gave up hope and came down from the top of the house. The great meal, which had been put off from hour to hour, was to be kept no longer. The meats were by now much overdone, the cook was very angry, and it was clear that everyone in the house was giving thought to his stomach. The Baron was forced to give orders for the meal, though the young Count was not there. All were seated at the table and were about to make a start when the sound of a horn outside made it clear that a newcomer was at the door. The old walls of the house gave back the sound, which came again, long and loud, and the watchman made answer. The Baron went quickly out to take his future son-in-law by the hand and say how pleased he was to see him.

The bridge had been let down, and the strange man was before the door, seated on a black horse. He was tall and strong, and had a white face and bright smiling eyes, but there was a sad and important look about him. The Baron was somewhat troubled that he had come in this simple way. For a minute the thought came over him that the Count was not giving enough

respect to the important event, and to the important family to which he was to be united. However, he was comforted by the idea that the boy, being young, had had a sudden impulse to come on before his servants.

"I am pained," said the young man, "to have come among you at such a time—" Here, the Baron put an end to his words by saying a number of kind things, and truly, he had at all times a very high opinion of himself for his kind behaviour and his moving language. The newcomer made an attempt, once or twice, to say something, but it was no use; so with bent head, he let the Baron go on. By the time the Baron had done his talking, they had come to the inside of the house; and again the newcomer was going to say something, when he was stopped by seeing the women of the family coming in with the young girl. There was a bright colour in her face, and she was slow to come forward. He gave her a long look, as if he was seeing her in his sleep; it seemed as if all his heart went out to her while his eyes were resting upon that beautiful form. One of her father's sisters said something softly in her ears. She made an attempt

to get some words out, and lifting her bright blue eyes, she took a quick, self-conscious look at him before turning them down again to the floor. The words came to an end, there was a sweet smile upon her lips, which made it clear that she was pleased with what she had seen. It was natural for a young girl of eighteen, ready for love and desiring to get married, to be pleased with a person so strong and so good-looking.

Because of the late hour at which the young man had come, there was no time for talk. The Baron made that clear, and put off all important discussion till the morning. Then he went before them to the table, on which was the still untasted meal. The tables had been got ready in the chief room of the house. Round the walls were the pictures of the great men of the house of Katzenellenbogen, with their hard faces. In addition, there were things to keep the memory of their fights against men and animals—coats of steel cut to bits, broken points, and flags full of holes were mixed with things they had taken in fights in the woods: the mouth-bones of the *wolf*[1] and the long pointed teeth of the *boar*[2] were smiling cruelly among

[1] Animal like a great dog.
[2] Male pig.

military knives and other instruments of war. Two great horns were branching out from the front of a *stag's*[1] head over the young man, where he was seated at table.

He took very little note of those round him, or of what they were doing for his amusement. The food before him was almost untasted, and he seemed to be giving all his attention to the young girl. He was saying things to her in a low voice, so that nothing of what he said came to the ears of the others. The language of love is not ever loud; but where is the woman's ear which is not open to the softest words of a lover? He had a kind and serious way with him which seemed to have a great effect upon the young girl. Her colour came and went, while she gave him her deep attention. From time to time she made answer, and her face became red; and when his eyes were turned away she would take a sideways look at his beautiful face, and then a deep, soft breath would come from her happy heart. It was clear that the young persons were very much in love. Her father's sisters, with their deep knowledge of the secrets of the heart, said that the two had

[1] Animal of the woods.

been in love with one another from the first look.

The meal went on happily, with much noise, because all the persons at table had that ready desire for food which comes with sharp mountain air and the need of money. The Baron was giving them his best and longest stories, and he had never been such a good talker. If he said anything strange, they were overcome with surprise; and if he said anything for their amusement, they would give a loud laugh, and in the right place. It is true that the Baron, like most great men, was kept by a sense of his position from saying anything with very much humour in it: however, every story was helped from time to time by a cup of the very best wine, and even a small thing may be the cause of much amusement if you are seated at your table, with a cup of good old wine in front of you. Other persons said a number of those bright things which are only in place at times like this; there was a great amount of secret talk in the ears of the women which sent them off into bursts of quiet laughing; and there were one or two loud songs from a poor but happy and fat-faced relation of

the Baron which made the sisters put something in front of their faces for shame.

All this time, the young lover had a strangely serious look. His face became more troubled with every hour, and the Baron's humour only made him sadder. Sometimes he seemed to be in deep thought, or there would be a troubled look in his eyes—the sign of an unquiet mind. His words to the young girl became more and more secret and serious. Then dark clouds were seen covering her delicate face, and her body was shaking with fear.

All this was noted by the others. The sad feelings of the young man, for which there seemed no reason, came between them and their pleasure. There was a change in their behaviour—talking under the breath, an exchange of little looks and signs, and much shaking of heads. The songs and the laughing became less and less frequent ; there were times when nobody said anything—and then they went on again with their stories of things strange and unnatural. The talk became sadder and sadder, and the women, hearing the Baron's account of the Little Man on horseback who took away the beautiful Leonora, were overcome with fear.

The young man gave his deep attention to this story. He kept his eyes fixed on the Baron, and when the story was ending, he was seen getting up from his seat, becoming slowly taller and taller, till it seemed to the Baron he was unnaturally tall. When the story was ended, he took a deep breath and sadly said good night to them all. They were greatly surprised—the Baron was completely at a loss.

" What ! Going away now, in the middle of the night ? Why, everything is ready for you, even a room, if you have a desire to go to sleep."

With a sad shake of the head, he said : " Tonight I have to take my rest in a different room." There was something in this answer, and in the sound of his voice, which put fear into the Baron's heart. But controlling himself, he did his best to keep the man from going. At every suggestion there was the same quiet shake of the head ; and waving his hand, the strange person went slowly out of the room. The Baron's sisters were almost turned to stone. The girl, with head bent low, was unable to keep from crying.

The Baron went after him to the walled square, where a black horse, tired of waiting, was stamping and making loud noises. When they came to the deep arch of the doorway, where a small light was hanging, the strange man made a stop. He said to the Baron, in a hollow voice which seemed even more unnatural because of the arched roof, " Now that we are by ourselves, I will give you the reason for my going. I have a serious—a very important meeting—."

