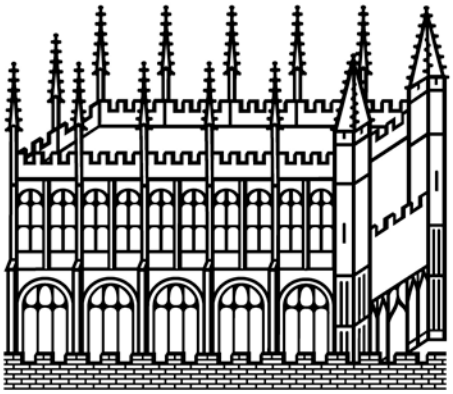
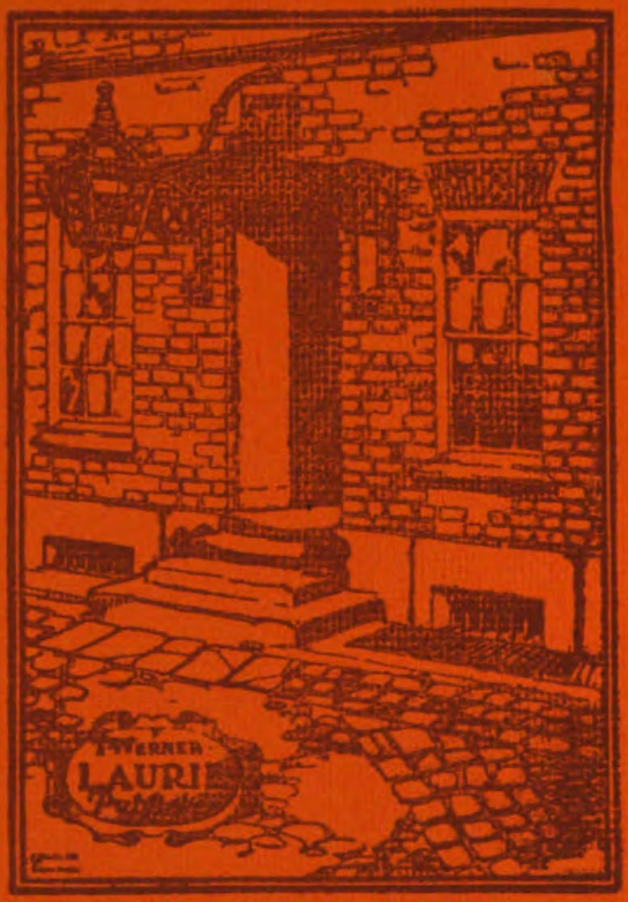


The Works of
GUY DE MAUPASSANT

PIERRE & JEAN

Translated by
MARJORIE LAURIE



PIERRE AND JEAN

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

. . .

This is the tenth and concluding Volume of the Maupassant Library. The publishers would draw special attention to the translator's farewell and to the press notices following it.

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The works of Guy de Maupassant

PIERRE AND JEAN

AND

ON MEDITERRANEAN WATERS

Newly translated into English
by
MARJORIE LAURIE

Published at Cobham House,
Water Lane, London,
by T. Werner Laurie Ltd.

MAUPASSANT, Henri René Albert Guy de.—Born at the Château de Miromesnil, Seine-Inférieure, August 5th, 1850; died at Passy, Paris, July 6th, 1893. A French novelist. He went to school at Yvetot, and graduated from the college of Rouen, while Gustave Flaubert, his godfather, looked after his literary training. He spent about ten years in the Civil Service in the Navy Department. In February, 1879, his one-act play "Histoire du vieux temps" was performed in Paris, without, however, attracting any special attention. The next year, however, the success of his short story "Boule de Suif" stamped him at once as a writer of marked ability. Then he published in rapid succession "La Maison Tellier" (1881), "Mademoiselle Fifi" (1882), "Contes de la Bécasse" (1883), "Une Vie" (1883), "Miss Harriet" (1884), "Les Sœurs Rondoli" (1884), "Au Soleil" (1884), "Clair de Lune" (1884), "Yvette" (1884), "Bel-Ami" (1885), "Contes du jour et de la nuit" (1885), "Contes et nouvelles" (1885), "M. Parent" (1886), "La petite Roque" (1886), "Toine" (1886), "Contes Choisis" (1887), "Mont-Oriol" (1887), "Le Horla" (1887), "Pierre et Jean" (1888), "Sur l'eau" (1888), "Le rosier de Madame Husson" (1888), "Fort comme la mort" (1889), "La Main Gauche" (1889), "Histoire d'une fille de ferme" (1890), "La Vie errante" (1890), "L'Inutile Beauté" (1890), "Notre Cœur" (1890). Among his other works are "Trois contes," "En mer," "L'homme de lettres" (1892), and two plays, "Musotte" (1891) and "La paix du ménage" (*Comédie Française*, March 6th, 1893). The insanity and death of a brother unbalanced him, and he attempted suicide during a fit of depression in December 1891; general paresis set in, and he had to be confined in a private asylum.—From the "Century Cyclopædia of Names."

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE DUNEDIN PRESS, LTD., EDINBURGH.

THE TRANSLATOR'S FAREWELL

THE Library Edition of Guy de Maupassant's Works now extends to ten volumes. It is a difficult question to decide at which stage the process of translation should cease. Although an edition in the original should doubtless include an author's complete works, an English version may perhaps aim at being representative rather than comprehensive. All Maupassant's long novels and the bulk of his short stories are here set before the English reader. The aim of the translator has been to include whatever of intrinsic merit his works contain, while omitting certain stories and sketches, which appear to her too slight and ephemeral to be of permanent interest. It is hoped that the admirer of Maupassant will find that none of the masterpieces, long or short, for which he has a special preference, have been omitted.

It is with regret that the translator has reached the end of a very pleasant task. In closing the series, she takes the opportunity of thanking the reviewers for the uniformly kind and encouraging reception which they have accorded to her work.

PRESS OPINIONS

OF THE UNIFORM LIBRARY EDITION OF THE STORIES OF GUY DE MAUPASSANT

Translated by MARJORIE LAURIE.

The Times Literary Supplement in a leading article on Guy de Maupassant said: "It is certain that those who know Maupassant only in his English can never know him wholly, but the amount of their knowledge will depend upon the relation of the translator's English to Maupassant's French; and it is here that with some pleasure we observe a ***superiority in the British Edition*** translated by Marjorie Laurie OVER THE VERY UNEQUAL AMERICAN EDITION."

The Sphere.—"Whoever Marjorie Laurie may be, I count her an exquisite translator, for the first volume of this series, *Bel-Ami,* seems to me to be one of the best translated books I have read for many a day."

Telegraph.—"A very worthy enterprise to which we wish all success."

New Statesman.—"The book fully deserves the phrase, 'Library Edition,' in which the publisher describes it, and the price is a low one."

FILSON YOUNG in the *Saturday Review.*—"If the rest of de Maupassant's works are done only as well as this one is done, the experiment will have entirely justified itself, and Mr Laurie will deserve well of the present generation of English readers."

The Nation.—"Mrs Laurie's exquisite translation may be recommended as a delightful version of a first-rate book."

Queen.—"Those who are unable to make the acquaintance of this master in his own language will be delighted with Mrs Marjorie Laurie's easily flowing translation."

PRESS OPINIONS (*Continued*)

The Gentlewoman.—"Great credit is due to Mrs Laurie for the excellent style in which she has translated Guy de Maupassant into English."

Field.—"The English rendering, by Marjorie Laurie, approaches more nearly to our conception of the master's meaning than we could have believed possible."

The Scotsman.—"Has merits of its own all the more conspicuous because earlier translations into English, made mostly by American writers, have been obviously less successful in catching the author's finer nuances in meaning and in expression."

Public Opinion.—"The translator has preserved the spirit of the original without taking liberties with the grammar or idiom of the language into which it is translated. It is an excellent piece of work."

Aberdeen Press and Journal.—"One rejoices anew at the delightful English style in which their translation appears. Mrs Laurie has done her work admirably, in diction that is suave, fluent and cultured."

Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register.—"Surely no translator has ever succeeded better than Mrs Laurie in conveying to the reader the delicate suggestion of the French prose. She has a knack of getting the right word, and her phrases are beautifully turned."

Nottingham Guardian.—"Those who wish to get as near as possible to the great French short story writer in English, will find nothing better than Marjorie Laurie's translations."

Northern Echo.—"To capture this grace in an alien tongue is a task; but Mrs Laurie's translation is a triumph."

Melbourne Age.—"We appreciate Mrs Laurie's translation, and are grateful to the publishers for their enterprise."

Madras Mail.—"Mrs Laurie has performed the difficult task of translating an exceedingly individual author with skill and care."

The Natal Advertiser.—"The translation has been sympathetically and skilfully done by Marjorie Laurie, in whose praise the critics have united."

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PIERRE AND JEAN

I

"DEUCE take it!" exclaimed old Roland, who had been sitting motionless for the last quarter of an hour, his eyes fixed on the sea, while he gave, now and then, a very gentle hitch to his line, which was touching the bottom. Madame Roland, dozing in the stern by the side of Madame Rosémilly, who had been invited to come fishing, woke up and turned her head towards her husband.

"Now, now, Gérôme."

"Not another bite," complained the old fellow wrathfully. "I've caught nothing since noon. Fishing parties ought to be limited to men. Women always make one start too late."

His sons, Pierre and Jean, who sat, one on either side of the boat, trailing their lines with one end wound round their forefingers, both burst out laughing.

"That's not very flattering to our guest," Jean reproved him.

Roland apologised in confusion.

"I beg your pardon, Madame Rosémilly. That's me all over. I invite ladies because I enjoy their society. But as soon as I feel the water under me, I forget everything except fishing."

Madame Roland, now completely roused, was gazing with emotion at the spacious prospect of cliffs and sea.

"Still, you have made a good catch," she comforted him.

Her husband shook his head. At the same time he cast

a complacent glance into the basket, where the fish the three men had caught were still palpitating feebly, while little sounds came from their viscous scales, quivering fins, and gasping mouths, in their weak, ineffectual struggles against the lethal air. Old Roland took the creel between his knees and tilted it, till the silvery stream reached the brim and he could see the fish that were at the bottom. Their dying agonies increased, and from the close-packed centre of the basket rose the powerful odour of their bodies, mingled with the wholesome tang of the sea. The old fisherman drew it eagerly into his nostrils, like a man smelling a rose.

"Jove! How deliciously fresh!" he exclaimed. "How many of them did you catch yourself, doctor?"

Pierre, his eldest son, was a man of thirty, clean-shaven except for black whiskers, which he wore trimmed like a judge's.

"Oh, not many," he replied. "Only three or four."

"And you, Jean?" asked Roland, turning to his second son, who was tall, fair, and much younger than his brother. He smiled:

"About the same as Pierre. Four or five."

The two brothers were always ready with the same lie, which rejoiced their father's heart. Roland had wound up his line on a row-lock, and folding his arms he declared:

"I shall never try fishing in the afternoon again. It's no use after ten o'clock. The brutes won't bite. They are having a nap in the sun."

He surveyed the sea around him with a proprietary glance of satisfaction.

Roland had kept a jeweller's shop in Paris, until his uncontrollable passion for boating and fishing had torn him from his counter. As soon as he had saved enough money to live quietly on the interest, he had retired to Havre, bought a fishing boat and taken up sailing as a hobby. His sons, Pierre and Jean, had both stayed on in Paris to continue their studies, coming home now and then for holidays, when they shared their father's pastime.

On leaving school, Pierre, who was five years his brother's

senior, had felt a vocation first for one profession, then another. He experimented with half-a-dozen careers in succession, abandoning each in disgust, only to strike out immediately in some new direction. The medical profession had finally attracted him, and he had thrown himself so zealously into his work that he had qualified after unusually brief studies, the Ministry granting him special exemptions in the matter of time. Quixotic, intelligent, unstable, pertinacious, he had his head crammed with Utopian notions and philosophical ideas.

Jean was as fair as his brother was dark, as phlegmatic and good-tempered as his brother was excitable and vindictive. He had quietly settled down to read law and had received his diploma at the same time that Pierre completed his course of medicine. The two brothers were now home together for a short holiday. Both had the intention of settling in Havre should conditions prove favourable. A vague feeling of jealousy, the lurking jealousy that grows to maturity, almost unperceived, between brothers or sisters, to break out on the occasion of a marriage, or of some stroke of luck befalling one of them, kept them on their guard, in a state of passive, brotherly hostility. Though genuinely attached, each kept an eye on the other. Pierre, who was five years old when Jean was born, had looked with the dislike of a spoilt little animal, on this other, new little animal, which had suddenly appeared in his parents' arms and received so much petting and affection. Even as a child Jean had always been a model of docility, gentleness and placid temper. Pierre had gradually become exasperated at having eternally to listen to the praises of that chubby lad, whose docility he accounted weakness, his gentleness stupidity, his friendliness obtuseness. His parents, quiet people, who looked forward to seeing their sons occupying respectable, if undistinguished, positions, reproached Pierre with his vacillations, his enthusiasms, his frustrate efforts, his large ideas, his barren attempts at spectacular careers. Once he was grown up, his family ceased saying to him:

"Look at Jean and copy him." But whenever he heard them remark:

"Jean has done so and so," he was alive to the significance, to the veiled hint the words contained. Their mother, a practical, frugal, middle-class woman, with a sentimental tendency and a susceptible soul, such as a female cashier may have, was always composing the petty squabbles that broke out between her two big sons during the commonplace course of family life. Just then her peace of mind was disturbed by circumstances, unimportant in themselves, which, however, she feared might lead to complications. The previous winter, while her sons were away pursuing their studies, she had made the acquaintance of a neighbour of hers, Madame Rosémilly, the widow of a ship's captain, who had died at sea two years before. Though very young, only twenty-three, she was a woman of character, possessing, like an animal in its natural state, an instinctive knowledge of life, as if she had seen, experienced, grasped and weighed all possible contingencies, appraising them with sound and limited, but charitable judgment. She had acquired a habit of dropping in of an evening, with her needlework, for a cup of tea and a little chat with these pleasant neighbours. Old Roland, who could never shake off his nautical obsession, was always questioning this new friend about the deceased captain, and she would speak of him, of his voyages and the yarns he used to tell, without embarrassment, like a sensible woman, resigned to the inevitable, and combining an appreciation of life with a due respect for death. When the two young men came home and found the pretty widow a constant visitor in the house, they at once began to pay her attention, not so much with the object of pleasing her, as the desire of cutting each other out. The young woman was rich, and the prudent, practical mother earnestly hoped that one of her sons would win her. At the same time she was equally anxious that the unsuccessful rival should feel no soreness.

Madame Rosémilly was fair and blue-eyed, with a crown of unruly locks, that fluttered in the lightest breeze. She

had a little air of confidence and pugnacity which bore no relation whatever to her well-regulated mind. Attracted by a similarity of disposition, she already appeared to have a preference for Jean. This, however, manifested itself only by a hardly perceptible difference in voice and glance and by the fact that she occasionally asked Jean's advice. She seemed to surmise that Jean's opinion would coincide with her own, while Pierre's would inevitably prove conflicting. She sometimes referred to Pierre's views on politics, art, philosophy and morals as " those notions of yours." At this he would fix her with the icy stare of a judge, framing an indictment against women, all women, poor creatures that they were.

Not once, before his sons' return, had Roland invited Madame Rosémilly to come fishing, nor would he ever take his wife. He preferred to set out before dawn with Beausire, his great friend, a retired sea captain, whose acquaintance he had made on the quay at high tide, and with Papagris, known as Jean-Bart, an old sailor who looked after the boat. But one evening, the previous week, Madame Rosémilly, who had been dining with her friends, remarked :

" It must be great fun to go fishing."

Flattered by her interest in his hobby, eager to impart its fascinations, and, after the manner of priests, to make a convert, the old jeweller exclaimed :

" Would you care to come? "

" Very much."

" Next Tuesday? "

" Certainly, next Tuesday."

" Have you pluck enough to start at five in the morning? "

She gave a cry of horror.

" Good gracious, no ! "

He was disappointed and chagrined, and began to have his doubts of the genuineness of her vocation. Nonetheless he persisted.

" What time could you manage it? "

" Well—say, nine o'clock."

"Not before?"

"Not a minute. And even that is very early."

The old fellow hesitated. There would certainly be nothing caught. Once the sun is hot, the fish stop biting. The two brothers, however, hastened to clinch the matter, planned it all out, and settled the details then and there.

The following Tuesday, accordingly, the *Pearl* dropped anchor below the white cliffs of Cape la Hève. The party fished till noon, dozed, and fished again, the second time without result. It was then that old Roland, realising too late that the outing on the sea was all that Madame Rosémilly really cared about and enjoyed, and that his lines would never give another quiver, had vented his unreasonable irritation in a vehement expletive, which was addressed quite as much to the callous widow as to the elusive fish.

He inspected his catch, his precious catch, with the tremulous joy of a miser. Then, with a glance at the sky, he noticed that the sun was setting.

"Well, children," he said, "we had better be getting back."

The young men drew in their lines, wound them up, cleaned the hooks, stuck them into corks, and waited for orders. Roland was standing up, scanning the horizon like the captain of a ship.

"Not a breath of wind. You youngsters will have to row."

Then, stretching out his arm towards the north, he exclaimed:

"Look, look. The steamer from Southampton."

Far away in the direction indicated, above the smooth sea, which lay, one sheet of shimmering blue, shot with fiery gold, a dusky cloud was rising into the rosy sky. Beneath it the ship was coming into view, a tiny speck in the distance. To the south, numerous other trails of smoke could be seen, all moving in the direction of the Havre quay, which lay, a streak of white, hardly discernible, with the lighthouse at one end jutting upwards like a horn.

"Isn't it to-day that the *Normandy* is due?" asked Roland.

"Yes, Papa," replied Jean.

" Hand me the telescope. I think that's she out there."

Roland drew out the brass tube, adjusted it to his eye, focussed it, and was delighted to find that he had spotted the ship.

" Yes, that's she. I recognise her two funnels. Would you like to look, Madame Rosémilly? "

She took the telescope and directed it towards the Atlantic liner in the distance, but she failed to focuss it correctly, for she could see nothing but a patch of blue in a rainbow-coloured circle, besides various strange phenomena, rather like eclipses, which made her feel giddy.

As she returned the telescope, she remarked :

" To tell the truth, I never could manage these things. It used to make my husband angry. He himself would spend hours at the window watching the shipping."

Old Roland was hurt.

" It must be due to some defect in your sight. It's a very good telescope."

He offered it to his wife.

" Would you like to look? "

" No, thank you, I know I should see nothing."

Of the whole party, Madame Roland seemed most to appreciate the sail and the sunset. She was forty-eight, but did not look her years, and there was only a touch of grey in her chestnut hair. She had a placid, sensible air, a contented, kindly manner which made a pleasing impression. According to Pierre, she knew the value of money, but this did not prevent her from tasting the delights of reverie. She was fond of novels and poetry, not on account of their literary merit, but because of the dreams of tender melancholy they evoked in her. A single verse, often trite, often poor, sufficed to set the little chord vibrating, as she said, and to make her feel as if some mysterious desire of hers had almost come true. She revelled in these superficial emotions, which lightly stirred the soul she kept in as good order as an account book. Since the migration to Havre, she had noticeably begun to put on flesh, to the detriment of her figure, which was once very slim and graceful. She

was enchanted with her day on the sea. Though not unkind, her husband would bluster at her, as all petty tyrants of shop-keepers do, not in anger or hatred, but because they never give an order without swearing. When strangers were present, he would control himself, but in the family circle he let himself go and put on ferocious airs, although he was really the most timid of men. Because of her horror of noise and scenes and useless arguments, she invariably gave way to him and made no demands. It was many a day since she had ventured to ask Roland to take her out in the boat. She had jumped at this opportunity, and was making the most of this new and unaccustomed pleasure. From the moment of starting, she had surrendered herself, body and soul, to the delightful sensation of gliding over the water, refusing to think or to lose herself in memories and hopes. She felt as if her heart, like her body, were floating upon some velvety, liquid, delectable element, which soothed and lulled her. When Roland gave the order to row towards the shore, she smiled, as she watched her sons, her two stalwart sons, strip off their coats and roll up their shirt sleeves leaving their arms bare. Pierre, who was nearest to the ladies, took the stroke oar and Jean the bow oar. They waited for the owner to give the word: "Forward." He always made a point of having every manœuvre carried out in a seamanlike manner. Together they dipped their oars into the water, lay back, and pulled their hardest. A trial of strength ensued. They had sailed quietly out that morning, but the breeze had dropped. The masculine vanity of the brothers was aroused at the prospect of pitting themselves against each other. When out fishing alone with their father, they always rowed without anyone steering. Roland would prepare the lines, while keeping an eye on the boat's course. He would correct any deviation with a word or a gesture.

"Easy, Jean," "Row, Pierre," "Row, bow," "Row, stroke. Put your back into it."

At this, the one who was dreaming would wake up and pull, while the overzealous oarsman eased off, till the boat

was straight again. That evening, however, they were determined to display their biceps. Pierre's arms were rather lean, but hairy and sinewy, Jean's, on the other hand, plump and pink, with bulging muscles that rippled beneath the skin. At first Pierre had the advantage. His teeth were clenched, his brows knitted, his legs rigid, and his hands clutched the oar, which bent throughout its length under the violence of his strokes. The *Pearl* headed towards the open coast. Seated in the bow, so as to leave the whole of the stern to the ladies, old Roland shouted himself hoarse :

" Take it easy, stroke," " Gently, bow." " Let her have it, bow."

Stroke, however, rowed all the harder and bow could not compete with such frenzied energy.

" Stop," cried the owner at last.

Simultaneously both oars were lifted out of the water, and at his father's bidding Jean pulled a few strokes by himself. From that moment the advantage remained with him. He roused himself to the work, while Pierre, winded and exhausted by his feverish exertions, slacked off, panting. Four times in succession Roland had to call an easy to give his elder son a breather, and to put the boat on her course again.

Angry and humiliated, his cheeks pale, his forehead wet, Pierre muttered :

" I don't know what's the matter with me. I have a pain in the heart. I started very well, but it has knocked all the strength out of my arms."

" Would you like me to take both oars? " asked Jean.

" No, thanks, it will go off."

" Dear me, Pierre," said his mother disapprovingly, " what were you thinking of to work yourself up into such a state? You're not a child."

He shrugged his shoulders and began to row again. Madame Rosémilly made as if she neither saw, nor heard, nor understood. At each movement of the boat, her small, fair head gave a pretty little backward jerk, which lifted the tendrils of hair upon her brows.

" Hello ! " exclaimed old Roland, " There is the *Prince Albert* overtaking us."

Everyone gazed at her. Long and low in the water, with her two raking funnels, her two yellow paddle boxes round as a pair of cheeks, the mail boat from Southampton came on under full steam, her decks crowded with passengers and open parasols. Her noisy, swiftly revolving paddles, churning the water to foam, gave her an air of haste, like a messenger in a hurry. Her vertical stem cut through the sea, throwing up two slender, transparent waves, which slipped past her sides. When she drew near the *Pearl,* old Roland raised his hat; the ladies waved their handkerchiefs, while half-a-dozen sunshades were vigorously flourished in response from the deck of the ship, who continued on her course, leaving in her wake gentle undulations on the calm, polished surface of the sea. Other steamers, each with its plume of smoke, came flocking from every point of the compass towards the short white jetties, which were like jaws swallowing them one by one. Towed by minute tugs, fishing smacks and great sailing ships, their slender masts gliding across the sky, approached the voracious ogre, who now and again, as if satiated, belched forth a second fleet of mail boats, brigs, schooners, and three-masters with their complicated network of rigging. Swift steamers raced away in every direction over the smooth bosom of the sea, while the sailing boats, dropped by the tugs that had towed them out, lay motionless, while setting every stitch of canvas, from main to topgallant sail, white sails, and brown sails that showed crimson in the setting sun.

With half-closed eyes Madame Roland murmured :

" Heavens, how beautiful it is, the sea ! "

" Indeed it is," agreed Madame Rosémilly with a long-drawn sigh, which had, however, no tinge of sadness in it. " But sometimes it works terrible havoc."

" Look," cried Roland. " There's the *Normandy* approaching the jetties. What a fine ship she is ! "

Then he began to describe the opposite coast, yonder in the distance, on the other side of the Seine estuary, which,

he informed them, was twelve miles wide. He pointed out Villerville, Trouville, Houlgate, the river Caen, Luc, Arromanches, and the rocks of Calvados, which constitute a danger to shipping as far as Cherbourg. Then he dealt with the question of the sandbanks in the Seine, which shift with every tide and baffle even the Quilleboeuf pilots, if they neglect to verify the channel by a daily trip. He pointed out how Havre divided Upper and Lower Normandy, how in Lower Normandy the coast was flat, and extended in pasture land, meadows and fields to the edge of the sea, while the steep coast of Upper Normandy formed a single lofty cliff, jagged, gashed, magnificent, a great white wall reaching as far as Dunkirk, and sheltering in each cleft a village or a harbour, such as Etretat, Fécamp, St. Valery, Le Tréport, Dieppe.

The two women paid no attention. They were drowsy with enjoyment, and moved by the sight of the sea, crowded with ships, like animals prowling around their lairs. A little oppressed by that vast expanse of sky and ocean, they were reduced to silence by the spectacle of the sunset, so grand and so satisfying. Roland alone chattered incessantly. He was one of those persons, whom nothing impresses. Women, more sensitive than men, sometimes feel without knowing why, that the sound of an intrusive voice is as distressing as bad manners.

Pierre and Jean, their equanimity restored, were rowing quietly, while the *Pearl*, a toy skiff by the side of these great ships, glided towards the harbour. Papagris, the sailor, was waiting on the quay and handed the ladies out of the boat. The whole party entered the town, mingling with the large, orderly crowds returning from the jetties, where they always congregate at high tide. Madame Roland and Madame Rosémilly walked on ahead, followed by the three men. As they strolled up the Rue de Paris, they paused now and then in front of a milliner's or a jeweller's shop, and, after admiring and commenting on a hat or trinket, passed on.

At the Place de la Bourse, Roland took his daily survey

of the crowded Commerce Docks, which consisted of a series of basins, where broad-beamed hulls lay side by side touching one another, four or five rows deep. Extending along several miles of quays, all these masts, these innumerable masts with their yards and spars and rigging, gave to this open space in the heart of the town the aspect of a great dead forest. Above this leafless wood gulls were wheeling, waiting to drop headlong, like a stone, on the offal thrown into the water. A cabin boy, who was securing a pulley at the royal mast top, looked as if he had climbed up there to hunt for nests.

"Won't you waive ceremony and take potluck with us?" said Madame Roland to her companion, "so that we may finish the day together."

"I shall be only too delighted. I should feel very dull all by myself at home this evening."

Pierre, who was beginning to resent Madame Rosémilly's indifference to himself, caught these words and muttered:

"Dear me, the widow is digging herself in."

During the last few days he had taken to calling her "the widow," and though the word was not in itself offensive, Jean disliked Pierré's tone of voice, which he considered unkind and wounding. The three men reached the doorstep without exchanging another word. The Rolands occupied a narrow-fronted house in the Rue Belle Normande, consisting of a ground floor and two small storeys above. Their maid, Josephine, whose wages were small and who possessed to an exaggerated extent that air of bovine surprise, characteristic of the peasant, opened the door to them. After closing it behind them, she followed her master and mistress upstairs to the drawing-room, which was on the first floor.

"A gentleman called three times this afternoon," she informed them.

Old Roland, who never addressed her without shouting and swearing, exclaimed:

"Who was it that called, confound you?"

She was never perturbed by her master's vociferations, and answered:

" A gentleman from the lawyer's."

" What lawyer? "

" Monsieur Canu, of course."

" Well, and what did the gentleman say? "

" He said that Monsieur Canu would call round himself in the course of the evening."

Maître Lecanu was Roland's lawyer and man of business, as well as something of a personal friend. For him to announce a visit that evening, indicated that it was a question of some urgent and important matter. The Rolands looked at one another with the usual misgivings of persons of modest means, at any intervention on the part of a lawyer, with its suggestions of contracts, legacies, lawsuits, and other possibilities, desirable or otherwise.

After a brief silence Roland muttered:

" What on earth can it mean? "

Madame Rosémilly gave a laugh.

" Why, it's a legacy, of course. I know it is. I always bring people luck."

But they could think of no one, by whose death they were likely to profit. Madame Roland, who had an excellent memory for family history, at once set to work to consider all their connections, both on her husband's side and her own, and to trace the different ramifications and degrees of cousinship. Without even waiting to remove her hat, she began:

" Let me see, Father, can you remember who it was that Joseph Lebru married as his second wife? "

In the family circle she called her husband " Father," while in the presence of strangers she sometimes addressed him as " Monsieur Roland."

" Yes," he replied, " a young woman of the name of Duménil. Her father was a stationer."

" Have they any children? "

" Yes, certainly. Four or five at least."

" Then it can't be from that quarter."

She was growing excited over these speculations, and beginning to cherish hopes of a little windfall. Pierre,

however, who was much attached to his mother, and aware of her fondness for dreaming, feared that she might suffer some slight pang of disappointment and regret, should the news prove bad instead of good, and checked her enthusiasm.

"Don't let your imagination run away with you, Mamma. The day of rich uncles from America is over. Personally, I am disposed to think that it is about a marriage for Jean."

The idea came as a surprise to everyone, and Jean was a little annoyed with his brother for broaching such a subject in Madame Rosémilly's presence.

"Why me, rather than you?" he asked. "It's a most unlikely supposition. You are the elder. Therefore, you would be the first to be considered. Besides, I have no intention of marrying."

"Why, are you in love?" sneered Pierre.

"Why should a man be in love," Jean retorted angrily, "because he says that for the present he has no intention of marrying?"

"For the present! That mends matters. You are merely postponing it?"

"Have it your own way."

Old Roland, who had been listening and thinking, now advanced a more plausible theory.

"Pooh! How stupid of us to rack our brains! Maître Lecanu is a friend of ours. He knows that Pierre is looking out for a surgery and Jean for an office. He has heard of suitable accommodation for one or the other."

This conjecture was so simple and so probable that it was generally accepted. Dinner was announced and they went to their rooms to wash their hands. Ten minutes later they were seated at table in the little dining-room on the ground floor. At first conversation flagged, but soon old Roland returned to the subject of the lawyer's visit.

"In that case, why didn't he write? Why did he send his clerk? Why is he coming in person?"

Pierre thought this perfectly natural.

" No doubt an immediate answer is required. And then there may be certain conditions, only to be communicated in confidence, which it is not advisable to commit to paper."

The family, however, remained preoccupied, and a little inclined to regret the presence of an outsider, who would hinder free discussion and deliberation.

They had just returned to the drawing-room when the lawyer was announced.

Roland sprang to meet him.

" Good-evening, dear Maître," he said, addressing him by the prefix by which a lawyer's name is accompanied.

Madame Rosémilly rose from her chair.

" I think I will say good-night," she said, " I am very tired."

A half-hearted attempt was made to detain her, but she was firm. The three men, one of whom had hitherto always escorted her to her door, allowed her to go home unattended.

Madame Roland welcomed the newcomer effusively.

" A cup of coffee, Monsieur Lecanu? "

" No, thank you, I have just had some at home."

" A cup of tea, then? "

" I won't say no to that, a little later. First of all, we have some business to discuss."

A deep silence ensued, broken only by the rhythmic ticking of the clock and by the clatter of crockery on the ground floor, where the maid, too stupid even to listen at the door, was washing up.

" Were you acquainted with a Monsieur Léon Maréchal, in Paris? "

" Very well indeed," replied Monsieur and Madame Roland in one breath.

" He was a friend of yours? "

" Our best friend," declared Roland. " But he has such a passion for Paris that he cannot tear himself away from the boulevards. I haven't set eyes on him since we left Paris, and we have let our correspondence drop. You know how it is with friends living so far apart. . . ."

The lawyer intervened in solemn tones:

"Monsieur Maréchal is deceased."

Husband and wife received this information with the usual little gesture of pained surprise, which, whether genuine or feigned, is at least prompt.

"My colleague in Paris," Monsieur Lecanu resumed, "has just communicated to me the principal provision of the will, by which your son Jean, Monsieur Jean Roland, is appointed sole heir."

They were all speechless with astonishment. Madame Roland was the first to recover her self-possession.

"Good heavens! Poor Léon . . ." she faltered, "our poor friend. . . . Good heavens. . . . Good heavens. . . . Dead!"

Tears started to her eyes and rolled down her cheeks, those silent tears, those sorrowful drops, that rise from a woman's soul, and seem so bitter because they look so clear. Roland, however, was not so much occupied with the sadness of this bereavement as with the anticipations aroused. Yet he did not venture to ask immediately for particulars of the will, nor the amount of the legacy. In order to pave the way for the crucial question, he enquired:

"What did Maréchal die of, poor fellow?"

Monsieur Lecanu had no idea.

"All I know," he replied, "is that, having no direct heirs, he bequeathed his entire fortune, a yearly income of some twenty thousand francs in three per cent. bonds, to your younger son, whom he had known from birth, observed as he grew up, and considered worthy of this legacy. Should Monsieur Jean fail to accept it, the money goes to foundling children."

Old Roland could no longer conceal his delight.

"Upon my soul, his heart was in the right place. If I had had no children, I should certainly not have forgotten him myself, kind friend that he was."

The notary smiled.

"It was a pleasure to me to be able to impart this information to you myself. It is always gratifying to be the bearer of good news."

He overlooked the fact that his good news related to the death of a friend, old Roland's best friend, while Roland, himself, had suddenly forgotten the intimacy, which he had a moment ago so stoutly asserted. Only Madame Roland and her sons preserved an appearance of sorrow. She was still quietly weeping, drying her eyes with her handkerchief and pressing it to her lips to stifle her deep sighs.

"He was a good man, and very affectionate," remarked Pierre. "He often asked us to dinner, my brother and me."

Jean, his eyes wide open and shining, sat stroking his magnificent yellow beard with a familiar gesture, drawing it through his right hand to the very last hairs, as if to make it longer and narrower. Twice his lips moved in an attempt to make some appropriate remark, but after long cogitation, this was all that he could think of:

"He was certainly very fond of me. He always used to embrace me when I went to see him."

But his father's thoughts were racing ahead, revolving round this inheritance, a moment ago announced and already attained, this fortune hiding behind the door, and ready to enter this very minute, or on the morrow, at the word of acceptance.

"There are no difficulties in the way? No law suits? No counter-claims?"

Maître Lecanu appeared satisfied.

"No; my colleague in Paris assures me that the situation is perfectly clear. All that is required is Monsieur Jean's acceptance."

"Excellent.... Then the fortune is quite unencumbered?"

"Quite."

"And all the formalities have been observed?"

"Yes, all of them."

Roland felt a sudden twinge of shame, vague, instinctive, transitory, at this unseemly haste for information.

"You understand, don't you," he resumed, "that if I go into all these matters immediately, it is to save my son worries, which he might not anticipate. Sometimes there are debts and various complications—you know more about

these things than I do—and a man finds himself involved in an inextricable tangle. After all, I'm not the heir. I am thinking of the little chap's interest before anything else."

The family always referred to Jean as "the little chap," although he was much taller than Pierre.

Madame Roland seemed suddenly to come out of a dream, and to call to mind something remote, or half forgotten, something she had heard long ago, of which she was not quite sure.

"Didn't I hear you say that our poor dear Maréchal had left his fortune to my little Jean?"

"Yes, Madame Roland."

"I am very glad," she replied simply. "It shows that he still cared for us."

Roland rose from his chair.

"Do you wish my son to sign the acceptance immediately, dear Maître?"

"No, no, Monsieur Roland. To-morrow. Two o'clock to-morrow afternoon, at my office, if that will suit you."

"Perfectly. Perfectly."

Madame Roland, too, sprang to her feet. She had dried her tears, and, taking a step or two towards the notary, she placed her hand on the back of his easy-chair, and smiled at him with the melting eyes of a grateful mother.

"Now, what about that cup of tea, Monsieur Lecanu?"

"I should like one very much, now."

She rang for the maid, who came in carrying a large tin of those dry, tasteless English biscuits, which are baked so hard that only a parrot can eat them, and then soldered up in boxes for voyages round the world. Next she brought in some of those greyish doylies, folded into tiny squares, which are never washed in frugal households. She made a third journey and returned with sugar basin, cups and saucers. Then she went away to boil the water.

The party in the drawing-room sat and waited.

None of the men had anything to say. There was plenty to think about but nothing that could be discussed. Madame Roland alone made a few commonplace remarks. She spoke

of their day's fishing and sang the praises of the *Pearl* and of Madame Rosémilly.

"A charming woman, charming," replied the lawyer.

With his hands in his pockets, his lips moving as if he were whistling, Roland stood leaning his back against the marble mantelpiece, as he did in the winter, when there was a fire. He was suffering such torture from his violent desire to give vent to his delight, that he could not keep still. The two brothers, in armchairs of similar design, one on either side of the table in the middle of the room, sat with their legs crossed in precisely the same manner, gazing fixedly before them, in identical attitudes, but with very different expressions on their faces.

At last the tea made its appearance. The lawyer helped himself to sugar, and after crumbling into his cup a biscuit, which was too hard for him to bite, he drank his tea, shook hands all round and turned towards the door.

"That's settled, then," Roland repeated, "To-morrow afternoon at your office."

"Precisely."

Jean had not uttered a word. After the lawyer had left the room, another silence followed. Then old Roland went up to his younger son and clapped his hands on his shoulders.

"Well, you lucky devil, aren't you going to kiss me?"

Jean smiled.

"It didn't occur to me that that was necessary," he said, as he embraced him.

The old fellow was beside himself with glee. He walked up and down, drummed on the furniture with his coarse fingers, and spun round on his heels.

"What luck!" he kept exclaiming. "What luck! Did you ever see such luck?"

"You must have known him very well in the old days, this man Maréchal," remarked Pierre.

"Rather!" exclaimed Roland. "Why, he always spent his evenings with us. You can't have forgotten how he used to call for you at school on holidays, and sometimes take you back there, after dinner. Why, dear me, the day

that Jean was born, it was he who went for the doctor. He had been lunching with us, when your mother was suddenly taken ill. We guessed at once what was the matter. He rushed off in such a hurry that he took my hat instead of his own. I remember it, because we had many a laugh over it afterwards. Maybe this little incident came back to him when he lay dying, and, as he had no heir, he thought to himself: 'I took a hand in that youngster's birth. Why shouldn't I leave my money to him?'"

Madame Roland, who had sunk into an easy-chair, seemed lost in memories. As if thinking aloud, she murmured:

"What a good friend he was, so devoted, so loyal! There are few like him nowadays."

Jean rose.

"I'm going for a stroll," he announced.

His father was surprised, and protested. There was much to be discussed; proposals to be made, plans to be considered. Jean, however, insisted, and pleaded an engagement. In any case, there was ample time to talk matters over before he entered into possession of this inheritance. Anxious to be alone with his thoughts, he left the house. A few minutes later, Pierre followed his example.

When only Roland and his wife remained, he caught her in his arms and kissed her a dozen times on each cheek. He now had an answer to the reproaches she had so often addressed to him.

"You see, my dear, there was no need for me to stay on in Paris, slaving away for the children, instead of coming here to recover my health. A fortune has dropped from the skies."

She had turned very grave.

"A fortune for Jean, yes. But what about Pierre?"

"Pierre? Why, Pierre's a doctor. He will make money. Besides, his brother can very well do something for him now."

"No. Pierre would never accept it. Besides, this legacy is Jean's, and Jean's alone. It puts Pierre at a great disadvantage."

The old fellow seemed perplexed.

"Well, then, we shall have to leave him a little extra in our wills."

"No, that would hardly be fair, either."

"Oh, hang it all," he burst out. "Whatever do you expect me to do? You always look on the black side of things and spoil my pleasure. Well, I'm for bed. Good-night. Say what you like, it's luck, stupendous luck."

And off he went in high glee, in spite of everything, and without one word of regret for the friend who had proved so generous in death. Madame Roland returned to her seat by the lamp, which was burning low, and was soon plunged again in memories of bygone days.

II

On leaving the house, Pierre turned into the Rue de Paris, the principal street in Havre. It was well lighted, busy and noisy. A chill breeze from the sea caressed his cheeks, as he sauntered along, his stick under his arm, his hands behind his back. He was feeling restless, downcast, depressed, as if he had heard unpleasant news. Yet it was no definite idea that vexed him. At first he was at a loss to account for this heaviness of mind and lassitude of body. He was conscious of a soreness, which he could not define. He could feel within him one of those tiny pinpricks, one of those hardly perceptible bruises, which cannot be located, yet produce a feeling of discomfort, weariness, despondency, exasperation, a slight, inexplicable ache, like a little seed of sorrow. When he reached the Place du Théâtre he felt attracted by the lights of the Café Tortoni, and slowly approached its illuminated front. But as he was about to enter, he reflected that he would meet there friends and acquaintances, people to whom he would be obliged to talk. He was seized with a sudden repugnance for the superficial intimacies, which originate over coffee and liqueurs. Retracing his steps, he turned back into the main street, which led down to the harbour. He could not make up his mind where to go, nor think of any spot, which would soothe him and suit his mood. Although his loneliness oppressed him, he shrank from meeting anyone he knew. On reaching the great quay, he hesitated once more, then turned towards the jetties. He had decided in favour of solitude. He brushed against a bench on the breakwater, and sat down. He was already tired of walking and bored with the mere

idea of his projected stroll. "What is the matter with me this evening?" he wondered.

He searched his memory to find out what it was that had vexed him, like a doctor questioning a patient to discover the origin of his fever. His was a mind at once excitable and rational. He would flare up, then reason with himself, and condemn or justify his impulses. But, in his case, it was always his primitive nature that triumphed in the end. The man of feeling invariably defeated the man of judgment. He was now seeking the origin of this lassitude, this inexplicable restlessness, this desire to meet someone for the pleasure of contradicting him, together with his aversion from the acquaintances he might encounter and their conversation.

"Could it be that legacy of Jean's?" he wondered.

Yes, after all, it was possible. When the lawyer had announced the news, Pierre had felt his heart beat a thought more rapidly. To be sure a man is not always master of himself; he is subject to spontaneous and persistent emotions against which he contends in vain. He began to ponder deeply on the physiological problem of the impression, produced upon the subconscious self by some incident, setting in motion a stream of ideas and sensations, which, whether painful or pleasant, are contrary to the emotions desired, invoked, and approved of by the rational self, that has risen superior to the natural man by the cultivation of the intelligence. He tried to imagine the state of mind of a son, inheriting a large fortune, which will enable him to enjoy many long-coveted pleasures, hitherto denied him by the parsimony of a father, whom, nevertheless, he loved, and whose death he regrets. He rose and continued his walk to the end of the jetty. He was feeling better. It was a relief to him to have found an answer, to have caught himself out, to have unmasked that other self which lurks within us.

"So I was jealous of Jean," he reflected. "That was base enough in all conscience. But I am sure of it now, because the first thought that came into my head was about

his marriage to Madame Rosémilly. Yet what do I care for that wise little owl, who is enough to give one a horror of commonsense? It was, therefore, jealousy pure and simple, the very essence of jealousy, existing without any provocation. I must guard against it."

He had reached the signalling mast, on which the depth of water in the harbour is indicated, and he struck a match to read the list of the ships that had been signalled out at sea, and were expected to come in on the next high tide. Steamers were due from Brazil, La Plata, Chili and Japan, and two Danish brigs, a Norwegian schooner, and a Turkish steamer, which surprised Pierre as much as if he had read of a Swiss steamer. He had a fantastic vision of a great vessel, crowded with turbaned men, swarming up the rigging in baggy trousers.

"How absurd!" he reflected. "Of course the Turks are a maritime race."

He took another step or two, then stopped to observe the roadstead. Away to the right above St. Adresse, the two electric lighthouses of Cape la Hève, like twin Cyclopes of monstrous size, projected over the sea their long and powerful rays. Proceeding from these two adjoining focuses, the two parallel beams, like the gigantic tails of two comets, slid from the top of the cliff down a vast, steep slope to the edge of the horizon. On both jetties, two other lights, like the children of the giant pair, marked the entrance to Havre. On the other side of the estuary shone other lights, many in number, some fixed, some flashing, like eyes that blinked, the eyes of the different harbours, yellow eyes, red eyes, green eyes, keeping watch upon the gloomy seas, crowded with shipping, the living eyes of the hospitable land, saying, by the mere mechanical, regular, never varying movement of the eyelids:

"This is I. This is Trouville. This is Honfleur. This is the Pont Andemer river."

Towering above the rest, so high that from this distance it might have been mistaken for a planet, the lighthouse of Etouville on its lofty eminence, marked the channel to Rouen,

winding in and out among the sandbanks at the mouth of the great river. And out yonder on the deep, the boundless deep, darker than the sky, little stars were glittering here and there. Near and far, white, and green, and red, they twinkled, in the mist of the night. Nearly all were stationary; some, however, appeared to be moving. They were the lights of ships riding at anchor, awaiting the next tide, and of other ships, looking for an anchorage. At that moment, the moon rose behind the city, like some divine great beacon, set in the firmament to serve as guide to the infinite fleet of the stars of heaven.

Half aloud, Pierre said:

"Just look at that! And yet we vex our souls for the sake of twopence."

Quite near him, up the wide black passage between the two jetties, a shadow, a vast mysterious shadow, came suddenly stealing. Leaning over the granite parapet, he saw a fishing smack returning to port, without a sound of voices, without a ripple of water, or a splash of oars, wafted gently onwards by her high brown sail, filled with the breeze from the sea.

"A man who could spend his life on that boat," Pierre reflected, "might perhaps find peace."

A few more steps revealed to him the figure of a man seated at the end of the pier. What was he? Dreamer, lover, philosopher, a happy man, or a sad one? Impelled by curiosity, he approached the solitary form in order to see his face. He recognised his brother.

"Hallo, Jean, is that you?"

"Why, it's Pierre. What are you doing here?"

