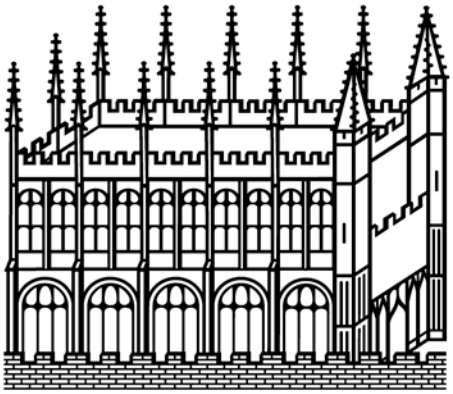

XVIII CENTURY FRENCH ROMANCES

Edited by

VYVYAN HOLLAND

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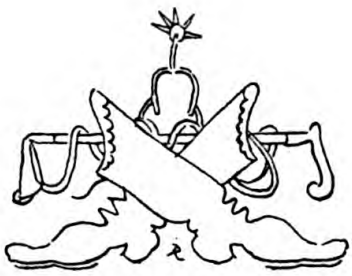
THE COACHMAN'S STORY
AND
OTHER TALES

THE COACHMAN'S STORY
AND OTHER TALES

Translated from the French
of
Anne-Claude-Philippe de Tubières
Comte de Caylus
by
Eric Sutton

With an Introduction by
George Saintsbury



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NOTE

The opening tale in this book, Histoire de M. Guillaume, Cocher, *was first published in* 1730. *The remaining tales are taken from* Les Étrennes de la Saint-Jean, *which was first published in Paris in about* 1742.

INTRODUCTION

There are probably not very many books which complete the lights thrown on an author by his authorship in the same way and to the same extent as this completion is achieved by the following collection of the minor tales of the Comte de Caylus. Anne-Claude-Philippe de Tubières de Grimoard de Pestels de Lévi (one cannot resist any opportunity of going through the stately list of names) united, as probably every one who knows anything at all about him is aware, the at first sight oddly combined professions or vocations of archæologist and fairy tale teller. With his archæological work the present writer does not pretend to be well acquainted; but certain remarks which are found in the reference books are not without suggestion to anyone who has a smattering of the history of criticism. They say, or said, that his eye was better than his taste, and his erudition better than something else. Now it may seem to some of us that, in matters of Art, ancient or modern, erudition and a good eye will bring a person rather serenely through. But, as is well known, there has been at almost all times a 'taste' which insists on being followed; which will not let you use your own eyes or your own knowledge, but, on the contrary, will 'connoisseur you out of your senses', as William Blake's excellent phrase has it.

On the other hand, I (to drop circumlocution) am pretty familiar with the fairy tales, and have quite a lively affection for them. One can fall in love with nearly all the

heroines from Zibeline to Zaza; and the heroes have a fortunate habit of escaping the too frequent doom of the hero in fiction. But the stuff of the present volume, while it is curiously different from that of fairy tales, with perhaps one remarkable exception, not merely adds something to the display of Caylus's gift, but to some degree explains his other performances. For he here presents himself almost throughout—even in the miraculous and exceedingly pleasing adventures of Eulalie and Alexis, the cream of the book—as something of a realist.

A very hasty person may say, 'Write fairy tales, and be a realist?', but this would be a sad mistake, especially with regard to that curiously sophisticated thing, the later French fairy tale. The great originals (or at least first introducers), Perrault and Madame D'Aulnoy—still more Hamilton, who, like them, belonged to the poetical seventeenth century, but whose body and soul, under his admirably French dress were English-Irish-Scotch—kept the natural and real, but not realist, element uppermost: Hamilton bringing in a strong vein of irony, but nothing that can be called realism. The eighteenth-century imitators (Caylus himself was born within, but not even a whole decade within, the seventeenth) made the whole thing—though still often amusing and graceful enough at its best—sophisticated with manners and customs prosaic rather than poetical, and coarse rather than fine, after a fashion which at least tends to what we now call realism, that is to say, coarse or coarsened reality. We were not free from this

tendency in England: but there was very much more of it in France.

Now in some, if not all, of the tales that follow, Caylus seems to be practising what one may call the anti-superfine side of story-telling. He is rarely very shocking from the moral point of view, though the (in the contemporary sense of the word) 'sensible' moralist may grieve to find Javotte, who behaves so admirably when tempted by the footman, La Roche, becoming the very creature she has scorned to make herself, when she is the wife of the coachman, Guillaume. But he not only to some extent degrades the 'class' of his personages: he admits freely instances of behaviour of the kind which shocked Dr. Johnson, and did not shock Sterne, abroad.