" Why do you not send someone in your place ? " said the Baron.

" It is impossible to send another in my place. I have to go myself—to the great church at Wartzburg—"

" Yes," said the Baron more brightly, " but not till to-morrow—to-morrow you will take there the girl who is to be yours."

" No ! no ! " was the sad answer, " my meeting is with no girl ! The worms, the worms are waiting for me ! I am a dead man—I was put to death by violent hands —my body is at Wartzburg—when the clock goes twelve, I am to be put in the earth—the hole is waiting for me, and I have to be there."

Jumping on to his black horse, he went quickly across the bridge, and the sound of his horse's feet became more and more feeble in the whistling of the night wind.

The Baron went back into the house in great trouble, and gave an account of what had taken place. Two women became unconscious; others became ill at the thought of having taken food with a dead man. Some were of the opinion that this was the Great Fighter of the Woods of the old German story-books. There was talk of strange beings of the mountains and woods, who had for so long given trouble to good Germans. One of the poor relations made a suggestion that it might be a bit of humour on the part of the young man, and that its sad quality was in harmony with so serious a person. This suggestion made everybody angry, specially the Baron, who said that, in his opinion, he was a man without belief in anything, so that he was very quickly forced to take back his words.

But whatever may have been the doubts of the family, they were ended the day after by letters which came, saying that the Count had been put to death, and that he was now under the stone floor of the church at Wartzburg. Naturally, a shock

of surprise went through all the house. The Baron kept himself shut up in his room. Those who had come to be happy with him would not go away now in his trouble. They went about the walled squares of the house, or came together in groups in the great room, with much head-shaking and so on, at the troubles of the good man. They were seated at table longer than ever, taking more and more food and drink, as a way of keeping themselves from being sad.

But the saddest thing of all was the condition of the young girl at the loss of her lover before she had ever had him in her arms—and such a lover! If it was possible for a shade to be so kind and beautiful, what might the living person have been? The house was full of her unhappy crying.

On the night of the second day after this, she had gone to her room, together with one of the Baron's sisters, who said she would not let her go to sleep by herself. The good woman, who had as great a knowledge of stories about shades as anyone in Germany, had been giving one of the longest of her store and had gone to sleep in the middle of it. The room was

in a far part of the house, overlooking a small garden. The girl was awake, watching the rays of the moon moving over the leaves of the tree in front of her window. The house clock was sounding the hour of twelve, when soft notes of music came up from the garden. She got out of bed quickly, and went to the window. A tall form was there under the trees. When the head was lifted, the face was lighted by a moon-ray. Surprise of surprises! It was the shade of her lover! At that minute, there was a sharp cry, and the Baron's sister, who on hearing the music had quietly come to the window, became unconscious in her arms. When the girl took another look, the shade had gone.

Of the two women, the older now had more need of comfort, because she was completely overcome with fear. For the young girl, there was something which was dear to her, even in the shade of her lover. He seemed still to be beautiful, and though truly the shade of a man is not enough for a girl almost off her head with love, even that is a comfort if the substance is not to be had. The older woman said that she would never go to sleep in that

room again : the younger one, this time, was fixed in her decision to have no other sleeping-place : the outcome was that she had to be there by herself. She made her father's sister give her word not to say anything about the shade, and not to take away the only sad pleasure she now had, which was to go on living in the room over which the shade of her lover kept its night-watch. It is uncertain how long the good old woman would have kept her word, because she had a great taste for strange stories. It would have been a great event for her if she had been the first to give an account of the surprising facts. However, those living round about have said, as an example of how women keep secrets, that she kept it to herself for a week. She was suddenly made free to give a full account of everything by news which came at the time of the morning meal—that the young girl was not in her room, the bed had not been used, the window was open, and the bird was gone !

Only those who have seen the sad effect upon his friends of the troubles of a great man have any idea how shocking the news was. Even the poor relations took no food

for a minute, and then the old woman, who had at first been unable to say anything, made twisting motions with her hands, and gave a loud cry: "The little man! the little man! He has taken her away!"

As shortly as possible, she gave an account of what she had seen in the garden, and at the end said that the shade had certainly taken the girl away. Two of the servants were of the same opinion, because about twelve at night the sound of a horse's feet down the mountain had come to their ears. They were certain that it was the shade on his black horse, taking her away to her death. All the others seemed to have the idea that it was very probable, because such events were very common in Germany, there being in existence a number of true stories about such things.

What a sad position for the poor Baron! What deep trouble for a father, one of the great family of Katzenellenbogen! His only daughter had been taken away to her death; or he was going to have a little man of the woods for a son-in-law, and possibly a number of sons and daughters in the family. He was completely at a loss, as was common with him; and all the house

was full of noise. The men were ordered to get on their horses, and go about looking on every road and foot-way in the Odenwald. The Baron himself had put on his great boots and his war-blade, and was jumping on to his horse to go out on his strange journey when he saw something which made him come to a sudden stop. A young woman seated on a horse was coming in the direction of the house, with a man on horseback by her side. Coming quickly to the door, and jumping from her horse, she went down at the Baron's feet, and put her arms round his knees. It was his daughter, and the shade! The Baron was very surprised. Looking at his daughter, and then at the shade, he was almost certain that his senses were tricking him. In addition, the man was looking very much better for having been in the land of the shades. His clothing was of the best, and seemed made for his beautiful form. His face was no longer white and sad. It had the colour and fire of a young man, and there was a happy light in his great dark eyes.

Everything was made clear in a short time. The friend (and you have been conscious that he was no little man of the

woods) said that he was Sir Herman Von Starkenfaust. He gave the story of his experiences with the young Count, of how he had come quickly to the house with the bad news, and how he had been stopped by the Baron's moving language every time he made an attempt to give them the true account. He said that, seeing the young girl, he had been completely overcome with love of her, and so that he might have two or three hours of her company, he had let the error go on. He had been troubled as to how to get away, till the Baron's strange stories put the idea into his head. He had been in fear that the family would not give their approval, and he had come again and again secretly to the garden under the young girl's window. He had made love, had been rewarded by learning of her love for him, had taken her away, and they had been married. Under other conditions, the Baron would have been fixed in his decision to make use of a father's authority, and to keep up old family arguments. But he had great love for his daughter; he had been made unhappy by her loss; he was happy to have her still living; and though the man to whom she was married came from a

family who were not his friends, he was comforted by the knowledge that he was no little man of the woods. In the opinion of the Baron, it is true, there was something not quite straightforward in the foolish trick which had been played upon him to give him the belief that the man was dead. But a number of old friends who were present, and who had been through the wars, said that without doubt every trick seemed right when one was fighting for love, and that the man had the right to special rewards, having been in the army a short time before.