"Getting a breath of air. And you?"

"The same," laughed Jean.

Pierre seated himself beside his brother.

"Rather wonderful all this, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Jean.

By the tone of his voice, Pierre knew that Jean had not given so much as a glance to his surroundings.

"I never come here," Pierre resumed, "without being

seized with a frantic desire to travel, to sail away in all these different ships, either north or south. Just think of all those little lights out there, which have come from every quarter of the world, from countries full of giant flowers and lovely damsels white or bronze, from countries full of humming-birds, elephants, roving lions, negro kings, from all those lands, which are the fairy tales of us grown-up people, who no longer believe in Puss in Boots and the Sleeping Beauty. It would be tremendously jolly to be able to treat oneself to a voyage like that. But it takes money, a lot of money."

He broke off abruptly, remembering that his brother now had money, ample money, at his disposal and that, relieved from the necessity of daily drudgery, happy, joyful, free, he could go wherever he pleased, to the fair-haired lasses of Sweden, or the dusky beauties of Havana. At this there flashed across his mind one of those involuntary thoughts that frequently occurred to him, so sudden, so swift, that he could neither anticipate, nor suppress, nor modify them, thoughts that seemed to him to emanate from some independent and ungovernable second soul.

"Pooh! He's too much of a fool for that. He'll go and marry that little Rosémilly."

He rose to his feet.

"I'll leave you to your dreams of the future. I rather want a walk."

He pressed his brother's hand, and continued, in very cordial tones:

"Well, young man, you're rich now. I am very glad I have found you by yourself to-night. I wanted to tell you how glad I am, and how heartily I congratulate you. I am very fond of you, you know."

Jean, who was of a gentle and affectionate disposition, was much touched.

"Thank you, dear Pierre, thank you," he faltered.

His stick under his arm, his hands behind his back, Pierre turned away with his usual deliberate step.

On re-entering the town, he was once more at a loss as to

where he should go. He was annoyed because he had had his walk cut short, and had been driven from the sea by his brother's presence. Then an idea occurred to him:

"I'll drop in at old Marowsko's and have a liqueur with him."

He retraced his steps in the direction of Ingouville. He had made Marowsko's acquaintance when he was walking the hospitals in Paris. Marowsko was an elderly Pole, a political refugee, it was said, who had had terrible experiences in his own country, and had come to Paris with the object of passing further examinations, in order to carry on his trade of chemist. Nothing was known of his past, but legends about him were circulated among the house-surgeons and dressers, and, later, among his neighbours. His reputation as a dangerous conspirator, nihilist, regicide, patriot, who would stick at nothing, and who had escaped death by a miracle, appealed to Pierre's vivid and romantic imagination. He struck up a friendship with the Pole, without, however, receiving from him any confidences on the subject of his earlier life. It was on Pierre's account that he had transferred himself to Havre, where he looked to the young doctor to furnish him with a profitable connection. In the meantime he eked out a scanty subsistence in his humble dispensary by supplying remedies to the small shopkeepers and workmen in the quarter. Pierre went to see him after dinner and spent an hour chatting with him. He had a liking for Marowsko's impassive face, meagre conversation, and for his prolonged silences, which he thought full of significance.

A single gas jet was burning above the counter, which was covered with medicine bottles. The gas in the shop window had not been lighted, from motives of economy. On a chair behind the counter sat an old, bald-headed man, fast asleep, with his chin on his breast, his legs crossed and stretched out in front of him. He had a great nose like a beak, which, continuing the line of his bald forehead, gave him a melancholy resemblance to a parrot. At the sound

of the bell he awoke, rose to his feet, and on recognising the doctor went to meet him with outstretched hands. His black frock coat, mottled with the stains of acids and syrups, and far too big for his lean and shrunken frame, looked like an old cassock. Its wearer spoke with a strong Polish accent, which lent to his reedy voice a childish quality, the lisping intonations of an infant learning to talk.

"What news, doctor?" asked Marowsko, as Pierre took a seat.

"Nothing special. Everything is going on as usual."

"You don't look very bright this evening."

"I am not often in high spirits."

"Come, come, you must shake off that. You will have a liqueur?"

"Yes, thank you."

"I want you to taste a new preparation of mine. For the last two months I have been trying to make an extract of gooseberries. Up to now only a syrup has been produced. Well, I've succeeded.... I've at last succeeded ... in obtaining a good liqueur, a really good liqueur."

Jubilantly he went to a cupboard and took out a bottle. All his movements and actions were abrupt and curt. He never stretched out his arm to its full length, nor took a long stride, nor made a complete, decided gesture. His ideas seemed to have the same peculiarity. He confined himself to hints, promises, outlines, suggestions, but never made a definite pronouncement. Indeed his chief interest in life consisted in the preparation of syrups and liqueurs.

"There's a fortune to be made out of a good syrup or liqueur," he often remarked.

He had invented hundreds of sugary concoctions, but had never succeeded in putting a single one of them on the market. Pierre declared that Marowsko reminded him of Marat. Two small glasses were brought from the back of the shop and placed on the dispensary slab. Both men held the liquid up to the light to examine the colour.

"A fine ruby red!" said Pierre.

"Yes, isn't it?"

The Pole's ancient, parrot-like countenance was radiant. The doctor took a sip, tasted, considered, sipped again, and after further deliberation voiced his opinion:

"It's very good, very good indeed; it has quite a new flavour. It's a discovery, my dear sir."

"Do you think so? I am very glad."

Marowsko asked his advice about naming the new liqueur. He had thought of "Gooseberry Essence," "Fine Groseille," "Groselia," or "Groseline."

But none of these names met with Pierre's approval. The old man had an inspiration.

"Why not 'Ruby Red,' as you so aptly called it just now?"

Pierre, however, was not satisfied with this name, although it was his own invention, and he suggested plain "Groseillette," which Marowsko pronounced admirable.

Both men then fell silent, and sat for a few minutes without uttering a word under the solitary gas jet. At last, almost against his will, Pierre remarked:

"Rather a strange thing happened at home to-night. A friend of my father's has just died, and has left his fortune to my brother."

At first Marowsko did not seem to grasp this piece of information. But after some cogitation, he expressed the hope that the doctor shared the inheritance with his brother. When the matter had been carefully explained to him, he appeared surprised and dissatisfied. To express his regret at seeing his young friend passed over, he exclaimed two or three times:

"It will produce a bad impression."

Pierre's earlier mood of gloom returned, and he urged Marowsko to explain what he meant by this remark. Why should it produce a bad impression? What bad impression could arise from the fact that his brother had inherited the estate of a family friend? The cautious old fellow, however, refused to be more definite.

"In a case like that," he said, "the right thing is to leave

an equal share to both brothers. I tell you it will produce a bad impression."

Exasperated, Pierre took his departure and went home to bed. For some time afterwards he could hear Jean walking softly up and down in the adjoining room, but at last, after drinking two tumblers of water, he fell asleep.

III

On the following morning Pierre woke up firmly resolved to make his fortune. It was not the first time that he had formulated this decision, but he had never yet persisted in it. In each of his attempts at different careers, he had been buoyed up by the dream of rapidly acquired wealth, until the first obstacle, the first rebuff, had turned his thoughts in the direction of some new profession. Snug in bed under the warm blankets, he let his mind wander. How many doctors had become millionaires within a very short space of time! All that was needed was a dash of worldly wisdom. In the course of his studies, he had had ample opportunity for studying the most eminent men in his profession, and in his opinion they were fools. He was certainly as good a man as any of them, if not better. If only he could contrive to work up a practice among the wealthy, fashionable set in Havre, he would easily earn a hundred thousand francs a year. He made an exact estimate of the profits on which he could depend. He would devote the morning to his rounds. Putting the average very low, he reckoned that ten patients a day, at twenty francs per head, would bring in a yearly income of at least seventy-two thousand, or even seventy-five thousand francs, and this estimate was certainly ridiculously moderate. In the afternoon, in his consulting-room, he would receive on the average another ten patients at ten francs per head, which would bring in another thirty-six thousand francs. There you had a round sum of a hundred and twenty thousand francs. He would have to allow for friends and old patients, whom he could charge only half fees. This would perhaps effect a slight reduction

of the total; on the other hand there would be fees for consultations with other doctors, as well as all the little perquisites, to which his profession entitled him. What could be easier of attainment, with the help of a little intelligent self-advertisement, such as a paragraph, now and then, in the *Figaro* to show that the Faculty in Paris had their eye on him and were watching with interest the astounding cures effected by the modest young physician of Havre? He would be richer than his brother, and not only richer, but famous, and he would have the satisfaction of feeling that he owed his good fortune to no one but himself. He would prove a generous son to his old parents, who would be justifiably proud of his renown. He would never marry. He had no wish to saddle himself for life with one exacting female. But he would choose his mistresses among his prettiest patients. He felt so confident of success that he jumped out of bed as if to achieve it that very moment. He dressed and went out to search the town for suitable accommodation. As he wandered through the streets, he thought to himself how trivial were the causes that determined our actions. At any time in the last three weeks, he could have, and indeed ought to have, formed this resolution, which had now suddenly arisen within him, obviously in consequence of his brother's inheritance. He stopped at every door which had a notice of a fine flat, or a luxurious apartment, to let, scorning all announcements that lacked an embellishing epithet. With a consequential air, he inspected various flats, measuring the height of ceilings and entering in his notebook the disposition of rooms, passages and doors. He stated that he was a doctor and entertained on a large scale. He insisted on a wide, well-kept staircase, and refused in any case to consider anything higher than the first floor. After noting seven or eight addresses and scribbling down hundreds of details, he returned home, a quarter of an hour late for luncheon.

As soon as he entered the hall he heard the clatter of plates. Then the family had begun luncheon without him. He wondered why. Such punctuality was unusual. Always

rather ready to take offence, he felt hurt and injured. When he entered the dining-room, his father exclaimed:

"Hurry up, Pierre, confound you. You know we have to be at the lawyer's by two. This is not a day for dawdling."

After kissing his mother and shaking hands with his father and brother, Pierre took his seat without a word. From the dish in the middle of the table, he helped himself to the one remaining cutlet. It was cold and dry, and, no doubt, the worst one of all. He felt that it might at least have been kept hot for him in the oven. There was no need for his people to lose their heads so completely as quite to forget their other son, their first born. The conversation, which his arrival had interrupted, was resumed.

"If I were you, Jean," said his mother, "this is what I should do. I should at once set up a handsome establishment, so as to strike the eye. I should go into society, and I should take up riding, and I should select one or two interesting cases to defend, and make a favourable impression at the law courts. I should aim at being a kind of amateur barrister, very much in request. By the mercy of Providence, you are secure from necessity, and if you do decide to follow a profession, it is merely because you do not wish your studies to be thrown away, and because no man ought to be without an occupation."

Old Roland, who was peeling a pear, exclaimed:

"By Jove, if I were in your shoes, I should buy a good boat, something on the lines of the pilot-cutter, and I'd sail it all the way to Senegal."

Next Pierre delivered his opinion. After all, it was not a man's fortune that determined his moral and intellectual worth. In the case of a mediocrity, private means had a demoralising effect, though they constituted a powerful lever in the hands of a strong man. But strong men were rare. If Jean had really exceptional gifts, now that he was relieved from pecuniary cares, he could prove his mettle. But he would have to work a hundred times harder than in ordinary circumstances. It was no longer a question of pleading on behalf of, or against, the widow and orphan, and pocketing

his fees, whether he won or lost his case, but of becoming an eminent lawyer, a legal luminary.

"If I had money," he concluded, "I should spend all my time cutting up corpses."

Old Roland shrugged his shoulders.

"Tra la la! It's best to take it easy. We're men, not beasts of burden. If you are born poor, you have to work and make the best of it. But if a man has private means, by Jove, he must be a fool to slave his soul out."

"Tastes differ," replied Pierre scornfully. "There is nothing in the world that I respect, except learning and intelligence. The rest is negligible."

Madame Roland, who always tried to act as buffer in the constant clashes between father and son, changed the subject, and began to talk of a murder, which had been committed the previous week at Bolbec-Nointot. Every mind was at once occupied with the circumstances attending the deed, and attracted by the alluring horror, the captivating mystery, the strange and universal fascination, which all crimes, even the most sordid, vile, and revolting, possess for human curiosity.

From time to time, however, Roland pulled out his watch.

"Come," he said, "we ought to be going."

"It's not one o'clock yet," replied Pierre with a sneer. "Really, it was hardly worth while making me eat my cutlet cold."

"Are you coming with us to the lawyer?" asked his mother.

"No. Why should I?" he answered sharply. "My presence is quite superfluous."

Jean held his peace as if it were no concern of his. While the Bolbec murder was under discussion, he had, as a lawyer, aired his opinions and views on crimes and criminals. He now relapsed into silence, but the brightness of his eyes, the heightened colour in his cheeks, and even the glossiness of his beard, seemed to testify to his happiness.

As soon as his family had left the house and Pierre was alone again, he resumed the morning's inspection of suitable

flats. After two or three hours spent in climbing up and down stairs, he discovered at last, on the Boulevard François Ier, a charming flat, a large entresol, with two doors opening on to different streets, two reception rooms, an attractive round dining-room with a view of the sea, and a conservatory, where his patients could walk up and down among the flowers, while awaiting their turn. He was on the point of taking it, when the rent, which was three thousand francs, made him postpone his decision. The first quarter was payable in advance, and he had nothing, not a penny, of his own. The interest on his father's small capital amounted to a bare eight thousand francs, and Pierre reproached himself for having so often caused his parents embarrassment by his long hesitation in choosing a profession and his repeated changes from one career to another. Accordingly he left the flat, after promising a reply within two days. It occurred to him that as soon as his brother was in possession of his inheritance, he might ask him to advance him the first quarter, or even the first two quarters, of the rent, a sum of fifteen hundred francs.

"I shall not need the loan for more than a few months," he reflected. "I may even be able to pay it back before the end of the year. In any case, it's a simple matter. He will be only too glad to do this for me."

As it was barely four o'clock and he had nothing whatever to do, he turned into the public gardens and seated himself on one of the benches. He sat on and on, with his mind a blank, his eyes on the ground, overwhelmed with lassitude, which developed into acute depression. Yet he had spent all the precedings days, since his homecoming, in precisely the same way, without suffering so severely from the emptiness of his existence and his own inertness. How had he got through the hours between rising and bedtime? He had idled on the quay at high tide, idled about the streets, idled in the cafés, idled at Marowsko's, idled everywhere. And now, all of a sudden, this existence, which he had hitherto found tolerable, had become odious and unendurable. If he had had any money, he would have hired a carriage and

gone for a long drive out into the country, along the boundaries of farms, shaded with oaks and elms. But he had to think twice before buying a glass of beer or a postage stamp. He could not afford to indulge in such whims. He suddenly thought how hard it was at thirty and over, to be reduced to asking one's mother, with a blush, for an occasional louis. Prodding the ground with his stick, he muttered:

"Jove! if only I had money!"

Again the thought of his brother's inheritance stung him like a wasp. But he dismissed it impatiently, refusing to yield to his jealous propensities. Around him some children, with long fair hair, were playing in the dust of the garden paths. With a very solemn air of deep concentration, they were making little heaps of sand and then stamping them flat. Pierre was experiencing one of those gloomy days, when a man looks into every cranny of his soul and shakes out all the creases.

"Our labours," he mused, "are like the doings of those youngsters."

And he wondered if, after all, it were not the wisest course in life to beget two or three of these little, useless creatures, and watch them grow up with complacent curiosity. A desire for marriage drifted across his mind. A married man is no longer so forlorn, for he has a companion; in hours of trouble and doubt he at least hears a fellow-creature moving near him, and when in pain, it is always something to be able to talk to a woman familiarly. He began to consider the subject of women, of whom he knew very little. In the Latin Quarter, his experiences had been confined to affairs of a fortnight's duration, which were broken off when the monthly allowance was exhausted, and resumed or replaced on the arrival of the next remittance. Yet surely there existed admirable women, very gentle and consoling. There was his mother. In her was vested all the significance, all the charm, of his father's house. How he wished he knew a woman, a true woman! He sprang to his feet with the idea of calling on Madame Rosémilly. But he sat down

again immediately. He could not bear her. Why was it? Because she had too large a share of sordid commonsense. Besides, it was obvious that she preferred Jean. Although he did not admit it to himself in so many words, this preference of hers for Jean largely accounted for his contempt for the widow's intelligence. Although he was fond of his brother, he could not help feeling that he was rather a mediocrity, compared to himself.

He could not, however, remain where he was till nightfall. As on the previous evening, he wondered drearily what to do next. His soul now cried out for sympathy, for love, for consolation. Yet why this need of consolation? He could not explain it, but he was passing through one of those hours of weakness and despondency when the heart of man requires, that very instant, a woman's presence, a woman's caress, the touch of her hand, the rustle of her gown, a tender glance from blue eyes or black. Then he remembered a certain little waitress in a wineshop, whom he had accompanied home one night and seen again at intervals. He rose from his bench, intending to have a glass of beer in this girl's company. What would they talk about? Nothing of any consequence. But no matter. He would hold her hand for a few moments. She appeared to have a liking for him. He wondered why he did not look her up more frequently. He found her dozing in a chair in the almost empty bar. Three customers sat smoking their pipes, with their elbows on the oaken tables. The cashier was reading a novel, while the proprietor, in his shirt sleeves, was fast asleep on a bench. As soon as she saw him, the girl jumped up with alacrity and went to meet him.

"Good afternoon. How are you?"

"All right, thanks. And you?"

"Quite well, thank you."

"You don't often favour us."

"No. I have very little spare time. I'm a doctor, you know."

"Dear me, you never told me. I wish I had known. I wasn't feeling well last week and I would have consulted you. What are you going to have?"

"A glass of beer. And you?"

"The same, as you're so kind."

She slipped into the informality, which his offer of refreshment seemed tacitly to invite. They sat down opposite each other and began talking. From time to time she took his hand with the easy familiarity of a young woman whose caresses can be bought. With a seductive glance at him she asked:

"Why don't you come here oftener? I'm very fond of you, my dear."

But he was tired of her already, and saw her as she was, stupid, coarse, blatantly plebeian. Women, he reflected, should appear to us in dreams, or with the glamour of luxury to sublimate their vulgarity.

"You passed here the other morning," she said, "with a handsome, fair-haired man with a big beard. Was that your brother?"

"Yes, my brother."

"He's jolly good-looking."

"You think so?"

"Yes, rather. And he looks as if he enjoyed life, too."

What strange impulse prompted him to tell this barmaid the story of Jean's inheritance? Why did this fact, which he thrust from him the moment he was alone, which he repulsed because of the havoc it wrought within his soul, spring to his lips that moment. Why did he suffer it to escape them, as if he felt constrained again to unburden, in the presence of another, his swelling heart of its bitterness? Crossing his legs he said:

"He is a lucky fellow, that brother of mine. He has just come in for twenty thousand francs a year."

She opened her avaricious blue eyes very wide.

"Really! And who left him that? His grandmother, or an aunt?"

"No, an old friend of my parents."

"Just a friend? You don't say so. And didn't he leave you anything?"

" No. I knew him very slightly."

She thought for a few moments. Then, with a curious smile upon her lips :

" Well, your brother is lucky to have friends like that. It's not surprising that he is so little like you."

He longed to box her ears, he hardly knew why.

" What do you mean by that? " he asked stiffly.

She put on a look of innocent stupidity.

" Nothing, of course. I only meant that he was luckier than you."

He threw a franc on the table and left the café. But he was haunted by the phrase :

" It's not surprising that he is so little like you."

What hint, what meaning, underlay these words? They certainly implied something malicious, spiteful, insulting. Yes, that girl must have believed that Jean was Maréchal's son. The emotion he felt at the idea of such a suspicion cast upon his mother, was so violent that he stood still and looked about him for some place where he could sit down. There was another café facing him. He entered, took a chair and ordered a glass of beer. He felt his heart beating, and he was shuddering all over.

Suddenly he remembered the remark Marowsko had made the previous evening :

" It will produce a bad impression."

Had he been struck with the same idea, the same suspicion, as that baggage? Bending over his glass, he watched the white froth bubbling and dissolving.

" How could anyone believe such a thing? " he wondered.

The reasons, which might give rise to this vile doubt, now presented themselves to him one by one, lucid, convincing, exasperating. What more simple and natural, than that an old bachelor, without heirs, should leave his fortune to his friend's two sons? But for him to bequeath his whole estate to only one of the two, might well make people wonder, whisper, and, eventually, smile. How could Maréchal have overlooked this possibility? How had it escaped his father's notice? How had his mother failed to realise it? They had

been too happy at this unexpected access of wealth for such an idea to cross their minds. Besides, how should honest people such as they dream of such baseness? The world, however, neighbours, tradesmen, acquaintances, would they not continue to repeat this infamous slander, to enjoy it, revel in it, to laugh at his father and despise his mother? The truth of the barmaid's remark, that Jean was fair while he himself was dark, that they resembled each other neither in face, build, bearing nor disposition, would now be plain to every eye and every mind. Whenever mention was made of one of Roland's sons people would say:

"Which do you mean? The real son or the other one?"

He rose with the intention of warning his brother, of putting him on his guard against this appalling danger that threatened his mother's honour. But what would Jean do? His simplest course, no doubt, was to refuse this inheritance, which would then go to the poor, and to tell any friends and acquaintances, who had heard of the legacy, that the will contained clauses and conditions, which would make Jean not a beneficiary but merely a trustee. As he made his way home he reflected that he would have to see his brother alone; he could not broach such a subject in his parents' presence.

As soon as he reached the door he was met by a hubbub of talk and laughter, proceeding from the drawing-room. On entering the house, he recognised the voices of Madame Rosémilly and Captain Beausire, whom his father had brought home and kept to dinner to celebrate the good news. Vermouth and absinthe had been handed round to give everyone an appetite, and the whole party was in the best of spirits. Captain Beausire, a short man with a roundness of figure due to much rolling over the deep, with ideas that also seemed round, like pebbles on a beach, and a deep, gurgling, guttural laugh, held that life was an excellent thing and ought to be enjoyed to the full. He and old Roland were pledging each other, while Jean at that moment approached the ladies with another two glasses filled to the brim. Madame Rosémilly was about to refuse, when Captain

Beausire, who had been a friend of her late husband's, protested:

"Come, come, Madame Rosémilly, *bis repetita placent*, as we say. Two vermouths will do no harm. Since I left the sea, you know, I always give myself a little artificial rolling before dinner. I add a little pitching with my coffee, and there I have a high sea which lasts me the rest of the evening. I never let it come to a storm, never, never, never. I'm too much afraid of shipwreck."

Old Roland, his face already flushed and his sight clouded with absinthe, laughed at the jokes of the old salt, who pandered to his mania for the sea. He had the typical shopkeeper's belly, a vast and predominant corporation, which seemed to have absorbed every other part of his anatomy. It was one of those flabby bellies, frequently seen in men of sedentary occupation, who no longer possess thighs, chests, arms, or necks, long contact with their chair bottoms having massed all their tissues in the selfsame area. Beausire, on the other hand, though short and stout, seemed as full as an egg and as hard as a bullet.

Madame Roland had not yet finished her first glass. Rosy with happiness, she gazed with shining eyes at her son Jean, who was at last giving rein to his delight. The matter was settled. The documents were signed. He had twenty thousand francs a year. The ring of his laughter, the resonant voice in which he now spoke, his way of looking at people, his brisker manners, his increasing assurance, revealed the poise that money bestows upon a man.

Dinner was announced. As old Roland was offering his arm to Madame Rosémilly, his wife interposed:

"No, no, Father, this is Jean's day."

The table displayed an unwonted luxury. Jean sat in his father's place, and in front of him arose a huge, beribboned bouquet, a real bouquet of ceremony, like a flag-decked dome. It was flanked by four dessert dishes, the first containing a pyramid of magnificent peaches, the second a monumental cake, a pastry cathedral, bursting with whipped cream and decorated with sugar flowers; the third, slices of

pineapple swimming in transparent syrup, the fourth, an unprecedented luxury in the shape of black grapes from the south.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Pierre as he sat down, "we're celebrating the accession of Jean the Rich."

Madeira was brought round with the soup, and already everyone was talking at the same time. Beausire began to tell of a banquet at St. Domingo, given by a negro general, at which he had been present. Old Roland listened to him, while endeavouring to interpolate a story of another dinner, given by a friend of his at Meudon, in consequence of which all the guests had been ill for a fortnight. Madame Rosémilly, Jean, and his mother were planning an excursion to St. Jouin for luncheon, from which they expected the utmost enjoyment. Pierre in the meantime was regretting that he had not dined by himself in some alehouse down by the sea, and escaped this exasperating noise, laughter and jubilation. He wondered how, after all this, he should set about communicating to his brother his own apprehensions and how he should persuade him to renounce this fortune, which he had now accepted and begun to enjoy in anticipation, and which had already gone to his head. It would be hard on him, but it could not be avoided. He could not hesitate when their mother's reputation was at stake. The advent of an enormous bass turned Roland's thoughts to anecdotes of fishing. Beausire spun some amazing yarns about fishing in the Gaboon, off Sainte-Marie in Madagascar, and especially off the coasts of China and Japan, where the fish had queer faces like the natives. He described the appearance of these fish, their golden, goggle eyes, their red and blue bellies, their curious, fanlike fins, their crescent-shaped tails, and he gave such a comical imitation of their physiognomy that his audience laughed till they cried.

Pierre, alone, muttered sarcastically:

"No wonder people say that the Normans are the Gascons of the North."

After the fish came a vol-au-vent. Then followed roast chicken, salad, French beans, and a Pithiviers lark pie.

Madame Rosémilly's maid helped to wait. The general hilarity increased with each glass of wine. When the first champagne cork popped, old Roland, who was greatly excited, imitated the noise with his mouth, exclaiming:

"I prefer that sound to a pistol shot."

Pierre, whose irritation was steadily rising, replied with a sneer:

"At the same time the champagne cork may do you more harm."

Roland, who was raising his brimming glass to his lips, set it down untasted.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

For some time past he had been complaining of his health, of feelings of oppression, giddiness, constant discomfort, for which he could not account.

"Well," replied the doctor, "the bullet might easily miss you. But the wine can't help finding its way to your stomach."

"And then?"

"And then it burns the linings, disorganises the circulation and paves the way for apoplexy, to which all men of your type are liable."

The intoxication, which had been overtaking the old man, seemed suddenly dispersed like smoke before the wind. He fixed his eyes anxiously on his son, trying to make out if he had spoken jestingly. But Beausire exclaimed:

"Oh, these damned doctors! They are all alike. You mustn't drink, you mustn't eat, you mustn't philander, you mustn't kick up your heels. All that plays the deuce with the little constitution. Well, sir, personally I have been guilty of all these things in every quarter of the globe, wherever I could, and whenever I could, and I'm none the worse for it."

"In the first place, Captain," Pierre replied acidly, "you are a stronger man than my father. And then, all self-indulgent people talk like you, till the time when . . . and not one of them comes back the next day to tell their sensible medical advisor that he was right. When I see my father

doing whatever is worst and most dangerous for him, it is very natural that I should warn him. I should be a bad son if I neglected to do so."

Madame Roland intervened in distress:

"Why, Pierre, what is the matter with you? It can't hurt him once in a way. Remember what an occasion it is for him, and for all of us. You are spoiling his pleasure and upsetting everyone. It's horrid of you to behave like this."

Pierre shrugged his shoulders.

"He can do as he likes, I've warned him."

His father, however, left his wine untouched. He sat gazing at his glass, his brimming glass, of clear, sparkling wine, while its volatile and exhilarating soul escaped in little bubbles, rising from the bottom, thick and fast, to evaporate on the surface. He eyed it distrustfully, like a fox who has found a dead hen and suspects a trap.

"Do you really think it would do me much harm?" he asked Pierre timidly.

Pierre felt a pang of remorse and blamed himself for venting his ill-humour on his companions.

"No, not this once. Have your glass of wine. But do not exceed, and do not make a habit of it."

At this old Roland took up his glass, but did not at first venture to put it to his lips. He gazed at it ruefully, fear struggling with desire. Then he sniffed it, tasted it, and drank it in little sips, savouring it, his heart full of apprehension, weakness and greed, mingled with regrets which seized him, when the last drop had vanished.

Suddenly Pierre met Madame Rosémilly's blue eyes, which, clear, hard and penetrating, were fixed on him. He felt, he fathomed, he divined, the frank contempt which animated her glance, the indignant reproach directed at him by this little woman with her simple, honest mind. Her look said to him:

"You're jealous, you are. How shameful!"

He bent his head and went on with his dinner. He did not feel hungry and nothing was to his taste. He was aching

to be gone, aching to escape from these people around him, and not to have to listen to their chatter, jokes and laughter. In the meantime, old Roland, again somewhat fuddled, and already forgetting his son's injunctions, kept stealing tender, sidelong glances at a bottle of champagne which was standing almost full at his elbow. For fear of another reprimand, he did not venture to touch it, and he tried to think of some means, some trick, which would enable him to seize it without drawing Pierre's reproaches upon himself. A very simple expedient suggested itself. With an air of unconcern he took the bottle, and, holding it by the base, stretched across the table, refilled first Pierre's empty glass, then made the round of all the other glasses, until he came to his own, when he began to talk very loudly, and if he poured himself out a drop or two anyone would have sworn that he did so quite inadvertently. But as a matter of fact no one paid any attention.

Without realising it, Pierre was absorbing a large quantity of alcohol. With his nerves on edge, he kept on drinking, mechanically raising to his lips the tall, slender glass, in which the bubbles winked in the clear sparkling wine. Very slowly he let the liquid trickle into his mouth, so as to feel the sugary effervescence tingling on his tongue. Gradually a genial glow pervaded his whole frame. Starting from the diaphragm, which seemed to be its focus, it reached his chest, suffused his limbs, and spread throughout his body, like a warm healing flood bringing with it happiness. He felt better, less irritable, less peevish. He wavered in his determination to speak to his brother that very evening, not because he had any intention of relinquishing his purpose, but because he was reluctant to destroy so soon his own sense of well-being.

Beausire rose to propose Jean's health. After bowing to everyone he began :

" Fair ladies and noble lords,

" We have met this evening to celebrate a happy event which has befallen one of our friends. It used to be said that Fortune was blind. My own theory is that she was

merely short-sighted or ill-natured, and that she has recently bought a serviceable pair of binoculars, which have enabled her to single out, in the port of Havre, the son of our worthy comrade, Roland, Captain of the *Pearl*."

The speech was received with cheering and clapping, and old Roland rose to reply. After coughing to clear his throat, which felt choked, while his tongue seemed a trifle heavy, he blurted out:

"Thank you, Captain, thank you, on behalf of my son and myself. I shall never forget your conduct on this occasion. Here's luck to you."

He could think of nothing more to say, and, with his eyes full of tears, he resumed his seat. Jean, who was laughing, now addressed the table.

"It is really my business to thank these devoted friends, these excellent friends," he said, with a glance at Madame Rosémilly, "who have given me to-day such a touching proof of their affection. I cannot express my gratitude to them in words. But I will prove it to them to-morrow, and always, every minute of my life. For our friendship is no ephemeral thing."

His mother, who was deeply moved, whispered:

"That was charming, my dear."

"Now, then, Madame Rosémilly," broke in Beausire, "you must speak for the ladies."

She raised her glass and said in a pleasant voice, tinged with melancholy:

"I should like to drink to the memory of Monsieur Maréchal."

There followed a brief lull, a few moments of becoming gravity, such as succeeds a prayer. Beausire, who had a ready tongue, remarked:

"It takes a woman to show such delicate feeling."

He turned to Roland.

"By the way, who on earth was this man Maréchal? You must have been very intimate with him."

Maudlin with intoxication, the old man began to weep.

"He was a brother to me," he whimpered. "There are

none like him nowadays. . . . We were never apart. . . . He dined with us every evening. . . . He used to take us to the theatre for a treat. . . . I can't tell you. . . . I can't tell you . . . such a friend . . . such a loyal friend . . . wasn't he, Louise?"

"Yes," she answered with simplicity, "he was a faithful friend."

Pierre looked at his father and mother, but the subject was dropped and he returned to his wine. He had no recollection whatever of the latter part of the evening. Coffee and liqueurs had followed, and there had been much laughing and joking. About midnight, with muddled brain and heavy head, he had gone to bed, and slept like a log till nine the next morning.

IV

His slumbers, steeped in Chartreuse and champagne, had certainly soothed and mollified him, for he awoke the next morning in a highly charitable frame of mind. While he was dressing, he reconsidered, weighed, and analysed his emotions of the previous evening, and endeavoured to differentiate very clearly and thoroughly between the real, secret, personal causes and the external causes. It was certainly possible that that barmaid, on learning that of Roland's two sons one only had inherited a stranger's estate, had conceived this vile suspicion, characteristic of a polluted mind. It was a fact that these creatures always entertained similar suspicions, for which there was no shadow of justification, on the subject of every respectable woman. They could hardly open their mouths without slandering, calumniating, traducing all the women whom they felt to be above reproach. Whenever someone was mentioned to them as immaculate, they were as indignant as if an insult had been offered them.

"That's all very well, but I know all about your married women. A nice lot they are! They have more lovers than we have. But they hush them up, because they are hypocrites. A nice lot they are!"

At any other juncture he would certainly not have understood her; he would never even have dreamt of the possibility of such aspersions being cast upon his poor mother, who was so good, so simple, so worthy. But his soul was troubled by the leaven of jealousy, which was working within him. His overheated mind, subconsciously on the

alert for anything detrimental to his brother's interests, had perhaps actually attributed to this waitress base ideas of which she was innocent. It was possible that his imagination alone, his unruly imagination, which was always evading his control, and roaming free, audacious, bold and subtle, through the infinite realms of thought, returning at times with shameful and forbidden spoils, which it sequestered like stolen booty in the unfathomable recesses of his soul—it was possible that this imagination of his was alone responsible for creating, for begetting, this horrible surmise. His heart, he knew, his own heart had its secrets from him. Was it that his wounded heart had seen in this abominable doubt the means of depriving his brother of the inheritance which it grudged him? He now suspected himself and examined the secret corners of his mind, as the devout examine their conscience. Though her intelligence was limited, Madame Rosémilly had all a woman's tact, intuition, penetration. Yet this idea had never occurred to her, since, in perfect good faith, she had drunk to Maréchal's memory, which she would not have done, had the faintest suspicion crossed her mind. He now felt convinced that his unconscious mortification at the fortune that had fallen to his brother's lot, coupled no doubt with his religious devotion to his mother, had inflamed sensibilities, in themselves filial and becoming, but exaggerated. As he reached this conclusion he felt as happy as if he had performed some virtuous act, and he resolved to make himself pleasant to everyone, beginning with his father, whose enthusiasms, unintelligent assertions, commonplace ideas and undisguised mediocrity jarred on him unceasingly. He took care to be in time for luncheon, and entertained the whole family with his wit and gaiety.

His mother was enchanted.

"Dear Pierre," she said, "you have no idea how clever and amusing you can be when you choose."

He conversed, dropped epigrams, and made them all laugh with his amusing mimicry of their friends. He took Beausire for target, and aimed a discreet hit or two at

Madam Rosémilly, but without being too unkind. As he looked at his brother, he thought to himself :

" Why don't you stand up for her, you duffer. You may be rich, but I can always cut you out when I like."

As they were having coffee, he said to his father :

" Are you going out in the *Pearl* to-day? "

" No, my boy."

" Can I have her and Jean-Bart? "

" Yes, of course, as long as you like."

Pierre bought a good cigar at the first tobacconist he came to, and strode gaily down to the harbour. He looked at the clear and radiant sky, washed by the sea breeze to a cool, ethereal blue. Papagris, the sailor, was dozing in the bottom of the boat, which he had orders to have ready every day at noon, unless his master had been out fishing in the morning.

" Just the two of us, skipper," said Pierre. He clambered down the iron ladder by the side of the quay and jumped into the boat.

" What's the wind? "

" Still off shore, M'sieur Pierre. We shall get a good breeze outside."

" Well, Jean-Bart, let us be off."

They hoisted the foresail, and weighed anchor. As soon as she was free, the boat began to glide slowly over the smooth water of the harbour towards the jetty. A faint breath of air, issuing from the streets, caught the top of the sail so gently that it could not be felt, and the *Pearl* seemed animated with life of her own, that life that ships possess, derived from some mysterious force concealed within. Pierre held the tiller. With his cigar between his teeth, his legs stretched out on the thwart, his eyes half-closed in the dazzling sunlight, he watched the thick, tarred piles of the breakwater slip past him. As they gained the open sea, on rounding the point of the north jetty which had been sheltering them, a cooler breeze stole, like a somewhat chill caress, over Pierre's face and hands. It entered his lungs, which, with a deep sigh, expanded to inhale it, and it filled the brown, bellying sail, making the *Pearl* heel

over and move more briskly. Jean-Bart hoisted the jib; its triangular shape, when filled with the wind, resembled the wing of a bird. Then, reaching the stern in a couple of strides, he released the sternsail, which was lashed to its mast. The boat heeled sharply over, and went racing along at full speed with the soft swish of the water rushing past her side. Her bow cut through the sea, like a coulter gone mad, throwing up a wave which, plastic, white with foam, surged and fell like the heavy brown furrows of ploughed earth. As she met each of the quick, short waves, she quivered all over from the end of her jib-boom to the tiller in Pierre's hand. Whenever the wind freshened for a few moments, the ripples lapped against the gunwale as if they would pour into the boat. A collier from Liverpool lay at anchor waiting for the tide. They passed astern of her, then inspected, one by one, all the craft lying in the roadstead. After this they sailed farther out to watch the panorama of the coast unroll.

Pierre spent three happy, tranquil, peaceful hours roaming the restless deep, guiding, like some winged creature, swift and docile, this thing of wood and canvas, which came and went at his pleasure, under the pressure of his fingers. Idly dreaming, as a man dreams on horseback, or on the deck of a steamer, he mused upon his future, which was to be a brilliant one, and of the delights of an intelligently ordered existence. The very next day he would ask his brother to lend him fifteen hundred francs, for three months, to enable him to take up his quarters at once in that attractive flat on the Boulevard François I.

"There's a fog coming, M'sieu Pierre," the sailor suddenly informed him. "Better go in."

Pierre raised his eyes, and saw to the north a grey shadow, dense yet airy, blotting out the sky and covering the sea, speeding towards them like a cloud dropped from the firmament. He wore round, and, with the wind behind her, the boat raced towards the jetty, pursued by the swiftly moving fog, which gained upon her. When it reached the *Pearl*, it smothered her in its impalpable folds. A cold shiver ran

over Pierre's limbs, while the dank, smoky odour, peculiar to sea fogs, made him close his mouth to keep out the taste of that clammy, icy cloud. By the time the boat had reached her usual anchorage in the harbour, the whole town was blanketed in a fine mist, which, without falling, soaked like rain, and diffused itself over streets and houses like a running river. With feet and hands frozen, Pierre hurried home and threw himself on his bed for a nap before dinner.

As he entered the dining-room he heard his mother say to Jean:

"The conservatory will be enchanting. We will put plants there. You'll see. I'll undertake to look after them and attend to their renewal. When you give parties, it will be like a peep into fairyland."

"What are you talking about?" asked the doctor.

"A charming flat I have just taken for your brother. A real find! An entresol with two doors opening into different streets. It has two drawing-rooms, a conservatory, and a little round dining-room, just the thing for a bachelor."

Pierre turned pale. His heart contracted with rage.

"Whereabouts is this flat of yours?"

"Boulevard François I."

His fears were confirmed, and he sat down so utterly disgusted that he could hardly refrain from exclaiming:

"This is really the last straw. Is there to be nothing to be left for anyone else?"

Ecstatically, his mother rambled on:

"And just think, I got it for two thousand eight hundred francs. The rent asked was three thousand, but by taking it on a lease for three, six, or nine years, I obtained a reduction of two hundred francs. It will suit your brother down to the ground. All that a lawyer needs is a handsome residence and his fortune is made. Clients are attracted and impressed and retained. It inspires them with respect, and gives them to understand that a man with an establishment like that demands a high fee for his eloquence."

She was silent for a moment, then resumed:

"We shall have to look out for something similar for you,

on a much more modest scale of course, as you have no private means, but still something quite attractive, too. I assure you it would be a great help to you in your career."

"I," said Pierre scornfully, "I shall make my way by work and scientific knowledge."

"Quite so," his mother persisted, "but, believe me, an attractive house is a great asset, too."

Half-way through dinner, Pierre asked abruptly:

"How did you make the acquaintance of that man Maréchal?"

Old Roland looked up and searched his memory.

"Why, I hardly remember. It's so long ago. Ah, yes, now I have it. It was your mother who made his acquaintance in the shop, wasn't it, Louise? He had come to order something or other. After that he often came. He was a customer first, before he became a friend."

Pierre, who was eating kidney beans and impaling them, one by one, on the prongs of his fork, continued:

"About what time was it that you first met him?"

Again Roland considered, but he could remember nothing more and referred the question to his wife.

"Come, Louise, what year was it? You with your good memory can't have forgotten. Let me see. It must have been in 'fifty-five or 'fifty-six. Do try to remember. You are more likely to know than I am."

She took a little time to reflect; then in a calm, unhesitating voice:

"It was in 'fifty-eight, my dear. Pierre was just three. I know I'm right, because that was the year the child had scarlet fever, and Maréchal, whom we still knew very slightly, came to the rescue."

"Of course he did. Of course he did," exclaimed Roland. "He was splendid. Your mother was quite worn out, and I was busy in the shop. So he used to go to the chemist to fetch the medicines. Really, he had a heart of gold. And when you were well again, you have no idea how delighted he was and how he hugged you. From that time onwards we were always the greatest friends."

Sudden and violent, like a bullet tearing and rending its way, this thought forced itself into Pierre's soul:

"He knew me first. He was devoted to me. He was so fond of me that he was always kissing me, and I was the cause of his tremendous friendship with my parents. Why, then, did he leave his whole fortune to my brother and nothing to me?"

He asked no more questions, but sat there gloomily, brooding rather than thinking, nursing within him a new feeling of uneasiness, vague as yet, the secret germ of a future ill. Soon after dinner he left the house, and resumed his wanderings about the streets. They were swathed in the fog, which rendered the night oppressive, dark, unwholesome. It was as if some pestilential blight had descended upon the earth. It could be seen drifting past the gas jets, which at times it seemed to extinguish. The pavements were becoming as slippery as on nights of silver frost, and every variety of foul odour issued from the interior of the houses, the stench of cellars, excavations, drains, squalid kitchens, which mingled with the noisome smell of the floating mist. With his hands in his pockets, his back hunched up, Pierre felt no temptation to linger out-of-doors in such cold, and went to see Marowsko.

Under the solitary gas jet, which watched over his slumbers, the old apothecary was having his usual nap. On recognising Pierre, whom he loved with the love of a faithful dog, he shook off his drowsiness and went to fetch a couple of glasses and the bottle of *Groseillette*.

"Well," asked the doctor, "how are you getting on with your liqueur?"

The Pole informed him that four of the principal cafés in the town had agreed to keep it on sale, and that the *Phare de la Côte* and the *Semaphore Havrais* had agreed to advertise it, in exchange for certain pharmaceutical products, placed at the disposal of the editors.

After a long silence, Marowsko asked if Jean had actually entered into possession of his inheritance, and he followed up the enquiry with two or three vague questions on the

same subject. His sombre affection for Pierre was up in arms against the favouritism of which he was the victim. Pierre felt as if he could hear the old man's thoughts, as if he could discern, discover, read in his averted eyes, in the hesitating tones of his voice, the comments that rose to his lips but which he was too timid, too prudent, too cautious ever to utter. Pierre was now convinced that Marowsko was thinking:

"You ought never to have allowed him to accept the legacy, which will cause evil to be spoken of your mother."

Perhaps he actually believed that Jean was Maréchal's son. Assuredly he believed it. How could he help it, when the thing must appear so probable, so plausible, so obvious? Why, these last three days, had not he himself, he, Pierre, her son, fought with all his strength, with all the ingenuity of which his heart was capable, to hoodwink his intelligence, to crush this appalling suspicion. And suddenly, his yearning to be alone, in order to think, to debate with himself, boldly, ruthlessly, relentlessly, this monstrous possibility, seized him again, with such compelling force that he jumped up, leaving his glass of *Groseillette* untouched, shook hands with his bewildered friend, and plunged again into the foggy night.

"What made that man Maréchal leave his whole fortune to Jean?" he demanded.

It was no longer jealousy that prompted this question, no longer those envious feelings, natural though rather base, which he had found lurking within him, and had struggled against for the last three days, but the dread of some appalling calamity, the dread lest he himself should believe that Jean, his own brother, was that man's son.

No, he did not believe it. How could he even ask himself that impious question? Yet it was imperative that this suspicion, so slight, so preposterous, should be cast out by him utterly and forever. He must have light; he must have certainty. He must have absolute assurance within his heart, for there was no one in the world he loved, except

his mother. Roaming alone through the night, he would subject his memory, his reason, to a vigorous scrutiny, which would reveal the limpid truth. Then he could put it from him and never think of it again. He would be able to go to sleep.

"Well, then," he said to himself, "let us first take the facts. Next, I shall call to mind everything I know about him, all I can remember about his attitude towards my brother and myself. I shall examine every reason that could account for this preference. He knew Jean from birth? True, but he knew me first. If he had loved my mother with silent and concealed affection, surely I should have been his favourite, as it was through me, through my attack of scarlet fever, that he became such an intimate friend of my parents. Logically, it was myself he should have chosen, for whom he should have had a special tenderness, unless he had felt for my brother, as he watched him grow up, an instinctive attraction, a natural predilection."

Desperately straining his memory, his whole mind, his whole intellectual force, he strove to reconstruct, to conjure up and fathom this man, whom all those years in Paris he had been constantly meeting, but who had never touched his heart.