On the other hand, these 'Coachman's Tales', whether deliberate practisings in something as different from his other work as possible, or exercises in a sort of realistic background-material for that work, are curiously verisimilar; and in some respects much more like nineteenth-century work than eighteenth, though they may be allowed a throw-back to the Roman Bourgeois *of Furetière and some things of Sorel's in the seventeenth. For anything contemporary, they are much nearer Marivaux (except in* lingo) *than Crébillon, while they to some extent foretell the manners of Pigault-Lebrun and Restif. The description of the row at the restaurant is not quite like anything I know of the time and language: while the history of the expulsion of the rascally Abbé Évrard, and the promotion*

into his various posts of the not exactly blameless coachman, is almost what one might call ancestral Maupassant. The Story of M. Bordereau and Madame Minutin, *while possibly the most realist to the time, pleases me least, though it will no doubt commend itself to others. There is of course a certain amount of not very strong satire in it; and the practice of 'letting out a wife for a consideration' has, equally without doubt, been regarded by French authors as having something to be made out of it, even more than it was by our Elizabethan dramatists—*not *including Shakespeare. But I should have to be very much amused by it in order to accept it: and in this instance I do not find it amusing at all. The fourth of the batch, however, though dealing, in a way, with the same subject—the resistance of Javotte to her first tempter as above glanced at—is, not merely because of her virtuous conduct, much more successful. The ingenuity and elaboration of the pander's arguments, and the girl's unimpassioned reception before the final refusal, with the finality thereof, are distinctly dramatic. Indeed, Caylus's conversation is one of his strongest, as he ingenuously confesses that it was one of his favourite, points.*

It is not, however, till you come to The Four Elements *that you find Caylus's art in full condition, like the immortal 'Todgers'', to 'do it when it chooses'. If anybody ever takes a fancy (and he probably might do much worse) to write a full discourse on the great Aristotelian doctrine of the possible and the probable in Art, he should by no means*

neglect this history. It is not a fairy tale, that is to say, all the personages are ordinary human beings, and nothing that they do or suffer (with perhaps certain qualifications) requires wands or incantations or anything of the sort. That they should be fostered together; that for some time they should be child-lovers; that their families should quarrel is all, of course, the plainest of plain sailing. It is equally, or almost equally, commonplace that there should be a fire in Eulalie's house, and that Alexis should rescue her in the nick of time. '"Commonplace"?' I call it banal,' says somebody. But now things begin to go a little out of dailiness. There has been such a confusion that the rescue has been unnoticed, and Alexis not merely does not restore his prize to her moderately bereaved parents, but secretes her in his own apartment. The possibility of this, even for a short time, may seem very questionable to an English reader; but I think I remember other instances of it in French novels, and the hugeness of an old Parisian house—with its flats and between-flats and pavilions and what-not—might render it less impossible than in London. At any rate, it introduces the not quite *commonplace easily enough. Of course, the lovers enjoy themselves immensely, though (both here and elsewhere it is insinuated) not without some limitation. But equally of course, some servant discovers, in both senses of that word, the matter: and Eulalie is both figuratively and literally torn from her lover's arms and sent to a convent.*

But she has to get there, and (still according to Cocker) Alexis accompanies the carriage in disguise so as to be at

hand when his beloved, in despair, obtains (rather *improbably*) *leave to get out near a convenient river, into which she throws herself. Alexis, of course, follows, and the rising dose of the not-quite-probable which the writer allows himself permits a surprising display of sinking and coming up again on the lady's part, and of finally successful swimmings and divings on the gentleman's. He catches her at last; but, alas! rivers have banks: and on banks ferocious parents can await their prey. She is immured after all.*

In the next stage the demands on what we will not call credulity (*one surrenders to them quite willingly*) *rise again. Alexis once more disguises himself—as a novice—of course of the other sex: while Eulalie quite falsely* (*for, as observed above, they have set limits to their enjoyment*) *pretends to be with child. This does free both from the convent: but though Eulalie has no difficulty in ridding herself of signs of pregnancy, the dread question, so nearly fatal to Effie Deans, arises, and a brutal magistrate condemns her to be hanged. One boggles a little at this: for the France of the eighteenth century was not weak in the medico-surgical line, and expert evidence must have saved her. But never mind: it was also the century of Calas. And, of course, once more she is not hanged. The ever faithful, though ever disappointed, Alexis, with some friends, after having saved her from Fire and Water, saves her from being suspended in the Third element—Air—at point of sword, with which, though he has not exactly to 'cut her* down', *he actually cuts the accursed cord from her beautiful neck. The text must be allowed to show in detail*

how separation of a different kind happens; but the close is too beautiful not to be commented on, with the same object of showing Caylus's curious blend of truth and fantasy.