Events had a happy ending. The Baron gave no more thought to the past. The pleasures and amusements at the house were taken up again. The poor relations were specially loving to this addition to the family—he had such a kind way with him—and so much money! The Baron's sisters were a little shocked that the girl was such a bad example of their system of education, of which the two chief rules were to keep oneself away from strange persons, and to do as one is ordered, without question. They were of the opinion that it was an error not to have had the windows covered by a

network of iron. One of them was very angry that her surprising story had come to nothing, and that the only shade she had ever seen had not been a shade at all. But the girl seemed quite happy to have as her lover a man of living substance.

And so the story comes to an end.

THE GLASSES

In earlier days it was common to make sport of the idea of 'love at first view;' but most persons of thought or feeling have at all times been certain of its existence. In fact, present day discoveries about the attraction between persons make it probable that the most natural, and so the truest and strongest, of man's feelings, are those which are started in the heart as if by the electric touch of another—in a word, that the brightest and strongest of man's chains are those in which he is prisoned by a look. The experience of which I am about to give an account will be one more of the examples without number in support of this opinion.

It is necessary for my story that I give a number of details. I am still a very young man, not quite 22. My name, now, is a very common one—Simpson. I say 'now,' because I have not had that name long, having taken it by law in the last year, so as to get the great property given to me at his death by a male relation in

another branch of the family, Adolphus Simpson. The property came to me on the condition that I would take his family name. My first name is Napoleon Bonaparte—or, more truly, those are my first and middle names.

I was not quite happy to become Simpson, because I was pleased with my true name, Froissart, having the belief that it went back to the noted writer of the Chronicles.[1] While we are talking about names, by the way, I might say a word about a strange trick of chance in the sound of the names of some of my family line. My father was a M. Froissart, of Paris. My mother, who was married to him at 15, was a Mlle. Croissart, oldest daughter of Croissart, the banker. Her mother, who was married at 16, was the oldest daughter of one Victor Voissart. And M. Voissart, by a strange chance, had taken a woman of very like name, a Mlle. Moissart. Her mother had been married at 14, and she, when not much older—to be married early is common in France. Here are Moissart, Voissart, Croissart, and Froissart, all in the same branch of the

[1] Jean Froissart (1338-1410), whose chronicles are a history of his time.

family. My name though, as I said, became Simpson by an act of law, and with so little pleasure on my part, that at one point I had the thought of giving up the property which was to be mine only on this foolish and troubling condition.

As for my physical qualities, they are not unpleasing. In fact, I would say I am well made, and have a face which would be said by most to be good-looking. I am five feet eleven inches tall: my hair is black and waving: my nose is not bad. My eyes are of good size and grey; and though in fact they are not very strong, no one looking at them would see this. Their condition has for a long time been a cause of trouble, and I have done everything which was possible for them without putting on glasses. Being young and good-looking, I naturally have no love for glasses, and will not, on any condition, make use of them. In my opinion there is nothing so damaging to the looks of a young person. They give the face such an air of being O so good, and make one seem old. An eye-glass, on the other hand, gives one a foolish and self-conscious look. Up to the present I have done as well as possible without the

one or the other. But enough of these details, which, after all, are not very important. I will simply say, in addition, that I am a person of strong feelings and do things without giving thought; that I have a very warm heart; and that I am deeply moved by women.

One night last winter, with a friend, Mr. Talbot, I came into a box at the P— Theatre. It was an opera night and the work they were giving was a great attraction, so that the house was full. We were able, however, to get the tickets which had been ordered for us, though it was not without some trouble that we got to our seats.

For two hours my friend, who was a true music lover, gave all his attention to the stage, while I got amusement from looking at the public, which, for the most part, was of the best society in the town. I was turning my eyes to the *prima donna* when they were stopped and fixed by a form in one of the private boxes which I had not seen.

To the day of my death I will keep the memory of the strong feeling with which I was moved when I saw that form. It was that of a woman—the most beautiful I had ever seen. The face was so far turned

to the stage that I was unable to get a view of it; but the form was that of a Diana. No other word would give an idea of its complete harmony of line, and even the word 'Diana' seems foolishly feeble when I put it down now. A beautiful woman has for me an attraction, a power, which overcomes me completely; but here was The Beautiful itself come down to earth—here before my eyes, was my highest hope of what a woman might be. Her form (of which, because of the structure of the box, I was able to see almost all) was a little taller than normal, with a certain air of authority. The full curving outlines were most pleasing. The head, of which I saw only the back, was like that of a Psyche, and was not so much covered as ornamented by some material light as air. The right arm, hanging over the edge of the box, sent a sharp feeling of pleasure through every nerve of my body, so beautiful it was. The higher part was covered in the loose open way so frequently seen now, and under this was a tight covering of some thin material ending in a sort of open-work falling over the hand, so that you saw only the delicate fingers, on one of which was a jewelled ring of

great value. The meeting of hand and arm was beautifully round, and ornamented by a circle of jewels, which, better than words, made clear the high position and the good taste of their owner.

As if I had been suddenly turned to stone, I kept my eyes on this picture for no less than half an hour, and in this time I was feeling the full force of everything which has been said, and all the songs which have been made, about 'love at first view.' My feelings were quite different from any I had ever had before on seeing a beautiful woman. A strange attraction seemed to keep not only my eyes, but all my thought and feeling, fixed upon the woman in front of me. I was conscious of being deeply, violently, and unchangingly in love—and this, even before seeing the face of the person loved. In fact, so strong was the love burning in me, that it seemed to me that my feeling would have been very little changed even if, when I saw the face, it was nothing out of the common. So strange is the quality of the only true love—love at first view; and so little dependent is it on the outer conditions

which only seem to be its cause and to keep it in control.