Presently he found that the act of walking, the slight exertion of his limbs, tended to distract his thoughts, disturb their concentration, blunt their perceptions and cloud his memory. In order to subject the past and its mysteries to a scrutiny so rigorous that nothing could escape it, he felt that he must be perfectly still, in some great open space. He decided to go to the jetty and sit there as he had done the other night. As he approached the harbour, he heard from the direction of the open sea, a lugubrious, sinister howl, like the bellowing of a bull, but louder and more continuous. It was the scream of a siren, the cry of a ship lost in the fog. A shudder shook his frame and convulsed his heart, so strongly did it reverberate in his nerves and in his soul, this cry of distress which he thought he himself had uttered. Another voice, a little farther away, gave an

answering wail; then, close at hand, the harbour siren replied with an earsplitting shriek.

With his mind a blank, save for a sense of relief at plunging into this dismal, ululating darkness, Pierre made his way, with long strides, to the jetty. He seated himself at the extreme end, and closed his eyes to shut out the electric beacons, suffused with fog, which render the port accessible by night, and the red gleam of the lighthouse on the south jetty, which, however, was barely visible. He turned half round, and, leaning his elbows on the granite parapet, buried his face in his hands.

Though his lips did not utter the words, his mind kept reiterating "Maréchal . . . Maréchal," as if to summon up, conjure, invoke his shade. In the darkness of his closed eyelids, he suddenly beheld him, such as he had known him, a man of sixty with a pointed beard, which was white, like his bushy eyebrows. He was of medium height, and had a pleasant expression, an unassuming manner, mild grey eyes, and the general aspect of a kind, simple, affectionate soul. He used to call Pierre and Jean his dear boys, never seemed to prefer one to the other, and always asked them both to dinner together.

With the tenacity of a dog casting about for a lost scent, Pierre strove to recall the words, gestures, tones, aspects of this man, who had vanished from the earth, till at last, little by little, he saw him again, just as he had known him, in his flat in the rue Tronchet, when he used to entertain Pierre and his brother at his table. The two elderly maids in his service always referred to them as "Monsieur Pierre and Monsieur Jean," doubtless a habit of long standing. Maréchal would give a hand to each of the young men, the left or the right, indifferently, whichever came first.

"How do you do, my boys?" he said. "Have you heard from your parents? They never write to me."

They talked pleasantly and unconstrainedly on everyday topics. There was nothing remarkable about this man's mind, but it had much urbanity, grace and charm. He was certainly a good friend to them, one of those staunch friends,

who are seldom in our thoughts, because we take their loyalty for granted.

A rush of memories now poured into Pierre's brain. More than once, Maréchal, finding him cast down and divining the cause, had of his own accord pressed on the impecunious student a loan, some hundreds of francs, perhaps, that were forgotten alike by debtor and creditor, and never repaid. This man, then, had never ceased to care for him, to take an interest in him, since he showed solicitude on his behalf. But then—but then—why leave his whole fortune to Jean? No, he had never shown himself more attached, more demonstrative to the younger brother, nor more absorbed in him. Then—then—he must have had some cogent and secret reason for giving everything, absolutely everything, to Jean and nothing whatever to Pierre. The more he thought, the more he lived over again the recent past, the more incredible and surprising this difference, made between his brother and himself, seemed to Pierre. A sharp pang of indescribable anguish pierced his breast and made his heart flutter like a shaken rag. It felt as if the blood were rushing through it unrestrained, causing it to palpitate violently with its tumultuous pulsing. Under his breath, like a man in a nightmare, he muttered:

"I must know, my God, I must know."

He now explored the earlier days, when his parents still lived in Paris. But the faces he sought eluded him, and this served to confuse his recollections. It was Maréchal's face in particular that he was bent on recovering. Was his hair dark, or auburn, or fair? In vain! The countenance of his latter years, when he was old, had obliterated his youthful aspect. Yet Pierre could remember a time when he was slimmer, and had soft hands, and often brought flowers—so often, indeed, that his father was always exclaiming:

"More flowers! My dear fellow, it's ridiculous. You will ruin yourself in roses."

"Never mind," Maréchal would reply, "It gives me pleasure."

Suddenly his mother's voice echoed in his ears so clearly that he seemed to hear her very words.

"Thank you, dear friend," she said with a smile.

She must have uttered them many a time, these three words, for them to have graven themselves so deeply on her son's memory. Maréchal, then, this gentleman, this man of means, their customer, used to bring flowers to the wife of this small tradesman, this humble jeweller. Was he in love with her? How else could he have become the friend of those petty shopkeepers, he, a man of education, and some intellectual refinement? How often he had discussed poets and poetry with Pierre! He did not appraise these writers from an aesthetic point of view, but like a plain man with susceptibilities. Pierre had often smiled at his emotionalism, which he considered a little absurd. To-day he realised that this sentimentalist could never, never have been a friend of his father, who was so utterly matter-of-fact, prosaic, and heavy-witted, to whom the word poetry was synonymous with nonsense. One day, then, Maréchal, young, independent, rich, and highly impressionable, chanced to enter a shop, attracted, perhaps, by the pretty saleswoman. He bought some trinket, came again, entered into conversation, grew day by day more familiar, and, by means of frequent purchases, won the right to take a seat beneath their roof, to smile at the young wife, and to shake hands with the husband. And then, later . . . later . . . good God . . . later!

He had loved and fondled the first child, the jeweller's offspring, until the birth of the second son. Thereafter he had maintained an impenetrable reserve, until his death. But once his tomb was sealed, his body dust, his name struck off the roll of living men, his whole person vanished for ever, once the need for caution, apprehension, secrecy was past, he had bequeathed his whole fortune to the younger boy. Why had he done so? The man was intelligent. He must have realised and foreseen that his act would probably, nay, inevitably, lead to the assumption that the child was his. He was staining a woman's honour. Would he have

done this thing, unless Jean had been his son? That instant, a memory, precise and terrible, flashed across Pierre's soul. Maréchal had been fair, fair like Jean. He called to mind a miniature, which he had seen at home in Paris on the drawing-room mantelpiece, and which had since disappeared. What had become of it? Was it lost or concealed? Oh, if only he could lay hands on it but for a single moment! Perhaps his mother had hidden it away in a secret drawer, where such relics of love are kept. At this thought, his anguish became so acute that he uttered a groan, one of those brief outcries of pain, wrung from the breast by intolerable suffering. And suddenly, as if it had heard and understood, and were answering him, the siren on the jetty gave a shriek close to his ear. Its scream, which was like the howl of some unearthly monster, more reverberating than thunder, a savage and terrifying roar designed to dominate the voices of wind and waves, spread abroad through the darkness brooding over the sea, which was blotted out in mist. Through the fog, from near and far, answering cries rose upon the night, blood-curdling screams from the great sightless steamers. Then once again all was still.

Roused from his nightmare, Pierre had opened his eyes, and was looking about him, surprised to find himself where he was.

"I must be mad," he thought, "to suspect my own mother."

A wave of love, tenderness, remorse, appeal, and desolation flooded his heart. His mother! Knowing her as he did, how could he have doubted her? Surely the life and soul of this simple, pure and loyal woman were clearer than water? How could anyone, who had seen her, and known her, not deem her above suspicion? And it was he, her son, who had doubted her. Oh, if he could have clasped her in his arms that moment, how passionately he would have embraced her and thrown himself at her feet to ask for pardon!

She to have deceived his father, she? . . . His father! . . .

True, he was a worthy man, honest and upright in matters of business, but his spirit had never travelled beyond the bounds of his shop. How could such a woman, once remarkably pretty, as anyone could see, as he was himself aware, endowed with a refined, affectionate, sensitive soul, have accepted as her betrothed, as her husband, a man so different from herself? Why ask? Like other girls, she married the first eligible suitor her parents presented to her. The pair had settled down at once in their shop in the rue Montmartre. Presiding at the counter, sustained by her pride in the new home, by that subtle and sacred sense of common interest, which takes the place of love, and even of affection, in most marriages among Paris shopkeepers, the young wife had devoted all her keen, alert intelligence to the hoped-for prosperity of the business. Thus had her life flowed on, monotonous, smooth, respectable, empty of passion. Empty of passion! Was it possible for a woman never to know love? Could a young and pretty woman, living in Paris, reading novels, thrilling at the spectacle of actresses dying of love on the stage, pass from adolescence to old age, without her heart having been touched, were it but once? He would never believe it of another woman . . . why then should he believe it of his mother? Surely she might have loved, even as other women. Why should she be different, because she happened to be his mother? She had been young; she had known all the romantic feelings which trouble youthful hearts. Cooped up, imprisoned in the shop, by the side of a commonplace husband, who talked of nothing but business, she had doubtless had her dreams of moonlight nights, of travels, of kisses exchanged in the dusk of evening. And then, one day, a man had entered, as lovers did in books, and had talked as lovers talked. She had loved him. Why not, indeed? Because she was his mother? Well, need a man be so blind, so dense, as to reject the evidence, because his mother was concerned? Had she yielded to him? Assuredly, since the man had had no other mistress. Assuredly, since he had remained faithful to her, even when she was old and far away. Assuredly,

since he had left his whole fortune to her son—her son and his.

Pierre sprang to his feet. He was quivering with such rage that he could have committed a murder. His outstretched arm and open hand were aching to strike, to bruise, to crush, to strangle. But whom? Everyone, his father, his brother, the dead man, his mother. He started off home at a run. What did he mean to do?

As he was passing a turret beside the signalling mast, the strident blast of the siren took him full in the face. The shock was so violent that he nearly fell, and he reeled back against the granite parapet. There he sat down, exhausted, shattered, by the uproar. The first steamer to reply seemed close in. It was high tide and she was approaching the entrance. Pierre turned round and saw her port light, obscured by the fog. Between the two jetties, in the diffused radiance of the electric harbour lights, loomed a great black shadow. Behind him, in the raucous tones of an old retired ship's captain, the look-out shouted:

"What ship is that?"

Through the fog came the equally hoarse voice of the pilot on the bridge:

"*Santa Lucia.*"

"Where from?"

"Italy."

"What port?"

"Naples."

Pierre's bewildered eyes seemed to be gazing at the fiery plume of Vesuvius, while, at the foot of the volcano, fireflies danced in the orange groves of Sorrento and Castellamare. How often had he dreamed of these familiar names, until he seemed to know the landscapes. If only he could have set forth that moment, no matter whither, and never have returned, never have written, never have revealed what had become of him! But alas! he must needs go home, back to his father's house, back to his bed!

No, he refused. He would stay where he was till daybreak. He found solace in the noise of the foghorns. He

rose to his feet and began walking up and down, like a ship's officer on watch. A second vessel, huge and mysterious, followed in the wake of the first. It was a British merchantman from India. He watched several more ships arrive, emerging one after the other out of the impenetrable darkness. At last, however, the dankness of the fog proved too much for him, and Pierre made his way back to the town. He was so cold that he dropped into a seaman's tavern for a glass of grog. As the hot, fiery spirits burned his palate and throat, hope revived within him. Perhaps he had been mistaken. He was well aware of his own wrong-headedness. Doubtless he had deceived himself. He had piled up evidence, like someone framing an indictment against an innocent person, whom it is always easy to convict, if it is desired to prove him guilty. After a night's rest he would take quite a different view.

He returned home to bed, and eventually, by an effort of will, went to sleep.

V

PIERRE'S weary body was granted no more than an hour or two of troubled sleep. When he awoke again in the darkness of his warm, airless room, he was conscious, even before his mind was clear, of that painful feeling of oppression, that uneasiness of soul, produced in us by some sorrow on which we have slept. During our repose, the misfortune, of which the shock had merely bruised us the previous evening, seems to have worked its way into our very flesh, wasting it, consuming it, like a fever. Suddenly memory returned to him and he started up in bed.

Deliberately, one by one, he recapitulated all the arguments which had wrung his heart down on the jetty, with the sirens wailing around him. The more he thought, the less he doubted. He felt carried away by his own logic, which was like a strangling hand, dragging its victim towards an intolerable certainty. He was hot and thirsty and his heart was beating rapidly. He got up to open the window and breathe the air. As he did so, he heard through the wall a muffled sound. It was his brother, lapped in slumber and peacefully snoring. So Jean could sleep! No suspicion, no misgivings had crossed his mind. A man, who had known his mother, had left him his whole fortune. He took the money, deeming the gift natural and reasonable. Rich and happy, he had fallen asleep, unconscious that his brother was groaning with anguish and despair. Pierre was seized with wrath against this man, who was so contentedly and unconcernedly snoring. Twenty-four hours earlier, he would have knocked at his brother's door, entered, sat down

by his bedside, and, before Jean had recovered from the bewilderment of his sudden awakening, he would have said to him:

"Jean, you cannot keep this legacy. At any moment it may cause our mother to be suspected and slandered."

But now his lips were sealed. He could not say to Jean that he believed him to be no son of their father. It was now his duty to conceal, to bury within himself, the shameful fact he had discerned, to hide from all eyes the blot he had perceived, which no one else must ever discover, not even his brother, least of all, his brother. He was no longer actuated by a vain respect for popular opinion. He could have wished the whole world to accuse his mother, provided that he himself, he alone, knew her to be innocent. How could he endure to live with her, day after day, thinking, whenever he looked at her, that his brother was born from the embraces of a stranger? Yet how calm and serene she was! How sure of herself she seemed! Was it possible that a woman like her, of pure soul and honest heart, could succumb, carried away by passion, and never, in later years, show any signs of remorse or the prickings of an uneasy conscience?

Ah! Remorse! Remorse! Doubtless at first, in the early days, it had racked her, and then, like everything else, gradually faded. Surely she had wept over her sin, until, little by little, she had almost forgotten it. Was it not common to all women, all, this astounding faculty of forgetting, thanks to which, after the lapse of a few years, they hardly so much as recognised the man to whose kiss they had surrendered their lips, their whole person? The kiss falls like a thunderbolt, love sweeps over like a storm, and then, like the sky, life is calm again, and resumes its normal course. Who will remember a passing cloud?

Pierre could stand his room no longer. This house, his father's house, was crushing him. The roof seemed to be weighing on his head and the walls smothering him. Feeling very thirsty, he lighted his candle and crept down the two flights of stairs to the kitchen for a glass of cold water from

the filter. On his way up with a brimming water-bottle in his hand, he sat down in his nightshirt on the stairs in a draught, and drank straight from the bottle in great gulps, like a man breathless from running. As soon as he ceased to move, he was oppressed by the stillness of the house. Then, one by one, he began to distinguish the smallest sounds. First there was the dining-room clock, which seemed to him to tick more loudly every moment. Then he heard again the sound of snoring, this time the short, harsh, uneasy snoring of age. His father, he presumed. As if it had only that instant occurred to him, he was convulsed by the thought that these two men, father and son, who were snoring beneath the same roof, were nothing to each other. No bond, not the very slenderest, united them, yet neither was aware of it. They conversed affectionately, embraced, shared the same joys and emotions, as if one blood flowed in their veins. Yet two persons, born at opposite ends of the earth, could not be more alien to each other than this father and this son. They believed that they were fond of each other, because a lie had grown up within them, a lie that had created that paternal, that filial affection, a lie impossible to reveal, which no one would ever know except himself, the legitimate son. And yet, and yet, what if he were wrong? How was he to know? Ah! if only there were some similarity, however slight, between his father and Jean, one of those mysterious resemblances, handed down from generation to generation, proving that a whole race has sprung direct from one and the same embrace! So slight a clue would have enabled him, a doctor, to trace it, the formation of the jaw, the curve of the nose, the space between the eyes, the quality of teeth and hair, or, less than that, a gesture, a mannerism, a habit, an inherited taste, any sign sufficiently characteristic to a practised eye. In spite of his mental exertions, he could think of nothing, nothing whatever. But he had never looked carefully, never observed closely. For he had never before had occasion to seek for these minute indications. Still pondering, he rose to return to his room, and slowly climbed the stairs.

At his brother's door he stopped short, his hand outstretched to open it. He felt an irresistible desire to gaze at Jean that moment, to study him, take him off his guard during sleep, when the features are relaxed, the face is in repose, and the distortions of life have disappeared. Thus he might learn the slumbering secret of that countenance, and if any resemblance existed, it could not elude him. But how if Jean woke up? What could he say to him? How explain his visit? He stood there, his fingers clutching the door-handle, while he thought of a pretext, an excuse. Then he remembered that a week ago he had lent his brother a bottle of laudanum to relieve an attack of toothache. He could plead a similar affliction, for which he required his sedative. So he tip-toed into the room, furtively, like a thief. With his mouth half open, Jean lay wrapped in deep, natural sleep. His light-coloured hair and beard made a splash of gold on the white linen. He did not wake up, but stopped snoring. Leaning over him, Pierre scanned his face with eager eyes. No, the young man lying there bore no resemblance to Roland, and for the second time his thoughts turned to that vanished miniature of Maréchal. He must find it. Perhaps, if he could see it, his doubts might be resolved.

Disturbed by his brother's presence or by the candle-light filtering through his closed eyelids, Jean stirred in his sleep. At this, Pierre retreated and tip-toed out again, closing the door gently behind him. He went back to his own room, though he did not return to bed.

Dawn was slow in coming. The dining-room clock struck hour after hour; it had a deep and solemn tone as if the little timepiece had swallowed a cathedral bell. The sounds drifted up the empty staircase, penetrated through walls and doors and died away in the dull ears of the sleepers in their secluded chambers. Pierre began pacing up and down between the bed and window. What should he do with himself? He was too completely overwhelmed to spend the coming day with his family. He felt that he must be alone, at least until the morrow, so that he might think, recover his equanimity, and nerve himself for the everyday

life, which he must needs resume. Well, he would go to Trouville and watch the crowds swarming on the beach. It would distract him, take his mind off his troubles, and give him time to accustom himself to the terrible discovery he had made. At the first glimmer of dawn he washed and dressed. The fog had lifted. It was a glorious day.

As the Trouville boat did not leave the harbour till nine, Pierre reflected that he would have to greet his mother before he set out. He waited till the time when she usually rose, and went downstairs. As he touched her door, his heart throbbed so violently that he had to pause for breath. His hand on the knob was so nerveless and shaky, that it was hardly capable of the slight exertion of turning it in order to enter.

"Who is there?" said his mother's voice in answer to his knock.

"Pierre."

"What do you want?"

"Only to say good-morning. I'm spending the day at Trouville with friends."

"I'm afraid I'm still in bed."

"Never mind, don't bother. My kiss can keep till this evening, when I come back."

He hoped to escape without seeing her, without having to set upon her cheeks the insincere caress from which he shrank with revulsion. His mother, however, replied:

"Just a moment. I'll unfasten the door. Then wait till I get back to bed."

He could hear her bare feet on the polished boards and the sound of the bolt sliding back.

"Come in," she called.

He entered the room. She was sitting up in bed, while beside her, Roland, a silk handkerchief round his head, his face to the wall, lay soundly sleeping. Nothing woke him, short of shaking him till his arm was nearly off. On mornings when he went fishing, the maid, roused at the appointed hour by Papagris, was deputed to drag her master from his invincible slumbers.

As Pierre approached her, he looked at his mother and suddenly felt as if he had never set eyes on her before. She turned her face towards him; he kissed her on both cheeks, and sat down on a low chair.

"Was it yesterday evening that you arranged this excursion?"

"Yes; yesterday evening."

"Will you be back to dinner?"

"I don't know yet. In any case, don't wait for me."

He scanned her features with curiosity and bewilderment. This was his mother, this woman. That face he had beheld from infancy, from the moment his eyes could distinguish anything, that smile, that voice, so familiar, so often heard, suddenly appeared to him new and strange, different from all that he had hitherto deemed them. Yet it was she herself. The smallest details of her face were known to him, but that morning he saw them clearly for the first time. He realised now, that though he loved her, he had never really looked at her. The anxious scrutiny to which he subjected her beloved countenance, revealed to him a different personality, a wholly unknown aspect. As he rose to go, he yielded to the irresistible craving for certainty, which had consumed him since the previous evening.

"By the way, I seem to remember a little portrait of Maréchal, which used to be in the drawing-room."

Was it his imagination, or did she hesitate for a moment?

"Why, yes," she replied.

"What has become of it?"

Again her answer might have been more prompt.

"That miniature . . . dear me . . . I don't quite know. . . . It may be in my writing-table drawer."

"Would you be kind enough to find it?"

"Yes, I'll look for it. Why do you want it?"

"Oh, it's not for myself. I thought it would be the proper thing to give it to Jean. I am sure he would like to have it."

"Yes, you are right. It is a good idea. I will look for it as soon as I'm up."

Pierre left the house.

It was a cloudless day without a breath of air. The people in the streets, tradesmen going to their businesses, clerks to their offices, girls to their shops, had an air of gaiety. Exhilarated by the sunshine, some of them were humming to themselves.

Passengers were already boarding the Trouville steamer. Pierre took a seat on a wooden bench in the stern.

"Was she uneasy at my question about the miniature?" he wondered, "or merely surprised? Has she mislaid it, or has she hidden it? If she has hidden it, what made her do so?"

His mind, working along the same lines as before, from one deduction to another, reached the following conclusion:

This miniature, this portrait of the friend, the lover, had remained in the drawing-room in full view, until one day, before anyone else remarked it, she, the wife and mother, realised that the portrait was like her son. Doubtless she had long been on her guard against this resemblance. Having detected it and watched it develop, she was aware that at any moment others might notice it. One evening she had removed the perilous little portrait, and not daring to destroy it, had hidden it. Pierre now remembered perfectly clearly that it disappeared long ago, long before they left Paris. It had been spirited away, he presumed, when Jean began to grow a beard, which suddenly made him exactly like the fair-haired young man, smiling out of the picture frame. The motion of the boat, which was leaving the harbour, disturbed and scattered his thoughts. He rose and gazed at the sea. Emerging from between the jetties, the little steamer swung round to the left. Puffing, panting, quivering, she proceeded towards the distant coast, which was visible through the morning haze. Here and there the red sail of a fishing boat, lying motionless on the smooth sea, had the look of a great rock rising out of the water. The Seine, flowing down from Rouen, was like a wide arm of the ocean, separating two neighbouring lands. In less than an

hour Trouville was reached, and, as it was bathing time, Pierre wandered down to the beach. From a distance it had the appearance of a strip of garden, bright with brilliant flowers. All over the yellow sands, from the jetty to the *Roches Noires,* parasols of every colour, hats of every shape, gowns of every hue, were grouped in front of the bathing huts, ranged in rows by the edge of the sea, dotted here and there, like great clumps of flowers in a vast meadow. A confused sound of voices, far and near, dispersed upon the limpid air; the shouts, the cries of children bathing, the ringing laughter of women, were blended in a soft continuous murmur, mingling with the imperceptible breeze, and inhaled with it. Wandering among these crowds, Pierre felt more aloof from them, more isolated, more drowned in torturing thoughts, than if he had been thrown into the sea from the deck of a steamer, a hundred leagues from shore. He brushed past them, caught, without attending, a phrase or two, saw, without heeding, men talking to women and women smiling at men. Suddenly, as if he had woken up, he became keenly aware of them and was filled with hatred towards them, because they looked happy and content. In the grip of a new conception, he now skirted group after group and prowled around them. All these multicoloured dresses, covering the sands like a carpet of flowers, these lovely draperies, these gay parasols and sunshades, the artificial elegance of those corsetted figures, all the ingenious devices of fashion, from dainty shoe to amazing hat, the fascination of gesture, voice and smile, in short, the whole gamut of seduction displayed upon that beach, produced upon him the impression of a tremendous efflorescence of feminine perversity. All these elegant women aimed at attracting, seducing and fascinating man. They had adorned themselves for men, for all men, with the exception of the husband,whom it was no longer necessary to captivate; for the lover of to-day, for the lover of to-morrow, for the stranger encountered, observed, or perhaps awaited. And those men, seated beside them, eyes meeting eyes, lips whispering close to lips, challenged them, desired

them, pursued them like a quarry, swift and evasive, although seemingly so near and so accessible. This great beach, then, was nothing but a mart of love, where women sold or gave themselves, some bartering their caresses, while others merely made promises. None of these women had an idea in their heads beyond this provocative offering of their persons, which were already given, already sold, already granted to other men. But it was ever the same, he reflected, all the world over. His mother had done as the others, that was all. As all the others? No. There were exceptions, many, many exceptions. After all, these women he saw around him, wealthy, frivolous, amorous, belonged to the fashionable world of easy morals, or even to the mercenary underworld. On these beaches, trodden by the legion of idlers, the multitude of virtuous women, who remained cloistered in the seclusion of the home, were never to be found.

The rising tide put to flight the first line of loungers. Groups of people were seen clutching their chairs and beating a hasty retreat, before the amber water with its fringe of lacy foam. A horse was harnessed to the bathing boxes to draw them higher up the sands. The promenade was now occupied with a dense, uninterrupted stream of well-dressed crowds, jostling, intermingling, and forming two opposing currents. Irritable, exasperated by contact with them, Pierre plunged into the town. On the outskirts he stopped at a modest wineshop for luncheon. After coffee, he put his feet up on a chair, and, as he had slept but little the previous night, he took a long nap in the shade of a lime tree. Several hours later he roused himself, found that it was time to go back to the boat, and set off, in spite of a sudden and overwhelming feeling of lassitude which had come upon him as he slept. He was now eager to return, eager to learn whether his mother had found Maréchal's miniature. Would she refer to the subject herself, or would he have to remind her? If she waited to be asked a second time, it would be proof that she had some secret reason for not producing it.

Once in his own room, however, he was reluctant to go down to dinner. He was feeling too ill. He had not yet had time to recover from the nausea that assailed him. But he plucked up courage and made his appearance in the dining-room just as his family were sitting down to table. All were looking radiant.

"Well," said Roland, "how goes the shopping? Personally I don't want to see anything until it is all complete."

"Oh, we're getting on," replied his wife. "But it takes a great deal of thinking out to get everything to harmonise. We are much occupied with the question of the furniture."

She and Jean had spent the day visiting furniture dealers and upholsterers. She was in favour of rich, rather pretentious fabrics, which caught the eye. Jean, on the other hand, was bent on something plain and distinguished. Over each set of patterns, both sides repeated their arguments. Madame Roland maintained that it was necessary to impress prospective clients, who, as soon as they entered the waiting-room, should be made to react to the suggestion of wealth. Jean, on the other hand, wished to attract only rich and fashionable litigants and aimed at seducing cultured minds by his own sure and quiet taste. The discussion, which had lasted all day, was resumed with the soup. Roland offered no opinion.

"Personally," he repeated, "I don't want to hear anything about it. I'll see it when it is finished."

Madame Roland appealed to her elder son.

"Well, Pierre, what do you say?"

His nerves were so overwrought that he longed to reply with an oath. But he said, drily, his voice quivering with exasperation:

"As far as I'm concerned, I am entirely of Jean's opinion. Nothing attracts me like simplicity. In questions of taste, simplicity may be compared to honesty in questions of character."

"You must remember," his mother rejoined, "that we live in a commercial town, where good taste is not so common."

"What does that matter?" exclaimed Pierre. "Is that a reason for imitating fools? If my fellow townspeople are stupid and ill-bred, am I bound to follow their example? A woman does not make a slip, just because her neighbours happen to have lovers."

Jean laughed.

"You seem to have borrowed your illustrations from some moralist's maxims."

Pierre made no reply, and his mother and Jean resumed their discussion of materials and easy-chairs.

Pierre looked at his family as he had looked at his mother that morning, before setting out for Trouville. He looked at them like an observant stranger, and he actually felt as if he had been precipitated into an unknown household. His father, especially, was a shock to his sight and mind. That fat, flabby, stupid, complacent man his father, his own father? No, no, Jean had not the slightest resemblance to him. His family! In the last two days, a malign and alien hand, a dead man's hand, had torn and snapped, one by one, all the ties that had bound these four persons to one another. All was ended. All was destroyed. He had no mother now, for he could no longer cherish her, lavish upon her that perfect reverence, tender and pious, that a son's heart demands. He had no brother, for his brother proved to be the son of a stranger. All that remained to him was his father, that gross man, whom, in spite of all his efforts, he could not contrive to love.

"By the way, Mamma," he broke in, "have you found that miniature?"

She opened her eyes in surprise.

"What miniature?"

"The one of Maréchal."

"No, . . . or rather, yes. I haven't found it again, but I think I know where it is."

"What are you talking about?" asked Roland.

"A miniature of Maréchal," Pierre replied, "which used to be in our drawing-room in Paris. I thought Jean might like to have it."

"Yes, yes, of course," exclaimed Roland. "I remember it perfectly. Why, I saw it only last week. Your mother had taken it out of her writing-table, when she was tidying her papers. It was either Thursday or Friday. . . . Don't you remember, Louise? I was shaving and you took it out of the drawer and put it on a chair beside you with a lot of letters, half of which you burnt. Wasn't it strange that you should have been handling that miniature only a day or two before we heard of Jean's legacy? If I believed in presentiments, I should consider that an instance."

"To be sure," Madame Roland calmly replied. "I remember where it is. I'll fetch it presently."

Then she had lied. That very morning she had lied to her son, when he asked her what had become of the miniature.

"I don't quite know," she had said. "It may be in my writing-table."

And she had seen it only a few days before, had touched it, handled it, gazed at it, then hidden it away again in her secret drawer, with some letters, his letters to her. Pierre looked at this mother of his who had lied. He looked at her with the bitter anger of a son, deceived, defrauded in his sacred affections, with the jealousy of a man long hoodwinked, who at last discovers a shameful betrayal. Had he, her son, been the husband of this woman, he would have seized her by the wrists, by the shoulders, or by the hair, and thrown her to the ground, struck her, crushed her, trampled her under foot. But he was powerless. He could neither speak, nor act, nor reveal, nor accuse. He was her son. He had no wrongs to avenge. It was not he who had been betrayed. No wrongs? When his love had been outraged, his filial reverence violated? She owed herself to him immaculate, as all mothers owe themselves to their children. If the fury that inflamed him amounted almost to hatred, it was because he felt that she had sinned against himself even more than against his father. The love between man and woman is a voluntary pact; the one who breaks it is guilty only of disloyalty, but when the woman has become

a mother, her duty is greater, because nature has entrusted a race to her care. If she now succumbs, she is base, unworthy, vile.

"After all," remarked Roland suddenly, stretching out his legs under the table, as he did every evening, when he was discussing his glass of black currant liqueur, "there are worse things than idling through the day if one has a nice little income. I hope Jean will stand us a tip-top dinner now and then. I don't care if I do get indigestion once in a way."

He turned to his wife.

"Do go and find that miniature, my dear, as you have finished your dinner. I should like to have a look at it again myself."

She rose, took up a candle, and left the room. After an absence, which seemd to Pierre prolonged, though it was barely three minutes, she returned smiling, holding by the ring an old-fashioned gilt frame.

"There," she said, "I found it almost at once."

Pierre was the first to stretch out his hand for it. He took it from her, and holding it at arm's length, examined it. Then, fully aware that his mother was watching him, he deliberately raised his eyes to his brother's face to compare it with the miniature. Carried away by passion, he could hardly resist saying:

"Dear me, it's like Jean!"

If he did not venture to utter these perilous words, he showed clearly enough what he was thinking, by the way in which he compared the living countenance with the painted one. They had undeniably certain common characteristics, the same beard, the same forehead, but nothing sufficiently pronounced to warrant the assumption that the pair were father and son. It was more a family likeness, a general similarity, between men of the same blood. But to Pierre, even more convincing than the likeness of the two faces, was his mother's behaviour.

She rose, turned her back, and, with unnatural slowness, pretended to be putting the sugar and the liqueur away in

the cupboard. Evidently she had realised that he knew, or at least suspected.

"Here, let me have a look at it," said Roland.

Pierre handed the miniature to his father, who drew the candle towards him to enable him to see more clearly.

"Poor fellow," he murmured in a sympathetic voice. "To think that this was what he was like when we first knew him. Heavens, how time flies! He really was a fine-looking man, and so affable, too, wasn't he, Louise?"

His wife made no reply, and he continued:

"And even-tempered as well. I never once saw him put out. Well, he's gone. Nothing of him remains . . . except what he has left to Jean. At least, we can vouch for it that he remained until the end a good and faithful friend. Even in death he did not forget us."

Jean now put out his hand for the miniature. After gazing at it for some moments, he said regretfully:

"Personally, I don't recognise him in the least. I can only remember him with white hair."

He returned the likeness to his mother. She gave it a rapid glance, seemingly apprehensive and hastily withdrawn. Then she said in her usual voice:

"It is yours now, my Jean, as you are his heir. We will take it to your new quarters."

On entering the drawing-room she placed the miniature on the mantelpiece beside the clock, where it had formerly stood. Roland filled his pipe, while Pierre and Jean lighted cigarettes. As a rule one brother paced the room as he smoked, while the other reclined in an easy-chair, with his legs crossed. Their father invariably sat astride his chair and spat from a distance into the fireplace. Madame Roland, on a low seat by the little table which bore the lamp, would occupy herself with knitting, embroidery, or marking linen. That evening she was beginning a piece of needlework for Jean's bedroom. It was a difficult and complicated pattern, which, at the beginning, demanded her whole attention. From time to time, however, she looked up from her task

of counting stitches and stole a swift and furtive glance at the dead man's likeness, which was propped up against the clock. His hands behind his back, his cigarette between his lips, Pierre kept taking four or five strides backwards and forwards across the narrow room, and his eyes met his mother's eyes. It was as if they were spying upon each other, as if the battle were joined, and Pierre's heart was wrung with pain, with sharp, unendurable pain. Tortured though he was, he thought to himself with satisfaction:

"How she must be suffering, if she knows that I have guessed her secret!"

Each time he came to the mantelpiece he paused for a few moments to gaze at Maréchal's fresh-coloured countenance in order to draw attention to his obsession. That little portrait, no bigger than the palm of a hand, seemed like some living person, dangerous and malign, who had suddenly intruded upon this house, upon this family. There was a ring at the door. Madame Roland, usually so calm, gave a start, which betrayed to the doctor the disordered condition of her nerves. Then she remarked:

"That must be Madame Rosémilly."

And again her anxious eyes were directed towards the mantelpiece. Pierre understood, or thought he understood, her terror and dismay. Women possess keen sight, nimble wits, and suspicious minds. When their visitor entered and noticed this miniature, which she had never seen before, she might immediately detect its likeness to Jean. And then the whole situation would be clear to her. He was seized with fear, with sudden, abject fear, lest this disgrace should be brought to light. As the door opened, he turned, and, unobserved by his father and brother, pushed the little portrait under the clock. As he once more met his mother's eyes, they seemed to him changed, troubled, and haggard.

"Good-evening," said Madame Rosémilly, "I have dropped in for a cup of tea."

While the others were busily enquiring after her health, Pierre slipped away through the door, which had remained open. When his departure was discovered, everyone was

surprised. Jean, who was afraid that the young widow might be hurt, muttered angrily:

"What a bear he is!"

"Don't be vexed with him," pleaded Madame Roland, "he is not feeling well to-day, and besides, he is tired after his excursion to Trouville."

"That's no excuse for dashing off like a savage," replied Roland.

Madame Rosémilly attempted to explain it away.

"Why, he only took French leave. In society people always slip quietly away, if they want to leave early."

"In society, I daresay," replied Jean. "But it's not the way to treat one's family. Pierre has been behaving like that for the last few days."

VI

THE next week or two proved uneventful. Old Roland spent his time fishing. Jean, with his mother's assistance, was settling into his flat, while Pierre, who was very moody, never appeared except at mealtimes.

"Why the devil do you glower at us, as if you were going to a funeral?" his father asked him one evening. "It's not the first time I've noticed it."

"It's only that I'm terribly conscious of the burden of existence," replied Pierre.

The old fellow did not understand, and said disconsolately:

"Really, it's too bad. Ever since Jean's stroke of luck, nobody seems happy. One would think some misfortune had overtaken us, and that we were mourning for someone."

"Well, so I am," retorted Pierre.

"Indeed? Who is it?"

"Oh, it's someone you never knew, someone I was too fond of."

Roland concluded that Pierre was referring to some love affair, to some light woman, whose favours he had sought.

"A woman, I suppose."

"Yes, a woman."

"Dead?"

"No. Worse than dead. Lost."

"Dear, dear," said Roland.

Although he was surprised by this unexpected confidence made in his wife's presence, and by his son's strange tone of voice, the old man did not pursue the subject. He held that these matters were no third person's concern. Madame

Roland appeared not to have heard. She was looking ill and was very pale. More than once, alarmed at seeing her sink into a chair, as if about to collapse, and at hearing her gasp, as if distressed for breath, her husband had said to her:

"Really, Louise, you are looking very seedy. I am sure you are wearing yourself out helping Jean to get the flat ready. Do take a little rest, confound it! There's no hurry, now that the youngster's rich."

But she shook her head and made no reply. That evening her pallor became so marked that again her husband was struck by it.

"My poor old dear," he said, "you're not at all well. You must take care of yourself."

He turned to his son.

"You see, I suppose, that your mother is not well. Has it occurred to you to examine her?"

"No," replied Pierre. "I had not noticed that there was anything wrong with her."

At this Roland flared up.

"Bless my soul, can't you see what's under your very nose? You call yourself a doctor, and don't even notice when your own mother is ailing. Look at her, just look at her. Why, anyone might snuff out, and this precious doctor would never know."

Madame Roland began to pant for breath, and turned so white that her husband exclaimed:

"She is going to faint."

"No, no, it's nothing. It will pass. It's nothing."

Pierrè went up to her, and, looking at her fixedly, said:

"Come, tell me, what is the matter?"

Hurriedly, in a low voice, she replied:

"It's nothing . . . nothing at all. . . . I assure you, it's nothing."

Roland had gone for some vinegar. He returned with the bottle, which he handed to Pierre.

"Here you are. . . . Why don't you look after her? . . . Did you think of feeling her heart?"

As Pierre bent over her to take her pulse, she drew her hand away so sharply that she struck it against a chair, which stood near her.

"Come," he said coldly, "as you're ill, you must let me attend to you."

At this she sat up and held out her arm to him. Her skin was burning and her pulse was beating wildly and erratically.

"'Yes, it's rather serious," he murmured, "you must take a sedative. I'll write you a prescription."

As he wrote, bending over the paper, he caught stifled sounds of choking, of rapid sighs, and short, laboured breathing. He turned round. His mother was weeping, her face buried in her hands. Roland was beside himself.

"Louise, Louise," he exclaimed. "What is the matter with you? Whatever is the matter?"

She made no reply; she seemed rent by some deep and terrible grief. Her husband tried to draw her hands away from her face, but she resisted.

"No, no, no," she sobbed.

He appealed to his son.

"What can be the matter with her? I have never seen her like this before."

"It's nothing," said Pierre. "A little attack of nerves."

His own heart felt relief at the sight of her anguish. It was as if her sufferings allayed his resentment, and lessened his mother's load of ignominy. He watched her like a judge approving his own work. Suddenly she sprang to her feet, and, before anyone could forestall her, rushed to the door, fled to her room, and locked herself in. The two men remained confronting each other.

"Can you account for it?" asked Roland.

"Certainly," replied Pierre. "It is the result of a slight nervous disorder which frequently occurs at Mamma's age. She will probably have many more attacks like this."

As Pierre predicted, almost every day she had further attacks, which he himself seemed to provoke with a single word, as if he knew the secret of her strange and mysterious malady. He watched her face for intervals of relief, and, with

the cunning of a torturer, revived with one phrase the pain that had been momentarily allayed. And he was suffering no less than she. He was suffering terribly, because he could no longer love and reverence her, and because he was torturing her. When he had thoroughly inflamed the bleeding wound he had inflicted upon this heart of wife and mother, when he knew he had reduced her to misery and despair, he would wander about the town alone, so racked with remorse, so overwhelmed with pity, so utterly wretched, at having thus crushed her beneath his filial contempt, that he could have thrown himself into the sea, drowned himself, and made an end. How passionately, then, he longed to forgive! But in vain, for he could never forget. If only he could have refrained from making her suffer! But, though he suffered with her, he could not spare her. He would return home at mealtimes, fully resolved to be merciful. But the moment he caught sight of her, the moment he saw her eyes, once so frank and steady, now furtive, apprehensive and distraught, he could not stay his hand, nor repress the treacherous words that rose to his lips. The shameful secret, known only to themselves, goaded him on. It was like a poison in his veins, and maddened him till, like a rabid dog, he could have bitten everyone he saw. There was nothing now to defend her from his onslaughts, for Jean spent his days in his new quarters, returning home only in the evening to dine and sleep. He could not, however, help noticing Pierre's acerbity and violence, which he attributed to jealousy. He made up his mind to put him in his place and teach him a lesson some day, for family life was embittered by these perpetual scenes. But as he now had his own establishment, he was less affected by Pierre's outrageous behaviour, and his love of peace disposed him to bear with his brother. Besides, his inheritance had gone to his head. His mind dwelt on nothing that did not directly concern himself. He talked incessantly of all the details of his flat, the shelves for linen which had been fitted into his wardrobe, the coat-stands in the hall, the system of electric bells acting as a burglar alarm.

It was decided to celebrate Jean's settling in with an excursion to St. Jouin, and to return to his flat after dinner for a cup of tea. Roland's suggestion, that the party should go by sea, was overruled on the score of the distance, and the uncertainty of reaching their destination, should the wind prove unfavourable. A brake was hired for the occasion.

The expedition set out about ten o'clock, so as to arrive at St. Jouin for luncheon. The dusty highroad wound through the Norman countryside, to which undulating plains and farms embowered in trees lent the aspect of a vast park. The two stout horses drew the carriage along at a leisurely trot, and, lulled by the sound of the wheels, the Rolands, Madame Rosémilly, and Captain Beausire lapsed into silence and closed their eyes against the clouds of dust. It was harvest time. Besides the sombre green of the clover and the vivid emerald of the beetroots, the yellow wheat threw upon the landscape a mellow, golden light. It seemed to have absorbed the sunshine in which it had been steeped. In some of the fields, reaping had begun, and the harvesters could be seen swaying with the motion of their scythes, as they swept the wing-shaped blade along the ground. After a drive of a couple of hours, the brake struck off to the left. It passed a windmill, turning in the breeze, a melancholy grey ruin, half-rotten and condemned, solitary survivor of the windmills of olden days; entered a trim courtyard and drew up in front of an inviting-looking inn, which was famous in the countryside. The landlady, the fair Alphonsine, appeared smiling at the door and gave a hand to the two ladies, who were nervously eyeing the high carriage-step. Under an awning on the grass in the shade of apple trees, some Parisians, summer visitors from Etretat, were already lunching, while from within the house came the sound of talk and laughter and the rattle of plates. All the public rooms were crowded, and the newcomers had to be served in a bedroom.

Roland caught sight of prawning nets, stacked against the wall.

"Oho!" he exclaimed. "It looks as if there were prawning here."

"So there is," replied Beausire. "And what's more, it's the best place anywhere along this coast."

"By Jove, why shouldn't we go prawning after luncheon?"

As luck would have it, it was low tide at three, and they all agreed to spend the afternoon on the rocks, hunting for prawns. They had a light luncheon, so as to avoid a rush of blood to the head when they were paddling in the water. Besides, they wanted to reserve themselves for a sumptuous repast, which was to be ready by six o'clock, when they returned. Roland could hardly restrain his impatience. He wanted to buy the necessary tackle. The smiling Alphonsine, however, lent them nets and helped the two ladies to improvise a suitable costume, so as to avoid wetting their gowns. She provided them with skirts, coarse woollen stockings, and sandals. The men took off their socks and bought slippers and clogs from the village cobbler. With their nets on their shoulders and their creels on their backs, they all set out for the beach. In this array, Madame Rosémilly looked quaint and rustic and dashing, and altogether charming. The skirt lent by Alphonsine, turned up coquettishly, and tacked together to enable her to scramble fearlessly over the rocks, revealed her ankle and an inch or two of calf, the firm little calf of a sturdy, supple little woman. Her bodice was loose enough to allow her freedom of movement. She had picked up a gardening hat of yellow straw, with a huge brim, caught up at the side with a sprig of tamarisk, which gave it a swaggering, martial air. Every day, since the news of his inheritance, Jean had been wondering whether to marry her or not. Whenever he saw her, he felt determined to make her his wife, but as soon as he was alone, he thought to himself that there was no hurry. At present he was the wealthier of the two. Her income amounted to a bare twelve thousand francs, but the capital was invested in real estate, in farms, and in building sites near the docks, which might, later on, prove of great value.

Their fortunes, then, were approximately equal, and the youthful widow had certainly a great attraction for him. As he watched her tripping along in front of him that afternoon, he reflected:

"Well, I must make up my mind. I'm not likely to find a better match."

They followed a little valley descending from the village to the cliff, which at this point rose some two hundred and fifty feet above the sea. Framed in green hillsides, sloping down on either side, a great triangular patch of sea, silvery blue in the sun, gleamed in the far distance, while an almost invisible sail looked like an insect. The dazzling sky and the water melted into each other, till it was impossible to discern where one left off and the other began. The two women walked in front of the men, and their figures in their tight bodices stood out clearly against this luminous background. Jean's eyes sparkled as he watched Madame Rosémilly's neat ankles, slim legs, graceful hips and provocative hat fleeing before him. Her flight roused his desire and incited him to take a decisive step, with that suddenness so often displayed by timid and hesitating characters. The balmy air, in which the scents of hillside, gorse, clover, grass, mingled with the briny smell of the uncovered rocks, exhilarated him and increased his ardour. He grew more resolute with every step, with every moment, with every glance directed at the young woman's buoyant figure. He resolved to hesitate no longer, but to tell her he loved her. The prawning expedition would serve his purpose by affording an opportunity for a tête-à-tête. Besides, what a pretty setting, what a charming scene, for lovers' talk, as they sat with their feet in a crystal pool and watched the prawns hiding their whiskers under the seaweed! When they came to the edge of the bluff at the end of the valley, they espied a little path descending the face of the cliff, and, half way down, they beheld a strange jumble of enormous boulders, worn away, hurled down, piled up, on an undulating stretch of turf extending southwards out of sight, the result of landslides in bygone ages. The rocks, scattered

about this long strip of scrub and turf, heaved up, as it seemed, by volcanic convulsions, were like the ruins of some great vanished city that had once looked down upon the sea, itself overshadowed by that white, interminable wall of cliff.