That Alexis should be called away from the refuge of the lovers (whatsoever and wheresoever it is) cannot possibly be objected to; nor that Eulalie should fall ill because of the beloved's absence; nor (though the feelings of the matter-of-fact may be slightly disturbed by this) that she should, at least in appearance, die; nor (though things are still in a sort of crescendo) be buried; nor even that Alexis should, in something of Romeo fashion, come too late, and only find her buried.

But in what follows, if there were not such admirable compensations, one might perhaps suggest mildly that the flats should be a little *nearer joining. It is almost impossible to make out with certainty what the place and the fashion of interment was or were: for at one moment earth and grass are spoken of, at another things would seem to take place in some sort of structured monument. Anyhow, Alexis, in the most approved tragical manner, lays himself down and out by the side of his beloved, to die by her and be buried with her. The stages of the sequel shall not be* unfreshened *to spoil the reader's enjoyment, but something must be said of the delightful conversation which precedes, or rather ushers in, the happy ending, when all four elements —Fire, Water, Air, and Earth—have been conquered, and the world is well gained—not lost—for love. The arguments of Eulalie to assure herself that she is not dead are*

Caylus at his very beſt. Alexis, with the usual male density and sentimentality combined, will have it that since she *is dead, and* he *could not possibly exiſt without her,* both *muſt be dead. But Eulalie, with that admirably practical feminine logic which fools sneer at, points out that as she has never been dead before, she cannot know how you feel in those circumſtances, but that she* has *been alive and she feels very much like* that *ſtill.*

Something of the same agreeable topsy-turviness appears in, and more might have been made out of, the adventures of M. Usquebaugh or Usquebæ. (Caylus does not seem to have known, or to have condescended to use, the ingenious corruption 'Scuback', by which the French of his time endeavoured to make the favourite liquor of their Irish and Scotch allies pronounceable by a Gallic mouth.) And moſt of the reſt, whether intentionally or accidentally fragmentary, have intereſting suggeſtions. It is probably my original and unrepented sin of Victorianism which makes me think the satire on 'Persian' letters rather unsuccessful and even a trifle vulgar. That this literary trick of the time was, even in Montesquieu, even in Goldsmith, open to counter-satire is, of course, true; but I do not think the hit quite comes off here. Other people, however, may think differently, and the book as a whole is certainly a pleasant one.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

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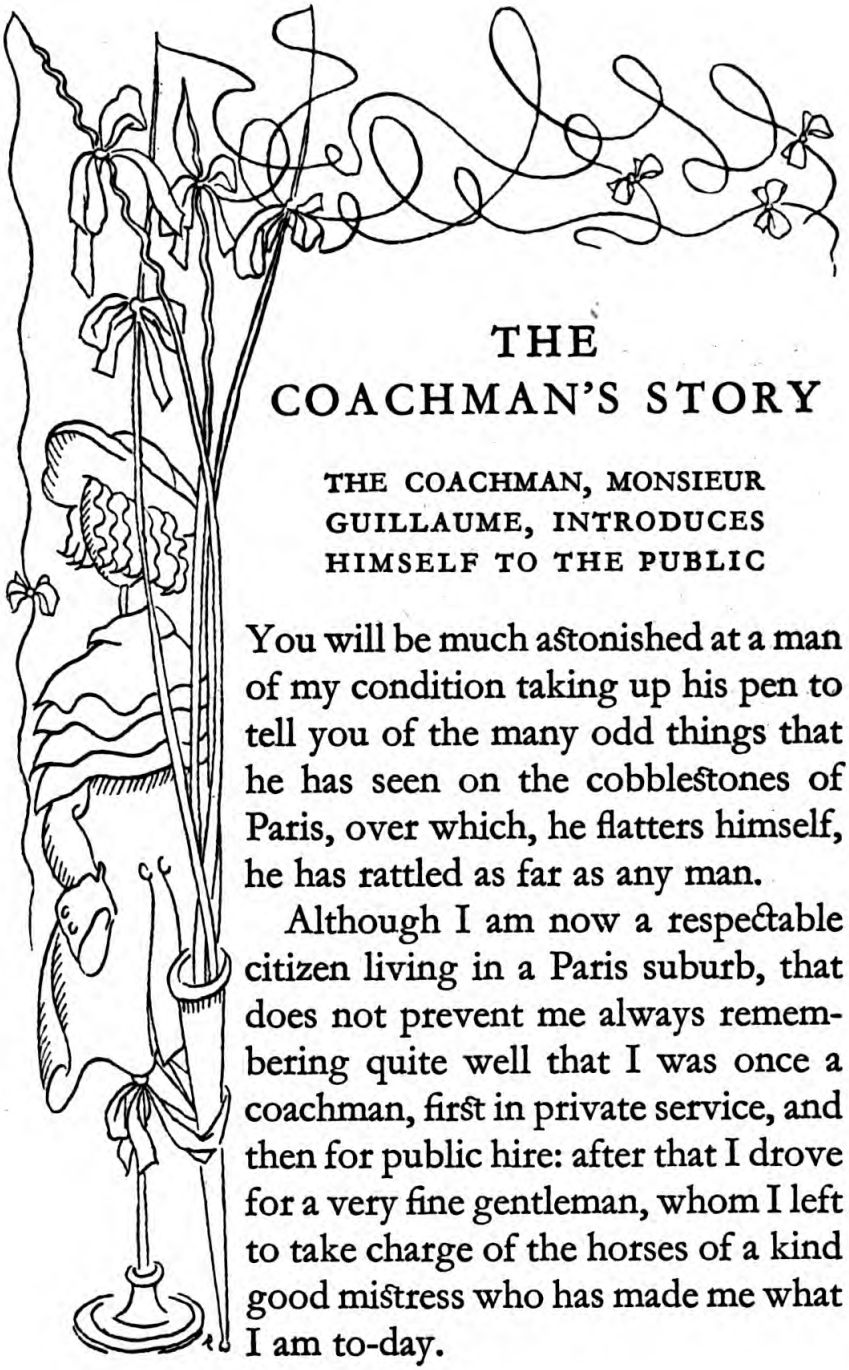