While I was looking at this beautiful person in a sort of mist of pleasure, a sudden motion in the house made her give her head a half turn in my direction, so that I saw the full side view of her face. It was beautiful past all my hopes—but there was something about it which gave me a sense almost of regret, without my being able to say quite what it was. I say 'regret,' but this is not the right word. My feelings became at the same time quiet and uplifted. They took on a quality less of uncontrolled pleasure and more of happy peace. This change was caused, it may be, by the Madonna-like quality and serious air of the face; but at the same time I had the feeling that it did not all come from this. There was something more—something which was not clear to me—some look about the face which, while making my interest stronger, was a little troubling. In fact, I was in that condition of mind which makes a young man of warm blood ready for any foolish act. Had she been by herself, I would, without doubt, have gone into her box and said something to her—

anything ! But happily for me there were two friends with her—a man, and a very beautiful woman, seemingly some years younger than herself.

I went over in my mind a thousand ways by which I might later have a meeting with my Diana ; or, if not that, at least a nearer view of her. I would have got a place nearer to her, but with all the seats taken, that was not possible. And to make use of an opera glass in a time like this would have been in bad taste, even if I had had one with me, which I had not. So I was quite at a loss.

Then I had a thought. " Talbot," I said, " may I have your opera-glass ? "

" Opera-glass ! What would I be doing with an opera-glass ? " he said, without taking his eyes from the stage.

" But Talbot," I went on, pulling him by the arm, " do give me your attention ! Do you see the stage box ? There ! No, the other one ! Did you ever see so beautiful a woman ? "

" She is very beautiful, no doubt," he said.

" Have you any idea who she is ? "

" Any idea ! What a question ! She is the talk of the town, the most beautiful

woman of the day—the noted Mme. Lalande, who came from Paris only a week or two back. M. Lalande is dead; and she has tons of money! Any man would be happy to be married to her."

"Are you a friend of hers?"

"I have the pleasure to be."

"Will you take me to see her?"

"Certainly! I'd be happy to. Only say when."

"Tomorrow at one. I'll come to your club."

"Very good! And now—do be quiet, if that is possible."

I had to take his suggestion to be quiet, because he gave me no further attention, having ears and eyes only for what was going on on the stage.

All this time I kept my eyes fixed on Mme. Lalande, and at last got a full front view of her face. It was very beautiful: of that my heart had been conscious before, even if Talbot had not made me certain on that point. But still I was troubled by that strange something. I came to the decision that it was an air of something serious and sad, or even more truly, of something tired, which kept the face from looking bright and girl-like;

and which seemed, to me, to give it an interest ten times greater.

I was comforting my eyes with looking, when I saw, with sudden fear, by an almost unseen motion of her head, that she had become conscious of my attention. But I was quite unable to take my eyes from her, even for a minute. Then her face was turned away, and I saw only the clear curve of the back of her head. After some minutes, as if moved by a desire to see if I was still looking, her face slowly came round again, again meeting my burning look. Her great dark eyes were quickly dropped and her face went a deep red. But to my surprise, in place of turning her head away a second time, she took out a *lorgnette*[1] and, lifting it to her eyes, she kept it on me for the space of five or six minutes.

Had the moon out of the sky come down at my feet I would not have been more surprised—surprised only—not pained or disgusted in the smallest degree; though in any other woman an act so forward would almost certainly have given a feeling of shock or disgust. But it was done so quietly, so naturally—in a word,

[1] Eye-glasses with a long hand-part.

with such an air of good taste—that there was nothing shocking about it, and my only feelings were those of pleasure and surprise.

I took note that on first lifting the glass a short look at me had seemed enough ; and she was putting the instrument down, when, as if moved by a second thought, she put it up again, and went on looking fixedly for some time—five minutes at least, I am certain.

This act, so out of the common in an American theatre, was seen by everyone, and was the cause of a buzz of talk and so much turning round that for a minute I was quite troubled ; though they seemed to have no effect on Mme. Lalande.

When her interest was ended she put down the lorgnette and again gave her attention to the stage, her side-face being turned to me as before. I went on watching her, though I was fully conscious of the bad taste of doing so. After a time I saw the head slowly, and to the very smallest degree, changing its position, and I became certain that Mme. Lalande, while seeming to be looking at the stage, was in fact looking at me. There is no need to say what effect this behaviour, of so beautiful

a woman, had on my quickly fired mind. Having kept me under her observation in this way for probably a quarter of an hour, she said something to the man at her side, and by the looks they sent in my direction, I saw clearly that they were talking about me.

After this exchange of words, Mme. Lalande, turning again to the stage, seemed for a time to be giving her attention to the opera. And then again I was lifted to the skies by seeing her take up the glass hanging at her side, and as before, let it come fully to rest on me, taking no note of the buzz in the theatre, and looking long at me with the same untroubled air which had before given me such great surprise and pleasure.

This strange behaviour had a very great effect on me—blowing my love to a flame; and in place of putting me off, only made me more ready to go forward. Everything went out of my head but the fact that this beautiful woman was near me. Waiting for a time when everyone seemed to be giving attention to the opera, I at last got the chance of exchanging a look with Mme. Lalande, and made a small but quite marked motion of the head.

Her face went red, and she took her eyes off me ; then slowly and with great care she gave a look round to see if my forward act had been noted—and made a turn as if to say something to the man at her side.

I was now deeply conscious of the bad taste of what I had done, and had a fear that I was to be publicly shamed straight away, while a picture of sudden death went quickly through my brain. So that I was very happy to see that Mme. Lalande, without saying anything, only gave the man the list of the players. But the reader may have some feeble idea of my surprise—of my deep surprise—and of the overpowering effect on my heart and mind, when, having again given a quick look round, she let her bright eyes come to rest fully upon mine, and then, with the smallest suggestion of a smile uncovering a line of delicate white teeth, made two separate and undoubted motions of the head—down, and up.

If ever a man was off his head with pleasure, it was myself at that minute. I was in love—for the first time—so it seemed to me. It was love without equal—past the power of words. It was

love at a look, and at a look it had been taken and given again.

Yes, given again. How and why have any doubt of that? What other reason might there be for such behaviour on the part of a woman so beautiful, so well-off, of such high birth—in every way so deeply to be respected as I was certain Mme. Lalande was? Yes, her love was mine—she gave back my deep love with a love as deep and as unquestioning, as free from self-interest, as unlimited as mine!