"That's very fine," exclaimed Madame Rosémilly, and stood still.

Jean had joined her, and with a beating heart he offered her his hand to help her down the narrow steps hewn out of the rock. They went on ahead, while Beausire, steadying himself on his short legs, offered his arm to Madame Roland, who was feeling giddy at the sight of the precipice. Last of all came Roland, escorted by Pierre, who had to drag his father along. He was so dizzy that he sat down and let himself slide from step to step. The two young people, who were leading, hurried on till half way down the cliff they espied a wooden bench, and beside it a jet of clear water, bubbling up from a little hole in the rock. It spread out first into a hollow, the size of a washing-basin, which it had worn for itself, then formed a miniature cascade no more than two feet high, rippled across the path, where a carpet of cress had sprouted, and lost itself in the grass and brambles on the tumbled plain, with its heaped up volcanic rocks.

"Oh, I'm so thirsty!" exclaimed Madame Rosémilly.

But drinking was no easy matter. She tried to catch the water in the hollow of her hand, but it trickled between her fingers. Then Jean thought of blocking the channel with a stone. She knelt down, till her lips were on a level with the spring, and quenched her thirst at the actual source. When she raised her head, her skin, her hair, her eyelashes, her bodice, were sprinkled with thousands of little drops. Jean leaned towards her and murmured:

"How pretty you are!"

"Will you be quiet?" she replied, in the tone in which one rebukes a child.

These were the first words, tinged with sentiment, that had passed between them.

" Come along," said Jean, who was much agitated. " Let us hurry on before the others join us."

Even as he spoke, he caught sight of Captain Beausire, now quite near them, who was coming down backwards, so as to be able to devote both hands to Madame Roland's support. Higher up the cliff, in the same posture as before, Roland was slipping from step to step, helping himself along with feet and elbows, and crawling like a tortoise, while Pierre preceded him and superintended his movements. Less precipitous now, the track became a sloping path, which wound in and out among the enormous boulders, hurled from the cliff top in bygone ages. Madame Rosémilly and Jean broke into a run, which soon brought them to the beach. They crossed over to the rocks, which presented a long flat surface, covered with seaweed and glittering with countless pools. It was low tide, and the sea far out, beyond shining green and black flats, slippery with seaweed. Jean rolled up his trousers above his calves and his sleeves up to the elbow, to avoid wetting his clothes.

" Here goes," he exclaimed, and jumped resolutely into the nearest pool.

Though fully intending to follow his example presently, Madame Rosémilly was more circumspect. Afraid of slipping on the slimy seaweed, she crept cautiously round the edge of the shallow pool.

" Can you see anything? " she asked.

" Yes, I see your face reflected in the water."

" If that is all, you won't make much of a catch."

" Oh," he murmured in sentimenetal tones. " No other catch would make me half so happy."

She laughed.

" Well, try. You will find that it slips through your net."

" Ah! If you only would! "

" I want to see you catching prawns. That is all . . . for the present."

" How unkind you are! Let us go a little farther. There is nothing here."

He offered her his hand to help her over the slippery rocks. She leant on him a little nervously, and suddenly he was overwhelmed with love, stirred with desire, hungry for her, as if the nascent passion within him had chosen that very day to burst into flower. Presently they came to a deeper pool, where, beneath the quivering water, flowing through an invisible crevice towards the distant sea, long slender weeds were floating, curiously coloured like pink and green tresses.

"Look, look," exclaimed Madame Rosémilly, "I see a big one, an enormous one, over there."

Jean, too, caught sight of it, and jumped bravely into the pool, up to his waist in water. Waving its feelers, the prawn calmly retreated before the net. Jean drove it towards the seaweed, where he made sure he would catch it, but when it found itself cornered, it glided swiftly over the net, skimmed across the pool and vanished. Madame Rosémilly, who had been watching the chase, quivering with excitement, could not help exclaiming:

"Oh, how clumsy!"

Nettled by this remark, Jean dragged his net recklessly along the weedy bottom of the pool, and brought it to the surface with three large transparent prawns in it, which he had unwittingly scooped out of their hiding places. He offered them triumphantly to Madame Rosémilly, who was afraid to touch them, because of the sharp serrated point at the top of their narrow heads. But she plucked up courage, and, seizing the fine tips of their feelers between finger and thumb, she put them one by one into her basket, with a little seaweed to keep them alive. Then finding a shallower pool, she stepped cautiously in, with a catch of her breath, as her feet felt the cold, and she began to fish on her own account. She proved to be both skilful and cunning, possessing two essentials, the hunter's instinct and a nimble hand. Almost every attempt was rewarded with several prawns, which had been trapped and outwitted, thanks to her patience and determination. Jean, however, was catching nothing. He followed her, step by step, brushing against

her, hanging over her, simulating deep despair at his lack of skill, together with an eagerness to learn.

" Show me how," he pleaded, " show me how."

When their two heads were reflected side by side in the limpid water, which the dark weed at the bottom turned into a crystal mirror, Jean smiled at that face so near his own, and sometimes blew it kisses, which seemed to flutter down to it.

" How tiresome you are ! " exclaimed the young woman. " My dear man, you should never do two things at once."

" I'm not. I'm doing only one thing . . . loving you."

She stood erect, and said in a serious voice :

" What has come over you during the last ten minutes? You seem to have lost your head."

" No, I haven't lost my head. But I love you, and at last I have plucked up the courage to tell you so."

They were now standing up to their knees in salt water. With their nets in their dripping hands, they gazed into each other's eyes.

Petulantly, teasingly, she answered :

" How tactless of you to talk of this to me just now ! Couldn't you have waited for some other day, and not have spoilt my fishing? "

" Forgive me," he murmured. " I could not help it. I have been in love with you for a long time. And to-day you have driven me almost distracted."

At this she seemed to accept the situation and to resign herself to putting pleasure aside and talking business.

" Let us sit down on that boulder," she said, " and we will have a quiet talk."

They scrambled on to the rock, which was rather high, and when they were seated side by side, dangling their legs in the bright sunshine, she resumed :

" My dear friend, you are no longer a child, nor am I a young girl. Both of us know perfectly well what we are talking about, and we can weigh all the consequences of our actions. Since you have chosen to express your affection for me to-day, I naturally assume that you wish to marry me."

He was hardly prepared for this lucid exposition of the situation, and he said, sheepishly:

"Yes, of course."

"Have you mentioned it to your father and mother?"

"Not yet. I wanted first to know if you would accept me."

She held out her hand, which was still damp, and as he clasped it fervently, she said:

"I will gladly marry you. I think you are good and true. But do not forget that I would never go against your parents' wishes."

"Oh, do you suppose my mother has never considered the possibility of this, or that she would be as fond of you as she is, if she had not hoped for our marriage?"

"Still, I am a little uneasy."

Both were silent. For his part he was surprised that she should appear so troubled and prove so unromantic. He had anticipated a delicate flirtation, a no that meant yes, a whole coy comedy of courtship, to the accompaniment of prawning and the splashing of water. And now the whole thing was over. He felt that he had been captured and wedded, all in a dozen words. As they were agreed, nothing remained to be said, and they sat on and on, both of them a little embarrassed at that which had so hurriedly passed between them, both of them a little awkward, not venturing to talk, not venturing to fish, at a loss as to what to do next.

A shout from Roland saved the situation.

"This way, children, this way. Come and watch Beausire. There won't be a prawn left in the sea."

The captain was certainly making a wonderful catch. Wet to the waist, he went from pool to pool, recognising at a glance the most likely places, and with a slow, deliberate movement of his net scooping out all the crevices hidden beneath the seaweed. The fine, transparent, pale grey prawns lay squirming in the palm of his hand, till he seized them briskly and tossed them into his creel.

Surprised and delighted, Madame Rosémilly never left his side, and did her best to adopt his methods, almost forgetting

both her promise and Jean himself, who was dreamily following her, in her whole-hearted absorption in the childish pleasure of catching prawns under the floating seaweed.

"Look, there's my wife coming to join us," exclaimed Roland.

At first Madame Roland had remained on the beach alone with Pierre. Neither had felt inclined to go scrambling over the rocks and dabbling in the pools. Yet each shrank from remaining in the other's company. She was afraid of him, while her son was afraid of his mother, afraid of himself, afraid of his own cruelty, which he could not control. But they sat down together on the beach. Basking in the warmth of the sun, which was tempered by the sea air, gazing at the great, calm expanse of azure water shot with silver, both of them were thinking:

"How we should have enjoyed this once!"

She dared not speak to Pierre; she knew only too well that he would return a harsh reply, nor did he venture to address his mother, for he was equally aware that, in spite of himself, he could not do so without roughness. He kept prodding, poking, and hitting the shingle with the point of his stick. With an absent look in her eyes, she picked up three or four small pebbles, which she passed from one hand to the other with a languid, mechanical gesture. Presently her vague, wandering gaze lighted on Jean, prawning among the seaweed with Madame Rosémilly. She continued to follow the pair with her eyes, watching their movements, her maternal instinct warning her that they were engaged in no ordinary conversation. She saw them, when they bent down, side by side, and gazed at each other in the water; when they stood erect, face to face, each questioning the other's heart, and again, when they clambered on to the rock, where they sat and plighted their troth. Their silhouettes, sharply defined, seemed to be isolated in the centre of the horizon, and, in that vast circumference of sky and cliffs and sea, were invested with a certain grandeur, a certain symbolism. Pierre, too, was watching them, and broke into a harsh laugh.

"What is the matter?" asked Madame Roland without turning towards him.

He said with a sneer:

"I'm taking a lesson. I'm observing how husbands set about letting themselves be fooled."

Shocked at his words, outraged by the interpretation she put upon them, she gave a start of indignation and anger:

"Whom do you mean?"

"Jean, of course. It is extremely amusing to see those two carrying on."

"Oh, Pierre," she murmured in a low voice, quivering with emotion. "How cruel you are! That woman is honesty itself. Your brother could not make a better choice."

At this he broke into a loud, offensive cackle of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Honesty itself! All women are honesty itself. And yet they all deceive their husbands. Ha, ha, ha!"

Without replying, she sprang to her feet, hurried down the sloping shingle, and, almost at a run, at the risk of slipping, falling into holes hidden beneath the seaweed, and breaking an arm or a leg, she splashed through the pools without seeing them, and fled straight on towards her other son.

Jean saw her coming and called out:

"Hullo, Mamma, so you plucked up your courage."

She made no reply, but clutched his arm as if to say:

"Save me. Protect me."

He was surprised to see her agitation.

"How pale you are! What is the matter?"

"I nearly fell," she faltered. "I was frightened crossing these rocks."

At this Jean helped her and supported her, and tried to interest her in the prawning, by explaining how it was done. But as she hardly listened, he yielded to his violent desire to unbosom himself, and, drawing her farther away, said, in a low voice:

"Guess what I have been doing."

"I have no idea."

"Guess."

"I can't think."

"Well, I have asked Madame Rosémilly to marry me."

She could not answer. Her head was swimming, and her mind was so distraught that she hardly grasped what he was saying.

"Marry you?" she echoed.

"Yes. Don't you think I was right? She is charming, isn't she?"

"Yes, charming. You were perfectly right."

"Then you approve?"

"Yes, . . . I approve."

"How queerly you say it! Anyone would think you weren't really pleased."

"Oh, but I am. . . . I am pleased."

"Really and truly?"

"Really and truly."

In order to convince him, she threw her arms round him and covered his cheeks with a mother's hearty kisses. When she had wiped away the tears that had risen to her eyes, she saw a figure lying on the beach, prone like a corpse, his face buried in the shingle. It was her other son, her Pierre, who was brooding despairingly.

She drew Jean farther away, down to the edge of the sea, and they had a long talk about this marriage, on which she had set her heart. The rising tide drove them back towards the prawning party, and they all returned to the beach. They roused Pierre, who was pretending to be asleep. Dinner was a lengthy meal, and the wine flowed freely.

VII

DRIVING home in the brake, all the men with the exception of Jean, kept dozing. Every five minutes, Beausire and Roland would droop against a neighbouring shoulder, which would shake them off impatiently. At this they would sit up, stop snoring, open their eyes, mutter "Lovely weather," and almost immediately collapse on to the other side. When they reached Havre, they were so overcome with sleep, that they had great difficulty in rousing themselves, and Beausire would not even accompany the others to Jean's flat for a cup of tea. He insisted on being dropped at his own door. It was Jean's first night in his new abode, and he was seized with immense, if rather puerile, joy at the thought of showing his betrothed, on that particular evening, the home that would soon be hers.

The maid had gone away. Madame Roland, who disapproved of leaving servants alone in the house, for fear of fire, had undertaken to make the tea. Nobody but herself, her son, and the workmen had as yet been admitted into the flat. It was to be a complete surprise when it was displayed with all its attractions. Jean asked his guests to wait in the hall, and left Madame Rosémilly, his father and brother in the dark, while he lighted all the lamps and candles. Then he called out: "Come in," and threw the folding-doors wide open. The conservatory, which was illuminated by a chandelier and by coloured lamps hidden among the palms, rubber plants and flowers, seemed at first like a scene on the stage. There was a moment of astonished silence.

"By Jove!" murmured Roland, so much amazed at all this magnificence that he could hardly resist the impulse to clap his hands as at a transformation scene. Next they

passed into the small drawing-room, which had hangings of old gold to match the chair-covers. Salmon pink was the colour scheme of the large drawing-room, an austere and impressive apartment, which was to be Jean's office. Jean seated himself in the armchair at the desk, which was laden with books, and in a solemn voice, which rang a trifle forced, delivered a speech:

"Yes, Madam. The law on this subject is explicit, and this fact, together with the authorisation, which I communicated to you, enables us to count with absolute certainty on the matter under consideration being brought to a favourable conclusion within three months."

He looked at Madame Rosémilly, who smiled and looked at Madame Roland. Madame Roland took her hand and pressed it. Jean jumped for joy like a schoolboy.

"Doesn't the voice carry well in here?" he exclaimed. "It would be a splendid room in which to argue a case."

He began to declaim:

"If we based our demand for an acquittal upon humanity alone, upon that sentiment of natural benevolence, which we feel for all suffering, we should appeal, gentlemen of the jury, to your pity, to your hearts as men and fathers, but the law is on our side, and it is this question of the law alone that we propose to raise."

Pierre looked round the flat, which might have been his, and felt exasperated by his brother's antics. Really, Jean was too childish, too insignificant. Madame Roland opened a door on the right.

"This is the bedroom," she said.

She had lavished a mother's love on its adornment. The hangings were of Rouen cretonne, which imitated the old Norman fabric. It had a Louis XV design, consisting of a shepherdess, set in a medallion formed by two doves, beak to beak, and this gave the walls, curtains, bed and easy-chairs a debonair and sylvan air, which was very attractive.

"Oh, it's charming!" exclaimed Madame Rosémilly, a trifle subdued as she entered this room.

"You like it?"

" Immensely."

" I can't tell you how glad I am."

They looked at each other for a moment with trust and affection in their eyes. She felt, however, a little abashed in this room, which was to be her bridal chamber. As they entered, she had noticed that the bed was very wide, a truly patriarchal bed, chosen by Madame Roland, who had evidently looked forward eagerly to her son's early marriage. This proof of maternal foresight pleased her, however; it seemed to hint to her that the family was ready to welcome her. On their return to the drawing-room, Jean flung open the door on the left, and displayed the round dining-room, which had three windows and was decorated in imitation of a Japanese lantern. Here mother and son had let whatever imagination they possessed run riot. With its bamboo furniture, its curios, its grotesques, its spangled silks, its transparent curtains strung with glass beads like drops of water, its draperies caught up with fans and nailed to the wall, its screens, its sabres, its masks, its cranes made of real feathers, with all its trumpery knick-knacks in china, wood, paper, ivory, bronze, mother-of-pearl, this room had the meretricious, self-conscious aspect, which the unskilled hand and untrained eye impart to subjects that demand the utmost delicacy of intuition, taste and artistic education. Yet it was this room that received most admiration. Pierre alone offered some criticisms with a touch of rather bitter sarcasm, which his brother resented. The table was set with pyramids of fruit and monumental piles of cake. But no one felt hungry. Jean's guests merely trifled with some fruit and nibbled a biscuit. After an hour or so, Madame Rosémilly rose to go. Old Roland undertook to see her home, and they were to leave at once, while, in the maid's absence, Madame Roland remained to cast a motherly eye round the flat, to make sure that Jean lacked nothing.

" Shall I come back for you? " asked Roland.

" No, my dear," she said, after a slight hesitation, " you go to bed. Pierre will take me home."

As soon as the two had left, she blew out the candles,

locked up the cakes, sugar and liqueur in a cupboard, and handed the key to Jean. Then she went into the bedroom, turned down the sheet, and satisfied herself that there was fresh water in the bottle and that the window was securely fastened.

Pierre and Jean remained together in the little drawing-room. Jean was still smarting under his brother's strictures on his taste, while Pierre's resentment at seeing Jean in this flat was steadily rising. The two sat smoking in silence. Suddenly Pierre jumped up.

"My word!" he exclaimed, "the widow was looking decidedly off colour this evening. Excursions don't seem to agree with her."

All at once Jean was convulsed by one of those swift and violent paroxysms of rage, which seize upon a genial nature wounded to the quick. He was in such a rage that he could hardly breathe.

"I won't have you calling her that," he gasped.

Pierre turned on him scornfully.

"I believe you are trying to dictate to me. Have you taken leave of your senses?"

Jean, too, had sprung to his feet.

"No, I haven't. But I have had enough of your behaviour towards me."

"Towards you?" sneered Pierre. "Do you identify yourself with Madame Rosémilly?"

"Let me inform you that Madame Rosémilly has promised to be my wife."

At this Pierre laughed more loudly than before.

"Ha, ha! Excellent! Now I see why I'm not to call her 'the widow.' But what an odd way of announcing your marriage to me!"

"I forbid you to make a joke of it, do you hear? I forbid you."

Pale, with trembling voice, stung by the taunts directed at the woman whom he loved, the woman whom he had chosen, Jean strode up to his brother. At this Pierre himself flew into a passion. All the pent-up emotions of the last

few weeks, his impotent anger, his suppressed rancour, his stifled indignation, his mute despair, rushed to his head and maddened him.

"How dare you! How dare you! Hold your tongue, do you hear? Hold your tongue."

Taken aback by this outburst of fury, Jean was silent for some moments. He was searching in the confusion of mind, induced by passion, for the phrase, the term, the insult, that would stab his brother to the heart. Controlling himself with an effort, in order to strike more surely, and speaking slowly to render his words more cutting, he resumed:

"I realised some time ago that you were jealous of me. It was the day when you first began calling her 'the widow,' because you found that it annoyed me."

Pierre gave vent to one of his frequent outbursts of harsh laughter.

"Ha, ha! Jealous of you? Good God! I? I? And why, pray? Because of your looks or because of your intelligence?"

Jean, however, saw that he had touched him on the raw.

"Yes, you are jealous of me. You always were, even as a child. And you were furious when you found that Madame Rosémilly preferred me and would have nothing to say to you."

"I . . . I . . ." stammered Pierre, beside himself at this charge, "Jealous of you? Because of that gaby . . . that silly goose?"

Seeing that his shafts went home, Jean continued:

"What about that day in the *Pearl,* when you tried to row harder than I. And all the things you said to show off. Why, you are bursting with jealousy. And when I came in for this money, you were frantic, you began to hate me. You have shown it in every possible way, and you have made everybody wretched. Not an hour goes by without your spitting out the venom that is choking you."

Pierre clenched his fists with rage. He could hardly restrain himself from flying at his brother's throat.

"Hold your tongue. You've gone far enough. Don't you mention that money of yours."

"Why, your jealousy is oozing out of every pore," Jean persisted. "You cannot say a word to father or mother or me without its breaking out. You pretend to despise me, because you are jealous. You pick quarrels with everyone, because you are jealous. And now that I am rich, you can't contain yourself. You have become poisonous. You torture mother as if it were her fault."

Pierre had retreated to the mantelpiece. He was in the grip of one of those insane attacks of rage, in which men commit crimes. In a lower voice, but gasping for breath, he repeated:

"Hold your tongue, I tell you, hold your tongue."

"I won't. I have long been wanting to speak my mind to you. You have brought it on yourself. So much the worse for you. I am in love with a woman. You are aware of it. You jeer at her in my presence. You drive me to desperation. So much the worse for you. I'll draw your poison fangs. I'll force you to respect me."

"Respect you? You?"

"Yes, me."

"Respect you? You? When you are bringing dishonour on us all by your cupidity?"

"What's that? Say it again."

"I tell you, one doesn't accept a fortune from one man, when one passes for another man's son."

Jean stood motionless, not understanding, yet alarmed at the insinuation he was beginning to apprehend.

"What? . . . You said? . . . Repeat that, too."

"I'm only telling you what everyone is whispering, what everyone is spreading, that you are the son of that man who has left you his fortune. Well, no decent fellow will accept money that casts a slur upon his mother."

"Pierre . . . Pierre . . . Pierre . . . do you realise what you are saying? You . . . you to utter this infamous slander?"

"Yes, I myself. Can't you see that for the last month I

have been half-dead with grief, that I can't sleep at night, and spend my days skulking like a beast, that I don't know what I am saying, nor what I am doing, nor what will become of me because I am so wretched, so utterly overwhelmed with shame and sorrow. I guessed it from the first and now I am sure."

"Hush, Pierre, hush! Mamma is in the next room. Remember, she may hear us . . . she can't help hearing us."

But Pierre had to unburden his heart. He poured out everything: his suspicions, his convictions, together with the story of the miniature, which had again disappeared. He spoke in short, broken, incoherent phrases, like the ravings of delirium. He seemed now to have forgotten not only Jean, but his mother in the adjoining room. He spoke as if no one were listening to him, because he could not help it. He had suffered so unbearably; he had compressed and constricted his wound, till it had grown like a tumour, and now the tumour had burst. He was pacing up and down the room, as he often did. Gesticulating and sobbing, in a frenzy of despair, with his eyes fixed in front of him, seized with reactions of self-loathing, he talked on and on, as if he were voicing his own misery and that of his family, as if he were unloading his anguish upon the deaf and invisible air, which bore his words away. Almost convinced by his brother's blind vehemence, Jean, seized with utter consternation, was standing with his back against the door, through which he felt their mother must have heard them. She could not make her escape without passing through the drawing-room. As she had not reappeared, it was doubtless because she dared not.

Suddenly Pierre stamped his foot.

"What a swine I am to have told you this!" he exclaimed, and, bareheaded, he fled from the flat and down the stairs.

The slamming of the heavy outer door roused Jean from the deep stupor into which he had sunk. Several moments, long as hours, had elapsed, and his soul was numb with an imbecile bewilderment. Soon, he knew, he would have to think and act, but he waited, reluctant, from fear, from

weakness, from cowardice, to understand, to face the facts, and to remember. He belonged to the race of procrastinators, who relegate all things to the morrow. Whenever an immediate decision was required of him, he instinctively sought to obtain a few moments' grace. Following upon Pierre's denunciations, the profound stillness that now encompassed him, emanating from walls and furniture, together with the garish illumination of the two lamps and the six candles, suddenly struck him with such panic that he, too, longed to make his escape. But he plucked up his courage, collected his scattered wits, and tried to think. Never before in all his life had he been confronted with any difficulty. He was one of those men who let themselves drift with the stream. At school he had worked sufficiently well to avoid punishment, and he had pursued his legal studies methodically, thanks to the tranquillity of his existence. All the events of life appeared to him perfectly natural and he did not bother his head about them. Himself free from mental complexes, he was by temperament disposed towards order, prudence, calm. Confronted with this catastrophe, he was like a man unable to swim, who has fallen into the water. At first he attempted to disbelieve. Might not his brother have lied through hatred and jealousy? And yet how could he have been so base as to bring such a charge against their mother, unless he had been beside himself with anguish? Jean's ears and eyes and nerves, his very flesh, retained the impression of certain words of Pierre's, certain cries of anguish, certain gestures and intonations, so poignant as to be irresistible; uncontrovertible as truth itself. He felt too utterly crushed to make a movement or an effort of will. His distress became intolerable, and he felt that there, behind that door, was his mother, who had heard everything, and was waiting for him.

What was she doing? Not a movement, not a shudder, not a breath, not a sigh, revealed the presence of a living soul behind those panels. Could she have fled? Impossible. She could not have escaped . . . unless she had jumped out of the window on to the street. He was stabbed by a thrill of

horror, so sudden and so violent, that he almost burst the door open, and plunged into the room. It appeared to be empty. A single candle was burning on the chest of drawers. Jean darted to the window; it was closed and the shutters were fastened. Turning, he peered anxiously into the dark corners of the room, and saw that the curtains of the bed had been drawn. He hastened to pull them back. His mother was lying on the bed, her face buried in the pillow, which she held convulsively over her head with both hands, so that she might hear no more. At first he thought that she was suffocated. Then, seizing her by the shoulders, he turned her over, but without making her relinquish the pillow which hid her face, and which she was biting to repress her cries. Contact with that rigid body, those tense arms, brought home to Jean the full force of her unspeakable anguish. The desperation, the strength, with which she clung with teeth and hands to the bulging down-pillow and kept it crushed down over mouth and eyes and ears, so that he might neither see her nor speak to her, helped him to realise, through the shock he himself received, to what a pitch human suffering can be brought. His heart, his child-like heart, was wrung with pity. He was no judge, not he, not even a merciful one. He was only a man full of failings, a son full of tenderness. Everything his brother had said was forgotten. He neither reasoned, nor argued. All he did was to lay both hands upon his mother's motionless form, and, as he could not draw the pillow away from her face, he kissed her gown, exclaiming:

"Mamma, Mamma, my poor Mamma. Look at me."

She might have passed for dead, except for an almost imperceptible quivering of her limbs, like the vibration of a tautened string.

"Mamma, Mamma," he repeated. "Listen to me. It isn't true. I know perfectly well that it isn't true."

She gave a convulsive gasp and suddenly began sobbing into the pillow. Her tears brought relief to her overstrung nerves and rigid muscles; her half-open fingers relaxed their grip on the pillowslip and he uncovered her face. She was

perfectly pale, perfectly white, and tears were trickling from her closed lids. He put his arm round her neck, and pressed upon her eyes, long, lingering, sorrowful kisses, which mingled with her tears.

"Mamma, dear Mamma," he kept saying, "I know it's not true. Don't cry. I know it isn't."

She raised herself to a sitting posture, and looked him in the face. Then, with one of those efforts of courage, which in certain cases enable a man to take his own life, she said to him:

"No, my child. It is true."

Speechless, they faced each other. For a few more moments she struggled for breath, straining her throat, and throwing back her head. Then she again controlled herself.

"Yes, it is true, my child. Why should I lie? It is true. Even if I denied it, you would not believe me."

She looked almost demented. Stricken with terror he fell on his knees by the bed, murmuring:

"Hush, Mamma, hush!"

She had risen to her feet, with an alarming appearance of energy and decision.

"What more is there to say, my child? Farewell."

She turned towards the door, but he seized her in his arms.

"What are you doing, Mamma? Where are you going?"

"I do not know. How should I know? There is nothing left for me to do. I am all alone now."

She struggled to free herself. As he held her fast, one word alone rose to his lips:

"Mamma, Mamma, Mamma!"

Endeavouring to break away, she exclaimed:

"No, no. I am no longer your mother. I am nothing to you now, nothing to anyone, nothing, nothing. You have neither father nor mother, my poor boy. Farewell."

In a flash he realised that if he let her go, he would never see her again. He lifted her up, carried her to an easy-chair, made her sit down, and knelt beside her, encircling her with his arms.

"I won't let you go, my dear mother, I love you and I

shall keep you. You shall stay with me always. You belong to me."

In a broken voice she murmured:

"No, my poor boy. It's no longer possible. You are sorry for me this evening; but to-morrow you would show me the door. You, too, would never forgive me."

"I? I? How little you know me!" he protested, with such a rush of genuine affection that she uttered a cry, clutched him by the hair, drew his head fiercely towards her and covered his face with distracted kisses. Then she sat perfectly still, her cheek against her son's, feeling the warmth of his skin beneath his beard. Then very softly she whispered into his ear:

"No, my little Jean. To-morrow you would not forgive me. You think you would, but you deceive yourself. This evening you have forgiven me, and your pardon has saved my life. But you must never see me again."

"Mamma," he exclaimed, hugging her, "don't say such things."

"Yes, my child. I must go away. I don't know where, nor how to manage it, nor what story to tell. But it must be so. I should never dare look you in the face again, nor kiss you. Don't you see?"

It was his turn, now, to whisper in her ear:

"My little mother, you will stay, because I insist, because I need you. And you are to swear, this very minute, that you will do as I say."

"No, my child."

"Oh, Mamma, you must, you know, you must."

"I can't my dear. It is impossible. It would be hell for both of us. I have known what torture it is, all this last month. You are sorry for me now. But when that feeling passes away, when you look at me as Pierre looks at me, and call to mind what I have told you. . . . Oh, my little Jean, . . . never forget, . . . never forget that I am your mother."

"I won't let you leave me, Mother. You are all I have."

"But consider, my son. How could we ever see each

other without my almost dying of shame, without my eyes falling before your own?"

"No, no, Mamma."

"Yes, yes, yes, believe me. Haven't I entered into all your poor brother's struggles, all of them, from the first day? Now, as soon as I hear his step in the house, my heart bounds, as if it would burst my breast. As soon as I hear his voice, I feel ready to faint. And I still had you. Now I have lost you as well. Oh, my little Jean, do you suppose I could possibly go on living, between the two of you?"

"Yes, Mamma. I will love you so much that you will never give it another thought."

"As if that were possible!"

"Indeed it is."

"How can I but remember, what with you and Pierre? Could you yourself help remembering?"

"Yes, I swear it."

"Why, it will haunt you every moment of the day."

"Never, I swear it. And now, listen to me. If you leave me, I'll go and enlist and get killed."

She was horrified at this childish threat, and hugged and kissed Jean passionately.

"I love you more than you think," he declared. "Ever so much more. Now, be reasonable. Try it for a week. Will you promise to try it for a week? You cannot refuse me that."

She laid both hands on Jean's shoulders, holding him away from her at arm's length.

"My boy, let us try to be calm and not give way to our feelings. If ever I had to hear from your lips, were it but once, what I have heard from your brother's this last month, or had to read in your eyes what I have read in his, if I had to divine, were it merely by word or glance, that I had become hateful to you, as I am to him . . . within an hour, mark me, within an hour, I should be gone forever."

"Mamma, I swear. . . ."

"Hear me out. All this month I have suffered the utmost that a human being can endure. The moment I realised that

your brother, that my other son, suspected me, that minute by minute he was drawing nearer to the truth, each moment of my life became such martyrdom as I can never describe to you."

Her voice was so fraught with pain that Jean's eyes filled with sympathetic tears. He tried to take her in his arms, but she repulsed him.

"Not now. . . . Listen. I have still so much to say to you, if you are to understand. . . . But you never will understand . . . and yet, if I am to stay, I must try. . . . But no, it is beyond me. . . ."

"Speak, Mamma, speak."

"So be it, then. At least I shall not have deceived you. You really wish me to remain with you? . . . At present I hardly dare open a door, for fear of finding your brother the other side of it. Now, if we are to continue to see each other, to talk, to meet all day long about the house, you will have to bring yourself . . . not to forgive me, nothing hurts like forgiveness . . . but . . . not even to resent that which I did. You will have to be sufficiently strong, sufficiently different from the rest of the world, to accept the fact that you are not Roland's son, without blushing for it, without despising me. I have suffered enough, more than enough. I can bear no more. I can bear no more. And it is not since yesterday; oh, no, it began long ago. But how shall I ever make you understand. Yet, to enable us to live together, to enable us to kiss, my little Jean, you must realise that, although I was your father's mistress, I was even more truly his wife, his real wife; that in the depths of my heart I know no shame, that I regret nothing, that I love him even though he is dead, that I have never loved another, that he was all my life, all my joy, all my hope, all my consolation, everything to me, everything, everything, and for so long a time. Listen, my child. Before God, Who hears me, if I had never met him, I should have known no happiness in life, no love, no tenderness, not one of those hours that make us so reluctant to grow old. I owe everything to him. He was all I ever had in the world . . . he and you two, you and your

brother. Without you three, life would have been as dark and dreary as the night. I should have lived and died without ever having loved, or known, or desired, or even wept. For I have wept, my little Jean; I have shed many tears since we came here. I had given myself to him utterly, body and soul, joyfully and forever. For more than ten years I was his wife, as he was my husband, in the sight of God, who created us for each other. Then I realised that his love was waning. He was always kind and considerate, but I was no longer to him all that I had once been. It was over. How I cried! How miserable and treacherous life is! Nothing lasts. . . . Then we moved to Havre and I never saw him again. He never came. In his letters he was always promising to come, and I kept waiting for him. But I never saw him again. And now he is dead. Yet he still cared for us, for he thought of you. I shall love him till my latest breath; I will never deny him, and you I love, because you are his son. I could never think of him with shame in your presence, never, you understand. If you would have me stay, you must accept the fact that you are his son and consent to talk about him now and then, and to love him a little. And when we look at each other, we will think of him. If you will not, if you cannot, agree to this, farewell, my child. After all that has passed between us, it would be impossible for us to live together. I will abide by your decision."

"Stay, Mamma," Jean murmured tenderly.

She caught him in her arms and again her tears began to flow. Then, with her cheek against his, she resumed:

"Yes. But Pierre? What are we to do about him?"

"We will think of something," said Jean. "You cannot go on living in the same house with him."

At the thought of her elder son, she was convulsed with horror.

"No, never again; never again."

Throwing herself on Jean's bosom, she cried in agony of soul:

"Save me from him, my child. Save me. . . . Act.

. . . I don't know what to do. You must decide. . . . Save me."

"Yes, Mamma. I'll find some way out."

"At once . . . you must . . . at once. Do not leave me. I am so frightened of him . . . so frightened."

"Yes, I'll hit on some plan. I promise."

"Yes, but be quick, be quick. You have no idea what I feel, whenever I see him."

Then, very softly, she whispered in his ear:

"Let me stay here with you."

He paused to consider her proposal. Then, with his practical commonsense, he realised the danger of this proceeding. But before he could convince her, he had to reason with her for a long time, and allay her terror and distress with his persuasions.

"Just this one evening," she pleaded. "This one night. To-morrow you can send Roland word that I was feeling ill."

"It's not possible, because Pierre has gone home. Come, be brave. I promise to arrange everything to-morrow. I'll be round about nine. Now put on your hat. I'll take you to the door."

"I will do as you wish," she said with grateful, timid, childlike submission.

She tried to rise from her chair. But the shock had been too severe and she was still unable to stand. Jean gave her some water and sugar, held smelling-salts to her nostrils, and bathed her temples with vinegar. Exhausted yet relieved, as after a confinement, she accepted his ministrations. Presently she was able to walk, and took his arm. The clock on the town hall struck three as they passed. At the door of the house he kissed her.

"Good-night, Mamma," he said. "Cheer up."

With furtive steps, she climbed the silent stairs, entered her room, hurriedly undressed, and, with feelings that recalled past infidelities, slipped into bed beside Roland, who was snoring.

Pierre alone was awake and heard her come in.

VIII

On his return to the flat, Jean collapsed on to a sofa. The sorrow and anxiety, which had kept his brother on the run like a hunted beast, produced a different effect upon his own lethargic nature. His limbs seemed paralyzed and he felt too limp to make the effort even of going to bed. He was crushed, unnerved, discomfited, both in body and soul. Unlike Pierre, he had not been wounded in the integrity of his filial affection, nor in that secret self-respect which is the armour of proud hearts, but overwhelmed by a stroke of fate, which at the same time threatened his most cherished interests. When his soul had at last recovered its calm, and his mind had cleared, like troubled water, he began to consider the situation that had been revealed to him. Had he learnt the secret of his birth in any other manner, he would doubtless have felt outraged and experienced deep distress. But after his quarrel with his brother, after his nerves had been shattered by that brutal and violent denunciation, the poignant emotion evoked by his mother's confession had left him without sufficient energy to be indignant. The shock to his feelings had been strong enough to sweep away, on an irresistible wave of pity, all the prejudices, all the pious scruples of conventional morality. And then, he was no fighter. He shrank from conflict, especially with himself. He therefore accepted the inevitable with resignation. But his natural, instinctive preference, his inborn love for peace, for a smooth and pleasant life, warned him of the troubles that were about to rise and smite him. He saw that they were unavoidable, and, in order to cope

with them, he resolved to make superhuman efforts of energy and activity. It was essential to grapple with the problem immediately, the very next day, for he, too, felt at times that compelling desire for an immediate solution, which is the one strength of a feeble character incapable of a sustained effort of will. Moreover, his mind, with its legal training, was accustomed to studying and straightening out complicated situations, intimate domestic problems in troubled households, and he at once perceived all the immediate consequences of his brother's state of soul. He could not help considering these results from an almost professional point of view, as if he were arranging future relations between clients of his own, after some catastrophe in the sphere of morals. Constant association with Pierre was obviously impossible for him, but this he could easily avoid by remaining in his own home. It was, however, still more out of the question for his mother to continue to live under the same roof as her elder son. Reclining on the cushions, he thought for a long time, making and rejecting plan after plan without finding one that met with his approval. Then he was assailed with sudden misgivings. This fortune that he had inherited, was it possible for a decent man to keep it? No, he told himself, and he made up his mind to bestow it upon the poor. It was hard on him, but there it was. He would sell his furniture and set to work like other men, like all other men at the outset of their careers. This manly, though painful, resolve braced his courage. He rose, went to the window and pressed his forehead against the panes. He had been poor; he would be poor again. After all, it would not kill him. His gaze was fixed upon the gas-jet, which was burning on the opposite side of the street. Just then a belated woman happened to be passing along the pavement. He was reminded of Madame Rosémilly. His heart sustained the shock which is dealt by deep emotions provoked by some cruel thought. All the disastrous consequences of his decision thronged into his mind. It meant renouncing his marriage, renouncing his happiness, renouncing everything. Now that he was plighted to her, was he

justified in acting in this manner? She accepted him, knowing him to be rich. If he were poor, she would keep faith with him. But had he a right to hold her to her promise, to impose this sacrifice upon her? Would it not be better to keep this money, in trust, as it were, for the poor, to whom he would devote it later on? Within his soul, where self-interest assumed the mask of virtue, all his disguised motives strove for mastery. His original scruples yielded to specious arguments, only to return, and to be again dispelled. He went back to the sofa and endeavoured to find some clinching argument, some overwhelming reason, to put an end to his doubts and overrule his natural honesty. A score of times he had said to himself:

"Since I am this man's son, since I am aware of it and accept it, is it not logical that I should likewise accept his inheritance?"

This argument, however, could not stifle the whispered protest of his own conscience. At last he reflected:

"As I am not the son of the man whom I believed to be my father, I can accept nothing more from him, neither during his lifetime nor after his death. It would not be just or decent. I should be robbing my brother."

This new aspect of the case served to set his mind at rest and to silence his conscience. He went back to the window.

"Yes," he continued, "I must renounce my claims to the family property in favour of Pierre, as I am not his father's son. That is fair. Then surely it is equally fair that I should keep my own father's fortune."

As soon as he recognised that he could not profit by Roland's will, and decided to relinquish his claims entirely, he resigned himself to keeping Maréchal's bequest. To renounce both were to condemn himself to absolute penury. This delicate matter disposed of, he returned to the question of Pierre's presence in the family circle. How was he to be ousted? He began to despair of ever arriving at a practical solution, when, like an answer to his problem, the whistle of a steamer suggested a scheme to him. Fully dressed, he threw himself on his bed and pondered till it

was day. About nine o'clock, he left the house, in order to ascertain whether his plan were feasible. After making certain enquiries and paying several visits, he went home to his parents. His mother was in her room waiting for him.

"If you had not come," she told him, "I should never have ventured to go down."

At that moment Roland's voice was heard on the stairs.

"Are we to have no breakfast this morning?" he cried.

There was no reply.

"Josephine," he bawled, "what the deuce are you doing?"

The maid's voice rose from the basement:

"Yes, sir, what is it?"

"Where is your mistress?"

"Upstairs with Monsieur Jean."

Raising his head towards the floor above, he roared:

"Louise."

Madame Roland opened her door.

"What is it, my dear?"

"Are we never to have breakfast this morning, dash it?"

"All right, dear, we're just coming."

She went downstairs, followed by Jean.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Roland as soon as he saw the young man. "Back again, are you? Tired of your flat already?"

"No, Father, but there was something I wanted to talk over with Mamma."

Jean offered him his outstretched hand, but when he felt the old man's fatherly clasp, he was convulsed with strange and unlookedfor emotion, with the pain that attends separations and farewells, which are to be final.

"Isn't Pierre down yet?" asked Madame Roland.

Her husband shrugged his shoulders.

"No, but never mind. He is always late. We will begin without him."

She turned to Jean:

"You had better call him, dear. He feels hurt if we don't wait for him."

"Very well, Mamma."

He left the room and climbed the stairs with the feverish

determination of a timid man about to fight a duel. He knocked at Pierre's door, and was bidden to enter. He found his brother bending over his table, writing.

" Good-morning," said Jean.

Pierre got up.

They shook hands as if nothing had happened.

" Aren't you coming down to breakfast? "

" Well . . . you see . . . I'm very busy."

The elder brother's voice trembled, and his anxious eyes asked his junior what he intended to do.

" They're waiting for you."

" Ah! And Mother . . . is Mother downstairs? "

" Yes; in fact it was she who sent me up to call you."

" Oh! In that case . . . I'll come down."

At the door of the dining-room he paused, reluctant to be the first to enter. Then with an abrupt gesture he flung it open. He saw his father and mother seated at opposite ends of the table. Without raising his eyes, or uttering a word, he went straight to his mother, and offered her his forehead, as was now his custom, instead of kissing her on both cheeks, as he used to do. He was aware that her lips approached his brow, but he did not feel them touch him, and, after this semblance of a caress, he stood erect with beating heart.

What had the two said to each other after his departure, he wondered. Jean kept tenderly calling her " Mother " and " dear Mamma "; he paid her little attentions, waited on her, and replenished her cup. From his behaviour Pierre concluded that they had mingled their tears, but he could not read their thoughts. Did Jean believe his mother guilty, or did he consider his brother a scoundrel? All the reproaches he had heaped upon himself for his infamous betrayal attacked him again, choking him, sealing his lips, preventing him from eating or speaking. He was seized with an intolerable longing to escape, to leave this house, his home no more, and these people, who had ceased to be linked to him, save by the slenderest ties. He would gladly have departed that very hour, no matter whither, for he felt that all was over, that he could not remain with them, that, in spite of

himself, he would always be torturing them by his mere presence, while they would continually cause him unbearable pain.

Jean was talking to Roland. Pierre, who was not listening, did not catch what he was saying. But he seemed to detect a meaning note in his brother's voice, and he began to pay attention.

"Apparently she will be the finest ship in the fleet," remarked Jean. "Six thousand five hundred tons, they say. She is to make her maiden voyage next month."

"As soon as that!" exclaimed Roland in surprise. "I didn't think she would be ready to be launched this summer."

"The work has been pushed on, so that she can do her first trip before the autumn. I dropped in at the Company's office this morning and had a chat with one of the directors."

"Indeed. Which one?"

"Monsieur Marchand, who is a particular friend of the Chairman of the Board."

"Dear me! Do you know him?"

"Yes. Besides, I had a small favour to ask of him."

"Well, then, you will be able to get permission for me to go all over the *Lorraine*, as soon as she comes into the harbour."

"Certainly. There will be no difficulty."

Jean now seemed to hesitate, as if choosing his words, in an attempt to introduce an awkward subject.

"Really, life must be very pleasant on one of these great Atlantic liners. More than half the month is spent on shore, either in New York or in Havre, fine cities both, and the rest at sea in the company of charming people. A man has a chance of making delightful acquaintances among the passengers, acquaintances who may very well prove useful, very useful indeed, later on. Just think, with what he saves on the coal, the captain can make as much as twenty-five thousand francs a year, and more."

"Jove!" exclaimed Roland, and gave a whistle, which expressed his deep respect both for the captain and for his emoluments.

"The purser makes ten thousand. The doctor draws a fixed salary of five thousand, which, with free board and lodging, lighting, heating and attendance, is equivalent to quite ten thousand. It's remarkably good."

Raising his eyes, Pierre met his brother's glance and grasped his intention. After a moment's hesitation, he asked:

"Is it difficult to obtain the post of surgeon on an Atlantic liner?"

"Yes and no. It all depends on circumstances and influence."

There was a long silence.

"Is it next month that the *Lorraine* sails?" Pierre resumed.

"Yes. On the seventh."

Again they were silent. Pierre was thinking the matter over. It would certainly be a way of escape, if he could ship as surgeon on that liner. Later on he would see. The arrangement need not be permanent. In the meantime, he would be earning his living without having to apply to his family for assistance. The previous evening he had had to sell his watch, for he could no longer approach his mother. This was the only expedient, which would provide him with bread, other than the bread of this intolerable house, with another bed to sleep in, and another roof to his head.

"If it were possible, I should be very glad to sail in her," he remarked tentatively.

"Why not?" asked Jean.

"I don't know anyone in the Transatlantic Company."

Roland listened in amazement.

"And all your fine plans for a career, what becomes of them?"

"There are times," Pierre replied, "when a man must be ready to sacrifice everything, even his dearest hopes. In any case it is merely a beginning, a way of accumulating some thousands of francs, which will enable me to buy a practice later on."

His father was at once convinced.

" Yes, that's true. In a couple of years, you could put by six or seven thousand francs, which, properly applied, would go a long way. What do you say to it, Louise? "

In a low, almost inaudible voice, she replied:

" I think Pierre is right."

" Why," exclaimed Roland, " I'll go and talk it over with Monsieur Poulin. I know him very well. He is one of the judges of the Commercial Court and transacts the legal affairs of the Company. Then there's Monsieur Lenient, the shipowner, who is another friend of mine. He is on intimate terms with one of the Vice-Presidents of the Company."

" Would you like me to sound Monsieur Marchand this very day? " Jean asked his brother.

" Yes, if you wouldn't mind."

After some moments' reflection, Pierre continued:

" Perhaps, after all, the best plan would be for me to write to my professors at the School of Medicine. They thought very well of me. Often these liners take on men of no ability. Enthusiastic letters of recommendation from Professors Mas-Roussel, Rémusot, Flache and Borriquel would do more in an hour than any number of doubtful testimonials. It would be sufficient to get your friend Monsieur Marchand to lay these letters before the Board."

Jean cordially agreed.

" That's an excellent idea of yours. Excellent."

He smiled. Incapable of lasting depression, he was feeling reassured, almost happy, confident of success.

" You had better write to them this very day," he said.

" Yes, so I will. At once. This minute. I won't have any coffee this morning. My nerves are too much on edge."

He rose and left the room.

Jean turned to his mother.

" What are you doing this morning, Mamma? "

" Nothing . . . as far as I know."

" Will you come with me to see Madame Rosémilly? "

" Yes, certainly . . . certainly."

"You know, I positively must call on her to-day."

"Positively must? Why?" asked Roland, who never took in anything that was said in his presence.

"Because I promised I would."

"Oh, very well. That's another matter."

He began to fill his pipe, while mother and son went upstairs to put on their hats.

Once in the street, Jean said:

"Won't you take my arm, Mamma?"

He had never before offered her his arm. Hitherto they had always walked side by side. But she accepted his support and leaned her weight on him. For some time neither of them spoke. Then he remarked:

"You see, Pierre is perfectly reconciled to going away."

"Poor boy!" she murmured.

"Why 'poor boy'? He won't be in the least unhappy on the *Lorraine*."

"I know, but I was thinking of so many things."

Keeping step with her son, she walked on with bent head, plunged in meditation. Then, in that curious voice, in which some thought, long brooded over, long repressed, at last finds utterance:

"How horrible life is! If ever a little happiness comes your way it is wicked to enjoy it, and you pay for it dearly later on."

"Don't talk about it any more, Mamma," he murmured very low.

"How can I help it? It is always in my thoughts."

"You will forget."

Again she fell silent. Then, with deep regret:

"Ah, how happy I could have been if I had married a different sort of man!"

She was now indignant with Roland, and attributed to his ugliness, his stupidity, his uncouthness, his dullness, his commonplace appearance the whole responsibility for her fault and her unhappiness. It was this, it was her husband's vulgarity that had driven her to deceive him, with the result that she had reduced one son to despair, and had had to make

to the other the most painful confession that ever caused a mother's heart to bleed.

"It is so terrible for a young girl to be married to a husband like mine."

Jean made no reply. He was thinking about this man, whose son he had hitherto believed himself to be. Possibly the vague consciousness he had long possessed of his father's inferiority, Pierre's perpetual sarcasms, and the scornful indifference with which others, down to the servant girl herself, regarded Roland, had prepared his soul for his mother's terrible avowal. It cost him less to know that he was another man's son. If the violent emotions of the previous evening were succeeded by no such reaction of indignation and wrath, as Madame Roland had dreaded, it was because for a long time he had unwittingly chafed at having this loutish simpleton for father.

They arrived at Madame Rosémilly's house on the Sainte Adresse road. She occupied the second floor of a tall building, which was her property. Her windows commanded a view of the entire roadstead of Havre. As soon as she saw Madame Roland, who was the first to enter the room, she guessed the object of her visit, and, instead of holding out her hands to her as usual, opened her arms and embraced her.

The drawing-room furniture, upholstered in stamped velvet, was always swathed in dust-sheets. The walls, papered with a design of flowers, were adorned with four engravings, purchased by the captain, her late husband. They represented sentimental episodes of seafaring life. The first depicted a fisherman's wife standing on the shore and waving farewell to her husband's boat, which was vanishing on the horizon. In the second, the same woman kneeling on the selfsame shore, was wringing her hands as she watched in the distance, beneath a sky streaked with lightning, her husband's barque foundering among incredible waves. The other two engravings represented analogous scenes, but on a higher social plane. A fair-haired young woman, leaning against the rail of a large liner, was gazing

dreamily at the distant shore, her eyes suffused with tears of regret. Whom had she left behind her? In the next, the same young woman reclined, in a fainting condition, in an armchair by an open window overlooking the ocean. A letter had fallen from her lap to the floor. Alas, he was dead!

As a rule visitors were charmed and affected by the trite sentimentality of these romantic but obvious scenes. The meaning was clear and required no explanation or mental effort. They pitied the poor women, though the precise nature of the calamity that had befallen the more distinguished of the two was not revealed. But this uncertainty itself served to stimulate the imagination. She must have lost her betrothed. All eyes were at once irresistibly attracted by these four studies, and glued to them as if spellbound. If the gaze wandered for a moment, it was only to return, and to resume its contemplation of these two women, who resembled each other like sisters. The clear, neat, carefully finished composition of these engravings, with their fashion-plate elegance, the polished frames themselves, produced above all an impression of cleanliness and propriety, which was enhanced by the furniture. The chairs were ranged in unvarying order, some against the wall, others around the table. The spotless white curtains hung in folds so straight and regular that one longed to crumple them a little. There was never a speck of dust to sully the brightness of the glass case under which the gilded Empire clock, a globe supported by a kneeling Atlas, seemed to be ripening like a melon.

The two women sat down, thus effecting a slight alteration in the normal disposition of the chairs.

"You have not been out to-day?" asked Madame Roland.

"No. To tell you the truth, I was a little tired."

As if to show her gratitude to Jean and his mother, she dwelt upon all the pleasure she had derived from the expedition and the prawning.

"I must tell you," she said. "I had my prawns for breakfast this morning. They were delicious. If you

cared to, why shouldn't we repeat the expedition another day?"

"Before embarking on a new one," broke in Jean, "suppose we round off the first?"

"What do you mean? I thought we had."

"Oh, Madame Rosémilly, on those rocks at St. Jouin, I, too, made a catch, which I hoped to be allowed to take home."

"A catch?" she exclaimed with an arch little air of innocence. "What was it? What did you find there?"

"A wife. Mamma and I have come this morning to ask her if she has changed her mind."

"No, Monsieur Jean," she said with a smile, "I never change my mind."

This time it was he who held out his open hand, while with a swift, resolute gesture she laid her own in it.

"As soon as possible?" he pleaded.

"As soon as you like."

"In six weeks' time?"

"I have no objection. But what does my future mother-in-law say to it?"

Madame Roland smiled a little sadly.

"I offer no opinion. I can only thank you for accepting Jean. You will make him very happy."

"I will do my best, Mamma."

Showing for the first time a trace of tender feeling, Madam Rosémilly sprang up, threw her arms round Madame Roland and hugged her like a child. At this unaccustomed demonstration of affection, the poor woman's wounded heart swelled with deep emotion. She could not have described her sentiments, which were at once sorrowful and sweet. She had lost a son, a grown-up son, but in exchange she had gained a daughter, a grown-up daughter. When they had returned to their chairs, they sat facing each other, hand in hand, exchanging smiles and glances. Jean seemed to be almost forgotten. The two ladies discussed a vast range of subjects, which had to be settled in view of the approaching marriage. When everything had been planned and decided,

Madame Rosémilly seemed suddenly to call to mind a trifling detail.

" What about Monsieur Roland? No doubt he has been consulted? "

Mother and son both blushed, but it was Madame Roland who replied.

" Oh, no, it was not necessary."

Then, realising that some explanation was required, she added :

" We never tell him anything beforehand. It is sufficient to inform him afterwards what we have decided."

Not in the least surprised, Madame Rosémilly smiled. The old gentleman was such a nonentity that the procedure seemed to her perfectly natural.

On leaving the house, Madame Roland said :

" Shall we go to your flat? I should be glad of a little rest."

She had a horror of her own house and felt as if she possessed no shelter, no place of refuge. As soon as she entered Jean's house and heard the door close behind her, she heaved a deep sigh, as if the turning of the key gave her a feeling of security. But instead of resting as she had proposed, she began opening cupboards, counting the piles of linen, and checking the number of socks and handkerchiefs. She altered the existing system of arrangement in favour of a superior method of her own, which was more pleasing to her housewifely eye. When she had disposed everything to her satisfaction, when the towels, napkins, underclothing and shirts were all aligned on their proper shelves and the linen divided up into three main categories, namely, body linen, household linen, table linen, she stood back to view her achievement.

" Jean," she called, " come and see how nice it looks."

To please her, he rose and admired her work. When he had returned to his armchair, she crept up softly behind him, slipped her right arm round his neck, and kissed him, while, with her left hand, she deposited on the mantelpiece a small object wrapped in white paper.

" What is it? " he asked.

As she made no reply, he guessed what it was by the shape of the frame.

" Give it to me," he said.

But she pretended not to hear and went back to her cupboards. He sprang to his feet, snatched up the melancholy relic, and crossing the room laid the miniature in his writing-table drawer, which he double-locked. With her finger-tips she brushed away a tear, then she remarked in a somewhat tremulous voice :

" Now, I am going to see how your new maid keeps her kitchen. As she is out just now, I can have a good look at everything to make sure."

IX

THE letters of recommendation from Professors Mas-Roussel, Rémusot, Flache and Borriquel, which were couched in terms most flattering to their pupil Dr Pierre Roland, had been submitted to the Board of the Trans-atlantic Company by Monsieur Marchand, supported by Monsieur Poulin, judge of the Commercial Court, Monsieur Lenient, a substantial shipowner, and Monsieur Marival, deputy mayor of Havre and a particular friend of Captain Beausire. As it happened, the post of ship's surgeon to the *Lorraine* had not yet been filled, and a few days later Pierre was so fortunate as to be nominated. The note informing him of his appointment was brought to him by Josephine one morning as he was dressing. His first feeling was that of a man, under sentence of death, who hears that the penalty has been commuted. He was conscious of a slight alleviation of his sufferings at the thought of his departure, and of that peaceful existence, evermore cradled on the rolling deep, evermore wandering, evermore moving onwards. He now dwelt in his father's house like a reserved and silent stranger. Since that evening when he had allowed the shameful secret he had discovered to escape him in his brother's presence, he felt that he had broken his last links with his family. Tortured with remorse for having said this thing to Jean, he accounted himself vile, unclean, and cruel. And yet it was a relief to him to have spoken. He never met the eyes of his mother or Jean. All three developed a surprising alacrity in averting their glances, the strategic wariness of enemies, dreading to cross each other's path.

"What can she have said to Jean?" he kept wondering. "Did she confess or deny? What does he think of her? What does he think of me?"

He could not guess, and chafed under the uncertainty. But he hardly ever spoke to them, except in Roland's presence, and then only to avoid rousing his father's curiosity. The same day that he received the letter informing him of his appointment, he showed it to his family. His father, who was always ready to indulge in jubilation on every possible occasion, clapped his hands. Jean, though exulting inwardly, said gravely:

"Congratulations, Pierre. I know there were a great many other applicants. It was those letters from your professors that did the trick."

His mother bent her head and said softly:

"I am very glad that you have been successful."

After luncheon Pierre went to the Company's office to obtain information on many points. He ascertained the name of the doctor on the *Picardy*, which was sailing the following day, with the object of gathering from him as many details as possible concerning his new existence, and advice as to any special conditions, to which he would have to adapt himself. Dr Pirette was on board. Pierre was received in a small cabin by a young man with a light-coloured beard, who reminded him of Jean. They had a long talk. From the echoing depths of the great vessel rose a loud, confused, continuous uproar, in which the thud of the cargo, as it was dumped in the holds, was mingled with the noise of footsteps and voices, with the working of the cranes loading packing-cases, with boatswains' whistles, and with the rattle of chains, dragged along or wound on windlasses by the stertorous breath of the steam, which sent a slight shudder throughout the whole vast structure.

But as soon as Pierre had taken leave of his colleague, and was back in the street again, a new kind of depression descended upon him, enveloping him like the fogs that come from the ends of the earth, and sweep across the sea, bringing in their impalpable density a mysterious foulness, like

the pestilential breath of sinister and distant lands. Never, in his hours of intensest suffering, had he plunged into such a slough of despair. The last link was snapped, the last stay was gone. Even when tearing from his heart every vestige of affection he had not known this lost-dog feeling of desolation which had now seized him. It was no longer a violent moral torture, but the forlornness of an animal without shelter, the physical distress of a homeless creature, without a roof to his head, exposed to the fury of rain and wind and storm, and all the brute forces of nature. When he set foot on that steamer, when he entered that little cabin adrift upon the waves, his flesh, the flesh of a man who always had a steady, restful bed to sleep in, had shrunk from the thought of those hazardous days to come. Hitherto his body had enjoyed the protection of solid walls, planted firmly in the stable earth, the certainty of repose in a fixed abode, beneath a roof that kept out the wind. Henceforth all those elements, so cheerfully defied in the warmth of a sheltered home, would become a menace, a perpetual affliction. No longer would he have the earth beneath his feet; only the sea that rolls and roars and engulfs, nor space around him to walk and run, nor roads to ramble in; only a few yards of deck to pace, like a convict among his fellow-prisoners. No more trees, gardens, streets, or houses, nothing but water and clouds! And always he would feel the steamer pulsating under his steps. On stormy days he would have to hold on to bulkheads, cling to doors, clutch the sides of his narrow bunk to avoid being pitched on to the floor. On calm days he would hear the hoarse throb of the screw, and feel the ship which bore him speeding onwards with continuous, methodical, maddening haste. And to this galley-slave's existence he found himself condemned solely because his mother had submitted to a man's embrace. He walked on, bowed down by the forlorn melancholy of a man going forth into exile. He no longer felt the old arrogant contempt and proud aversion for the passers-by, but a mournful yearning to accost them, to confide to them that he was leaving France, to be listened to and comforted. At the bottom of

his heart he felt the piteous craving of a beggar stretching out his hand for alms, a timid, yet vehement, longing to know that there was someone who would regret his departure. He thought of Marowsko. No one but the aged Pole cared for him sufficiently to feel real and poignant sorrow. He determined to pay him a visit without delay. When he entered the shop, the chemist, who was grinding powders in a marble mortar, gave a little start and left his work.

"One never sees you nowadays," he remarked.

Pierre explained that he had been much occupied, but did not go into details.

"How's business?" he asked as he took a seat.

Business, it seemed, was far from prosperous. Competition was terrible, and, in this workmen's quarter of the town, patients were few and impecunious. Only cheap medicines had a sale, and the doctors never ordered rare and complicated prescriptions, on which it was possible to make a five hundred per cent. profit.

"If things go on like this for another three months," added the old fellow, "I shall have to put up the shutters. If I were not counting on you, my dear doctor, I should be blacking boots by now."

Pierre's heart sank. But, since it had to be, he decided to deal the blow without delay.

"Oh, you mustn't count on me. . . . I shall not be able to do anything more for you. . . . I am leaving Havre at the beginning of next month."

In his consternation Marowsko removed his spectacles.

"What did you say? . . . What did you say?"

"I said that I was leaving Havre, my poor friend."

The old man was thunderstruck, as he felt his one remaining hope collapse. Then he was seized with sudden indignation against this man, whom he had followed, whom he loved, whom he had trusted so implicitly, and who was abandoning him thus.

"But surely you cannot mean to betray me, you too?" he faltered.

Pierre was so deeply affected that he could have clasped the old man to his heart.

" I am not betraying you," he said. " But I have found it impossible to set up a practice here, so I have signed on as ship's doctor on an Atlantic liner."

" Oh, Monsieur Pierre ! When you had promised so faithfully that you would help me to make a living."

" What can I do? I, too, have to earn my living. I haven't a penny of my own."

" It's cruel," Marowsko continuel. " It's cruel to do a thing like that. . . . There is nothing left for me now but to die of hunger. At my age, this is the end. It's cruel. You are abandoning a poor old man, who followed you here. It's cruel."

Pierre attempted to explain, to expostulate, to justify himself, to convince Marowsko that no other course was open to him. But the Pole refused to listen. He was up in arms at this desertion, and finally, alluding, doubtless, to certain political incidents, he exclaimed :

" You Frenchmen, you never keep your promises."

It was now Pierre's turn to take offence. He rose from his chair and said, somewhat haughtily :

" You are unjust, Marowsko. I should never have taken this step without urgent reasons, as you might have guessed. Good-bye for the present. I hope that next time we meet you will be in a more reasonable frame of mind."

He left the shop.

" So there's no one who will feel one pang of genuine regret at my departure," he reflected.

He went over in his mind all his acquaintances past and present, and among all the countenances that flitted through his memory, he saw again the face of the barmaid who had first led him to suspect his mother. The instinctive grudge he bore her caused him to hesitate for a moment. Then, reflecting that after all she had been right, he made up his mind. He took his bearings and found his way to the street where the wineshop was situated. The bar was crowded and the atmosphere thick with smoke. It happened to be a holiday,

and the customers, workmen and small shopkeepers, were calling out, shouting, laughing, while the landlord himself helped to serve them, hurrying from table to table, removing empty glasses and returning with them full and foaming. Pierre found a seat near the counter and waited, hoping that the girl would see him and recognise him. But she kept brushing past him without a glance, as she tripped along with an engaging little swing of her skirts. At last he began tapping on the table with a silver coin. She hurried up to him:

"What will you have, sir?"

Absorbed in keeping tally of the refreshments she had served, she never so much as looked at him.

"Well," he exclaimed, "is that how you welcome your friends?"

She glanced at him and said perfunctorily:

"Oh, it's you. Keeping well? I haven't time to-day. Did you say a glass of beer?"

"Yes, please."

When she brought it, he resumed:

"I came to say good-bye to you. I'm going away."

"Indeed?" she said indifferently. "Where to?"

"To America."

"A fine country, so they say."

That was all. Really, it was absurd of him to talk to her when the café was so crowded.

Pierre wandered down to the sea. On reaching the jetty he saw the *Pearl* returning with his father and Captain Beausire. Papagris was rowing, while the others sat in the stern smoking their pipes with an air of supreme content.

"Blessed are the simple-minded," muttered Pierre as he watched them pass.

He took a seat on the breakwater, and endeavoured to lose himself in an animal lethargy. When he came in that evening, his mother said to him, without daring to raise her eyes:

"You will want all sorts of things before you go, and I am rather at a loss. I have been ordering your linen, and I

called in at the tailor's about your suits. But there must be odds and ends that you will require which I know nothing about."

It was on the tip of his tongue to say:

"There's nothing I require."

But he reflected that he must at least accept a decent outfit. In level tones he replied:

"I hardly know yet myself; I will find out at the office."

He made enquiries and handed her a list of indispensible requirements. As she took it from him, his mother looked at him for the first time for many days. Deep in her eyes was the humble, gentle, piteous, pleading expression of a poor, beaten dog, begging for mercy.

On the first of October the *Lorraine*, coming from St. Nazaire, entered the port of Havre. She was to sail for New York on the 7th of the month, and Pierre Roland was to take possession of the little floating cabin in which his life would henceforth be confined.

The next day, as he was leaving the house, his mother met him on the stairs. She had been lying in wait for him, and murmured almost inaudibly:

"Wouldn't you like me to help you to settle in on the steamer?"

"No, thank you, everything is finished."

"I should so love to see your little cabin."

"It's not worth the trouble. It's very small and very ugly."

He passed on, leaving her crushed, white in the face, and leaning against the wall.

Roland, however, who went over the *Lorraine* that same day, could talk of nothing but her magnificence all through dinner, and could not understand why his wife showed no desire to visit the ship, considering that their son was sailing on her.

Pierre's family saw little of him during the next few days. He was nervous, irritable and rough, and no one was safe from the lash of his bitter tongue. Buf on the eve of his

departure he appeared quite changed and softened. When he kissed his parents good-night before sleeping on board for the first time, he said:

"You will come and say good-bye to me on the ship to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, rather," exclaimed Roland. "I should think so. You'll come too, won't you, Louise?"

"Why, certainly," she replied in a low voice.

"We sail at eleven precisely, so you must be down there not later than half-past nine."

"I tell you what," cried Roland, "When we leave you, we'll hurry down to the *Pearl* and take her out beyond the jetties and wait there for a last glimpse of you. Shall we, Louise?"

"Yes, certainly."

"In that way you will not lose sight of us in the crowd that always overruns the wharf when a liner is sailing. It's impossible to pick out one's friends in such a mob. Will that suit you?"

"Yes, certainly. Then that's settled."

An hour later he was stretched out in his bunk, which was long and narrow like a coffin. He lay with open eyes, turning over in his mind all the changes that the last two months had wrought within his life, and, even more, within his soul. By dint of his own sufferings and the sufferings he had inflicted on others, his aggressive and vindictive pain had worn itself out, like a blunted blade. He had hardly sufficient spirit left to resent anything that anyone could do. He was content to let his indignation, like his own existence, drift with the stream. He was weary of strife, weary of punishing, weary of hating, weary of everything—so weary that he could bear no more, that he was fain to let his heart be lulled into oblivion, like one falling asleep. Around him he could hear vaguely the unfamiliar noises of the ship, infinitesimal sounds, barely audible, that still night in port. And all that he felt of his hurt, hitherto so agonising, was the painful contraction of wounds in process of healing.

The activities of the sailors roused him from a deep sleep.

It was day. The boat train with passengers from Paris was arriving at the jetty. He wandered about the decks, mingling with busy, anxious people, who were lookingfor their cabins, calling to one another, asking questions, answering at random, in the bewildered condition which characterises the beginning of a voyage. After he had saluted the captain and shaken hands with the purser, he went into the saloon, where a few Englishmen were already dozing in corners. The immense room had walls of white marble, set off with gilt mouldings, and long tables flanked by two interminable rows of red velvet revolving chairs, which the mirrors reproduced in an unending perspective. It was a typical example of those great, floating, cosmopolitan banquet halls, where the wealthy of every nation assemble to dine. Its sumptuousness compared with that of the great hotels, theatres, public halls, whose crude and vulgar luxury appeals to the eyes of millionaires.

Pierre was on the point of visiting the part of the steamer reserved for second-class passengers, when he remembered that on the previous evening a large crowd of emigrants had been taken on board. He went between decks, but as he approached he was assailed by a nauseating odour of unwashed and indigent humanity, the reek of naked flesh, which is more revolting than the smell of the pelt or fleece of animals. In a kind of low dark vault, like a gallery in a mine, Pierre saw some hundreds of men, women and children lying on wooden bunks or swarming over the bare deck. He could not distinguish individual faces, but obtained a vague impression of that sordid, tatterdemalion rabble, those hordes of wretched men, exhausted, crushed, defeated by life, who were setting out with their gaunt wives and puny children for an unknown world, where they hoped, perhaps, to avoid dying of hunger. As he thought of their past toil, their wasted labour, their ineffectual efforts, their desperate struggles, renewed day after day in vain, of the energy expended by these outcasts, who were about to resume, they knew not where, the old existence of unutterable misery, Pierre could hardly refrain from calling to them :

" For God's sake, throw yourselves overboard, you and your women and children."

His heart was wrung with such pity that he could endure the sight of them no longer, and went away.

He found his parents, his brother, and Madame Rosémilly already waiting for him in his cabin.

" How early you are," he said.

" Yes," replied Madame Roland in a trembling voice. " We wanted to have a little time with you."

He looked at her. She was dressed in black as if she were in mourning, and he suddenly noticed that her hair, which a month ago had been merely grey, was now perfectly white. He had some difficulty in finding seats for the four of them in his small domain and he perched himself on his bunk. Through the open door, a stream of people could be seen passing by, like holiday crowds in a street. The great steamer had been invaded by all the passengers' friends, as well as a host of inquisitive intruders. They wandered about the alleyways, into the saloons, into every corner; heads were actually poked into Pierre's stateroom, while voices outside murmured:

" That's the doctor's cabin."

Pierre closed the door. But as soon as he found himself shut up with his family, he wished he could open it again. The hubbub outside had served as a cloak to their embarrassed silence.

Madame Rosémilly attempted to make conversation.

" These little windows don't let in much air."

" That's a porthole," replied Pierre.

He drew her attention to the thickness of the glass, which enabled it to resist the most violent shocks. Then he explained to her at great length the mechanism for closing it.

Next Roland came to the rescue.

" Is this where you have your dispensary? "

Pierre opened a cupboard and displayed an array of phials, each with its Latin name printed on a white label. He took out one and described its properties, then a second and a third, till he had delivered quite a lecture on thera-

peutics, to which everyone appeared to pay the closest attention. Roland kept saying, with a nod:

"Isn't that interesting?"

There was a gentle tap at the door.

"Come in," called Pierre, and Captain Beausire appeared. He held out his hand.

"I didn't come before, for fear of interrupting your tender farewells."

Pierre made room for him on the bunk. There was another silence. Suddenly the captain pricked up his ears at the words of command which reached him through the panelling.

"We ought to be going," he said, "if we want to get the *Pearl* out in time to see you as you leave the harbour, and to wave you farewell at sea."

Doubtless with a view to impressing the passengers on the *Lorraine,* old Roland had set his heart on this. He rose hurriedly.

"Well, my boy, good-bye."

He bestowed a kiss on Pierre's whiskers, and opened the door. Very pale, with downcast eyes, Madame Roland made no attempt to move. Her husband touched her on the arm.

"Come, be quick. We haven't a minute to lose."

She started up, took one step towards her son and offered him her cheeks, which were of a waxen pallor. He kissed her without a word. Then he shook hands with Madame Rosémilly and his brother.

"When is the wedding?" he asked the latter.

"I'm not sure yet. We must fit it in with one of your spells on shore."

At last they all emerged from the cabin and went up on deck, which was crowded with private persons, porters and sailors. The steam was roaring away in the vast belly of the ship, which seemed to be quivering with impatience.

"Good-bye, again," said Roland, still in a fever to be gone.

"Good-bye," echoed Pierre, who was standing by one of the wooden gangways connecting the *Lorraine* with the quay.

He shook hands all round once more, and his family turned away.

"Quick. Get into the cab," cried Roland.

A fly was waiting to convey them to the outer harbour, where Papagris had the *Pearl* in readiness. There was not a breath of air. It was one of those dry, still, autumn days, when the burnished sea looks cold and hard as steel. Jean seized one oar and Papagris the other, and they began to row. Breakwaters and jetties and even the granite parapets were packed with dense crowds, noisy and restless, waiting for the *Lorraine* to set sail. The *Pearl* glided on, between these two waves of humanity, and was soon clear of the jetties. Captain Beausire sat between the two women and held the helm.

"You'll see," he said, "we shall be right on her course, right on it."

The two oarsmen rowed with might and main so as to get as far out as possible.

"There she is," cried Roland, "I can see her masts and her two funnels. She is moving out of the harbour."

"Row, lads," exclaimed Beausire.

Madame Roland took out her handkerchief and pressed it to her eyes. Roland was standing up holding on to the mast.

"She is just turning in the outer harbour. . . . Now she has stopped. . . . Now she's moving again. She must have picked up her tug. She's coming. . . . Hurrah! Now she's between the jetties. Can you hear the crowds cheering? The *Neptune* is towing her. I can see her bows now. . . . There she is. . . . There she is. . . . Jove! what a ship! Just look at her."

Beausire and Madame Rosémilly turned round. Jean and Papagris stopped rowing. Madame Roland alone did not move. Towed by a powerful tug, which, by comparison, looked like a caterpillar, the great steamer emerged slowly and majestically from the harbour. The entire population of Havre, mustered on the quay, on the beach, and at the windows, was fired with patriotic ardour and shouted

" Hurrah for the *Lorraine!* " acclaiming and applauding the stately departure of this progeny of a great maritime city, who was giving to the sea the fairest of her daughters. But as soon as she had passed down the narrow channel between the granite walls, she dropped the tug, and, rejoicing in her freedom, continued on her way alone, speeding over the ocean like some huge monster.

" There she is. There she is," Roland kept shouting. " She is coming straight at us."

Beausire was overjoyed.

" What did I tell you? " he said. " Don't I know their route? "

" Look, Mamma," Jean whispered to his mother, " she is coming towards us."

Madame Roland uncovered her tear-blinded eyes. After leaving port, the *Lorraine,* taking advantage of the clear calm weather, proceeded at full speed. Beausire levelled his telescope at her.

" Look! There's Monsieur Pierre in the stern, all alone, in full view. Look."

At that moment, high as a mountain, swift as a train, the ship swept past the *Pearl,* so close that she almost touched her. Distraught, bewildered, Madame Roland held out her arms towards her, and saw her son, her Pierre, his gold-laced cap upon his head, throwing her farewell kisses with both hands. But already he was gone, speeding onwards, vanishing, dwindling, till he was already a mere dot on the deck of the mighty vessel. She strained her eyes to see him, but could no longer distinguish him.

Jean clasped her hand.

" You saw him? "

" Yes, I saw him. How good he is! "

The *Pearl* turned towards the shore.

" By Jove, she's fast," exclaimed Roland enthusiastically.

And indeed the steamer was already growing smaller every moment, as if she were melting into the ocean. Following her with her eyes, Madame Roland watched her plunging below the horizon, on her way to unknown lands on

the other side of the world. That ship, which nothing could stop, that ship, which soon she would see no more, bore away her son, her unhappy son. She felt as if half her heart went with him; as if her life were done; as if she would never see her boy again.

"Why are you crying?" her husband asked her. "He will be back within a month."

"I don't know," she faltered. "It's just because I don't feel well."

As soon as they landed, Beausire left them and went off to lunch with a friend. Jean walked on ahead with Madame Rosémilly.

"He really is a fine-looking fellow, our Jean," Roland remarked to his wife.

She assented. But her mind was in such confusion that, without realising what she was saying, she added:

"I am very glad that he is going to marry Madame Rosémilly."

The old man was thunderstruck.

"What's that? Going to marry Madame Rosémilly?"

"Yes. We intended to ask your consent this very day."

"Dear me. Has this been going on for any length of time?"

"Oh, no, only a few days. Jean wanted to find out if she would accept him, before consulting you."

Roland rubbed his hands.

"Excellent. Excellent. It couldn't be better. It has my full approval."

As they were leaving the quay, and about to enter the Boulevard François I., his wife turned and cast one last glance at the open sea. But all that she saw was a tiny wisp of grey smoke, so distant and so faint that it looked like a trail of mist.

ON MEDITERRANEAN WATERS

THIS record contains no interesting tale or adventure.

Last spring I took a little cruise along the Mediterranean shores, and amused myself by making a daily note of the things I saw and the thoughts that occurred to me.

As for the things I saw, they were water, sun, clouds and rocks. That is all I have to tell you about. And as for my thoughts, they were simple, as thoughts may well be when the waves are your carriage, your cradle and your lullaby.

1888.

ON MEDITERRANEAN WATERS

6th April.

I WAS still sleeping soundly when Bernard, who is the owner of my yacht, threw a handful of sand at my window-pane. When I opened the window, the night air struck cool and delicious on my face; I drew it into my lungs and it penetrated even to my soul. The cloudless, dark-blue sky was alive with the twinkling of the stars.

Standing at the foot of the wall, the sailor addressed me.

"Fine weather, sir."

"How is the wind?"

"Off the land."

"All right. I'm coming."

Half an hour later I was walking with long strides down the slope. The pale light of dawn was beginning to appear on the horizon. Far away, beyond the Baie des Anges, I saw the lights of Nice, and, farther still, the recurring flash of the Villefranche lighthouse. In front of me, Antibes loomed vaguely through the waning darkness. This town, which is still enclosed by Vauban's ancient walls, is constructed in cone-formation, and on the highest point of all its two towers stand boldly out.

In the streets were a few dogs and some early-rising workmen. In the port, no one; nothing but the very gentle rocking of the tartanes which lay alongside the quay, and

the hardly audible lapping of the softly heaving water. Now and then I heard the noise of a hawser tautening itself, or the grating of a small boat against the hull of a ship. Boats, stones, the sea itself, seemed to be asleep under the gold-spangled firmament, under the eye of the tiny lighthouse which stands at the end of the jetty, keeping watch over its little harbour. Down by the water-side, opposite Ardouin's ship-building yard, I observed a light, and became aware of movements and voices. I was expected. The *Bel-Ami* was ready for sea.

Going aboard, I went below into the cabin. It was lighted by two candles, swung on gimbals, like compasses, each at the foot of a couch, which served for a bed at night-time. I put on my leather pea-jacket and a warm cap, and went up on deck again. The mooring ropes had already been cast off, and my two men hauled on the chain and brought the anchor apeak. Then they hoisted the mainsail which rose slowly, with a plaintive creaking of pulleys and yards. The sail loomed wide and pale in the darkness, hiding sky and stars. Already it was flapping to puffs of wind, coming down to us from the mountain, which we could not yet see, but which, from the dryness and coldness of the wind, we felt was snow-clad. The breeze was feeble, uncertain, intermittent; it was hardly awake yet. My crew were now getting the anchor aboard. I took the tiller, and the boat, like a tall phantom, glided over the tranquil water. To get clear of the harbour, we had to tack between tartanes and schooners, which were still plunged in slumber. We zigzagged gently from one quay to the other. At our stern we towed our short, round dinghy, which followed us like a newly-hatched cygnet keeping close to the mother-swan.

As soon as we reached the passage between the jetty and the square fort, the yacht became livelier, quickened her speed, and gained animation, as if inspired by a sense of gaiety. She danced upon the water, which was lightly ruffled by innumerable waves, like moving furrows upon a limitless field. After the dead water of the harbour, she

felt the aliveness of the sea. There being no ground-swell, I followed the channel between the town-walls and the *Cinq-cents francs* buoy which marks the main channel, and sailing before the wind, I made to double the cape.

With the birth of daylight, the stars faded away one by one. The Villefranche light made its closing revolution. In the far-distant sky, above the town of Nice, which was not yet in sight, I observed strange, pink lights reflected from the glaciers of the Alps, to whose peaks the dawn was now setting fire. Wishing to watch the sunrise, I handed the tiller over to Bernard. The breeze was now fresher, and sped us swiftly across the quivering waters of a violet sea. The sound of a church bell struck our ears. The three quick notes of the Angelus were swept down the wind. Why is it that a church bell sounds livelier at daybreak and heavier at nightfall? I love that cool, ethereal hour of morning when man still sleeps and earth is rousing herself from slumber. The air is full of a tremulous mystery of which your slug-a-bed knows nothing. One breathes, drinks, sees, the renascence of the material life of the world; that life which makes the circuit of the stars, and is to us a never-ending, tantalising secret.

"The wind will be striking from the east presently," said Raymond.

"The west, I think," retorted Bernard.

Bernard, the master of the yacht, is lean, lithe, careful, prudent and astonishingly clean. He is bearded up to the eyes. His voice is as kindly as his looks. He is faithful and plain of speech. But when he is at sea everything keeps him on tenterhooks; a suddenly encountered ground-swell which indicates a gale out at sea; a cloud lying along the Esterel which threatens a mistral in the west; even a rising barometer, which may mean a squall from the east. But besides being a first-rate sailor, he is a vigilant deck-hand, and pushes cleanliness to the extent of polishing his brass-work the moment a drop of sea-water touches it.

Raymond, his brother-in-law, is a stout lad with a

moustache. He is weather-beaten, indefatigable, plucky; just as faithful and honest, but less mobile, less nervous, more placid, more resigned to the tricks and treachery of the sea.

Bernard, Raymond and the barometer are sometimes found in mutual contradiction, and enact for my benefit an amusing comedy consisting of three characters, of whom the best-informed is dumb.

" By Jove, sir, we are making good speed," said Bernard.

We have, in fact, passed the Gulf de la Salis and the Garoupe, and are nearing Cap Gros, a long low flat rock, lying at surface level. Now comes in sight the whole chain of the Alps, a prodigious wave, which threatens the sea, a wave of granite, crowned by snow. The pointed summits have the appearance of foam which has leaped up, and has been frozen into immobility. And behind these icy peaks rises the sun, shedding its light upon them in a silvery flood.

Doubling Cap d'Antibes, we now come in sight of the Lérin Islands, and far behind them rises the laboriously wrought skyline of the Esterel. The Esterel is the chief adornment of Cannes. It is a charming mountain, a keep-sake mountain, deep-blue in colour, its outlines chiselled delicately, with a coquettish and yet artistic fancifulness. A kindly Creator sketched it in water-colours on a stage-scenery sky, so that it might serve as a model for English landscapists, and as an object of admiration for consumptive, or unemployed, Royal Highnesses. Every hour of the day the Esterel changes its effects, and charms the eyes of the *high-life* of Cannes.

In the morning this range of hills, so neatly and correctly designed, stands out in relief against a blue which is tender and pure, deep and winsome, the ideal blue of a southern watering-place. But at the evening hour, the wooded flanks of the hill-sides become dark and sombre, and lie like a splash of black against a sky, which is unbelievably dramatic and fiery. In no other region have I seen such fairy-like sunsets, such conflagrations of

the whole western sky, such outbursts of cloud-masses, so ingenious and splendid a *mise-en-scéne,* such a daily renewal of exaggerated and magnificent effects, which compel admiration, but would, perhaps, provoke a slight smile, if they were the work of a human artist.

The Lérin Islands, which block the eastern side of the Bay of Cannes, thus separating it from the Golfe Juan, have themselves the air of operetta islands, placed there for the greater pleasure of the winter visitors and invalids. Seen from the open sea, where we are at present, they look like two gardens of sombre green, which have sprung up in the deep.

On the seaward side, at the extremity of Saint-Honorat, a highly romantic ruin rises straight out of the water. It is a typical Walter Scott castle, for ever assaulted by the waves. There, in the olden times, the monks defended themselves against the Saracens, for Saint-Honorat has always belonged to the monks, except during the Revolution, when the island was purchased by an actress of the Théâtre Français. The strong castle, the priestly warriors, the plump Trappists of to-day, who beg from you with a smile, the pretty actress, coming thither, doubtless, to conceal her love-affairs in this islet covered with pine trees and thickets and encircled by a necklace of charming rocks . . . everything about this delicious seaboard, even to the Florianesque names " Lérin, Saint-Honorat, Sainte-Marguerite," is delightful, coy, romantic, poetical, and a little insipid.

As a pendant to the antique, crenellated manor, which rises, posed and slim, from the seaward extremity of Saint-Honorat, there is, facing the land, at the extremity of Sainte-Marguerite, the famous fortress in which the Man with the Iron Mask and Bazaine were imprisoned. A mile or so of water lies between the Croisette of Cannes and this castle, which has the aspect of an old, ruined house, with no trace of dignity or majesty. Heavy and sullen, it crouches there, a typical trap for prisoners.

All three bays are now visible to me. In front, and

beyond the islands, is the Bay of Cannes; closer to us lies the Golfe Juan, and behind us the Baie des Anges, over which tower the snowy summits of the Alps. Further to the east, the shores stretch onward, beyond the Italian frontier, and through my glasses I descry white Bordighera on its promontory.

And along the whole of this infinite line of coast are towns by the edge of the sea, with, higher up, villages clinging to the sides of the hills, and innumerable villas dotted about amongst the verdure, and all these buildings have the look of white eggs, laid upon sand or rock, or in the forests, by huge birds, which have flown down by night from the snowy regions in the heights above.

Cap d'Antibes, a long peninsula thrust in between two seas, is a vast garden in which grow the loveliest flowers in Europe. On it are yet more villas, and at the very point stands Eilen-Roc, that bewitching and romantic habitation, which people come from Nice and Cannes to visit.

The breeze drops; the yacht is hardly moving. After the land wind, which prevails at night, we are hoping for the sea breeze, which will be welcome, from whatever point of the compass it arrives.

"From the west," Bernard still maintains.

"From the east," says Raymond.

But the barometer moves neither up nor down; it stays just below 76.

The white walls of the houses flash under the rays of the sun. From afar they, too, look like sprinkled snow. Over the sea the sunbeams shed a luminous azure lustre. We take advantage of the slightest puffs of wind. These aerial caresses can hardly be felt on the face, and yet, given fine lines and a good set of sails, they send a yacht gliding over the surface of a sea that hardly shows a ripple. Little by little, we creep past the outermost point of land and open up to full view the Golfe Juan, with a naval squadron lying on its bosom.

Seen from a distance the ironclads resemble rocks, or islets, or reefs from which dead trees project. On shore

the smoke of a train can be seen on the line from Cannes to Juan-les-Pins, which will perhaps, at some later date, be the prettiest resort on the whole coast. Three tartanes with lateen sails, one red and the other two white, have come to rest in the stretch of water between Sainte-Marguerite and the mainland. A calm has fallen, the warm and soothing calm of a southern spring morning. Already it appears to me to be weeks, months, years, since I said goodbye to people who chatter and fuss. I feel the intoxication of solitude stealing upon my soul, the gentle intoxication of repose, which nothing will come to disturb; no letters in white envelopes; no telegrams in blue covers; no ring at my doorbell; no barking by my dog. The world cannot summon me, invite me, oppress me with its smiles, harass me with its civilities. I am alone, truly alone, truly my own man. That train may puff its way along the coast! As for me, I am afloat in a little dwelling balanced on wings; dainty as a bird, small as a nest, softer than a hammock; it wanders over the waters at the pleasure of the breeze, and is tied to nothing. I have two obedient sailors to wait upon me and sail the boat; I have books to read and enough provisions for a fortnight. A fortnight of silence! What joy!

My eyes were closing under the heat of the sun, and I was relishing the profound peace of the sea, when Bernard addressed me in an undertone:

"That brig over there has a wind."

He was right. Far along the coast, off Agay, a brig was sailing towards us. I could see clearly with my binoculars that her sails were bellying to the wind.

"Nonsense," retorted Raymond. "It is a local breeze. There is no wind at Cap Roux."

"Say what you please," said Bernard. "We shall have it from the west."

I leaned over to look at the barometer in the cabin. It had gone down within the past half-hour. I told Bernard this, and he smiled.

"It smells the west wind," he murmured.

My curiosity was now fairly aroused. There is a keenness peculiar to those who follow the sea. It makes them see everything, observe everything, take an intense interest in the smallest trifle. My binoculars were fixed to my eyes, and I watched the colour of the water on the horizon. But it remained clear, burnished, lustrous. If there was any wind about, it was still a long way off.

To a sailor, the wind is a living personality. He speaks of it as he would speak of a man, an omnipotent sovereign, sometimes awe-inspiring, sometimes benevolent. It is the main theme of conversation throughout the day; and the continual subject of his thoughts, both day and night. You landsmen know nothing of it, but we sailors know it better than we know our fathers and our mothers. It is invisible, terrible, capricious, sullen, treacherous, fierce; we love it and mistrust it. We know its cunning tricks, its fits of rage, for there are signs in sky and sea that gradually teach us to forecast them. The struggle between us and the wind never relaxes; we are obliged to bear it in mind every minute, nay, every second. Our whole being is on the alert for this battle. The eyes seek to surprise the secret of elusive appearances; the skin receives from it a kiss, or a buffet; the intelligence gauges its temper, anticipates its surprises, judges as to its calmness or its caprice. No enemy, no woman, so rouses us to the sense of combat, or forces us to such prescience, for the wind is the master of the sea. We may avoid it, use it, flee from it, but never do we master it. A sailor's soul is like the soul of a true believer; it is dominated by the idea of an irascible and formidable Deity, by a mysterious, religious, immeasurable fear of the wind, and respect for its power.

"There it comes, sir," said Bernard.

Yonder in the distance, where sky meets sea, a dark blue line extends along the surface of the water, a mere nothing, a shade, a shadow, hardly perceptible. It is the wind. Motionless under the hot sun, we await its coming. It is eight o'clock, I notice.

"It is early in the day for a west wind."

"It will blow hard this afternoon," replies Bernard.

I raise my eyes to the sail, which hangs flat, limp, dead. Its peaked summit rises impressively, and seems to touch the sky, for we have hoisted the long, fair-weather spar of which the point reaches seven feet beyond the top of the mast. There is not a movement; we might be on land. The barometer continues to fall. And all the time, the dark line which we saw in the distance is coming nearer. The burnished, metallic surface is dulled, and suddenly changes to slate-grey. The sky is clear, cloudless.

The sea around us, which lies as featureless as a plate of steel, is all of a sudden wrinkled here and there with almost imperceptible quiverings, which sweep quickly along and disappear almost at once. It is as if a thousand handfuls of fine sand had been scattered on the water. The sail shudders, hardly perceptibly. Then the boom slowly swings over to starboard. I can feel a puff of wind caressing my face. The trembling of the surface extends on all sides of us, as if the rain of sand had become continuous. The cutter has already begun to move. She glides straight forward, and there is a light lapping of water along her sides. The tiller, the long brass tiller, which looks like a flaming rod when the sun shines on it, stiffens in my hand, and the breeze grows stronger every moment. We shall have to luff, but no matter, for our ship mounts well into the wind, which, if it grows no weaker, will carry us, tack by tack, to Saint-Raphaël by nightfall.

We are drawing nearer to the squadron. The six iron-clads and two dispatch-boats swing slowly to their anchors, and their bows face west. We put about, towards the open sea, so as to clear the Formigues, which are marked by a tower in the middle of the bay. The breeze is freshening with surprising rapidity, and a short, quick sea is rising. The yacht, carrying all sail, leans over, racing through the water with the dinghy astern. The tow-rope is taut, and the dinghy, nose in air, and stern down, forges along between her bow waves, which curl away on either side.

As we near the Ile Saint Honorat, we pass close by a

naked red rock, bristling like a porcupine, so uneven, so armed with teeth and spikes and claws as to render walking on it almost impossible. You have to pick your way between these defences and advance with caution. It is called Saint-Ferréol. A little soil, come from no one knows where, has accumulated in the holes and crannies of the rock, and out of it have sprung varieties of lily and a charming blue iris, of a tint that seems to be derived direct from heaven.