The sudden fall of the curtain put an end to these sweet thoughts; and there was the general noise of everyone getting up. Without a word to Talbot, I went out of the box and did my best to get nearer to Mme. Lalande, but because the theatre was so full I was not able to do this. Giving up the attempt, I went to my house, comforting myself with the thought that in the morning I was to be taken to her by Talbot.

After a long and unquiet night, the morning at last came; and then the slow hours went by till the clock gave the hour of one. While the hour was still sounding I went into Talbot's club.

"He's out!" said his man-servant.

"Out?" said I, falling back a step. "You may take my word for it, this is simply not possible. Mr. Talbot is *not* out. What are you saying?"

"Nothing, sir; only that Mr. Talbot is not in. That's all. He went to S—— straight away after his morning coffee, saying that he would not be in town again for a week."

Deeply wounded and violently angry, I made an attempt to say something, but my tongue would not do its work. At last, completely disgusted, and in my mind sending Talbot to the farthest edge of nowhere, I went away. It seemed that my kind friend—with music on the brain—had let our agreement go quite out of his head the minute it was made. There was nothing to be done, so, controlling my feelings as well as I was able, I went sadly down the street, questioning every friend I came across about Mme. Lalande. As Talbot had said, her name was on everyone's lips; some had seen her; but she had been in town only a short time, and the number of those who might be named her friends was very small. Even these had been her friends for so short a time that they were not in a position to

take me to see her. While I, feeling very low, was talking with three friends about the woman nearest my heart, the woman herself came by.

" My stars ! There she is ! " said one.

" Surprisingly beautiful ! " said another.

" A Venus ! " said the third.

In an open carriage which was coming slowly in our direction was the Diana of the opera with the younger woman who had been with her in her box.

" Her friend seems to keep her looks very well," said one of our group.

" Very ! " said another, " Still quite an air ! But what will art not do ? On my word, she is looking better than she did in Paris five years back. A beautiful women still, wouldn't you say, Froissart ?—that is—Simpson ? "

" ' Still '? " I said, " and why not ? But in comparison with her friend she is like a wax light to the morning star."

" Ha ! ha ! ha ! Simpson, you have a surprising art of making discoveries—uncommon ones, that is." And with that, they went off.

One thing in this little event had given me much comfort, though it only had the effect of increasing the heat of my feelings.

When the carriage of Mme. Lalande went past our group, I saw that she was conscious of who I was ; and more than that, without its being seen by any of the others she had given me the sweetest of all possible smiles.

As for being taken to see her, I had to give up all hope of that till such time as Talbot took it into his head to come back from the country. Till then I went to every place of public amusement where she might be ; and at last, at the theatre where I had first seen her, I had the great pleasure of seeing her once again and of exchanging looks with her. But this did not take place till after a space of two weeks. Every day of those two weeks I had gone to Talbot's club, and every day, to my disgust, had got the same ' Still in the country ' from his man-servant.

For that reason, the night I saw her I was almost off my head. Mme. Lalande was a Parisian—she had only some weeks before come from Paris—might she not suddenly go back again ?—before Talbot came ?—and so I would not see her ever again ! The thought was death. With the knowledge that all my future was in the balance, I came to a decision to take

a strong step. At the end of the play I went after her to her house, took a note of the number, and the morning after, I sent her a letter, giving free outlet to my full heart.

My words were straightforward and full of strong feeling—they were words of love overpowering. I kept nothing back. I went over the sweet event of our first meeting, and the look which had gone between us. I went so far as to say that I was certain of her love ; and I gave this fact and the great force of my feelings as two reasons for my seemingly shocking behaviour. As a third, I gave my fear that she might go out of town before I had the chance of being taken to her in the regular way by a friend. Ending the most uncontrolled letter ever penned with a simple statement of my money position—saying that I was very well-off—I made the offer of my heart and my name.

After what seemed like a hundred years of waiting, an answer came. Yes, an answer came ! Strange as it may seem, I got a letter from Mme. Lalande—the beautiful, the so well-off, the generally loved Mme. Lalande. Her eyes, her great dark eyes, had not given me a false idea of

her heart! Acting like the true Frenchwoman she was, she had let herself be ruled by her feelings—with no thought of the opinion of society. She had *not* made sport of my offer! She had *not* taken the safe step of saying nothing! She had *not* sent back my letter without opening it! She had sent me an answer, one penned by her delicate fingers. It said: "Mr. Simpson will not be unkind to me that I do not have well the beautiful tongue of his country. I have come only a little time back, and have not had the chance for learning. I will say that—Ah yes! Mr. Simpson has seen what is true. Have I need to say more? Ah! have I not now said overmuch? Eugénie Lalande."

This dear note I gave a million kisses, and no doubt did a thousand other unreasoned things because of it which have gone from my memory. Still Talbot did not come back. I was certain that if he had had even the smallest idea of how unhappy he was making me by keeping away, he would have come to my help. But he did not come. I sent a letter. He sent an answer: he was being kept by important business, but would be back in town in a very short time. Till then I was

to keep my feelings under control, give my time to reading serious books, take no wine stronger than Hock, and get comfort from high thoughts. Foolish man! If he was not able to come himself, why, in the name of reason, did he not send me a note with which I might go myself to Mme. Lalande? I sent him another letter requesting him to do this straight away. My letter came back with some writing on it in pencil from that same man-servant who, it seemed, had gone to Talbot in the country: "Mr. Talbot went away yesterday—did not say where he was going or when he would be back. Stubbs."

After getting this I had no names bad enough for Talbot and his man. But there was little good in being angry, and no comfort at all in hard words. There was still one thing—my natural impulse to go straight to the point without fear of the outcome. This quality had been of much use to me before, and now I came to the decision to make it see me through to the end. And in addition, after the letters which had gone between us, what act of mine, in reason, would Mme. Lalande take as in bad taste?

From the day of getting her letter, I had given much time to watching her door, and I made the discovery that about night-fall, in the company of a black man-servant, she went for a walk in the public square opposite her house. Here under the thick shading branches, in the grey half light of the end of a sweet summer day, meeting her, I came to a stop, and said her name. Because of the servant, I did this with the air of an old friend; and with the quick mind of a true Parisian, she got the idea straight away and put out a most beautifully small hand. The servant went to one side, and we gave free outlet to our full hearts.

Mme. Lalande's English was even less clear in talking than in writing; so we made use of French, in which sweet tongue, so well made for love, I gave words to all the impulses of my heart; and with all the force of my feelings, made a request for her agreement to be married straight away.

At this heat a smile came into her eyes. She put forward the point of 'good taste' —that fiction which so frequently keeps one from being happy till the chance for being happy has forever gone by. I had

been very unwise, she said, to let all my friends see my desire for a meeting with her. That was the same as saying that up to the present I had not had such a meeting, and the time from our first knowledge of one another would be marked by everyone. And then, her face becoming red, she said something of how short that time was. To be married so quickly would be in bad taste. All this she said with a simple air, which, while making her attraction greater than ever, made me sad, because her words were true. She even went so far as to say that I was acting unwisely—without thought. After all, I had no knowledge of her—her money position, her connections, or her place in society. A little sadly, she made me a request to give thought again to my offer; my love, she said, was a sudden flame, a thing of the minute, of the mind's making, not the heart's. All these things she said while the sweet shades of the oncoming night became darker and darker about us—and then, with one soft touch of her delicate hand, sent all her solid arguments into thin air.

My answer was the answer of a true lover. I had much to say of my great love

for her, of the force of my feelings, of her beautiful face and how moved I was by it. To make an end, I said something (with great power, it seemed to me) of the dangers on the road of true love—not ever a smooth road—and how foolish it was to make that road unnecessarily long.

This last argument seemed to have its effect. She gave way. But there was one thing more, she said, which she was certain that I had not taken into account. This was a delicate point for a woman to put forward ; in talking of it she saw that she would have to put on one side all thought of herself. But for me, everything was to be put on one side. She had in mind the question of our years. Was I conscious—fully conscious—of how unequal we were on that point? That the man might be a little older—even 15 or 20 years older—than the woman was looked on by society as quite in order—as even to be desired. But for the woman's years to be more than those of the man—that was wrong ! so it seemed to her. That unnatural condition was, O how frequently, the cause of an unhappy existence ! She was conscious, she said, that I was not more than 22 ; while I, on the other hand,

was probably not conscious that the years of my Eugénie were far more than that number.

About all this there was something so simple, so straightforward, that the chains of my love were only made the stronger : I was almost overpowered by my feelings.

" My sweetest Eugénie," I said, " What is all this which you are saying ? You are a little older than me. But what of that ? The ways of society are generally foolish ways. In love like ours how is a year different from a day. I am 22—you may almost say 23. While you, my dearest Eugénie, are certainly no more than—certainly no more than—no more than—than—than—"

Here I came to a stop in the belief that Mme. Lalande would say how old she was. But a Frenchwoman is not so simple, and has a way of answering troubling questions by some special little act, in place of words. Now, for example, Eugénie, who for a minute had seemed to be looking for something in her pocket, at last took out a small framed picture, dropping it, as if by chance. I took it up from the grass to give it back to her.

" Keep it," she said, with one of her sweetest smiles ; " keep it for love of me, of whom it is so kind a copy. And on the back of it you may possibly see the very thing you are desiring. Certainly it is now getting dark, but you may give it more serious attention in the morning. For the present, you may take me back to my house : some of my friends are having a little music to-night. I give you my word, the voices will be good. It will be quite simple to take you with me as an old friend : we French are not so stiff as you Americans in these things."

With this she took my arm, and I went with her to her house. It was a house of great size, in which everything seemed to be of good taste. But of this I had no chance of judging, because it was dark when we came in, and in American houses of the better sort, in the heat of the summer, lights are not common at this, the most pleasing time of the day. True, about an hour after we got there, a shaded light was put in the great music room, and the things there, I saw, were in good taste and even of great value. But two other rooms in which most of us were, were kept in a very pleasing half light.

This is a very good idea, offering everyone as much or as little light as he has desire for, and an idea which might well be copied by our friends across the water.

These hours were, without doubt, the happiest of my existence. Mme. Lalande had not made an overstatement about the powers of her friends—the songs were given better than anywhere in my experience outside the private circles of Vienna, and the players on instruments were highly expert. The songs were given chiefly by the women and all of them were very good. At last, on someone's crying out for Mme. Lalande, she got up, quite simply and naturally, from the long seat on which we were seated side by side, and with one or two men and her woman friend of the opera, she went to the piano in the great music room. I would have taken her there myself, but I had the feeling that, in view of the conditions of my coming to the house, I had better keep where I was, unseen. So, though I had the pleasure of hearing her, I was not able to see her.

The effect she had on her friends seemed electric ; but the effect on me was something even more. In part, no doubt,

it came from the great love with which I was moved; but chiefly from the knowledge it gave me of her delicate feeling. It is past the power of art to make a song more deeply touching than she did. The way she gave the air from *Otello*, the quality she put into the words '*Sul mio sasso*' is sounding in my memory still. Her lower notes were quite past belief. Her voice took in an uncommonly wide range, and though strong enough for a great opera house, gave full attention to the smallest detail. In the song from *La Somnambula* (The Sleepwalker) she got a most uncommon effect by changing the music so as to let her voice go down very low and then, suddenly, taking the high G.

After giving us these beautiful examples of the art of song, she again took her seat at my side, and I said how great was my pleasure at hearing her. Of my surprise I said nothing; but truly, I was very much surprised. Because a certain feeble quality of voice when talking had given me the idea that in song her voice would not be specially pleasing.

We went on talking, seriously and quite freely, for a long time. She made me go

over my earlier years, and gave attention to every word of my story. I kept nothing back—I had the feeling that it would not be right to. With the memory of how open she had been about the delicate question of her years, I not only went into the details of all my smaller wrongdoings, but I gave a full account of all the feeble qualities of my mind and body—the talking of which, because of the general fear of discussion of such things, is so much more a sign of love. I said something of my foolish behaviour at the University, of my unwise use of money, of my debts, of my playing with love. I even went so far as to give an account of all the different ills with which I had ever been troubled—of a stiff feeling in the bones at times ; of a pain in my foot ; and as an end, of the bad condition of my eyes, which till now I had kept secret from everyone.