It is on this curious reef, lying in the open sea, that the body of Paganini was buried, and remained concealed for five years. So strange a fate was worthy of that weird genius, so grotesque in his gestures, frame and physiognomy, that he was believed to be possessed of the devil. From his super-human talent and excessive emaciation arose a legendary being, a sort of Hoffmann creation. While Paganini was on his way home to his native town of Genoa, accompanied by his son, who was the only person who could understand him, so feeble had his voice become, he died of cholera at Nice on the 27th May, 1840. His son put the corpse on a ship and sailed for Italy. But the clergy of Genoa refused to grant burial to this deceased demoniac. The Vatican was consulted, but did not dare to authorise the inhumation. In spite of this ban, the body was about to be taken off the ship when the municipality raised objection on the ground that Paganini had died of cholera. Genoa was at that time ravaged by an epidemic of that disease, but it was argued that the presence of this additional corpse might aggravate the scourge.

Paganini's son went on to Marseilles, but found that port closed against him for the same reason. From Marseilles he proceeded to Cannes, where again he was unable to effect a landing. So he remained at sea, and the waves cradled the body of the great, but uncanny, artist whom men had everywhere repulsed. Now, at a complete loss what to do, where to go, whither to bestow the dead, sacred to him, he saw this naked rock of Saint-Ferréol surrounded by the waves. He had the coffin landed there, and interred in the middle of the island.

It was not until 1845 that he returned with two friends to find his father's remains and transport them to the Villa Gajona, at Genoa. But would not it have been more in keeping if the marvellous violinist had been left on the rugged reef, amongst those curiously fretted rocks?

Farther away, the castle of Saint Honorat is visible, standing in the open sea. We noticed it when we doubled Cap Antibes. Still more remote is a line of reefs terminated by a tower: Les Moines. At present the white foam is breaking upon them with a great clamour. These reefs are one of the most dangerous places along this coast at night-time. There is no lighthouse, and wrecks are pretty frequent.

A sharp squall made us heel over till the sea reached our deck, and I gave orders to take in the extra spar, which the cutter could no longer carry without danger of breaking the mast.

The troughs of the waves became deeper; the crests were farther apart and their tops broken into foam; the wind whistled, raged, came in squalls; a threatening wind, which called out, "Beware."

"We shall have to put into Cannes for the night," said Bernard.

And so it was. In another half-hour we had to take in the standing jib and replace it with the second, with a reef in it; a quarter of an hour later we took in another reef. At that I decided to make for Cannes, which is a dangerous and unprotected port, with a roadstead open to south-westerly seas, which jeopardise all the shipping. When you think of the substantial sums, which the great foreign yachts would bring to this town if they were provided with a safe berth, you realise how overwhelming is the indolence which has prevented these southerners from exacting this indispensable work from the State.

At ten o'clock we cast anchor in front of the steamship *Le Cannois*. Grieving over my interrupted voyage, I made my way ashore.

The whole roadstead was white with foam.

CANNES, *7th April*, 9 p.m.

PRINCES, princes, everywhere! Those who like princes are happy at Cannes.

Hardly had I set foot yesterday morning on the promenade of La Croisette, when I met three of them, one after another.

If one could open people's minds, as one takes the lid off a stew pot, cyphers would be found in the head of a mathematician, actors gesticulating and declaiming in the head of a dramatist, a woman's face in the head of a lover, lewd images in the skull of a debauchee, and verses in the brain of a poet, but in the cranium of those who visit Cannes would be seen crowns of every pattern, swimming about like fragments of vermicelli in a soup-tureen.

There are men who frequent gaming-houses because they are fond of cards, others throng the race-courses because they love horses. But what attracts people to Cannes is a predilection for Royal and Imperial Highnesses, who find themselves at home there, reigning peacefully over loyal drawing-rooms, in default of the kingdoms from which they have been ejected.

At Cannes you meet big princes and little ones, rich and poor, sad and merry; to suit all tastes. In general these royalties are a modest folk, anxious to please. To their relations with humble mortals they bring a refinement and affability, which are only too rare among our parliamentary representatives, those princes of the voting urn.

If, however, these princes, these poor homeless princes, who have neither budgets nor subjects, and have come to

lead a bourgeois life in this elegant city of flowers, show themselves unaffected and give no occasion for ridicule, even to the irreverent, the same does not hold good of the admirers of Royal Highnesses. These persons revolve around their idols with a religious solemnity which is comical. As soon as they have lost one, they go in search of another, as though their mouths could open only to say *Monseigneur* or *Madame* and speak in the third person. You cannot talk to them for five minutes without their telling you what the Princess replied, what the Grand Duke said to them, of the projected walk with one, the witty remark of the other. You feel, perceive, divine, that they frequent no society except that of personages of royal blood, and that if they consent to talk to you, it is merely so as to furnish you with exact information as to what is done at these altitudes. And the desperate struggles, in which every conceivable ruse is employed, in order to have at their table, once at least every season, a prince, a real prince, one of the top-notchers! What respect one of these persons inspires, when he is invited to a Grand Duke's tennis party, or even when he has merely been presented to " Wales," as these super-chic people call him!

To write your name in the hall-books of these exiles, as Daudet calls them, these Humpty-Dumpties, as another would say, constitutes a constant occupation, refined, engrossing, and important. The register is laid out in the vestibule, with a footman on either side, one of whom offers you a pen. You write your name at the end of a list of two thousand other names of every quality, in which titles abound and honorific prefixes swarm. Then you take your departure, as proud as if you had received the accolade, as happy as if you had accomplished a sacred duty. And to the first acquaintance you meet you say with pride:

" I have just been writing my name in the Grand Duke of Gerolstein's book."

Later in the day, at dinner, you announce with an important air:

"I noticed just now in the Grand Duke of Gerolstein's list the names of X . . ., Y . . . and Z . . ."

And everyone listens intently, as though it was a question of some event of the last importance.

But why should we be amused and surprised at the innocent and inoffensive folly of these elegant tuft-hunters, when we meet in Paris fifty different breeds of lion-hunter, who are no less comical?

It is essential to anyone, who has a salon, to be able to make a display of celebrities. A hunt is accordingly organised with a view to capturing them. There is hardly a woman in society, even the best society, who does not make a point of having her artist, or artists; she gives dinners for them, so that the world and his wife may know that intellect is at home in her house. You may plume yourself on the brains you do not yourself possess but attract to your side with a great clamour, or you may flaunt your relations with royalty. Where is the difference?

Of all great men, it is assuredly the musicians who are most sought after by women, young or old. Certain houses boast complete collections of them. Moreover, these artists have the inestimable advantage of being useful at social gatherings. Collectors, however, who are set on obtaining specially rare specimens, can hardly hope to seat a couple of them side by side on the same sofa. It may be added that there is no depth to which a well-known woman, conspicuous in society, will not descend in order to garnish her salon with a famous composer. The small attentions which are ordinarily employed to attract a painter or a mere man-of-letters, are quite inadequate when it is a question of a professional musician. The most unheard-of means of seduction, the most unusual methods of flattery, are brought into play for his benefit. His hands are kissed as if he were a king, he is knelt to as if he were a god, when he has deigned to perform his own *Regina Coeli*. A hair of his beard is worn in a ring. One evening, while he is playing his *Doux Repos*, an energetic movement of his arm makes a button fly from his trousers. The button

is treated as a medallion, a sacred medallion; it is attached to a fine chain of gold, and finds its shrine in a woman's bosom.

Painters are not quite so highly prized, although still much sought after. They have less of the divine in them, and more of the Bohemian. Their demeanour is lacking in suavity and especially in the sublime, and in place of inspired performances you frequently hear broad jests and extravagant nonsense. In brief, they smack somewhat too strongly of the studio, and those of them who have, by taking pains, rid themselves of the workshop odour, are apt to show a tendency to pose. Painters are, moreover, changeable, fickle and irreverent. You can never be sure of keeping them, whereas the musician makes his nest in your household.

For some years past there has been rather a cult of the man-of-letters, who has, to be sure, great advantages. He can talk; he talks at great length, fluently; he talks for everybody; and inasmuch as he is a professed intellectual, one can listen to him and admire him confidently.

Any woman, who feels herself possessed by this strange fancy for having in her house a man-of-letters, just as one might have a parrot to amuse the neighbouring *concierges* with its chatter, may make her choice between poets and novelists. The poets have more of the ideal, and the novelists more of the unexpected. The poets are the more sentimental, the novelists the more realistic. It is a matter of taste and temperament. The poet has a higher degree of intimate charm, the novelist is frequently the wittier. The novelist, however, presents dangers which you need not dread from the poet. He nibbles, he pillages and exploits everything he sets eyes on. You can never be at your ease with him. You can never be sure that he will not plant you some day, in all your nakedness, between the leaves of a book. His eye is like a pump, which sucks up everything, or like the hand of a thief, ever at work. Nothing escapes him. He is perpetually collecting and picking up unconsidered trifles. He collects all the move-

ments, gestures, motives, incidents and goings-on that he perceives. He notes the most insignificant words and acts. From morning to night he is storing up all sorts of observations, and out of them he makes stories for sale, stories that will run to the end of the world, stories that will be read, discussed, commented on by thousands and millions of persons. And the terrible thing is that these adaptations will resemble the originals, for the rascal has the gift of seeing accurately. Unconsciously and in spite of himself, he narrates exactly what he has seen. Try as he may, his devices for disguising his characters will fail, and people will say: "Did you recognise Mr X. and Madame Y? The likeness is most striking."

Assuredly, it is as dangerous for the fashionable world to attract and pamper novelists, as it would be for a corn-chandler to rear rats in his store-house. Yet none the less they are in favour.

Accordingly, when a woman has made her choice of the author whom she wishes to adopt, she lays siege to him and plies him with compliments and attentions. As water, drop by drop, makes its way through the hardest rock, so do praises, word by word, work upon the susceptible heart of the man-of-letters. And then, as soon as she sees that she has roused his affections and emotions and won him over by assiduous flattery, she isolates him. One by one, she severs every tie which might attach him elsewhere, and she habituates him insensibly to frequenting her house, finding pleasure there, and making it his spiritual home. In order to acclimatise him thoroughly, she devises, prepares and effects successes for him, keeps him in the lime-light, in the centre of the stage. In presence of all the previous habitués of the place, she manifests towards him marked deference and singles him out for admiration.

At this point, he realises that he is an idol, and he decides to stay in the temple she has built for him. It is, moreover, all to his advantage to do so, for other women will practise on him every refinement of indulgence in the hope of snatching him away from her, who first made a

conquest of him. But if he is clever, he will on no account yield to the coy solicitations with which he is overwhelmed. The more loyal he shows himself, the more ardently he will be pursued, besought and loved. Oh, let him be on his guard, and not allow himself to be dragged away by all these other sirens of the salons! He would immediately lose three-fourths of his value if he became common property. Soon he becomes the nucleus of a literary circle, a cult of which he is the god, and the only god; for the authentic religions have never more than one deity. People will come to the house to see, hear and admire him, just as pilgrims come from a great distance to certain shrines. They will envy him, they will envy his hostess. He and she will discuss literature as priests talk theology, with knowledge and seriousness, and they will be listened to, both of them, and when the guests quit this literary salon, they will have the sensation of emerging from a cathedral.

Other lions are also sought after, but they are of less distinguished categories. Generals, for example, who are despised by the world of fashion and are classed hardly higher than members of Parliament, still make a good showing amongst the small bourgeoisie. Members of Parliament are sought after only at moments of political crisis. While Parliament remains peaceful, they are kept in a good temper with an occasional dinner. The man of learning, again, has his partisans, for men's tastes are diverse, and even heads of departments are greatly prized by people who live on the sixth floor. But these are not the classes who come to Cannes, where the bourgeoisie maintains, and that with difficulty, only a few timid representatives.

It is not till the afternoon that all the aristocratic foreigners are encountered on the Croisette. The Croisette is a long promenade, lying close to the sea-shore, and extending in a half-hoop from the point opposite Sainte-Marguerite as far as the harbour under the old town. It is frequented by young women with slim figures—it is the

correct thing to be thin—dressed in the English fashion. They walk with quick steps, and are escorted by active young men arrayed for tennis. From time to time, however, one meets some wretched, emaciated being, leaning on the arm of a mother, a brother, or a sister, and dragging himself along on leaden feet. These pitiable creatures are wrapped up in shawls in spite of the heat; they cough, they gasp for breath, and as we pass them, they look on us with deep, despairing, malevolent eyes. They are ill; they are dying; for this balmy and seductive region is society's hospital; it is the floral graveyard of aristocratic Europe. That fell plague, called nowadays tuberculosis, that plague which never pardons, never ceases ravaging, consuming, destroying its victims by the thousands, has apparently selected this coast for the purpose of finishing them off. And from every corner of the world, what curses must be hurled against this charming but gruesome region! It is filled with perfume and sweetness, yet it is the antechamber of death, where so many families, humble and royal, princely and common, have left some dear one; there is hardly a household which has not lost here a child, in whom their hopes were germinating, their affections blossoming.

I call to memory Mentone, the warmest and healthiest of these winter resorts. Just as in fortress cities, the ramparts are seen standing erect upon the surrounding heights, so from this sea-shore of the moribund may be perceived the cemetery, also on a hill-top.

What a place it would be to live in, this garden where the dead are sleeping! Roses, roses, roses everywhere; crimson, pale, white, veined with scarlet! The tombs, the alleys, the places that are empty to-day and will be filled to-morrow; there are roses over all. The perfume from them is so strong that it intoxicates; it makes the limbs totter and the head swim. And all those who are lying there, were no more than sixteen, or eighteen, or twenty years of age. From tomb to tomb you may go, reading the names of these girls and boys who were slaughtered in their

youth by this fell disease. It is a cemetery of children, a cemetery resembling one of those dances, where all wear white, and to which none but the unmarried are admitted.

The view from this cemetery extends eastward to Italy, as far as the long point of land, from which the white houses of Bordighera overlook the sea; westward, as far as Cap Martin with its leafy flanks running down to the water's edge. The presence of death prevails along the whole of this adorable coast. But note that death is discreet, veiled, full of tact and reticences; well-bred, in fact. She may be brushing past you at any moment, but you will never see her face to face. Death, it might be said, is unknown in this region, everyone acting as accomplice in the deception on which this sovereign lady plumes herself. But who can fail to be aware of her, to catch the whiff of her as she passes by, with a glimpse of the hem of her black robe! There must needs be many roses, many flowers on the lemon-trees, if the fearsome odour of the death-chamber is to be disguised.

Never do you see a coffin in the streets, never do you see mourning draperies, never do you hear a funeral knell. The emaciated pedestrian of yesterday no longer passes your window. That is all. If you are surprised at not seeing him again, if you are anxious about him, the whole staff of the hotel will unite in assuring you, with a smile, that your friend is better and has gone to Italy on the advice of his physician. In every hotel, in fact, death has her secret staircase, her confidants, her gossips. A moralist of the olden time would have had many sage reflections to make on this contrast between fashion and sorrow, living here cheek by jowl.

At noon, the promenade was deserted, and I went back aboard the *Bel-Ami*, where a frugal luncheon had been prepared for me by Raymond, who, in a white apron, was frying potatoes.

During the rest of the day I read.

The wind was still violent and the yacht danced at her anchors; we had had to let down our starboard anchor as

well. I succumbed at last to the effect of the movement and dozed for a time. When Bernard entered the cabin to light the candles, I saw that it was seven o'clock. The ground-swell along the quay made it difficult to get ashore, so I dined on board.

Later I went up on deck and sat in the fresh air. The lights of Cannes stretched out to east and west. There is nothing prettier than a lighted town, seen from the sea. To the left, the old quarter, where the houses seem to climb up one on the top of the other, aspired to mingle its lights with the stars; on the right, the gas jets of the Croisette uncoiled like an immense serpent to a distance of two miles.

I reflected that in all these villas, all these hotels, there were people gathered together this evening, as they had been yesterday, and would be to-morrow, and that they were talking. And of what were they talking? Princes! The weather! And after that? The weather! Princes! And after that? Of nothing at all. Is there anything more deadly than a table-d'hôte conversation? I have lived in hotels, I have been subjected to the spectacle of the human soul revealing itself in all its platitudes. Truly, one must be braced to supreme stoicism, unless one is to die of mortification, disgust and shame, at hearing men converse. Man, the ordinary man, may be wealthy, celebrated, esteemed, respected, highly regarded by others and pleased with himself, but he knows nothing, understands nothing, and talks of brains with a complacent contempt, which is appalling. A man must be blind and drunk with stupid pride to conceive that he is anything but a fool, even if slightly superior to other fools. Hearken to these wretches, seated round the table. They are conversing. They converse with ingenuity, confidence, and amiability and they call that the exchange of ideas. What ideas? They say when they have gone for a walk that the road was very pretty, but coming back it was a little cold; that the cookery is not bad in this hotel, although restaurant food is always a little too rich. And they recount their acts, their likes and dislikes, and their opinions. The hideousness of soul, which I see in them,

reminds me of a monstrosity kept in spirits in a glass jar. I witness the slow hatching of commonplaces, which they never tire of repeating. I can feel the words dropping down out of that storehouse of idiocy into their foolish mouths, and out of their mouths into the stagnant atmosphere through which they reach my ears. Their ideas, forsooth! Their loftiest ideas, the most solemnly held, the most highly esteemed, are they not the irrefutable proof of eternal, universal, indestructible and never-failing folly?

All their conceptions of God, the clumsy God who makes a mess of his first experiment and has to try again; who listens to our confidences and makes a note of them; the God who is policeman, Jesuit, lawyer, gardener, dressed now in a breastplate, now in flowing robes, now in clogs; their negations of God, based on terrestrial logic, the arguments for and against, the history of sacred beliefs, of schisms, heresies, philosophies, affirmations as well as doubts, all the puerility of principles, the fierce and blood-stained violence of the constructors of hypotheses, the chaos of conflicting evidence, the whole miserable effort of unfortunate humanity, incapable of conceiving, penetrating and knowing, and yet so prompt to believe; all these considerations prove that men have been cast upon this tiny world merely in order to drink, eat, beget children, compose little ditties and, to pass the time, kill one another. Happy are those whom life satisfies, those who can keep themselves amused, those who are contented.

There are people who are in love with everything, enchanted with everything. They love the sun and the rain, the snow and the mist, entertainments and domestic calm, they love all they see and do and say and hear. Some lead a pleasant life of tranquillity and contentment in the midst of their offspring. Others have a stirring existence of amusements and distractions. None of them are bored. Life, for them, is a diverting spectacle, in which they play their parts; it is a gay and varied experience, which charms without causing excessive astonishment.

Others, however, with one lightning flash of thought traverse the narrow circle of possible satisfactions and remain appalled before the utter nothingness of happiness, the monotony and poverty of earthly joys. As soon as they reach their thirtieth year, all is over for them. What else is there to wait for? Nothing distracts them any more; they have made the round of our jejune pleasures.

Happy are those who do not know the dread disgust that comes of the same actions repeated over and over again! Happy are those who have enough energy to recommence day after day the same tasks, performed with the same movements, in the same surroundings, with the same horizon facing them, the same sky over their heads; to walk along the same streets and there encounter the same faces, and the same animals! Happy are those who are not afflicted with prodigious disgust by the realisation that nothing changes, nothing passes, and that all things become a weariness! Our minds must needs be easy-going, insensitive, unexacting, if we are to be content with things as we find them. How comes it that humanity has not yet shouted out "Curtain!" Why have they not yet demanded the next act, with actors who are other than men; with other forms, other amusements, other plants, other stars, other inventions, other adventures?

Can it be that no one has yet felt a hatred of the never-varying human visage, a hatred of animals, who, their unchanging instincts transmitted in their spermatozoa from the earliest of their breed to the latest, are little more than living mechanical devices; a hatred of landscapes of never-ending monotony, a hatred of pleasures to which there is never a new one added? People will counsel you to find consolation in the love of knowledge and the arts. Do they not realise, forsooth, that each one of us is a prison to himself? Never can we succeed in escaping from ourselves, prisoners as we are, chained to the cannon-ball of a dream that can never take wing. The sole advance we effect in our cerebral methods consists in verifying material facts by means of absurdly imperfect instruments, which, to a

slight extent, make good the deficiencies of our organs of sense. Every twenty years or so some wretched, poverty-stricken investigator, working himself to death, discovers that the atmosphere contains a hitherto unknown gas, or that by rubbing sealing-wax on cloth a force may be disengaged which can be neither weighed, defined nor described, or that among the innumerable unknown stars there is one, never before remarked, in the neighbourhood of another, which was seen and baptised long since. What does it matter? Do our maladies come from microbes? So be it. But where do the microbes come from? And if the microbes are sick, where do their maladies come from? If it comes to that, where do the suns come from? We know nothing, we can see nothing, we can do nothing, we can neither guess nor imagine anything; we are enclosed, imprisoned in ourselves. And yet there are people who are amazed at human genius!

The arts? Painting consists in reproducing in colour monotonous landscapes, which never bear any resemblance to nature; in drawing human beings, in an effort, never successful, to bestow on them the aspect of living creatures. With desperate futility, the artist strives year after year to imitate reality, and hardly does he succeed, by means of his dumb and motionless copies of actualities, in making his intentions clear even to a practised eye. What is the object of all these efforts? of this futile imitation? of this commonplace reproduction of things that are in themselves a mere weariness? It is a wretched business!

Poets do with words what painters try to do with shades of colour. Again I ask, why? When you have read the four cleverest and most talented of them, it is useless to open another book, for the reader is none the wiser. Poets, like painters, are only men, and all they can do is to imitate men. They exhaust themselves in sterile labour. Inasmuch as man never changes, so their useless art is unchangeable. Ever since our brief thoughts began to stir, man has been the same. His sentiments, beliefs and sensations are the same. He has not advanced, he has

not retreated; he has remained stationary. What do I gain from learning what I am, from reading what I think, from gazing at my own reflection in the commonplace adventures of fiction?

Ah, if poets could traverse space, explore the stars, discover other universes, other beings! If they could display before my mind continuous variations in nature and the form of things, lead me about in an unknown sphere of change and surprise, open mysterious portals giving upon unexpected and marvellous horizons, I should read them day and night. But they can do nothing, these impotent ones, but change the place of a word, and show me my own image, just as the painters do. What is the use of that?

The truth is that man's power of thought is stationary. Its limits are defined; they are narrow and cannot be crossed; once they are reached, human reason goes round and round like a horse in a circus, or like a fly in a closed bottle, whose flight extends as far as the inner side of the bottle, against which it keeps knocking itself. And yet, for want of something better, it is a pleasant thing to dream when one is leading a lonely life. On this little craft, which is tossed about by the sea, and can be swamped and upset by a single wave, I know and feel to what an extent our knowledge is non-existent, for the earth floating in space is even more isolated, more lost, than this boat in the midst of the waves. They are of like importance; their destiny will work itself out. Our insect pride may engender belief and hope, but it is a joy to me to understand the nothingness of the one and the vanity of the other.

Cradled by the pitching of the vessel, I lay down and fell into the profound slumber which the sea bestows. I did not awake until the hour when Bernard roused me with the news:

"Bad weather, sir. We can't sail this morning."

The wind had dropped, but the sea was running very high outside, and a voyage to Saint-Raphaël was impossible. There was, accordingly, another day to spend at Cannes.

About noon the west wind rose again, but was not so strong as on the previous day, so I decided to take advantage of it and pay a visit to the squadron in the Golfe Juan. Crossing the roadstead, the *Bel-Ami* danced like a goat. I had to give all my attention to the steering to keep myself from being drenched by the waves which were coming at us almost abeam. Soon, however, I gained the lee of the islands and entered the stretch of water lying below the castle of Sainte-Marguerite. The walls of this fortress dip sheer down to wave-beaten rocks, and its highest point hardly rises above the inconspicuous elevation of the top of the island. It looks like a head plunged between a pair of heavy shoulders.

The place at which Bazaine descended is plainly visible. A man need not be a clever gymnast to let himself slip down across those accommodating rocks. The method of Bazaine's escape was narrated to me in great detail by a man, who claimed to be well-informed and may have been so.

Bazaine lived in comparative freedom, receiving daily visits from his wife and children. Madame Bazaine, a woman of energetic character, declared to her husband that if he did not take measures to escape she would leave him for ever and take the children with her. She revealed her plan to him. In view of the dangers of the flight and his doubts as to its success, he hesitated, but seeing his wife determined to carry out her threat, he finally fell in with her plans. Every day, accordingly, children's playthings, which constituted a tiny gymnastic apparatus for indoor use, were imported into the fortress. With the help of these toys, a knotted rope was fabricated for use by the Marshall. It was put together gradually, so as not to arouse suspicion, and was then carefully hidden by a friendly hand in a corner of the meadow. In due course the date was fixed for the escape. The surveillance appeared to be less strict on Sundays, so a Sunday was chosen. Madame Bazaine kept out of the way for some time. It was Bazaine's custom to walk until eight o'clock in the

evening in the prison meadow, accompanied by the superintendent, an agreeable person, whose society he enjoyed. At eight he would go back to his quarters, which the jailer bolted and padlocked in presence of his superior. On the evening of the flight, Bazaine feigned to be indisposed and expressed a wish to retire an hour earlier. He actually entered his quarters, but the moment the superintendent left him, in order to look for the jailer and warn him to lock up the captive immediately, Bazaine went straight out and hid himself in the courtyard. The empty prison was bolted, and all returned to their quarters. About eleven o'clock, Bazaine, armed with the rope ladder, came out of his hiding-place. Having fixed his ladder, he climbed down to the rocks. At daybreak, an accomplice detached the ladder and threw it down at the foot of the walls. In the morning, at about half past eight, the superintendent made enquiries after the prisoner, who was in the habit of going out early and whom he was surprised not to see. Bazaine's personal attendant refused to disturb his master. At nine o'clock, finally, the superintendent forced the door and found that the bird had flown.

Madame Bazaine, for her part, to further her plans, had gone to seek out a man, to whom her husband had formerly rendered a service of capital importance. He had a grateful heart and she gained an ally as devoted as he was energetic. Together they arranged all details. Thereafter she betook herself to Genoa, under a false name, and hired a small Italian steamer at the rate of a thousand francs a day on the pretext of an excursion to Naples. It was stipulated that the voyage should last at least a week and that it might be extended for an equal term on the same conditions.

The steamer set forth on its voyage, but hardly had it taken the sea when the lessee appeared to change her mind. She asked the captain whether he would mind going as far as Cannes in order to pick up her sister-in-law. He consented willingly and cast anchor on a Sunday evening in the Golfe Juan. Madame Bazaine had herself put ashore and gave orders for the boat to stand by. Her faithful

accomplice was awaiting her with another boat at the promenade of La Croisette, and they crossed the stretch of water which separates the little island of Sainte-Marguerite from the mainland. Her husband was there on the rocks, with torn clothes, injured face and blood-stained hands. The sea being a little rough, he was obliged to take to the water in order to reach the boat, which would have been staved in on the rocks had it come close in. When they reached the mainland, the second boat was abandoned; they took the first boat and gained the steamer, which had stood by with steam up.

Madame Bazaine then announced to the captain that her sister-in-law was too unwell to come. Pointing to Marshal Bazaine, she remarked:

"I had no servant, so I have engaged a footman. The imbecile has just fallen on the rocks and got into the condition you see. Please put him with the sailors and let him have what is necessary for bandaging himself and repairing his clothes."

Bazaine slept between decks. At dawn on the following day, the vessel then being out at sea, Madame Bazaine again changed her plan and, declaring that she was ill, had herself taken to Genoa. At Genoa, however, the news of the escape was already known and the populace, apprised of the facts, created a riot and raised shouts under the hotel windows. The tumult soon became so violent, that the proprietor took fright and forced the travellers to make their escape through a secret door.

I repeat this tale as it was told me. I take no responsibility for its veracity.

We were now approaching the squadron. The massive ironclads lying in line resembled war-towers constructed in the middle of the sea. Here were the *Colbert, Devastation, Admiral-Duperre, Courbet, Indomptable, Richelieu,* as well as two cruisers, the *Hirondelle* and *Milan* and four torpedo craft engaged in evolutions in the bay. I visited the *Courbet,* which is considered the most perfect type of man-o'-war in our navy.

Nothing gives the idea of the labour of man, the minute yet formidable labour of this little animal with the ingenious hands, so clearly as these enormous iron citadels which float, move about, carry an army of soldiers, an arsenal of monstrous weapons, and which are constructed, vast as they are, of minute pieces adjusted together, welded, forged, riveted. It is the work of ants and of giants. It reveals in the same moment all the genius, all the impotence, all the incurable barbarism of the human race, which is so vigorous and yet so weak that it uses its energies to create engines for its own destruction.

In bygone times men took stones and constructed cathedrals of lace-work, fairy palaces to shelter devout and childish dreams. Were not these men of old as worthy as those of to-day, who launch floating houses of steel, which are the temples of death?

While I was leaving the ship for my dinghy, I heard a fusillade breaking out on shore. It was the Antibes regiment engaged in musketry practice on the sands and among the pine trees. The smoke from their rifles rose in white puffs like little clouds of cotton, dissipating gradually. Red-trousered soldiers were to be seen running along the sea-shore. The naval officers' interest was at once excited and they levelled their binoculars landward, exhilarated by this simulacrum of war.

I have only to think of the word war, and I have the same sense of bewildered horror as if there were mention of sorcery, the Inquisition, or anything else that is remote, obsolete, abominable, monstrous, and unnatural. When cannibals are mentioned, we smile loftily to proclaim our superiority to those savages. But who are the true savages, those who kill in order to satisfy their hunger, or those who kill for killing's sake?

These little soldiers of the line, who are doubling along the shore, are destined to death, like the herds driven by a butcher along the roads. Out on some battle-field they will fall, their heads cleft by a sabre, or their chests perforated by a bullet. And these are young men, who could work,

who could be productive and useful. Six months hence, perhaps, their old and poverty-stricken fathers, their mothers, who have loved and adored them for twenty years, as only mothers can love and adore, will hear that their son, their child, the grown-up child, whom they have reared with such pains, at such a cost, with so much love, has been thrown like a dead dog into a hole in the ground, after having been disembowelled by a cannon-ball, trodden underfoot, smashed, reduced to pulp under a cavalry charge. Why has their boy, their lovely boy, their only hope, their pride, their life, been killed? They do not know. And we may well ask, why?

War. . . ! Fighting. . . ! Slaughter. . . ! Human massacre. . . !

To-day, at the present epoch, with our civilisation, with the wide-spread science and lofty philosophy, which we believe human genius to have evolved, we maintain schools in which men are taught to kill, to kill at a great distance, to kill with precision, men in a mass, poor devils of innocent fellows, men with families, citizens without a black mark against them. The most stupefying thing of all is that the people do not rise up against their Government. What difference is there after all between a monarchy and a republic? It is amazing that all society does not break into revolt at the mere word war.

Ah, we shall always live under the weight of the old hateful customs, the criminal prejudices, the ferocious ideas of our barbarian ancestors, for we are essentially animals, and we shall remain animals, dominated by instinct, and immutable. Would not the world have cried shame had anyone, except Victor Hugo, uttered this great cry of liberation and truth?

" Nowadays force is rightly named violence. War has been brought to the bar of judgment. Humanity has laid the plaint and civilisation has undertaken the prosecution and is preparing the great indictment of the captains and the conquerors. At last the nations have come to understand that a wrong is not diminished because it is committed

on a great scale; that if killing is a crime, there is no extenuating circumstance in killing wholesale; that if theft is shameful, annexation cannot be glorious. Ah, let us proclaim these absolute verities, let us dishonour war."

A poet's futile anger, a poet's indignation! War is more highly venerated than ever. An artist of ability in this department, a butcher of genius, Herr von Moltke, replied one day to a peace delegation in the following strange words:

"War is a holy thing and of divine institution. It is one of the sacred laws of the world. It is war that preserves for man all the great and noble sentiments such as honour, disinterestedness, virtue, courage. In a word, it is war that prevents man from relapsing into the most hideous materialism."

According to this, you are collected in herds of four hundred thousand, you march day and night without rest, you think of nothing, study nothing, learn nothing, read nothing, are of no use to anybody; you rot in filth, you make your bed in the mud, live like brutes in a continuous besotted dullness, you pillage towns, set fire to villages, ruin whole races, and finally come face to face with another agglomeration of human flesh, and hurl yourselves upon it. You make lakes of gore, you cover the plains with pounded flesh mingled with blood-stained mud and heaped-up corpses. You have your arms or legs blown off, your brains smashed into pulp, without any gain to anyone, and you die in the corner of a field. Meanwhile your old father and mother, your wife and children, are dying of starvation. That is what is described as not "relapsing into the most hideous materialism."

Soldiers are the scourge of the world. We struggle with nature, we pit our ignorance against every variety of obstacle in order to render our miserable life a little less hard. Men of heart, men of science, wear out their lives in working, in seeking for what can aid and succour and solace their fellow-creatures. In blind devotion to their useful task, they accumulate discoveries, they enlarge the

human intellect, widen the boundaries of science. Each day they add their quota of new knowledge to the human understanding, each day they confer on their country some element of welfare, of comfort, of energy.

Then war comes on the scene. In six months the generals have rendered vain twenty years of effort, patience and genius. That is what is described as not " relapsing into the most hideous materialism." Yes, we have seen war. We have seen men turn back into brutes. We have seen them go crazy, killing for pleasure, from terror, out of bravado and ostentation. When right no longer existed, when law was dead, when all notion of justice had disappeared, we have seen innocent people shot by the wayside, because they had betrayed fear and were on that account suspect. We have seen dogs, chained at their masters' doors, shot in order to test new revolvers. We have seen machine-guns used in mere wantonness against cows, lying in a field, just for the fun of the thing.

That is what is called not " relapsing into the most hideous materialism."

To invade a country, to find a man defending his house, and to slaughter him because he is wearing a blouse and has not a military cap on his head; to burn the dwellings of wretched starving creatures, to break some of the furniture, and steal the rest, to drink up the wine found in the cellars, to violate the women found in the streets, to blaze off millions of francs worth of gunpowder and to leave destitution and cholera in one's wake. That is what is called not " relapsing into the most hideous materialism."

And after all, what have these professional fighting-men done to prove their possession of even a small degree of intelligence? Nothing. What have they invented? Some guns and rifles. That is all. Did not the inventor of the wheelbarrow, with his simple and practical idea of fitting a wheel to two sticks, do more for humanity than the inventor of modern fortifications?

What remains to us of Greece? Books, statues. Was Greece great because she conquered, or because she pro-

duced? Was it the invasion of the Persians that prevented her from "relapsing into the most hideous materialism"? Was it the barbarian invasions which saved regenerated Rome? Did Napoleon the First continue the great intellectual movement initiated by the philosophers of the end of the eighteenth century?

Very well, then, inasmuch as Governments assume the right of life and death over nations, there is nothing surprising if nations occasionally assume the same right over Governments. A nation has the right to defend itself. No one has an absolute right to govern others. Government can be carried on only for the welfare of the governed, and anyone who governs is just as responsible for avoiding war as a ship's captain is for avoiding shipwreck. When a captain has lost his ship, and is recognised to have been guilty of negligence or even of incapacity, he is court-martialled and sentenced. Why should not Governments be judged after every war? If the nations understood this; if they took into their own hands the infliction of punishment on blood-guilty powers; if they refused to let themselves be killed without reason; if they turned their arms against those who gave them these weapons for purposes of massacre, on that very day war would die. . . . But that day will never come.

AGAY, *8th April.*

"FINE weather, sir,"

I rose and went on deck. It was three in the morning. The sea was smooth; the infinite sky resembled an immense vault strewn with seeds of flame. The lightest of breezes was blowing off-shore. Our coffee was hot, and after drinking it, we set sail, without losing a minute, in order to take full advantage of the favouring breeze. We glided over the water and made for the open sea. The coast vanished from view, and there was nothing around us but darkness. To plunge into the silent void of night, to float across the water, remote from the world, is a disturbing and exquisite sensation. It is as if one had quitted the world without prospect of arriving anywhere, as if there were to be no farther shore, nor future dawn of day. At my feet, a little lamp shed its light on a compass, which gave me my direction. I should have to run at least three miles out from the coast, in order to double Cap Roux and Le Drammont safely in any wind that might chance to arise after sunrise. To avoid accident, I had the lights lighted, red to port and green to starboard, and I took an intoxicated joy in this long, calm, silent flight.

Suddenly we heard a cry ahead of us. I was startled, for the voice was close at hand. I could see nothing, nothing at all, except that wall of darkness, into which I was plunging and which closed again behind me. Raymond, who was watching in the bows, said:

"It is a tartane sailing eastward. Bear away a little, and we shall pass astern of her."

Then suddenly, quite close to us, loomed a vague and terrifying phantom, the great, moving shadow of a lofty

sail, which appeared for a few seconds, to vanish almost immediately. Nothing is stranger, more spectral, more thrilling than these swift apparitions on the sea at night. Fishing-smacks and sand-boats carry no lights; you do not see them until you are brushing past them, and this gives you a constriction of the heart, as if you had had a supernatural encounter.

I heard the distant whistling of a bird, which came near, passed us and was lost in the distance. Why could I not wander like that bird?

At last the dawn rose, gradually, gently, without a cloud, and after it the day, a real summer day.

Raymond declares that we shall have an east wind; Bernard maintains that it will be from the west. He advises me to trim the sails accordingly, and to make for distant Le Drammont on a starboard tack. I follow his advice at once, and we approach the Esterel, lazily propelled by a dying breeze. The long, red slope dips into the blue water, which gains a violet tint by contrast. This quaint, spiky, attractive range of hills, with its headlands and innumerable bays, its freakish, capricious rocks, has the thousand self-conscious poses of a much admired mountain. The pine woods run up its flanks as far as the granite peaks, which resemble castles, towns, armies of rocks pursuing one another. And the sea at its base is so limpid that it is possible to distinguish the sandy from the weedy bottoms.

There are days, I confess, when I have such a horror of existence that I long for death. The unvarying monotony of landscapes, faces, thoughts, causes me distress that amounts to acute suffering. I am astonished and repelled by the mediocrity of the universe; I am disgusted by the triviality of everything, and dumbfounded by the pettiness of human beings.

On other days, however, I relish everything with animal enjoyment. When my restless, troubled spirit, over-excited with work, leaps forth to greet hopes that are no part of the human heritage, only to fall back into contempt for everything, with a renewed realisation of its nothingness,

my animal body makes itself drunk with all the intoxicating beauty of life. Like a bird I love the sky, like a prowling wolf the forests, like a chamois the rocks. Like a horse I love the deep grass, in which I can roll or run, like a fish the clear water, in which I can swim. I feel within myself a thrill of kinship with all species of creatures, all instincts, all the confused desires of the lower animals. I love the earth as animals love it, not as other men. I love it without praising it, or poetising it, without raptures of delight. With a passion, which is brutish yet profound, contemptible yet holy, I love all that lives, all that puts forth buds, all that is visible; my spirit remains untroubled, but my eyes and heart are stirred by all these things, all of them: days, nights, rivers, seas, storms, woods, dawns, woman's eyes, woman's body. The water's caress on sandy shore or granite rocks fills me with tender emotion, and the joy that sweeps over me, when I feel myself borne along by the wind, and cradled by the waves, springs from this surrender of myself to the brutal and natural forces of the world; from having found my way back to primitive life. On a fine day like this I have in my veins the blood of the lascivious, errant fauns of old. No longer am I merely the brother of man. I am the brother of every living being and of all created things.

The sun was higher in the sky. The breeze was falling, as it had done two days before, but the west wind, prophesied by Bernard, did not spring up, any more than the east wind, foretold by Raymond. Until ten o'clock we floated as motionless as a derelict. Then faint puffs of air from the open sea started us on our way; they kept dropping and springing up again, as if making fun of us, teasing the sail, and continually promising us a breeze, which never came. A mere nothing, a breath, the flutter of a fan, sufficed to keep us on the move. Porpoises, those clowns of the sea, were playing around us, leaping out of the water with a bound as rapid as the flight of a bird, shooting through the air quicker than a flash of lightning, and then diving and coming up again further on.

About one o'clock, when we were near the Agay crossing, the breeze died down altogether, and I realised that I should have to spend the night out at sea unless I ordered the little boat to be manned and had the yacht towed in to the shelter of the bay. Accordingly I sent my two men into the dinghy, and they began to tow with a thirty yards rope. A fiery sun shed its burning rays on the water, and on the deck of the yacht. The two sailors rowed with a slow, regular stroke, like two well-worn winches, which move without much force, but with a steady, continuous, mechanical effort.

The attractive roadstead of Agay has a natural formation resembling a well-protected dock. On one side it is guarded by steep, red rocks, above which rises the semaphore on the top of the mountain. This wall of rock is continued seaward by the Ile d'Or, so named from its colour. The other side is protected by a low chain of rocks, and by a small projection almost level with the water, on which has been built a lighthouse marking the entrance of the roadstead. At one end of the harbour there is an inn frequented by ships' captains, when forced by rough weather to take shelter. In summer there are fishermen. Agay boasts a railway station at which two trains halt daily, though no passenger ever alights, and a pretty stream which winds its way back into the Esterels as far as the Malinfirmet Valley, which is full of oleanders, like an African ravine. There is no road debouching from the interior on this exquisite bay; only a track, which leads to Saint Raphaël, past the porphyry quarries of Le Drammont. This way is, however, impassible for vehicles, and this gives us the feeling that we are in the heart of the mountains.

I decided to wander on foot, until dark, along those paths bordered with cistus and lentisk. These shrubs have the strong, aromatic odour, characteristic of wild plants. The air is full of it; it mingles with the great, resinous breath of the immense pine forest, which lies panting under the hot sun.

After an hour's walk I found myself deep in the sunlit

pine wood, which is planted on a gentle slope. The dark granite rocks, the bones of the earth, borrowed a reddish hue from the sunshine. I was proceeding at my leisure, as happy as a lizard sunning itself on a hot rock, when I caught sight of two lovers on the top of the hill. They were coming in my direction, but they moved in an intoxicating dream and did not notice me.

It was pretty, it was charming, to see these two coming down the hill, with linked arms and inattentive steps, through the sunshine and shadow that chequered the hillside. The woman was simply and gracefully dressed. She wore a grey travelling frock and a felt hat, which was both dashing and coquettish. As for the man, I hardly glanced at him, but he seemed to me presentable. I sat down behind a pine-trunk to watch them passing. They did not notice me, but continued their descent, with their arms round each other's waists, in the silence of an absorbing, mutual affection. When they were out of sight, I felt sad at heart. Happiness had brushed past me, happiness, of which I knew nothing, though I felt that it was the flower of human joys. Too weary to walk further, I returned to the bay of Agay, where I lay stretched out on the grass at the edge of the stream until evening. At seven o'clock I went to dine at the inn.

My crew had warned the landlord, and he was ready for me. My cover was laid in a large, low-ceilinged, white-washed room. At the adjoining table, my lovers were already dining. They sat face to face, and gazed into the depths of each other's eyes. I was ashamed to intrude on them, and felt that it was unseemly and ill-bred. They scrutinised me for a few moments and then began to converse in undertones. The inn-keeper, who was an old acquaintance of mine, took a chair beside me, and talked to me of boars and rabbits, of the fine weather, of the mistral, and of an Italian captain who had slept there the night before. Presently, to flatter me, he praised my yacht. Through the window I could see the black hull and the tall mast, with my red and white burgee at the top.

My neighbours finished their meal quickly and went out at once, but I waited awhile, watching the slim crescent of the moon shedding its rays over the little roadstead. At last I saw my dinghy coming shoreward, furrowing the placid, moonlit radiance of the water. Going down to board her, I saw my two lovers standing on the beach and contemplating the sea. And as the hurried strokes of the oars carried me away, I was still able to distinguish their shadows upon the beach, their dark forms standing side by side. Such an abundance of love was radiating from them, that it seemed to spread as far as the horizon, and convert them into majestic and symbolical figures. They appeared to fill the bay, the night, the heavens. When I boarded my yacht, I stayed a long time on deck. I was filled with melancholy, I knew not why; with regrets, for which there was no cause. I could not make up my mind to go below into my cabin. It was as if I wished to breathe a little more of that love, with which the atmosphere surrounding them was impregnated.

Suddenly one of the inn windows was illuminated, and I saw their profiles against the light. At that, a sense of solitude overwhelmed me. In the balminess of that night of spring, with the light lapping of the waves upon the sand, under the slender crescent moon that was sinking, where sea touched horizon, I had in my bosom so keen a longing for love, that almost I cried aloud in my torment. And then I felt ashamed of my weakness. Wishing to disavow the manhood, which I have in common with my fellows, I accused the moonlight of having unsettled my reason.

I have, it is true, always believed that the moon exercises a mysterious influence over the human brain. It is responsible for the vagaries of poets, whom it renders exquisite or absurd. On the passion of lovers it produces the same effect as the Ruhmkorff coil on electric currents. A man, whose love is normal enough in the sunlight, is stirred to a frenzy of adoration by the light of the moon. A young and charming woman assured me one day, in connection with

some subject that escapes my memory, that moonstrokes are a thousand times more dangerous than sunstrokes. You catch a moonstroke, she said, without suspecting it, while you are out walking on fine nights, and there is no cure. You stay mad; not raging mad and requiring to be put under restraint, but a lunatic with a peculiar variety of gentle, continuous mania. No longer are your thoughts on any subject as those of other persons.

And upon my word, I think I must have had a moonstroke that night. I felt out of my senses, delirious. The little crescent, which I saw sinking towards the sea, filled me with tender and harrowing emotions.

What is there that is so seductive in the moon, this old and defunct planet, whose yellow visage, like a melancholy corpse-light, wanders in the sky, that it thus disturbs the fancies of those of us, who are prone to vagrant thoughts? Do we love her because she is dead, as the poet Haraucourt has it?

> "In that pale age of mild and balmy winds
> The moon was all a-stir with sounds of life.
> Fathomless seas were hers, and many streams,
> Herds, flocks, abodes of men, tears, cries of joy.
> Love, too, was hers, and Arts, and Laws, and Gods.
> Then slowly she drew back into the shade."