" On this last point," said Mme. Lalande, laughing, " you have been unwise to say anything ; because without that, I am certain no one would have taken note of it. By the way," she went on, " have you any memory,"—and here it seemed to me, even in the feeble light of the room, that a

touch of red was to be seen on her face, " have you any memory, my dear friend, of this glass now hanging from my neck ? " And saying this, she took in her fingers the very same lorgnette which had had such an effect on me at the opera.

" A very clear memory—alas ! " I said, taking the delicate hand offering the glass to me. It was like a complex and beautiful plaything, bright with jewels which even in the poor light I was able to see were of great value.

" Very well, my friend," she said, with a certain serious air which was somewhat surprising. " You have made a request to me for something whose value, you have been pleased to say, may not be measured —your desire is for us to be married tomorrow. If I gave way to the desire of your heart and, I may say, of mine, would I not have the right to make one small request to you in my turn ? "

" Give it a name ! " I said, with a force of feeling which almost made us the point of observation for everyone in the room ; and only the fact that others were present kept me from falling at her feet. " Give it a name, my love, my Eugénie, my heart ! But alas ! it is yours even before named."

" Then, my dear friend," she said, " for the Eugénie who is your love, you will get the better of this feeling of false shame by which, in not using glasses, you make a secret of the feeble condition of your eyes. It is a feeling quite out of harmony with your true qualities, and if let go any farther it might one day be the cause of some very unhappy experience. You see, it is my desire that you will make use of this glass—hush ! you have given your word —for love of me ! You will take this little plaything which I now have in my hand, and which, though a great help in seeing, is truly of no great value as a jewel. You see, by a little change so, or so, it may be used as glasses, or as an eye-glass. But it is in the form of glasses that you have given me your word that you will make use of it—for love of me.

This request—I say it with shame—was more than a little troubling to me. But the condition with which it was joined made any second thought quite out of the question.

" It is done ! " I said, doing my best to seem pleased. " It is done—I give my agreement most readily. For you I give up every feeling of false shame. Tonight

it will be used only as an eye-glass, upon my heart ; but with the first light of that morning which gives me the pleasure of naming you mine, I will put it on my nose —a position less pleasing, but certainly of more use—and there it will be forever after."

Turning the discussion to the details for the morning, my dear one said that Talbot had come back to town. I was to see him straight away and get a carriage. Her friends would not go before two, and by that hour the carriage was to be at the door—in the general going away she would be able to get into it unseen. We were then to go to the house where a man of the church would be waiting, there be married, and after putting Talbot down, go on a short journey to the East—and let society say its worst !

With all this mapped out, I went from her to go and get Talbot. But on the way I was not able to keep from stepping into a hotel for the purpose of taking a good look at the picture, and this I did with the strong help of the glasses. The face was beautiful past all comparison! Those great star-like eyes ! that Greek nose ! that dark waving hair ! " Ah ! " I

said with deep feeling, " this truly is the very face of my loved one ! " On the back of the picture were the words : Eugénie Lalande, in her twenty-eighth year.

When I got to the club, Talbot was there, and I gave him the story of what had taken place. Naturally he was greatly surprised, but quite pleased that things had gone so well with me, offering me any help in his power. Everything was done in good order, and at two in the morning, ten minutes after we had been married, I was in a carriage with Mme. Lalande—or Mrs. Simpson, as she now was—and driving at a great rate out of town in a north-east direction.

Talbot had made the decision that, because we were to be up all night, we had better make our first stop at C——, a small place in the country about twenty miles from town, to have an early meal and to take some rest before going on with our journey. It was four when our carriage came to a stop before the door of the little hotel. Helping my loved one out, I gave the order for a meal to be got ready, and we went into the living-room.

It was now almost, if not quite, day-light ; and while I was looking with

loving eyes at the dear being by my side, the idea came into my head that this was in fact the first time that I had ever had the pleasure of a near view of that beautiful face by daylight.

" And now, my friend," she said, taking my hand and so putting a stop to this line of thought, " now that we are truly and forever one—now that I have given way to your strong desires and have done my part of our agreement—no doubt it has not gone out of your memory that you have a small something to do, an undertaking which it is your purpose to keep. Ah ! let me see. Yes, quite clearly the very words you said to me last night come back to my mind. ' It is done ! ' you said ; ' for you I give up every feeling of false shame. Tonight it will be used only as an eyeglass, upon my heart ; but with the first light of that morning which gives me the pleasure of naming you mine, I will put it upon my nose—a position less pleasing, but certainly of more use—and there it will be forever after.' Those were the very words, my love, were they not ? "

" They were," I said. " You have a very good memory ! And certainly, my beautiful Eugénie, I have no desire to get out

of doing what they say. See ! " And here, having got the lorgnette into the form of glasses, I put them with care into place on my nose ; while Mrs. Simpson, putting her head-dress straight and folding her arms, made herself upright in her seat in a somewhat stiff, and to say truly, a somewhat unpleasing position.

" Oh dear ! " I said, the minute the glasses were on my nose, " what is wrong with these glasses ? " and quickly taking them off, I gave them a rub with my silk pocket-cloth and put them on again.

But if, the first time, I had seen something which gave me a surprise, the second time, this surprise was much greater, in fact I may say it was a violent shock ! What, in the name of everything disgusting, was this ? Was I seeing right ? Was that—was that—paint ? And were those—were those—lines ? on the face of Eugénie Lalande ? And O great Jupiter ! what ! what !! WHAT !!! had she done with her teeth ? I sent the glasses violently to the floor, and jumping to my feet, shaking, and angry past words, I took up my position in the middle of the room, facing Mrs. Simpson.

" Well, sir," she said, after looking at me for some time, seemingly in great surprise, " What is the trouble now? Is it the St. Vitus dance[1] which you have? If I am not to your taste, why did you take a pig in a bag? "

" You disgusting old woman! " I said, almost out of breath, " you—you—you old cart-horse! "

" Old? I'm not so very old. After all, I'm not a day more than 82! "

" 82! " I said feebly, my legs shaking under me, " 82 hundred thousand monkeys! The picture said ' in her twenty-eighth year '."

" That is true, very true. But the picture was painted 55 years back. When I was married for the second time, I had the picture made for my daughter by M. Moissart, to whom I was first married."

" Moissart! " I said.

" Yes, Moissart. And what of that? What is Moissart to you? "

" Nothing, you old cat, nothing at all. Only, that name is in my family."

" ' That name '! And what have you to say to ' that name '? It's a very good

[1] A nerve disease causing violent and uncontrolled motions of the body.

name ! And so is Voissart—that is a very good name. My daughter, Mlle. Moissart, was married to M. Voissart, and they are two very good names."

"Moissart? and Voissart?" I was almost without breath. "What are you saying?"

"What am I saying? I am saying Moissart, and Voissart; and I am saying Croissart and Froissart, in addition, if that is my desire. My daughter's daughter was married to a M. Croissart; and my daughter's daughter's daughter, Mlle. Croissart, she was married to a M. Froissart and it may be that you will say that that is not a very good name!"

"Froissart!" I said, my head going round. "Did you say Moissart, and Voissart, and Croissart, and Froissart?"

"Yes," she said, going back in her seat and stretching out her legs. "Yes—Moissart and Voissart and Croissart and Froissart. But M. Froissart was a very foolish man, because he went away from our beautiful France to come to this rough America; and it has come to my ears that here he had a very foolish, a very, very foolish son, though I and my friend, Mme. Stéphanie Lalande, have not had

the pleasure of meeting him. His name is Napoleon Bonaparte Froissart. And now you will say that that is not a very good name!"

Because she had been talking for so long, or because of what she had been saying, Mrs. Simpson had got herself very much worked up, and now, coming to the end of this long story, she gave a jump out of her seat like someone off her head, dropping a number of *bustles*[1] great and small on the floor as she did so. Then, getting up, waving her arms and shaking her hands in my face, she made an end of this play-acting by pulling off her head-covering and with it a great mass of false hair, all of which she sent to the floor with an angry cry, stamping and dancing upon it in a violent outburst.

Completely crushed, I went down into the seat from which she had got up. "Moissart and Voissart!" I said to myself, "and Croissart and Froissart! Moissart and Voissart and Croissart and Froissart, and Napoleon Bonaparte Froissart! Why, you unnatural old snake, that's *me*! that's *me*! do you get that?

[1] Cushions or frames pushing out the top of a woman's skirt at the back.

that's *me* ! " I was crying out at the top of my voice—" that's *me-e-e* ! I !—I ! am Napoleon Bonaparte Froissart ! And if I haven't got myself married to my mother's mother's mother's mother, may I be sent to death and destruction."

Madame Eugénie Lalande, or, as it seemed, Simpson, was in fact, my mother's mother's mother's mother. When young she had been beautiful, and even at 82 kept the Diana-like air, the clear-cut outline of head, the star-bright eyes, and the Greek nose of the girl she had been. By the help of these, and of powder, paint, false hair, false teeth, and bustles, and, in addition, of the best dress-makers in Paris, she was able to keep her place among the circle of beautiful Parisians who were long past their Spring.

She had a great amount of money, and after the death of M. Lalande, she had given thought to my existence in America, and for the purpose of giving me all her property at her death, had come to the United States in the company of a very beautiful relation of M. Lalande, a Mme. Stéphanie Lalande.

At the opera, my behaviour made her take note of me, and on looking at me

through her opera glass she saw that in some way I had the family look. Interested, and with the knowledge that the man she was looking for was in town, she put questions to the man who was with her, and he said who I was. This was the reason for her looking at me through her glass, and this, in turn, was what made me so forward in my behaviour. She sent me an answering sign in the belief that I had somehow made the discovery of who she was. When, tricked by my feeble eyes and by the arts of the dressing-table in forming my opinion of the years and looks of the strange woman, I so warmly made my request to Talbot for her name, he took it that I had in mind the younger woman, and said, quite truly, that she was the noted Mme. Lalande. In the street the morning after, the old woman came across Talbot, who had been a friend in Paris, and very naturally, the talk was about me. The condition of my eyes was then made clear (this—though I was not conscious of the fact—was common knowledge), and the old thing saw, with small pleasure, that she had been wrong in the idea that I had been conscious of who she was, and that I had only been acting foolishly—

making love in the theatre to a strange woman. As a punishment for this unwise behaviour she made a design with Talbot. He kept out of the way on purpose, so that he would not have to take me to see her. The questions I put to everyone about the beautiful Mme. Lalande were naturally taken to be about the younger woman, and so the talk I had with the three friends after coming out of Talbot's club is quite simply cleared up. I had no chance of getting a near view of Mme. Lalande in daylight; and at her house, my foolish behaviour in not using the glasses kept me from making the discovery of her years. When "Mme. Lalande" was requested to give a song, it was the younger woman who was desired, and it was she who went in answer to the request; the old Mme. Lalande went to the piano with her for the purpose of further tricking me. Had I made an attempt to go with her, it had been her design to make the suggestion that it would be in better taste to keep where I was; but my good sense made this unnecessary. And it was Mme. Stéphanie Lalande who gave the songs which were so moving and which made me the more

certain that my loved Eugénie was still very young. She gave me the glass only to put an edge on the punishment, and to make a reason for the talk on false shame which I had to undergo. It is unnecessary to say that the glass of the instrument as used by the old woman had been changed by her for some of more use to a person of my years.

The 'man of the church' by whom we were 'married' was a dear friend of Talbot, and had no connection with the church. He was a very good horseman, however, and having taken off his church clothing, put on an overcoat and became the driver of the carriage which took the 'newly married' Simpsons out of town. Talbot was on the seat at his side, and the two were 'in at the death'[1]—through a half open window of the hotel living-room they got great amusement at the outcome of the play.

But—and this is the thought which makes me most happy—I am *not* married to my mother's mother's mother's mother; but I *am* married to Mme. Stéphanie Lalande, to whom the dear old woman has

[1] That is, the death of an animal which sportsmen have sent dogs after.

taken great trouble to get me joined, in addition to giving me all her property at her death—if ever that takes place! In ending, I will say that I am done forever with love letters, and am not ever to be seen without glasses.

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THE ORTHOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
10, KING'S PARADE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND
LONDON: KEGAN PAUL 68 CARTER LANE, E.C.