Do we love her because the poets, to whom we owe the eternal illusion with which we are enveloped in this life, have disturbed our eyes with all the images her rays conjure up for them, have taught us to interpret in a thousand ways, with our hypertrophied sensibilities, the sweet but monotonous effects which she diffuses in her course round the world?

When she rises behind trees, when she sheds her quivering light on a gliding river, when her rays strike athwart the branches and chequer the sanded avenue, when she mounts in solitude into the dark void of the sky, when she sinks towards the sea, when her rays stream across the liquid undulations in a far-flung train of glory, are not our

thoughts assailed by the exquisite verses which the great dreamers have been inspired by her to utter?

If, one night, with gaiety in our souls, we see her in her fulness, as round as some yellow eye gazing down upon us, from her perch just above some roof-bridge, Musset's immortal ballad begins to echo in our memory. It is Musset, is it not, whose whimsical genius makes us see her, in a flash, as he saw her?

" O'er the spire at midnight's noon
Rideth in the darkling sky
The moon,
Like a dot upon an i.

Say, O moon, what sombre sprite
Holds thee dangling there in space,
By night,
Slender rim or full, round face? "

Some evening, when our hearts are sad, if we chance to be strolling on an ocean beach by moonlight, are we not impelled almost in spite of ourselves, to recite these two noble and melancholy lines:

" Lonely above the seas the wandering moon
Sheds silvery tear-drops in the sombre waves."

Or, if we awake to find a long shaft of moonlight shining through the window across our bed, do we not straightway see that white figure evoked by Catulle Mendès gliding down towards us:

" She came. She bore a lily in each hand.
A sloping moon-beam for her pathway served."

If you are roaming the country by night and you suddenly hear the uncanny, long-drawn howl of a farm watch-dog, does it not bring sharply to your mind the recollection of that admirable piece by Lecomte de Lisle, *Les Hurleurs*:

"The pale and lonely moon breaks through the clouds
And like a mournful lantern, sadly sways.
Mute world, for ever blasted by heaven's wrath
Sherd of dead globe, once shattered wantonly,
Down from her frozen orb she sheds a wan
Sepulchral light upon the polar sea."

On some evening of tryst, when you are peacefully walking with your beloved, your arm round her waist, your hand pressing hers, you pause to print a kiss upon her brow. She is a little weary, a little overwrought; her footsteps flag. And then under the leafy branches, bathed in the sweet calm flood of moonlight, you see a bench, and forthwith your heart and soul thrill, as with an exquisite love-song, to the quaint couplet:

"To rouse the sleeping moonbeam from its couch
And take its place upon the rustic bench."

On such a night as this, who can behold the slim crescent of the moon, silhouetted against the wide, star-strewn sky without thinking of the closing lines of Victor Hugo's masterpiece, *The Sleeping Boaz*:

And Ruth,
With eyes half-closed beneath her filmy veils,
Lay still, and wondered. Might it be some God,
Some reaper of the eternal harvest field,
Who, his toil finished, carelessly threw down
That golden sickle on the starry plain?"

And who has ever expressed better than Hugo the spirit of the moon that shines down, so tenderly, so amorously, upon lovers?

"Night came and all was still. The torches were burned out.
In the dark woods, the springs kept up a ceaseless plaint.
From sombre covert sang the lonely nightingale,
Sang like a poet or a lover. And the throng
Dispersed abroad among the leafy darknesses.

Wild, laughing girls captured the wise, and amorous maids
Went gaily with their gallants to the shady groves.
Stirred by such vague disturbance as a dream inspires
They felt their souls, their whisperings, their ardent looks,
Their hearts, their senses, and their fondest sympathies
Steeped in the tender radiance of the rising moon."

I recall, too, that admirable prayer to the moon, which occurs at the beginning of the eleventh book of The Golden Ass of Apuleius.

And yet not all these songs of human bards suffice to account for the sentimental melancholy with which we are inspired by this sad satellite. In spite of ourselves, without knowing why, we are sorry for the moon, and because of that sorrow we love her. The affection we bestow on her has an element of compassion. We pity her as we pity an old maid, for we have a vague suspicion, in spite of what the poets say, that she is not a dead woman, but a virgin. Planets, like women, require a husband. Is not the truth just this, that the poor moon, disdained by the sun, has donned Saint Catherine's coif, as the saying goes here below, and this is why her timid radiance fills us with irrealisable hopes and unattainable desires? Under the pale rays of the moon, our hearts stir with all the dark, vain longings of our earthly sojourn, as with an impotent, mysterious ichor. With our eyes upon her, we are aquiver at the thought of dreams that can never come true; we are athirst for realities of love that will for ever escape us.

The slender crescent, like a golden thread, was now steeping its lower tip in the water. Gently, slowly, it sank, until only the upper tip was left, which dwindled till I could not tell the moment of its vanishing.

I then turned my eyes to the inn. The lighted window had just been closed. Crushed by an agony of depression I fled to my cabin.

10th April.

I WAS no sooner in bed than I realised that sleep was not for me. I lay on my back with my eyes closed, my mind wide awake, my nerves vibrating. Near or far, there was no movement, no sound except the breathing of my two sailors, which I could hear through the thin wooden partition.

Suddenly something creaked. What was it? I do not know: doubtless some pulley in the rigging. Still, the soft melancholy plaintive tone of it made me shudder all over. Silence ensued; an infinite silence, filling the space between earth and stars. Nothing; not a breath of wind, not a ripple on the water, not a vibration on the yacht. Nothing. Then all of a sudden the mysterious, faint whining began again. As I listened to it, a fretted edge of steel seemed to be sawing at my heart. How great a power lies in certain noises, tones, voices, to rend our hearts. In a moment, they charge the soul to its full capacity with grief and madness and anguish. I waited and listened, and again I heard that sound. It seemed to proceed out of myself, from my lacerated nerves. Or rather, it echoed within me like an inward summons, profound, forlorn. Yes, it was a cruel voice; a voice I knew and dreaded, and it filled me with despair. That faint, weird wail passed over me like one sowing the seeds of horror and delirium, with power to arouse in a moment that appalling anguish, which lurks forever deep in the hearts of all living creatures. What was it? It was the voice which cries aloud within our soul; the voice which never ceases levying its dark and mournful reproaches at us. Tormenting, harrowing, unknowable, insatiable, irrepressible, fierce, it brings up against us all

we have done, and all that we have failed to do. It is the voice of vague remorse, of futile regrets, of days that are dead, of women who might have loved us, of things that have vanished, of joys that were vain, of hopes that are no more. It is the voice of fleeting circumstance, deceitful, leaving no trace behind it, the voice of all that we have failed to achieve and can never hope to achieve, the puny little voice, which proclaims that life has gone awry, that effort is fruitless, the mind impotent and the flesh infirm.

Ever and anon, the sad silence of the gloomy night was disturbed by this voice, briefly murmuring of all I might have loved, all I had confusedly desired, expected, dreamed of, all that I could wish to have seen, understood, known, savoured, all that my poor, weak, hungering spirit had touched upon in vain longing, towards which it had striven to wing its way, baffled by the bonds of ignorance, which it could not burst.

Ah, I have desired all things, and naught have I enjoyed. To satisfy my yearnings I should have required the vitality of a whole race, the diverse intelligence, which is scattered over all living beings, all faculties, all forms of energy, and a thousand lives in reserve. For, bearing within me every appetite and an all-embracing curiosity, I am condemned to look at everything and to grasp nothing.

Why is it that life is torment to me, when most men derive only satisfaction from it? What is the cause of this secret torture that gnaws at my heart? Why can I not taste the reality of pleasures and expectations and joys?

It is that I possess that second sight, which constitutes at once the power and the misery of writers. I write because I understand all things, and all things are a source of pain to me; it is because I know too much, and above all, because I gaze at life through the medium of my own personality, seeing it, as it were, in the mirror of my thoughts, and thus can never have true contact with it. Such is the secret of the difference between the man of letters and his fellow creatures. Let no one be jealous of him; rather, let him pity him. No sentiment exists un-

alloyed in his mind. All that he sees, his joys, pleasures, sufferings, despair, instantaneously become objects of observation. Despite everything, despite himself, without ceasing, he analyses hearts, faces, gestures, intonations. Once he has seen a thing, whatever it may be, he must learn its significance. His emotions, his exclamations, his affections, not one of them, but is disingenuous. He is incapable of those instantaneous actions, which arise from the promptings of nature, unstudied, spontaneous, intuitive, unexplained.

If a writer suffers, he makes a note of his suffering and puts it in a pigeon-hole of his memory. Returning from the cemetery, where he has bidden farewell to the man or woman whom he loved best in the world, he will reflect on his emotions. How singular they were! an intoxication, as it were, of grief, etc., etc. He will call to mind all the details, the attitudes of the neighbours, the insincere gestures, the simulated grief, the hypocritical faces, the thousand insignificant incidents, the aesthetic aspect of the ceremony, the sign of the cross made by an old woman holding a child by the hand, a ray of light reflected on a window pane, a dog running across the procession, the artistic value of the hearse under the great cemetery yews, the mute's face, the muscular strain on the four bearers who let the coffin down into the grave, the contortion of their features, in short, a thousand trifles which a sincere man, suffering with all his soul and heart and strength, would never have noticed.

Despite himself, the writer has seen, treasured, noted all, because he is first and foremost a man of letters and his mind is so constructed that with him the reaction is livelier and, so to speak, more natural than the original impression, the echo more sonorous than the sound that evoked it. He appears to have two souls, one of which notes, analyses, comments, on every sensation of its sister, the natural soul, the ordinary human soul. He lives condemned to be always, on every occasion, a reflection of himself and others; sentenced to watch his own feelings, actions, affections,

thoughts and sufferings, and never to suffer, think, act, or feel like the rest of the world, honestly, frankly, and sincerely, without analysing the psychology of every joy and every sob. In conversation he often appears spiteful, simply because his mind is clairvoyant, and dissects all the hidden motives of the sentiments and actions of others. He cannot restrain himself from working into his books all the results of his vision, his understanding and his knowledge, and this he does without making any exception in favour of friends and relations. With cruel impartiality he displays in all their nakedness the hearts of those whom he loves or once loved, even giving way to exaggeration, in order to heighten his effects. He is engrossed solely in his work to the complete exclusion of his affections.

When he loves a woman, he anatomises her as though she were a corpse in a dissecting-room. Her words and acts are at once weighed in those delicate scales of observation, which he carries in his brain, and are classed at their literary value. If she throws her arms round his neck with heedless impulsiveness, he will criticise the gesture in relation to its timeliness, its appropriateness, its dramatic effectiveness, and if he feels that it is disingenuous or ill-considered, he will pass silent judgment upon it.

Spectator of himself and others, he must at times take action. But his doings are never ingenuous like those of honest folk, who live without ulterior motives. Everything round him, hearts, deeds, secret intentions, is as of glass. He suffers from a strange malady, a sort of duplication of mind, which converts him into a terrifyingly vibrant, artificial, complex being, a weariness to himself. His peculiar and morbid sensibility flays him alive, so that there is hardly a sensation which does not cause him pain. I can recall dark days, when my heart was so torn by things seen in a flash that the memories of these visions abide in me like open wounds.

Once in the Avenue de l'Opéra, in the midst of the gay throng, which moved hither and thither in the exhilarating light of a May morning, I caught sight of an indescribably

wretched creature, an old woman bent double and clad in rags which had once been a dress. On her head she had a black straw hat, stripped of its former ornaments; ribbons and flowers had vanished from it in the dark ages. She hobbled along, dragging her feet so laboriously that I could feel in my heart, as keenly as she herself, more keenly perhaps, the pain of every step she took. She had a stick in each hand, to support her. She passed on, looking at no one, heedless of everything, the noise, the people, the carriages, the May sun. Whither, to what hovel, was she bound? She carried a paper parcel, hanging from a string. What was in the parcel? Bread, doubtless, bread. She had no friend or neighbour, who was able or willing to do this errand for her, and had herself undertaken this appalling journey, from her garret to the baker's. It would take her two hours at least, going and coming. What a *via dolorosa,* more pitiable than Christ's! I looked up at the attic roofs of the tall houses. She had to climb up there. How long would it take her? How many times would she halt for breath upon the steps, on that narrow dark winding staircase? The passers-by turned to look at her. "Poor woman," they murmured, and went their way. Her skirt, her rag of a skirt, hardly stout enough to hold on to her wreck of a body, trailed on the pavement. Was there a mind in that degraded object? A mind? No. Only sheer suffering, frightful, incessant, harrowing. Oh, the misery of the starving old, the hopeless old, the old without children or money, with no prospect but the grave. Do we ever think of them? Do we ever think of the hungry old people in the garrets? Do we ever think of the tears that fall from those old, dull eyes that once sparkled with joy and excitement?

On another occasion, I was out by myself one rainy day shooting on the plains of Normandy, and plodding across the great, ploughed fields of clay that gave way greasily under my feet. Every now and then a partridge, crouching invisible against a clod of earth, would rise in alarm and fly heavily away through the pouring rain. Smothered by the sheets of rain, the detonation of my gun hardly made

more noise than the crack of a whip, and the partridge would be brought down with blood-stained feathers. I felt so depressed that I could have wept, wept like the clouds, which were shedding tears on the world and on myself. I was steeped to the heart in melancholy, and overcome by such weariness that I could hardly lift my feet from the sticky clay. I was on the point of turning homeward, when I saw the doctor's cabriolet traversing the fields by a cross-road. This sombre vehicle with its brown horse and low round hood passed before me like a presage of death, wandering about the countryside this dismal day. Suddenly the carriage stopped. The doctor put his head out and called me. When I came nearer he said:

"Will you help me with a diphtheria case? I am all by myself and I must have a second person to hold the patient while I am removing the membranes from her throat."

"I'll come," I said, and got into the carriage. He then told me that diphtheria, that horrible disease that suffocates its wretched victims, had invaded the farm of some poor people called Martinet. Father and son had died early in the week, and mother and daughter were now going the same way. A woman from the neighbourhood had been nursing them, but she had felt suddenly indisposed herself and had taken flight the evening before. The two patients lay there abandoned on their straw pallets, with the door wide open, and with nothing to drink. For twenty-four hours they had been alone, gasping for breath, choking, in the agonies of death. The doctor had just cleared the mother's throat and given her something to drink, but the child, maddened by pain and by the struggle against suffocation, had buried her face in the mattress and would not let herself be touched. Accustomed to these horrors, the doctor said, with melancholy resignation:

"You understand that I can't spend whole days with my patients. But, my word, these two are enough to wring your heart. To think that they have been twenty-four hours without drinking! The rain was driving in, right on to their beds. All the hens had taken refuge in the fireplace."

When we reached the farm, he hitched the reins to the branch of an apple tree and we entered the sick-room. We were assailed by a powerful odour, compounded of disease, damp, fever, and mouldiness, a mixture of cellar and hospital-ward. In the fireless, dead, grey, sinister abode, it was cold, with the raw coldness of a morass. The clock had stopped. The rain was pattering down through the wide chimney. The cinders in the fireplace had been scattered about by the fowls. From a dark corner of the room came the sound of hoarse rapid breathing, proceeding from the child.

The mother was lying in a sort of great, wooden chest, the type of bed common in farmhouses, and seemed quiet enough under her pile of old blankets and clothes. She turned her head slightly in our direction.

"Have you a candle?" the doctor asked.

"In the side-board," she replied, in a low, exhausted voice.

Lighting the candle, the doctor took me to the child's cot in the corner of the room.

The little girl was gasping for breath. Her face was emaciated, her eyes bright with fever, her hair all tangled. She was a dreadful spectacle. Every time she drew breath, deep hollows appeared between her lean, tense neck muscles. She was lying on her back, and was holding her ragged coverings close about her with both hands. As soon as she saw us, she turned away and hid her face in the mattress.

I took her by the shoulders and the doctor forced her to show her throat, from which he detached a great piece of whitish skin, as dry, it seemed to me, as a scrap of leather. Her breathing was immediately relieved and she took a drink. The mother raised herself on her elbow and looked at us.

"Is it done?" she asked feebly.

"Yes."

"Are we to be left here all by ourselves?"

Her voice quivered with fear, terrible fear, fear of

isolation and desertion, fear of darkness and of the death that she felt was so close at hand.

"No, my good woman," I replied. "I will wait here until the nurse comes. Send Mère Mauduit along," I said to the doctor. "I will pay expenses."

"That's splendid. I'll send her along immediately."

He shook my hand and went away, and I heard the wheels of his carriage on the wet farm road.

I remained alone with the dying mother and daughter.

Pat, my dog, was lying in front of the cheerless fireplace, and this suggested to me that we should be none the worse for a little fire. I went out and collected some wood and kindling, and soon a vigorous glow lighted up the whole room, even to the corner where the child's bed was. Her breath was again becoming laboured. I sat down and stretched my legs out before the fire. The rain was beating on the window-panes. The wind was shaking the roof. I listened to the short, hard, whistling respiration of the two sufferers, and to the breathing of my dog, who was sighing with pleasure, curled up in front of the cheerful blaze.

Life! Life! What is it? These two wretched creatures, who had always slept on straw, eaten black bread, worked like beasts of burden, endured every hardship the world has to offer, were about to die. What had they done? Father and son were already dead. And these paupers were reputed kindly, simple, honest folk, who were loved and respected. My boots steamed before the blaze. My dog slept. As I watched, I was seized by a sensual and shameful joy, when I compared my lot with that of those galley-slaves.

The rattling began again in the girl's throat, and her hoarse respiration became unendurable to me. Every breath stabbed me to the heart. Going to her bedside, I asked her if she wanted a drink. She nodded her head, and I poured a little water into her mouth, but she was unable to swallow it.

The mother, who was now calmer, had turned to look at her child. And at this, a sudden sinister dread crept over

me and chilled my skin, like a contact with some invisble horror. Where was I? I no longer knew. Was I dreaming? What nightmare had seized me? Could such things really happen? Could death come in this guise? I peered into the dark recesses of the cottage as though expecting to see, lurking in an obscure corner, a hideous, nameless, terrifying shape, the spectre that lies in wait for man, that slays, consumes, crushes, strangles; that loves red blood, and rejoices in eyes bright with fever, in wrinkles and blemishes, in white hairs, in all the processes of decomposition.

The fire was sinking; I threw on more wood, and warmed my back, which was frozen.

As for myself, I could at least hope to die in a comfortable room, with doctors about my bed and medicine bottles on every table; whereas these two had been left alone for twenty-four hours, gasping on their straw mattresses in this fireless hovel.

I heard a carriage approach. The nurse came in, self-possessed, pleased at having found work, and not in the least disconcerted by the misery confronting her. I gave her some money and, calling my dog, made my escape. As I hastened away through the rain, I felt like an escaping criminal. I could still, in fancy, hear the whistling in the two throats, as I hurried towards my well-heated house, where my servants were expecting my arrival and had a good dinner preparing for me. Never, never, shall I forget that incident, nor many similar episodes, which make me hate the world.

How I sometimes yearn to be free of all thought and sensation and live a purely animal life, in a bright and sunny land; a land of yellow sand and rock, without crude and brutal verdure; one of those Oriental countries where a man can fall asleep without sadness and awake without regret; where there is excitement without anxiety, love without its pangs, and, almost imperceptibly, life slips by.

In such a land, I would live in a great, square mansion like a huge casket, white and dazzling in the sun's rays.

From the terrace of the house the sea is visible, and the Greek or Moslem boats pass by with their white sails pointed like the wings of a bird. The outer walls of the house are almost without door or window. This Oriental dwelling of mine is built round a great garden, in which the air drowses under the shade of palm-trees. Amidst these trees, a fountain rises into the air and falls back in spray into a large marble basin with golden sand at the bottom. There, when the fancy took me, I would bathe, after a smoke, or a dream, or a kiss; and after bathing, again I would smoke or dream, or kiss. I would have dark, beautiful slaves, clad in draperies of filmy muslins. Swiftly, with bare feet, they would trip over the silent carpets. My walls would be soft and resilient like a woman's bosom, with divans ranged round every room, and every kind of cushion, so that I might repose at my ease. And then, when I was weary of rest, weary of the joys of motionless, eternal reverie, weary of the tranquil pleasures of well-being, I would order my slaves to lead to my door a horse, white or black, as lithe as a gazelle. I would spring on to its back and set off at a furious gallop, drinking in the tingling, intoxicating air which whistled past my ears. I would fly like an arrow across that land of many colours, which the eye swoons to look upon, and the sight of which has a savour as of wine. At the calm evening hour I would speed on my unbridled course towards the wide horizon while the western sky glowed rose red in the setting sun. For in those regions the whole world turns to that same rosy hue at the twilight hour; the sun-smitten mountains, the sands, the Arabs' robes, the dromedaries, the horses and the tents.

The pink flamingoes rise from the marshes and take flight across a sky of rose; and drowned in the infinite rosiness of the world, I emit cries of delirious joy. No longer would I have before my eyes these dingy citizens, seated on uncomfortable chairs on the pavement, drinking absinthe, talking business, and deafened the while by the harsh rattle of cab-wheels upon the cobbles. I should know nothing of

movements on the Exchange, of political events, of all those futile follies, in which we waste our brief and deceptive existence. Why these troubles and sufferings and struggles?

I would take my ease in a sheltered nook, in the luxury and brilliance of my Oriental home. I would have four or five wives, discreetly hidden away in silent rooms, and selected from the five different continents, who would steep me in the savour of a beauty, fraught with the very essence of the femininity of all the races of the world.

This winged reverie was floating before my closed eyes, shedding peace upon my spirit, when I heard my crew stirring. They lit their lamp, and set to work silently at some lengthy task.

"What are you doing?" I called out.

Raymond's answer came with some hesitation.

"We are getting the long line ready. We thought you might like a little fishing, if it is fine at sunrise."

Agay is, in fact, the summer fishing-ground of all the fishermen along that coast. Whole families of them come there. They sleep at the inn, or in their smacks, and eat bouillabaisse in the shade of pine trees by the edge of the sea, with the melting resin bubbling all round them in the hot sun.

"What o'clock is it?" I asked.

"Three."

Without getting out of bed, I made a long arm and opened the door that divided my cabin from the crew's quarters. The two sailors were squatting in the low-roofed space down through which the mast passes to its step in the keelson. This space is packed with such a variety of curious objects that you would take it for a lair of sea-robbers. In rows along the partitions hang tools of all sorts, saws, axes, marlinespikes, with odds and ends of gear, and stew-pans, and on the floor between the bunks, stands a bucket, a stove, a keg with brass hoops that reflect the light of the lamp, which hangs between the anchor-bitts, beside the chain-locker. My crew are hard at work baiting the innumerable hooks that are attached to the long line.

" When shall I have to get up? "

" This very minute, sir."

Half an hour later we were all three in the dinghy, and rowed away from the *Bel-Ami* to the place at the foot of Le Drammont near the Ile d'Or, where we were to set our line.

When the line, which was about three hundred yards long, had sunk to sea-bottom, we baited three small bottom-lines, let go a stone-anchor, and began to fish.

It was now broad day and the coast of Saint-Raphaël, by the mouth of the Argens, was distinctly visible. I could see the dark Montagnes des Maures stretching as far as Cape Camarat, far out towards the open sea, beyond Saint-Tropez Bay. This is the corner I love best on the whole south coast. I love it, as if it were here that I had been born and passed my boyhood. I love it because of its wildness and its striking colours, and because it has not yet been poisoned by the presence of Parisians, Englishmen, Americans, men of fashion, and adventurers.

A quick vibration of my hand-line roused me. A moment later there was a light tug at the line, which I had wound round my finger; then a second tug, strong enough to jerk my hand. With beating heart, I began to draw in the line, cautiously in spite of my excitement, gazing far down into the depths of the blue, transparent water, till I caught sight of a white flash describing rapid circles in the shadow of the boat. Thus seen, the fish appeared enormous, but when I hauled it in, it was no bigger than a sardine. After that, I caught others; blue, red, yellow, green, shining, silvery, striped, golden, spotted, speckled, all the pretty Mediterranean rock-fish, so varied, so many-coloured, that they look as if they had been painted for the express purpose of giving pleasure to the eye. Besides these there were acanthopterygians bristling with spikes, and hideous muraenas.

It is great fun lifting a long line. What is it going to bring up out of that sea? Every hook, as it emerges from the water, provides a surprise, a thrill of joy, or a thrill of disappointment. How exciting it is to catch a distant

glimpse of a big fish, struggling hard, as it is being pulled slowly to the surface.

By ten o'clock we were aboard the yacht again. My two men announced gleefully that our catch scaled over twenty pounds.

Presently I found that I was to pay for my sleepless night with a neuralgic headache, that terrible affliction which is the worst of all tortures. It is a grinding, maddening, distracting pain, and scatters the memory to the winds like a pinch of dust. I was in its grip. I had to lie down in my berth and hold a phial of ether to my nostrils.

After a few minutes, I seemed to hear a vague murmuring, which soon grew into a sort of low drone. I felt as if everything within my body was becoming as light as air and changing into intangible vapour. Upon this followed a sort of torpor of soul, a somnolent content. Although the pains persisted, they ceased to be acute. My sufferings were no longer those terrible agonies, against which the whole tortured frame rebels; they had become endurable.

Presently the curious and fascinating sensation of emptiness spread from my chest to the rest of my frame. Every member of my body felt light, as light as if flesh and bone had melted, leaving only the outer integument, the skin, which enabled me to sense the sweetness of life, the joy of this blissful repose. I became aware that I was no longer suffering; my pains had vanished. They, too, had melted, evaporated. I heard voices, four voices, as if two couples were engaged in dialogue, but I understood nothing of what was said. Sometimes these voices were mere indistinct sounds, but every now and then I caught a definite word. I realised, however, that these noises were merely the rhythmic throbbing in my ears. I was not asleep. I was awake. I could feel and understand. I could reason with extraordinary clearness, depth and power, and with a strange intoxicated joy which was the outcome of the tenfold increase in my mental faculties. It was not a *hashish* reverie, nor was it the morbid hallucinations of opium. It was a prodigious acuteness of intelligence, a new method

of seeing, judging, appraising life and circumstance, joined to an absolute consciousness and conviction that this new method was the true method.

The old parable of Holy Writ came to my mind. I had, it seemed to me, tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. All the mysteries were unveiling themselves in face of the new, strange, irrefutable logic which held me under its sway. Arguments, ratiocinations, proofs, crowded upon me, and were immediately refuted by other proofs, ratiocinations and arguments even more forcible. My head had become a battle-ground of ideas. I was a being on a higher plane. I was armed with invincible intelligence. I tasted with prodigious delight the joy of verifying the actuality of my power. . . .

This state lasted a long time. I continued to inhale the ether from my phial. Then I found that the phial was empty. And the pains began again.

For ten hours I had to endure that torture for which there is no remedy. At last I fell asleep, and when I awoke on the following day I was as clear-minded as if I had just accomplished a convalescence.

Then I wrote these few pages, and set out for Saint-Raphaël.

SAINT-RAPHAËL, *11th April.*

FOR our voyage here we had delicious weather and a little westerly breeze, which brought us along in six tacks. After doubling Le Drammont, we came in sight of the villas of Saint-Raphaël, hidden among the pine-trees, those meagre little pine-trees, harassed the whole year through by the onslaught of the wind, which blows perpetually from Fréjus. Next we sailed between the Lions, those attractive red rocks which guard the town. The upper end of the port has a bottom of shelving sand, so we could not approach the quay nearer than sixty yards.

On landing, I saw a great assemblage of people in front of the church, in which a marriage was being solemnised. In Latin, and with pontifical gravity, a priest was authorising that solemn and absurd act, which causes mankind so much agitation, laughter and suffering, and so many tears. The families concerned had followed the usual custom of inviting all their relations and friends to this funeral service over a young maid's innocence. It is a spectacle at once unseemly and devout. Maternal advice is followed by priestly counsels, and a public blessing is given to an affair that is ordinarily veiled with anxious modesty. The whole country-side, with heads full of licentious ideas, and thrilled by that curiosity, which, at once nice and nasty, impels crowds towards a wedding, had come to see what sort of a showing the newly-married couple would make. Mingling with the throng, I inspected the people composing it.

Heavens! how ugly men are! For the hundredth time at least I confirmed from the faces of those around me

my observation that of all species the human is the most repellent. The throng was permeated by the crowd odour. It is a sickly, nauseating smell of unwashed bodies, of greasy heads of hair, and of garlic. These people of the Midi shed around them, through mouth and nose and skin, this odour of garlic, as roses diffuse their perfume.

It is undeniable that men are ugly and evil-smelling, but eyes and nose become accustomed to this. The power to distinguish the repulsiveness of their features and their emanations is only regained after one has been for some time deprived of the sight and the stench of them.

Men are truly horrible! You have only to take the ten first passers-by, put them in a line and photograph them. Look at them with their lop-sided figures, their legs too long or too short, their bodies too fat or too thin, their faces too red or too pale, their hairiness, their baldness, their grins, their gravity. They are a gallery of grotesques which would make a dead man laugh.

There was once a time, when the world was young, when savage man, strong and naked, was no whit less beautiful than the horse, the stag, or the lion. The use of his muscles, the free life, the constant exercise of his vigour and agility maintained in him that grace of movement, which is the first condition of beauty, and that elegance of form which is bestowed only by physical activity.

At a later period, the artistic races, in their passion for form, understood how to preserve in men this grace and elegance, by means of gymnastic exercises. Attention to physical condition, games of strength and agility, and the use of ice-cold baths and the *sudatorium*, made the Greeks true models of human beauty, and they have left us their statues for our instruction, for a demonstration of the bodily perfection of these great artists.

But in our own generation, shade of Apollo! let us look at these human beings bustling about in some holiday gathering. Pot-bellied from the cradle, deformed by premature study, degraded by school-life, which wastes the

body and crushes the spirit before the age of puberty, they reach adolescence with ill-developed, ill-set limbs, which have lost their natural grace of proportion.

Let us look in any street at the passers-by, shuffling along in their dirty clothes. As for the agricultural labourer! Good heavens! See him in his fields, a stock of a man, gnarled, lean as a rake, twisted, round-shouldered, more horrible to behold than the primeval types which are seen in anthropological museums. At the same time, let us not forget how beautiful the negroes are in figure, if not in feature; these men of bronze, so tall and lithe. The Arabs, too, how graceful of figure and bearing!

I have, however, yet another reason for my horror of crowds. I cannot bear to go into a theatre or be present at any public gathering. I am at once affected by a weird and intolerable discomfort, a terrifying depression, as if I were contending with all my strength against some irresistible and mysterious influence. And I am, in fact, struggling against the crowd-soul, which is trying to get the better of me.

Times without number have I verified the truth that a solitary life expands and ennobles the intelligence, whereas a renewal of contact with one's fellow-creatures has a diminishing and degrading effect. A man's thoughts are affected by his contacts, by the ideas that are in the air around him, by what he says himself, by what he has to listen to, comprehend and answer. There is a flux and reflux of ideas between individuals, households, streets, towns, nations, which ends in the establishment of a level, a mean of intelligence, for every large agglomeration of individuals. The qualities of intellectual initiative, free judgment, prudent reflection and even of comprehension, which are natural in the individual man, disappear as a rule when he is plunged into a throng of other men.

I quote a passage from a letter of Lord Chesterfield's to his son, written in 1751, in which, with rare humility, he gives a proof of the effect that a large assembly has in suddenly eliminating the independent qualities of the mind.

" Lord Macclesfield, who had the greatest share in forming the Bill, and who is one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe, spoke afterwards with infinite knowledge and all the clearness that so intricate a matter would admit of; but, as his words, his periods, and his utterance were not near so good as mine, the preference was most unanimously, though most unjustly, given to me. This will ever be the case. Every numerous assembly is a mob, let the individuals who compose it be what they will. Mere reason and good sense is never to be talked to a mob. Their passions, their sentiments, their senses, and their seeming interests are alone to be applied to. Understanding they have collectively none. . . ."

This profound observation of Lord Chesterfield's has frequently been made by others, and has been noted with interest by the psychologists of the scientific school. It constitutes one of the most serious arguments against representative governments. The same surprising phenomenon is reproduced every time a large body of men collects together. Each person is separate and distinct. He differs from his neighbour in mind, intelligence, passions, education, beliefs, and prejudices. But the mere fact of collecting a number of men together converts them instantaneously into a new organism, endowed with a soul of its own, with its own new method of thought, which is a resultant of the mean of individual opinion and is incapable of analysis. What now results is a crowd, and this crowd is a personality, a great, collective individual, as distinct from any other crowd as one man is from another.

There is a popular saw which affirms that a crowd does not reason. Well, why is it that a crowd does not reason, when every unit composing it reasons? Why will a crowd commit spontaneous acts which no member of the crowd, left to himself, would have committed? Why does a crowd generate irresistible impulses, fierce determinations, stupid, uncontrollable, unreflective enthusiasms, by which it is impelled to actions which no individual in the throng would contemplate?

A shout is raised by some unidentified person, and forthwith the whole herd is possessed of a sort of frenzy; it is swept away by a common impulse which no one makes any effort to resist, by a single thought, which in one moment becomes common to all its members in spite of differences of class, opinions, beliefs and morals. They will hurl themselves upon some victim, they will slay or drown him in blind fury, with hardly a shred of pretext, although any member of the crowd, left to himself, would, at the risk of his life, have rushed to the rescue of the very man he is now killing. Later in the evening, when they return to their homes, they all wonder what rage or madness possessed them, jolting them so rudely out of their natural characters. What force was it that drove them to this atrocious display of feeling? The explanation is that they had ceased to be men and had become a crowd. The individual will had lost itself in the general will, as a drop of water loses itself in a river. Private personality had vanished. It had been converted into an infinitesimal atom in the great strange personality of the mob. The panics that seize an army, the whirlwinds of opinion by which whole nations are swept away, the insanity of the dance of death, are not these striking examples of the same phenomenon? To sum the matter up, it is no more astonishing for individuals to come together and form an organism, than it is for molecules to unite and form a substance.

This is the secret which explains the peculiar *morale* of public audiences, the grotesque variations of judgment as between rehearsals, first nights, and subsequent representations, the reversal of impressions from one evening to another, and the errors of taste which condemn works like *Carmen*, destined later to be immensely successful.

My remarks relating to crowds are applicable as well to society in general. Any man desirous of guarding his absolute integrity of opinion, and his lofty independence of judgment, of seeing life, humanity and the universe in the capacity of an unfettered observer, superior to all prejudice,

preconceived belief and religion, that is to say, fear, must isolate himself absolutely from what is called "society." Human folly is so universal and so contagious that it is impossible for him to frequent the society of his kind, to see them and listen to them, without being insidiously sapped in every direction by their convictions, ideas, superstitions, traditions, and prejudices, which react on him through their usages, laws, and their astonishing *morale*, of which the constituents are hypocrisy and cowardice. Try as he may to resist influences incessantly tending to diminish his personality, he will struggle in vain, for the bonds that tie him, though petty and almost imperceptible, are innumerable and in the aggregate irresistible. Presently, from sheer fatigue, he will cease to struggle any longer.

There was a sudden movement in the throng around the church door. The newly-wedded couple were just coming out. And suddenly I found myself doing what all the others were doing; I was standing on tip-toe to see better, and I had, moreover, a genuine desire to look at them, a stupid, low, disgusting and vulgar desire. My neighbours' curiosity had prevailed over me; I was carried away; I was part of that crowd.

I decided to spend the rest of the day boating up the Argens. This river, which is the boundary between the plain of Fréjus and the wild Montagnes des Maures, is very charming, though little known. I took Raymond with me. He rowed me along the edge of a great flat beach as far as the mouth of the river. We tried it but found it impracticable owing to its being partly sanded up. Only one channel remained open, and the current in it was so rapid and so full of foam and eddies and whirlpools that we could not make the passage, and were obliged to haul the boat ashore and carry it across the sandhills, as far as that most attractive stretch of water, almost a lake, into which the Argens widens at this spot. The river winds its way through a marshy expanse, which is mantled in the intense green peculiar to fresh-water vegetation. The banks on either hand are so densely crowded with verdant, lofty

and impenetrable foliage that the neighbouring mountains are almost shut out from view. Always gently curving, always keeping its appearance of a peaceful lake, the Argens, without even letting you see or guess what it is doing, penetrates the recesses of this placid region, this superb wilderness. Precisely as in the low-lying plains of the North, where the springs oozing out underfoot trickle away and bring fertility to the soil, like chill, clear blood, so here in the South we experience that same strange sense of abounding life, which permeates all watery tracts. Birds, with their long legs trailing, fly out in alarm from the reeds. Their pointed bills show clearly against the sky. Larger, heavier birds pass with lumbering flight from bank to bank, while smaller and swifter birds skim the surface of the water with the impetus of a stone making ducks and drakes. Innumerable wood pigeons coo in the tree-tops, or pass in wheeling flight from tree to tree to exchange amorous attentions. All around this deeper water, and throughout the plain that stretches hence to the foot of the mountains, there is water and yet more water, marsh-water, treacherous, sleeping, but teeming with life. There are great clear pools, which mirror the sky and the floating clouds. Sparse clumps of grotesque bulrushes break the surface. It is limpid, yet prolific; life is in it, putrescent, and death, fermenting; it nourishes fevers and miasma; it is at once a life-giving sap, a death-dealing poison. Attractive, fair to look upon, it is spread like a mantle over mysterious putrefaction. The air you breathe here is delicious, languorous; but beware! On all these low banks which separate the great placid sheets of water, in all that dense herbage, slimy and repulsive myriads of icy-blooded creatures are teeming, crawling, hopping, creeping. I love those cold elusive animals which people avoid and fear; to me they are in a sense sacred.

It is at the sunset hour that the marsh has power to intoxicate me and drive me mad. All day long the great pool has lain silent and drowsy under the hot sun. When twilight falls, it becomes supernatural, a land of faery. As

into a mirror, placid and infinite, the clouds, golden, blood-stained, fiery, are precipitated. There they lie, deep in the water, drowning in it, floating under it. They are above in the vast firmament, and yet they are below, beneath us; they are close to us, yet beyond our grasp, upon that thin aqueous surface through which the pointed rushes stick like bristles. All the charm, all the intoxicating diversity of coloration with which the world has been endowed, is revealed to us in exquisite finish, in glorious splendour, in an infinite refinement of tint, with its focus in the leaf of a water-lily. Every shade of scarlet, pink, yellow, blue, green and violet is there, in a little water, which shows us all heaven, all space, all the stuff that dreams are made of. And in it are mirrored the flights of birds.

There is yet another thing, not easily explained, which I divine in these marshes when the sun is setting. I have the sense of a confused revelation of a mystery which I shall never grasp. What was the first breath of primitive life? Perchance it was a bubble of gas, rising through marshy water at sunset.

SAINT-TROPEZ, *12th April.*

ABOUT eight o'clock this morning we left Saint-Raphaël with a strong north-westerly breeze. That terrible wind sets in from Fréjus nearly every morning, hurls itself at the surface of the water, whips the skin off, tosses it up, rolls it into little flakes, which it scatters abroad, then brings together again. The harbour folks assured us that the squall would subside about eleven o'clock, and we decided to leave under three reefs and a jib. The dinghy was brought on deck and made fast at the foot of the mast. From the moment we cast off, the *Bel-Ami* flew like a bird. Although she was carrying hardly any sail, I never knew her slip so fast through the water. She hardly seemed to be touching the surface. No one would have imagined that she had a seven foot keel with nearly two tons of lead on it, not to mention two tons of ballast in her hold and our complete outfit of rigging, anchors, chains, hawsers, and other moveables.

I made a very quick passage across the bay, at the head of which is the mouth of the Argens, and as soon as I came under the lee of the high ground, the breeze died away almost completely. This is the point which marks the beginning of that wild, sombre and superb region which still bears the appellation of Pays des Maures. It is a long mountainous peninsula with an indented coast-line, measuring over a hundred kilometres. Saint-Tropez lies at the entrance of the beautiful bay, formerly called the Golfe de Grimaud, and is the capital of this little Saracen kingdom, which had almost all its villages built on mountain tops to protect them from attack. These villages are still full of Moorish houses with arches, narrow windows, and enclosed

courtyards, planted with palm-trees, whose lofty tops now rise above the house-roofs. Make your way on foot into the unknown valleys of this strange mass of mountains, and you will discover an incredibly wild country, without highways or roads or even footpaths. There are no villages, no houses. Every now and then, after seven or eight hours walking, you may come across a hut, which, if not abandoned, as is often the case, is occupied by some wretched family of charcoal-burners. The Montagnes des Maures constitutes, apparently, a self-contained geological system, with an incomparable flora, which is declared to be the most varied in Europe, and vast forests of pine, cork-oak and chestnut. Three years ago I made an excursion into the heart of this country to visit the ruins of the Carthusian Monastery of the Verne. I cherish an unforgettable memory of it and, to-morrow, if it is fine, I shall pay it another visit. Between Saint-Raphaël and Saint-Tropez there is a new road running close to the sea. Along the entire length of this magnificent avenue, which has been driven through the forests of this incomparable coast, an effort is being made to open winter resorts. First on the programme stands Saint-Aigulf, which has a character peculiar to itself. In the midst of the pine woods, which come close down to the sea, are wide roads, running in all directions. There is not a house to be seen; nothing but these streets marked out among the trees. Here are squares, cross-roads, boulevards, with their names already inscribed on metal plates, Boulevard Ruysdaël, Boulevard Rubens, Boulevard Van Dyck, Boulevard Claude Lorrain. Why all these painters, one wonders? The reason is that the Company has followed the example of God when He created the sun, and has said, " Let there be . . . an artists' colony! "

The Company! The outside world does not know all that this term signifies in hopes, perils, money gained and money lost, on Mediterranean shores. The Company! Mysterious, fatal, profound, and treacherous word!

In this locality, however, the Company seems to be fulfilling its expectations. Already it has found purchasers

of the best class, among the artists. One building site or another bears the notice, " Purchased by Monsieur Carolus Duran, by Monsieur Clairin, by Mademoiselle Croisette," etc. Yet who knows? These Mediterranean Companies are not having much luck.

There is nothing so absurd as this mania of speculation, so often ending in disaster. Any man, who has made ten thousand francs on a field, forthwith buys ten million francs' worth of land at a franc a square metre, hoping to resell at twenty francs. Boulevards are surveyed, a water-supply is brought to the place, the gas-works are made ready, and then comes the waiting for some person, who will take a fancy to it. He never comes. But the crash does. Far away, I see the towers and buoys which indicate the shoals on either side of the mouth of Saint-Tropez Bay. The first tower is called the Tour des Sardinaux. It marks a regular reef of rocks, at water-level. A few of the rocks show their dark heads above the water. The second tower has been baptised the Balise de la Sèche à l'huile (the Beacon of the Cuttle-fish in oil).

Now we approach the entrance to the Bay. It runs up a long way between two forest-clad mountain slopes, as far as the village of Grimaud, which is built on a peak at the farthest extremity. The ancient castle of the Grimaldi, a lofty ruin, towers above the village. Through the mist it looks like a magic keep conjured up in a fairy-tale.

The wind has died down. The Bay resembles an immense, tranquil, inland lake. With the aid of the last puffs of the morning squall, we glide gently in. On the right lies the small white-washed sea-port of Saint-Maxime, with its houses reflected upside down in the water, as clear as on the mainland. Saint-Tropez, protected by an old fort, is in front of us.

By eleven o'clock the *Bel-Ami* was moored to the quay. Alongside of us lay the little steamer, the *Lion d'Or*, which plies between Saint-Tropez and Saint-Raphaël. It is an antiquated pleasure yacht, and the only means by which the inhabitants of this isolated little port can communicate with

the outer world, except for an old diligence, which nightly conveys the mail by the one road crossing these mountains.

Saint-Tropez is one of those simple and charming daughters of the sea, one of those good, modest little towns which spring up like shell-work at the water's edge. Such towns are nourished on fish and sea-air, and the product is sailors. A bronze statue of Bailli de Suffren de Saint-Tropez is prominent on the quay.

The whole place smells of fish and pitch and brine and the hulls of fishing smacks. Sardine scales gleam like pearls upon the street cobbles. Old sailors, crippled and paralysed, sun themselves upon the stone benches that are set by the walls running alongside the harbour. From time to time they talk of former voyages and old shipmates, the grandsires of the urchins who are playing on the beach. Their faces and hands are wrinkled, tanned, browned, and dried, by the wind and work and spray, by equatorial heat and Arctic cold. In a lifetime of following the sea, they have viewed the world, top and bottom, and the antipodes of every country and all latitudes.

A veteran deep-sea skipper, once master of the *Trois-Soeurs*, the *Deux-Amis*, the *Marie-Louise* or the *Jeune-Clémentine*, hobbles past them, leaning heavily on his walking-stick. Like soldiers answering to a roll-call, they all salute him with a *Bonjour, Capitaine!* in a litany of voices, modulated in different tones. At Saint-Tropez you are in the land of the sea. You are in a fine, bold, brine-pickled little city, which once on a time held its own against Saracens, against the Duke of Anjou, against the Barbary corsairs, against the Constable de Bourbon, and Charles V, and the Dukes of Savoy and Epernon. In 1637 the ancestors of these peaceful citizens repulsed, unaided, a Spanish fleet, and yearly since then they give with astonishing zest a representation of this attack and defence, and the town is filled with jostling and clamour, which recalls strangely the great popular holiday feasts of the middle ages. In 1813 the town was equally successful in repelling the attack of an English flotilla which had been sent against it.

In these days, however, Saint-Tropez goes a-fishing. It fishes for tunny, sardines, lobsters, all the pretty fishes that are found in this azure sea, and it provides for the wants of a whole section of this coast.

After dressing, I stepped on to the quay on the stroke of noon, and I saw two old clerks from some notary's or advocate's office, going home for luncheon. They were like two venerable draught horses, which had just been unbridled for a moment, to allow them to eat the oats at the bottom of their nose-bags.

Oh liberty! liberty! sole happiness, sole hope, sole dream! Of all classes of society, all varieties of workers, all those who wage daily the hard battle for existence, men such as these two are the most wretched, the most to be pitied, the most completely banished from the favours of fortune. They are impotent to complain; they cannot rebel; they remain bound and gagged in their misery, in the shameful humiliation of the quill-driver. They have studied, they know the law; they have perhaps graduated. How I love that dedication of Jules Vallès:

"To all those who were nourished on Greek and Latin, and subsequently died of starvation."

Do you realise what are the wages of these starvelings? Eight to fifteen hundred francs a year!

Oh ye clerks, who work in grimy chambers or in Government offices, you ought to read, every morning, inscribed on the portal of your gloomy prison, the celebrated line of Dante:

"Abandon hope, all ye who enter here."

A clerk enters that prison for the first time at the age of twenty, and stays there until he is sixty or more, and during that long period nothing happens. The sombre little office, furnished with green cardboard boxes, is always the same, and it swallows up a man's entire existence. When he first goes in, he is full of youthful hope and energy. When

he comes out, he is an old man, tottering on the verge of the grave. The harvest of memories, which we reap in life, unforeseen events, blissful or tragical love-affairs, adventurous voyages, all the hazards of a free existence, are a closed book to these galley-slaves. Day is like unto day, week to week, month to month, season to season, year to year. Daily he arrives at office at the same hour, he lunches at the same hour, he leaves office at the same hour, and this he does from the age of twenty to the age of sixty. There are four landmarks only in his life; his marriage, the birth of his first child, the death of his father, the death of his mother. Apart from these events, nothing. Your pardon! there are his increments of salary. Of ordinary life he knows nothing, absolutely nothing. He is never released before the usual hour, and he consequently knows nothing of happy days spent in sunny streets, or in roaming about the fields. He commits himself to jail at eight o'clock each morning. His prison opens at six in the evening, when it is getting dark. He has, however, one compensation. For a fortnight every year he has the actual right—for it is a right, although it is disputed, haggled over and grudged—to stay shut up in his home. For where can he go, since he has no money?

The carpenter on his scaffolding climbs up into the sky, the cabman prowls about the streets; the engine-driver traverses forest and plain and mountain; he leaves the city walls behind him, and makes towards the wide prospects of blue sea and sky. But the clerk never quits his office, which is a living man's coffin. In the same little mirror in which, on the day of his arrival, he looked at himself, a young man with blonde moustaches, he contemplates himself, bald, white-bearded, on the day on which he is shown the door. That, then, is the end. Life is now a locked door, the future a blank wall. How comes it that he has reached this point in so short a time? How is it possible for a man to have grown old without anything happening, without existence having yielded him one single shock of surprise? But so it is. Give way to the young, to the young clerks!

Well then, away he goes, more wretched than ever, and he dies almost at once of the rude rupture of that habit which has held him in long and ruthless subjection; the office routine, with the same journeys to and fro, the same actions, the same petty tasks at the same hours.

As I entered the hotel where I was having luncheon, I was presented with a monstrous packet of letters and papers, which had been awaiting my arrival, and I felt a sudden sinking at heart, as if I were threatened by some nightmare. I am afraid of letters; I hate them, because they are ties. When I tear open these little squares of paper with my name on them, the noise of it suggests to my ears the rattling of the chains which fetter me to my acquaintances old and new. All letters have the same questions to put to me, however different the writers of them may be:

"Where are you? What are you doing? Why do you vanish like this, without letting people know where you are going? With whom are you hiding?"

One of my correspondents adds:

"How can you expect your friends to become attached to you if you are always running away from them? You hurt their feelings. . . ."

Well then, let people refrain from "attaching" themselves to me. It seems impossible for anyone to conceive an affection, without introducing an element of ownership and authority. Apparently human relations cannot exist without involving obligations, susceptibilities, and a certain degree of servitude. The moment you respond to the civilities of a stranger, he establishes a hold over you. He becomes anxious about your doings, and assumes a right to reproach you with neglecting him. If the acquaintance proceeds as far as friendship, both sides imagine that they have rights. Ordinary intercourse gives rise to duties, and we find that cords of amity have a slip knot at the end of them.

This affectionate solicitude, this suspicious, despotic, leech-like jealousy, which arises between human beings

who have met and found each other agreeable, and therefore believe themselves to be chained to each other, is grounded solely upon the harrowing fear of solitude, which haunts men upon this earth. Each one of us is conscious of the void surrounding him, the unplumbed void, the thought of which affrights his heart and appals his mind, and he runs like a madman with arms outstretched, ready to kiss and clasp to his bosom anyone he can find. In his fear of solitude, he bestows his embraces right and left, at hazard, ignorantly, blindly, and unintelligently. As soon as he has shaken hands with you, he seems to say:

"Now you are, to a certain extent, my property. You owe me a portion of yourself, your life, your thoughts and your time."

That is the reason why so many people believe in their mutual love, when they are totally ignorant of each other. They hold each other's hands; they kiss, when they have never even taken the trouble to look at each other properly. In order not to feel that they are alone, they are impelled to clutch at some form of love, be it friendship, be it passion, no matter which, if only it abides with them for ever. They assert it with solemn oaths; they rouse themselves to rapture; they pour their whole soul into a strange heart, which they only discovered the night before; they mingle their soul with the soul of some casually encountered person, because they have liked that person's face. It is only natural that these hasty unions should beget a harvest of contempt, astonishment, misunderstandings, and tragedies.

We are alone, in spite of all our efforts, and similarly, we are free, in spite of all these embracings. No one ever becomes the property of another. You may lend yourself reluctantly to this superficial or passionate game of possession, but you never really surrender yourself. Guarded by this instinctive need to be master of somebody, man has instituted tyranny, slavery and marriage. He may kill, torture and imprison, but the will of man for ever eludes

him, even if it has consented for a few moments to feign submission.

Do mothers own their children? Does not the little child, so lately one with his mother, forthwith set about noisily proclaiming his wants, declaring his isolation and insisting upon his independence?

Does a woman ever belong to you? Do you know what is in her mind, even if she adores you? You may kiss her; you may swoon upon her lips, but one word from you or her, one single word, may suffice to kindle an implacable hatred between herself and you. All sentiments of affection lose their charm if they become authoritative. Because I like to meet and talk to someone, does it follow that I have any right to know about his actions and preferences?

The commotions in cities great and small, and in every group of men, the mischievous, jealous, back-biting calumnious inquisitiveness, the incessant worries of social intercourse, of other persons' love affairs, of gossipings and scandals, arise, do they not, from our claim to control the conduct of others, as if everyone were our property in varying degrees. It comes to this: we imagine we have rights over other people's lives, because we desire their lives to conform to ours; over their thoughts, because we require them to run on the same lines as ours; over their opinions, because we cannot bear to see them different from ours; over their reputations, because we wish them to be in harmony with our principles, and over their morals because we are indignant to see them adapted to any standard but our own.

I had my luncheon at the end of a long table in the Bailli de Suffren Hotel. I continued reading my letters and papers, when my attention was distracted by the noisy discourse of half-a-dozen men seated at the other end of the table. They were commercial travellers. They spoke of all things with conviction, authority, good-natured raillery, or contempt, and they conveyed to me a clear conception of the French soul, that is to say, the mean of intelligence, reason, logic and wit as it is found in France.

One of them was a big fellow with a shock of red hair. He was wearing a military medal and another medal for saving life; a man of courage. A second was a small, stout man, who made puns without ceasing, and laughed uproariously at them, without giving the others time to understand them. A third had close-cropped hair. He reorganised the army and the magistracy, reformed the laws and the constitution, defined the ideal Republic, from the standpoint of a man with the soul of a traveller in wine. Two others found great diversion in exchanging tales about their affairs with women, which consisted of adventures in back-shops and conquests in kitchens.

These men suggested to me a vision of France as a whole, the France of legend, the France that is intellectual, versatile, brave and chivalrous. They were types of the race, and common types. Still, I had only to poetise them a little in order to rediscover the Frenchman, who is revealed to us by history, that enthusiastic, but mendacious old beldame. And it is true that our race is an amusing one, by virtue of very special qualities which are not found in other nations.

The first characteristic is our versatility, which gives such a gay diversity to our manners and institutions. By reason of it, our country's past resembles an astonishing tale of adventure, of which the next instalment is always full of the unforeseen, of tragedy or comedy, of things terrible or grotesque. You may be angry and indignant, according to the opinions you hold, but the fact remains that no history in the world is more full of entertainment and animation than ours. From the point of view of pure art—and why not admit this special and objective point of view in politics as well as in literature?—it remains without a rival. What could be more curious and astonishing than the events that have occurred within the last century alone? And what shall we behold to-morrow? Is there not a fundamental charm in this expectation of the unexpected? With us everything is possible, the most incredible farce or the most tragic drama. Why should this astonish us? A country

that has produced Joan of Arc and Napoleon has earned a right to be deemed a land of miracles.

And then, we love women, and love them well. We love them with ardour, and yet with delicacy, with spirit and yet with reverence. Our gallantry towards women has nothing comparable with it in any other country. The man who treasures in his heart the chivalrous ardour, inherited from recent centuries, encircles women with a love which is at once gentle, deep-felt, and vivacious. He loves all that pertains to them, all that proceeds from them, all that they are, all that they do. He loves their dress, their knick-knacks, their finery, their artifices, their artlessness, their perfidies, their fibs, and their pretty ways. He loves them all, rich and poor alike, young and old, fair and dark, plump and thin. He feels at his ease in their proximity, in their midst, and he can remain with them indefinitely, without weariness or boredom, happy in their mere presence. From the first meeting, he is able, with look or smile, to show them that he loves them. He knows how to arouse their attention, stimulate the pleasure they take in pleasing, and make them deploy all their seductions for his benefit. An immediate and lively sympathy is established between women and himself; an instinctive comradeship, a kinship of character and nature. Together they enter the lists of coquetry and chivalry; friendship is established by a bond of mystery and mutual challenge; heart and mind are joined fast in a secret affinity. He knows how to flatter them. He can make them understand his thoughts. Without ever shocking them, without ever offending their fragile and variable delicacy, he can reveal the discreet yet ardent desire, which is always awake in his eyes, trembling on his lips, burning in his veins. He is their friend, their slave, a minister to their caprices, and a worshipper of their charms. He is ready, at their summons, to help or defend them, as though there were a secret alliance between them and him. He would gladly risk his life for them, even for those whom he knows but little, or not at all, or has never seen. He asks nothing of them but a little gentle affection, a little

confidence, a little interest, a little of their kind favour, or even a little of their roguish perfidy.

In the street, he loves the passing woman whose glance lights upon him for an instant. He loves the little girl, with a blue ribbon in her long hair and a flower in her bosom, with bold or timid eyes, tripping slowly or hurriedly along the crowded pavements. He loves the unknown woman who brushes past him, the little tradeswoman dreaming in her doorway, the languid beauty lying back in her open carriage.

As soon as he finds himself face to face with a woman, his heart is thrilled and his mind is on the alert. He thinks of her, adapts his talk to hers, does his best to be agreeable to her and make her understand that she has charmed him. Pretty speeches rise to his lips; there is a caress in his glance; he longs to kiss her hand, or touch her gown. For him, it is woman who lends to the world its beauty, and to life its seductiveness. He loves to lie at her feet, for the mere pleasure of being there; he loves to meet her glance, that he may capture her veiled and fleeting thoughts; he loves to listen to her voice, solely because it is the voice of a woman.

It is through women, and for the sake of women, that the Frenchman has learned to converse, and to have his wits ever on the alert. Conversation, what is it? A mystery. It is the art of never boring, of knowing how to say things with interest, of charming with trifles and delighting with nothing at all. How shall I define the lively play of words, this game in which supple words are tossed to and fro, and one idea smiles gaily at another? The Frenchman is the only man in the world who has wit. He alone appreciates and understands it. He has it in its evanescent, as well as in its permanent, forms; the wit of the streets and that of books. His one abiding quality is wit, in the broad sense of the term; it is the great inspiration of irony or gaiety, which has been the atmosphere of our race ever since it could think or speak; it is the terrible verve of Montaigne and Rabelais, the irony of Voltaire,

Beaumarchais and Saint-Simon, and the prodigious laughter of Molière. The flash of satire, the epigram, is the small change of this spirit, and yet it constitutes another aspect, a character peculiar to our natural genius. It is one of its liveliest charms. It creates the sceptical gaiety of our Parisian life, the amiable casualness of our manners. It is a part of our urbanity. It was once the fashion to versify these pleasantries; nowadays they are expressed in prose, and are called, according to the period, epigrams, witticisms, quips, hits, things racy of our native soil. Begotten on the boulevard, or at Montmartre, they flash through town and salon; and those from Montmartre are often as good as those from the boulevards. They are printed in the newspapers, and raise a laugh from one end of France to the other. Laughter is one of those things we understand.

How does it happen that one term, rather than another, the unforeseen, grotesque collocation of two phrases, two ideas or even two sounds, some quibble or inconsequent absurdity, can open the sluices of our gaiety and make all Paris and the provinces burst out in one great explosion, like a sprung mine? Why is France always laughing, while the English and the Germans cannot understand our amusement? Why? Simply because we are Frenchmen, and, having French intelligence, possess the charming faculty of laughter.

In our country, moreover, a pinch of wit suffices to solve a problem of administration. Humour takes the place of genius; a witticism sets a man apart and makes him great in the eyes of posterity. Other considerations are of little importance. We love those who amuse us, we pardon those who make us laugh.

One glance at the past of our country will suffice to make it clear that the renown of our great men rests always upon some happy turn of speech. The most detestable princes have become popular by means of successful jokes, which have been remembered and repeated down the ages.

The throne of France is propped with pastry-cooks' posies. Phrases and witticisms, and nothing but phrases

and witticisms, ironic, heroic, pleasing, licentious, rise to the surface of our history, and give it the appearance of a jest-book.

When Clovis, the Christian King, had the story of the Passion read to him, he cried out:

"Why was I not there with my Franks?"

To make his throne secure, this king had murdered his allies and his relations and committed every imaginable crime. None the less we regard this monarch as an upholder of religion.

"Why was I not there with my Franks?"

We should know nothing of the good king Dagobert, unless the song had apprised us of certain pecularities in his method of living, though these particulars are doubtless inaccurate.

Wishing to dispossess King Childeric of the throne, Pépin put the following insidious question to Pope Zacharias:

"Which of the two is the more fit to reign, he who discharges worthily all the functions of a king, without having the title, or he who has the title and does not know how to govern?"

What do you know of Louis VI? Nothing. . . . Your pardon! At the battle of Brenneville, an Englishman put his hand on the monarch and cried:

"The King is taken."

Louis VI, a true Frenchman, retorted:

"Knowest thou not that a King is never taken, even at chess?"

Louis IX, although a saint, has not bequeathed a single epigram for us to treasure, and thus his reign leaves us with a dreadful impression of boredom, prayers and penitence.

Philip VI, ninny though he was, when he was defeated and wounded at Crécy, knocked at the door of the Château de l'Arbroie and called out:

"Open to France and her fortunes."

It was a speech worthy of melodrama, and we still bear him goodwill for it.

Jean II, taken prisoner by the Prince of Wales, combined

a fine and chivalrous courtesy with the gallantry of a French troubadour in his remark:

"I thought to give you supper to-day; but fortune has ruled otherwise, and wills that I should be your guest."

It is not in man to show himself more gracious in adversity.

"It is not for the King of France to avenge the quarrels of the Duke of Orleans," generously declared Louis XII, and there he truly spoke a kingly word, a word worthy to be cherished by all princes.

François I, who was a great simpleton, a hunter of unmarried girls and an unlucky commander, saved his memory and surrounded his name with an imperishable aureole, when, after his defeat at Pavia, he sent his mother the superb message:

"All is lost, Madam, save honour."

In our eyes, to-day, do not these words shine as resplendently as any victory? Have they not done the prince more honour than if he had conquered a kingdom? We have forgotten the names of most of the great battles that were fought at that remote epoch, but shall we ever forget: "All is lost, save honour"?

Henri IV! Salute him, gentlemen: he is the master. Sly, sceptical, artful, the cunningest man alive; despite his mask of good fellowship, incredibly deceitful, a rake, a drunkard, and without a vestige of belief, he had the gift, by a few happily inspired words, of creating for himself, in history, an admirable reputation as a chivalrous and generous king, a fine fellow, full of loyalty and probity. Oh, the knave, how well he understood the art of playing on human folly!

"Hang yourself, my brave Crillon! We have won without you."

After such an utterance, a soldier is ready to let himself be hanged and slaughtered for his master.

At the moment of ordering the attack at the famous castle of Ivry:

"Children, if you have no colours, rally to my white

plume. You will always find it on the way that leads to honour and victory."

Could a man, who had the gift of speaking thus to his captains and soldiers, fail to be always victorious? The sceptic King wants Paris. He wants it consumedly, but he has to choose between his faith and that fair city.

"Pooh!" he mutters, "Paris is well worth a Mass."

So he changed his religion as he would have changed his coat. Still, is it not true that the word carries the deed along with it? "Paris is well worth a Mass!" It set the wits laughing and no great offence was taken.

The Spanish ambassador came upon him one day playing horses with the Dauphin.

"Has your Excellency any children?" the King asked.

"Yes, Sire," the Spaniard replied.

"Then I can go on playing," said the King.

Has not this incident made him the patron saint of all fathers of families? But he conquered the heart of the people for all eternity by the most beautiful saying ever pronounced by a prince, a saying of genius, full of depth and kindness and shrewdness and good sense:

"If God grant me life, it is my will that there be no peasant in my realm so poor that he cannot have a chicken in the pot on Sunday."

It is with such sayings that foolish and impressionable crowds are captured, governed and mastered. In a couple of phrases, Henry IV has drawn his own portrait for posterity. No man can pronounce his name without immediately seeing a vision of the white plume of Navarre, and without having in his nostrils the savour of the chicken in the pot.

Louis XIII made no epigrams; a sad king and a sorry reign.

Louis XIV established the formula of absolute personal power: "*L'Etat, c'est moi.*"

Royal arrogance found in him the measure of its complete expansion when he remarked:

"I was within an ace of having to wait."

He provided the exemplar of the sonorous, political phrases, which bring about alliances between two nations:

"The Pyrénées no longer exist."

The whole reign is summed up in these few words.

Louis XV, spoilt, elegant and witty, has bequeathed to us this charming instance of sovereign indifference:

"After me, the deluge."

If Louis XVI had had the wit to launch an epigram, he might perhaps have saved the Monarchy. Could he not perchance have avoided the guillotine with one jest?

Napoleon I scattered by handfuls the sayings which warmed his soldiers' hearts. Napoleon III, with one brief phrase, extinguished all the nation's future outbursts of wrath with the promise:

"The Empire is peace."

The Empire is peace! a superb assertion and a magnificent lie. After such a pronouncement he could declare war on all Europe without having to fear anything from his subjects. He had found a formula, simple, clean-cut, arresting, capable of striking men's minds, and against which facts could never prevail. He made war on China, Mexico, Russia, Austria, on the whole world. What matter? There are people who still speak with conviction of the eighteen years of tranquillity which he gave us. "The Empire is peace."

But it was also with witty sayings, more lethal than bullets, that Rochefort demolished the Empire, piercing it with his shafts, slashing it into ribbons, crumbling it into dust.

Marshal Macmahon himself has left us a relic of his passage to power in the words:

"*J'y suis, j'y reste*," "Here I am and here I stay," and he in his own turn was overthrown by Gambetta's phrase:

"Get under or get out."

With these words, stronger than a revolution, more formidable than barricades, more invincible than an army, more redoubtable than the ballot-box, the tribune upset the soldier, brought his glory to earth, and annihilated his power and prestige.

As for our administrators of to-day, they will fail for lack of wit. On the day of danger and revolution, the day of the inevitable reaction, they will perish through their incapacity to disarm France with a laugh.

Of all the historical sayings there are not a dozen which are authentic. But what does that matter, provided they are believed to have been spoken by those to whom they are attributed? In the words of the popular song:

"In the land where hunchbacks dwell,
By one's hump they judge one,
If you're not equipped therewith,
Do your best and fudge one."

The commercial travellers, however, were now talking of the emancipation of women, of women's rights, and the new position they aimed at in the world. Some approved the movement; others resented it. The little fat fellow kept up a running fire of jokes, and brought luncheon and the discussion to a simultaneous conclusion with the following anecdote, which is not without point:

"Recently, at a big meeting in England, they had been debating this question of women's emancipation, and an orator had just been developing a number of arguments in its favour. He concluded as follows:

'To sum the matter up, gentlemen, all that distinguishes man from woman is a very little difference.'

Then from the midst of the crowd a strong voice shouted, with enthusiasm and conviction:

'Three cheers for the little difference.'"

SAINT-TROPEZ, *13th April.*

A VERY fine morning. I set out for the Chartreuse de la Verne.

I was drawn to this ruin by two memories. One recalled the sensation of infinite solitude and unforgettable sadness, which I had experienced in the ruined cloister. The other concerned an old pair of peasants, to whose house I had been taken the previous year by a friend, who was guiding me across the pays des Maures.

The route soon became impracticable for a conveyance with springs, and I continued my journey in a cart provided with seats.

The road lay at first along the shore, as far as the head of the Bay. On the opposite shore were the fine woods in which the "Company" is trying to establish yet another winter resort. The beach, I own, is wonderful, and the whole region magnificent. My road presently plunged into the mountains and soon passed through the little country-town of Cogolin. A little later I quitted the road and took a sunk track resembling a long cutting. There is a river, or rather a brook, flowing alongside of it. Every hundred yards or so, it cuts into the sunk road, submerges it, shifts a little away, returns, deviates anew, leaves its bed and again floods the road. Then it falls into a ditch and is lost in a stony field, whence, as if it had suddenly learnt wisdom, it betakes itself to its proper channel for a time. Suddenly, however, it is seized by Puckish perverseness and precipates itself again into the road, converting it into a swamp in which the horse plunges up to the breast and the wagonette up to the body.

There are no more houses. Here and there is a charcoal-burner's hut. The poorest of these people live in holes.

Can you conceive of men living in holes? They exist there the whole year through, splitting wood and converting it into charcoal. Their food is bread and onions, and their drink is water. Like rabbits in their burrows, they sleep in the recesses of a narrow cavern, which they have excavated in the granite. In the depths of one of these unexplored valleys a solitary, a genuine solitary, has been discovered. He has lived in hiding there for thirty years, his presence unsuspected even by the forest rangers. Having learnt of the existence of this wild man from someone or other, the conductor of the diligence informed the post-master, who mentioned it to the telegraph superintendent, who imparted the surprising fact to the editor of some local journal. The editor worked up a sensational story, which was reproduced in every newspaper in Provence. The gendarmerie got moving and unearthed the hermit, but as they gave him no trouble, he must have preserved his identity papers. Excited by the news, a photographer set out in turn, and after wandering for three days and nights among the mountains, at last succeeded in photographing somebody, declared by some to be the real solitary, and by others a pretender.

Last year the friend, who made me acquainted with this curious region, showed me a couple assuredly even stranger than that poor devil of a hermit, who came to these impenetrable woods to hide some mortification, some remorse, some incurable despair, or perhaps merely his boredom with life.

It was thus that he discovered them. Wandering on horseback through these valleys, he came to a flourishing clearing consisting of a vineyard, fields, and a humble, but habitable, farm. On entering the dwelling, he was received by a peasant woman aged about seventy. Her husband, who was sitting under a tree, came up to greet him.

" He is deaf," said the wife.

He was an old man of eighty, tall, upright, handsome and amazingly strrong. The two had a male and a female domestic in their service. My friend was somewhat sur-

prised at meeting this singular pair in this wild spot and made enquiries about them. They had been there for a very long time, and were highly respected. They were reputed to be in comfortable circumstances according to a peasant's standard. My friend came back several times to visit them and by degrees became the woman's confidant. He used to bring her newspapers and books, and was astonished to find that she had ideas, or rather the remains of ideas, which seemed incompatible with her social status. It was not that she was well-read or intelligent or witty; but she seemed to retain, in the depths of her memory, traces of forgotten thoughts, the dormant recollections of an education received long since. One day she asked him his name.

"I am the Comte de X——" he said.

Stirred by one of those obscure promptings of vanity that lurk at the bottom of every soul, she replied:

"I am of noble birth, too."

She followed up her assertion and, obviously for the first time, spoke of this matter of ancient history, which she had never revealed to a soul.

"I am a Colonel's daughter. My husband was a non-commissioned officer in papa's regiment. I fell in love with him and we ran away together."

"And you came here?"

"Yes, we hid here."

"You have never seen your family again?"

"No; you see my husband was a deserter."

"You have never written to any of them?"

"No."

"Have you never had any news of any member of your family? Not of your father or your mother?"

"No. Mother was dead."

This woman had retained something of the ingenuousness of girls who leap into love as if they were casting themselves over a precipice. My friend continued his queries.

"You have never told anyone?"

"Oh, no. I only mention it now because Maurice is deaf. As long as he could hear I shouldn't have dared to talk about it. And, you see, I have never met anyone but peasants since I ran away."

"At least you have been happy?"

"Oh, yes. Very happy. He has made me very happy. I have never regretted anything."

When, the previous year, I went in my turn to see this woman and her husband, I was in the mood of one who goes to visit a miraculous relic. It was with sadness and amazement, and perhaps a touch of contempt, that I had looked upon the woman. As a girl, her fancy had been taken by the trappings of this prancing hussar, and later, when he exchanged these for the tattered blouse of an agricultural labourer, she still saw him with his blue dolman slung over his shoulder; she could still hear the spurs jingling in his cavalry boots, and his sabre rattling at his side.

But she herself had become a peasant woman. In the recesses of this wilderness she had adapted herself to this simple, unattractive life, entirely lacking in refinement; she had moulded herself to this primitive existence. And she still loved him. With her bonnet and her stuff petticoat she had become a woman of the people. Seated on a straw-bottomed chair she ate her stew of cabbage and potatoes and bacon-fat from an earthenware platter set out upon a bare wooden table. She slept on a straw mattress by her husband's side. She had never had a thought except of him. She had never pined for all she had relinquished, jewels, dresses, the refinements of life, the softness of cushioned chairs, the perfumed languor of curtained rooms, the downy couch so welcome to weary limbs. She had never wanted anything but her husband. If he were there, that was all she asked for. In the first flush of her youth she had abandoned life and society, and those who had brought her up and loved her. Alone with him she had come to this wild ravine. And he had been all in all to her, her one desire, her one dream, the object of a faith that

never ceased, a hope that never failed. He had filled her existence with bliss from end to end. Nothing could have made her happiness more perfect.

Now, on this second occasion, with the same feeling of astonishment tinged with a vague contempt, I was going to see her again. She lived on the other side of the mountain on which the Chartreuse de la Verne is built. The sunken cart-track, along which we had been driving, dwindled away into a mere footpath, suitable only for pedestrians and mules. Beyond the mountain, a second vehicle was awaiting me near the Hyères road. I accordingly began my slow ascent on foot. I was in an exquisite wood, exactly resembling the Corsican *maquis*, a wood with the colours of a fairy tapestry, with aromatic plants of pungent odours, and tall, magnificent trees. Sparkling lumps of granite lay in profusion in the road. Through the gaps in the foliage I caught sudden glimpses of wide, dark valleys whose tree-clad slopes receded into the remote distance.

I was warm, and my blood coursed gaily in my veins; I could feel its throbbing, ardent, rapid, lively, rhythmic, inspiring like a song, the great, gay, heedless song of sun-stirred life. Vigorous and happy, I quickened my pace. I clambered up the rocks, I jumped, I ran; every minute opened out to my sight a wider extent of country, a gigantic network of deserted valleys, without a single chimney to send up its smoke. Gaining the summit, which was dominated by other and loftier peaks, I made several detours, and on the side of the mountain opposite I caught sight of a sombre ruin rising behind an immense chestnut wood, which covered the entire slope of the hill from peak to valley. This ruin consisted of a pile of sombre stones, and ancient buildings resting on lofty arches. To reach it I had to go round the end of a wide gorge and climb up through the chestnut wood.

These mighty chestnut trees are of the same age as the Abbey and have survived its destruction, but they are decrepit and nearing their end. Some, unable to carry their weight of years, have fallen; others have lost their top

branches and are now mere hollow trunks, in which ten men could hide themselves. They look like a formidable army of ancient giants who, shattered by thunderbolts, still mount to the assault of heaven. There is a reek of the mould of centuries, of the life that once informed these rotten roots in this fantastic forest. No flowers now bloom at the feet of these Titans. Between these grey tree trunks the ground is hard and bears nothing but stones and scanty herbage. Here are two springs which have been dammed and are used for watering the cows. As I came nearer to the Abbey I gained a complete view of its old buildings. The earliest of these date from the twelfth century; the later are occupied by a family of shepherds. In the first quadrangle it is evident from the traces of animals that the place is still haunted by some remainder of life. After crossing crumbling halls, such as are found in all ruins, the visitor reaches the cloister, a long, low arcade with the roof still in place. It surrounds a wilderness of brambles and tall weeds. In no other part of the world have I experienced so depressing a sensation of melancholy as in that ancient and sinister monkish ambulatory. Undoubtedly the form of the arches and the proportions of the quadrangle contribute to this emotion, to this constriction of the heart. The soul is saddened by the sight of a gloomy edifice as inevitably as it is rejoiced by the aspect of a happy disposition of lines in a brightly-planned building. The architect who designed this monastic retreat must have been in the depths of despair to conceive this stalking-place of desolation. Within these walls one's impulse is to weep and groan, to suffer, to revive the heart's old wounds, to magnify, to exaggerate to infinity all the mortifications that life has packed into our bosoms.

I climbed up on a breach in the walls to obtain a view of the landscape outside. Then I understood. There was nothing around but death. Behind the Abbey a mountain towered up into the sky; on all sides of the ruins were chestnut trees; in front of it, a valley, then more valleys, and pines, pines, an ocean of pines, all the way to the

horizon, peak after peak all clad in pines. I resumed my walk.

My way took me next across a forest of cork-oak where, the previous year, I had experienced a shock of vivid surprise. It was a cloudy day in October, the month in which men come to strip the bark off these trees in order to manufacture it into corks. The trees are stripped from the base up to the first branches. The naked trunk turns blood-red, like the limbs of a man who has been flayed alive. These trunks have weird and twisted shapes; the attitudes of cripples, of epileptics writhing in a fit. I had a sudden impression of being cast into a forest of the tormented, a blood-bespattered forest in Hell, where men had roots, where human bodies, deformed by suffering, assumed a likeness to trees, where, in an agony without end, life trickled unceasingly from out these bleeding wounds. I experienced that shuddering horror, that sinking of the heart, which is produced in those of nervous temperament by the sudden sight of blood, by the rude shock of seeing a man who has been crushed, or has fallen from a roof. This emotion was so vivid, the sensation so overpowering, that I fancied I could hear plaints and heart-rending cries, distant, innumerable. I touched a tree in order to restore my courage, and when I withdrew my hand I saw the palm of my hand all red as if with blood.

To-day, however, the trees were whole again, until the next stripping.

At last I caught sight of the road passing by the farm which had sheltered for so many years the happiness of the Colonel's daughter and the non-commissioned officer of hussars. From a long way off I recognised the man walking about among his vines. So much the better. His wife would be alone in the house. The servant was washing the door-step.

" Is your mistress at home? " I asked.

With a singular expression on her face she replied in her southern accent:

" No, sir. She's been six months gone."

"Is she dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did she die of?"

She hesitated before muttering:

"She's dead. Dead, I tell you."

"But of what?"

"She had a fall."

"A fall? How was that?"

"From the window."

I gave her a franc.

"Tell me all about it," I said.

There was no doubt of her eagerness to speak. Doubtless she had repeated the story many times in the previous six months, for she narrated it in great detail, like a familiar matter, not to be varied. The deaf old husband, it appeared, had had a mistress in the neighbouring village for thirty years. His wife learnt this by chance from a passing carter, who referred to it without knowing who she was. Shrieking and distraught, she ran up to the loft and flung herself out of the window, not perhaps with definite intention, but driven out of her wits by the shock of grief and amazement, which urged her on with an uncontrollable impulse, like a whip lash cutting into the skin. She climbed the ladder, passed through the doorway, and, unconsciously, unable to check her impetus, run straight on and leapt into space.

The husband had never known the truth. He still did not know it. Being deaf, he would never know. His wife was dead. That was all. Everybody had to die.

From a distance I watched him directing his workmen by signs.

Then, however, I saw my carriage waiting for me in the shade of a tree, and I returned to Saint-Tropez.

14th April.

I WAS just turning in last night, although it was barely nine o'clock, when a telegram was brought to me. The message was from a friend of mine, one of the friends for whom I have a real affection.

"*I am at Monte Carlo for four days. I am sending you a telegram to every port on this coast. Come and join me.*"

Forthwith, the wish to meet him and converse, to laugh, to discuss society and things and people, to slander, to gossip, to criticise, to blame, to conjecture, and to chatter, was kindled in me like a fire. That morning the summons would have annoyed me, but in the evening I was only too delighted. I wished I could be transplanted, then and there, to see the great dining-hall of the restaurant full of people, and to hear that babel of voices, with the roulette numbers dominating all the talk, as the *Dominus vobiscum* dominates divine service.

Calling Bernard, I told him we would leave for Monaco at four next morning.

"If it is fine," he replied, philosophically.

"It will be fine."

"The glass is falling."

"Nonsense. It will rise again."

The sailor smiled his sceptical smile.

I went to bed and to sleep. It was I who awakened the crew. It was dark, and the sky was overcast. The barometer had dropped still lower. The two sailors shook their heads with an air of mistrust.

"Nonsense," I said again, "it is going to be fine. Come, let us get under way."

"When I can look out to the open sea," said Bernard,

"I know what I am doing. But in harbour here, at the farthest end of the bay, you can't see a thing. You don't know what is going on. There might be a high sea running outside without our knowing it."

"The barometer has fallen," I retorted. "Consequently there will be no easterly wind. And if it is a westerly wind, we can run for shelter to Agay, which is six or seven miles from here."

My crew seemed in no way reassured. However, they made preparations for our departure.

"Shall we take the dinghy aboard?" asked Bernard.

"No. I assure you it is going to be fine. Tow the dinghy astern."

A quarter of an hour later we left the harbour and entered the mouth of the bay with a slight, intermittent breeze following.

"Well," I said, laughing, "it is fine, you see."

We soon passed the black and white tower, built on the Basse Rabiou, but though we were under the lee of Cap Camarat, which projects a long way into the sea, with its beacon flashing out at sixty-second intervals, the *Bel-Ami* was already lifting to long, slow, heavy waves, like hills of water, which rolled on, one after the other, noiseless, gliding, smooth, menacing without anger, and terrifying by virtue of their quietness. It was too dark to see anything. We were conscious only of the yacht rising and falling on the dark, heaving sea.

"There has been a high wind out at sea to-night, sir," Bernard observed. "We shall be lucky to get there without trouble."

When the sun rose the sky was clear, but the bay was a mass of tumbling waves. We all three gazed out to the open for signs of the squall re-commencing. The boat, however, was scudding fast before the wind, with a following sea. Already we were off the Agay crossing, and we debated whether we should make for Cannes, in case the weather grew worse; or for Nice, bearing outward round the islands. Bernard gave his vote for Cannes, but as the

breeze showed no sign of freshening, I decided for Nice. All went well for three hours, although the poor little yacht tossed like a cork in the big rollers.

No one can form any conception of the mysterious, daunting, superb and terrifying force of the waves who has not been out in deep water and seen that sea of mountains running free and massive, separated by valleys, succeeding one another every moment; unceasingly crashing down, only to surge up again. In this dancing chaos of water, our little dinghy followed a long way astern of us, at the end of fifty yards of tow-rope. We kept losing sight of her, only to see her reappear, swimming like a plump, white bird on the top of a wave.

Cannes came in sight at the head of its bay, then Saint-Honorat with its tower projecting above the waves, and in front of us lay the Cap d'Antibes. The breeze was freshening, little by little, and on the crests of the waves were white horses, the snowy horses who gallop so fast in innumerable herds, without spur or bridle, under the infinite sky.

"We shall only just fetch Antibes," said Bernard. And indeed the waves were now breaking over us with a noisy violence which I cannot describe. Rude gusts smote us, hurling us down into gaping hollows which cast us up again, and we regained an even keel only after lurching terribly. We lowered the peak, but the boom touched the waves at every roll and seemed ready to snap the mast and send it flying, sail and all, leaving us helplessly adrift in that waste of foaming waters.

"The dinghy, sir," said Bernard.

I turned to look. A monstrous wave had swamped the dinghy, upsetting her, swallowing her in its foam as though devouring her, snapping the tow-rope, and seizing our half-drowned and sinking boat like a prey which it had conquered and subdued and would presently throw up on the rocks at the foot of the promontory. Minutes dragged like hours. There was nothing to be done but let the yacht run before the wind, until she gained the point for which we were

heading; when we had rounded that we should be in shelter, and safe.

We doubled the cape at last, and found ourselves in smooth, unbroken water, protected by the long spit of land and rock which forms the Cap d'Antibes. Here was the harbour which we left only a few days since, but it seemed as if we had been voyaging for months. We entered it at noon.

The sailors, now in their home port, were radiant. Bernard, however, kept saying:

"Ah, that poor little dinghy of ours! It's a great grief to me to have seen her go down like that."

I took the four o'clock train, meaning to dine with my friend in the Principality of Monaco.

I wish I had leisure to describe at length this astonishing State, which is smaller than many a French village, but contains an absolute sovereign, bishops, a host of Jesuits and seminarists more numerous than the Prince's army, an artillery of great guns and smooth bores, an etiquette more ceremonious than that of Louis XIV, principles of government more despotic than those of William of Prussia, joined to a magnificent tolerance for the human vices, which provide sustenance to sovereigns, bishops, Jesuits, seminarists, ministers, soldiers, magistrates and the rest.

Let us, at least, pay our tribute of respect to this good and pacific king, who need fear no invasion, no revolution, but reigns in peace over his happy little nation, in the midst of the ceremonies of a court in which the traditions of the four obeisances, the twenty-six hand-kissings, and all the observances once enforced in the presence of great rulers, are preserved intact. Yet, for all that, this monarch is neither sanguinary nor vindictive. When he passes a decree of banishment, as he occasionally does, he enforces it with infinite tact. Here is an instance.

A confirmed gambler, happening one day to be out of luck, made insulting remarks about the Prince and a decree of banishment was passed against him. For a month he prowled around the forbidden Paradise, fearing the sword

of the archangel in the form of a gendarme's sabre. One day at last he plucked up courage, crossed the frontier, gained the heart of the country in thirty seconds, and boldly entered the Casino, where he was immediately stopped by one of the officials.

"Are you not under decree of banishment, sir?"

"Yes, sir, but I am leaving by the next train."

"In that case, sir, you may go in."

He used to come to the Casino once a week. Invariably the same official put to him the same question, to which he always made the same reply.

Could justice be more gentle?

Sometime during the past few years, however, a case of great gravity, and quite without precedent, occurred in the kingdom. A murder was committed, and the murderer was not one of the foreigners who wander in legions about this coast, but a Monégasque, a husband, who in a moment of anger had killed his wife. It was a senseless murder, without any justification, and the Principality was thrilled to a man. The Supreme Court met to consider this exceptional case, the first murder on record, and the culprit was unanimously sentenced to death. The sovereign, with appropriate indignation, ratified the decree. All that remained to be done was to execute the criminal. At this juncture a difficulty arose. The country had neither executioner nor guillotine. What was to be done? On the advice of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prince opened negotiations with the French Government for the loan of an executioner and his apparatus. The Ministry in Paris gave the matter long and serious consideration, and finally replied by forwarding a note of the expense that would be involved in supplying the artist and his materials. The total was sixteen thousand francs. His Majesty of Monaco was of opinion that the operation would be highly expensive. The murderer was certainly not worth that price. Sixteen thousand francs for that rascal's neck? Not on any account.

The Italian Government was then approached with the same request. It was felt that a fellow-sovereign would

show himself less exacting than a Republic. The Italian Government forwarded an estimate of twelve thousand francs. Twelve thousand francs! That would involve a new tax at the rate of two francs per head of the population. Such a proposal might lead to unprecedented troubles in the State. It was next suggested that the ruffian should have his head struck off by an ordinary soldier. The Commander-in-Chief, however, when consulted, replied with some hesitation that his men had not perhaps had sufficient practice in swordsmanship to be qualified for a task requiring great skill in the management of the sabre. The Prince accordingly convoked the Supreme Court and laid his difficulties before them. Lengthy deliberations resulted in no practical solution. The Senior President finally proposed that the sentence of capital punishment be commuted to imprisonment for life. This suggestion was adopted. There was, however, no prison. A jail had to be constituted and a jailor appointed, who took delivery of the prisoner. All went well for six months. The prisoner slept all day long on a straw mattress in his retreat, and the jailor dozed in a chair before the door, keeping his eye on the passers-by.

But the Prince is an economical person, small blame to him, and scrutinises the most minute expenditure incurred in the State. It is not a long list. The bill for the upkeep of this newly created department of Government, with maintenance of prison, prisoner and warder, was according laid before him. It was the warder who constituted the heaviest tax on the Prince's budget. At first he made a wry face, but when it occurred to him that the prisoner was still young and that the expense might continue indefinitely, he warned his Minister of Justice that he must take measures to suppress this charge. The Minister consulted the President of the Supreme Court, and between them they agreed that the charge for the jailor must be cut out. If the prisoner was invited to keep watch over himself, he would undoubtedly make his escape, and this solution of the problem would satisfy everybody. The

jailor was accordingly sent back to his family and a scullion from the royal kitchens was charged with the duty of taking the prisoner his morning and evening meal. The prisoner, however, made no effort to regain his freedom. One day they forgot to bring him his rations, and he came along calmly and demanded them. From that day onwards, wishing to save the cook the trouble of running after him, he formed the habit of coming to the palace at meal-times and having his food with the palace servants, with whom he soon became friendly. After luncheon, he would go for a walk as far as Monte Carlo, occasionally entering the Casino and risking five francs at the tables. When he won, he would treat himself to a good dinner at some well-known hotel. Then he would return to his prison, enter it, and lock the door from the inside. Never did he sleep away from his cell. The situation was becoming difficult, not for the criminal, but for the judges. Again there was a sitting of the Court, and the prisoner was invited to remove himself from the State of Monaco. When this decree was communicated to him, he coolly replied:

"How absurd you are! What is to become of me, I should like to know? I have no means of support. I have no family left. What do you expect me to do? I was condemned to death. You did not execute me, and I made no complaint. Then I was sentenced to imprisonment for life and handed over to a jailor. You took my keeper away from me. Still I said nothing. Now you want to expel me from the country. No thank you. I am a prisoner, your prisoner, judged and condemned by you. I am serving my sentence faithfully, and I propose to remain here."

The Supreme Court was prostrated. The Prince was furiously angry and ordered that steps should be taken. The deliberations were renewed. It was finally decided to offer the man a pension of six hundred francs if he would go and live abroad. He accepted this offer, rented a little garden five minutes away from the Principality, and lived there happily, cultivating vegetables and despising princes and potentates.

The Supreme Court of Monaco, however, learnt a somewhat tardy lesson from this incident, and decided to make an arrangement with the French Government. Monégasque prisoners are now made over to France, who puts them in seclusion for a modest consideration. In the judicial archives of the Principality can be seen the decree which fixed the amount of the murderer's pension, and laid down the condition that he must not reside in Monégasque territory.

Opposite the royal palace stands its rival, the roulette establishment. Be it noted that there is no hatred, no emulation between them. Roulette supports royalty, and royalty protects roulette; an admirable and unique example of two powerful, neighbouring houses, living in peace in the same small state, an example that might well efface the remembrance of Capulet and Montague. On one side is the sovereign house, on the other the gaming house, old and new, fraternising to the chink of gold. The salons of the Casino are as easy of access to strangers, as the salons of the Prince are difficult. I propose to visit the former.

The moment the visitor enters the door, his ear is filled with the jingling of money. Incessant as the lilt of waves is this impressive, frivolous, menacing sound. From the ear it penetrates to the mind; it thrills the heart, disquiets the spirit, bewilders the brain. From all around emanates this metallic clink, which shrills and shouts, and summons, and tempts and shatters.

Round the tables is gathered a terrible horde of gamblers, the scum of every continent and of every stratum of society, a medley of princes, future kings, women of fashion, shopkeepers, moneylenders, fallen women; a mixture, unique upon earth, of all races, castes and breeds, a museum of Russian, Brazilian, Chilian, Italian, Spanish and German adventurers, old hags with reticules, disreputable young women, who carry on their wrist a little bag containing keys, a handkerchief, and their three remaining five-franc pieces, which they will put on the gambling table when they feel that their luck is in.

Approaching the last table, I caught sight of the young woman whom I saw at the Bay of Agay, the lovely, amorous nymph of the sunlit wood, the nymph of the benign moonlight. She was pale, frowning, tight-lipped; her whole face tense and malevolent.

Her companion was seated in front of her at the table. He was nervously fingering a few gold coins.

"Put them on the first square," she said.

"All of them?" he asked in agony.

"Yes. All."

He made the louis into a little pile, and staked them.

The croupier sent the ball spinning round. It revolved swiftly, then slowed down.

"*Rien ne va plus*," rapped out the voice, and an instant later:

"Twenty-eight."

The young woman gave a start; then said in a hard, curt tone:

"Come away."

He rose and followed, but did not look at her. Evidently some dreadful crisis had arisen between them. An onlooker remarked:

"Good-night, love! They don't seem to be hitting it off to-day."

I felt a hand on my shoulder, turned, and saw my friend.

It remains for me now to ask pardon for having talked so much about myself. I wrote this diary of reveries for my own amusement, or, rather, I took advantage of this solitary cruise in these waters to snatch at those wandering fancies which flit like birds across the spirit.

I have been asked to publish these musings so inconsecutive, haphazard and artless. They follow one another without method, and they break off for no particular reason, mainly because my yachting was cut short by a gale.

I yield to my friends' solicitations. I wonder if I am wise.


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