THE COACHMAN'S STORY

THE COACHMAN, MONSIEUR GUILLAUME, INTRODUCES HIMSELF TO THE PUBLIC

You will be much astonished at a man of my condition taking up his pen to tell you of the many odd things that he has seen on the cobblestones of Paris, over which, he flatters himself, he has rattled as far as any man.

Although I am now a respectable citizen living in a Paris suburb, that does not prevent me always remembering quite well that I was once a coachman, first in private service, and then for public hire: after that I drove for a very fine gentleman, whom I left to take charge of the horses of a kind good mistress who has made me what I am to-day.

In these various employments I have, as I said just now, seen many things, and I have often wondered to myself how I could get them down on paper.

My whip of days gone by has made my hand ill-suited to hold a pen; but when I have written down what I want to say, I shall get it copied by a writer at Les Charniers whom I knew from the days I was at La Ferronerie.

More than half of what I shall have to tell I saw with my very own eyes, when I was driving my coach. People who travel by coach wherever they go never give a thought to the coachman: so they don't trouble to hide from him what they would not like every one to know.

But, as I know a good many stories of this sort, I was rather embarrassed at first to know where to begin, and afraid of making too great a book of it. So, after consulting with the writer aforementioned, I decided that the most convenient plan would be to tell you four stories, one after the other.

First and foremost, and before all others, will come the adventure of Mam'zelle Godiche, at the Glacière at Chaillot, with the son of a Châtelet merchant, when I was at the Rue Mazarine.

Next you shall have the affair of the lawyer's wife and the fat Customs Officer, when I was working for public hire.

The third shall be the story of Monsieur le Cheva-

lier Brillantin: the wages I got from him, while I was driving his carriage, were mostly in the form of cracks with the flat of his sword.

Next and last, you shall have the adventure of Madame Allain, my kind mistress, who left me my little income, with Monsieur L'Abbé Évrard, who made a pretty fool of her, as you shall see for yourself at the end of this book.

That will make four little love-stories. If you like them, I will get out some more, quite as fresh as these.

THE ADVENTURE OF MAM'ZELLE GODICHE THE LITTLE MILLINER

One day after dinner I was waiting for a fare at La Mazarine, when a very pretty young Miss came up to me and said:

'Friend, what will you take to drive me to the Pont Tournant?'

'Mam'zelle, I am sure you will give me what is right.'

'Not a bit of it,' says she. 'I want to make a bargain.'

'Very well, then, you shall pay me twenty-four good round sous.'

'Twenty-four sous, indeed! Hark at him! Why, 'tis only a step or two. I'll give you twelve: nay, I'll make it fifteen, and if you won't take that I'll go in a wheel-barrow.'

'Well, well, mam'zelle, get in! I suppose you will give me a little extra for myself.'

'I'll do nothing of the kind, so don't expect it . . . Now then, pull your windows up, my good fellow: I'm nearly blown away [there was no wind at all]! It will take all the curl out of my hair, and my mistress will think I have been somewhere I shouldn't.'

I pulled up the shutters, and we started.

Opposite the Théatins Church one of the windows slipped down, and she cried:

'Coachman, coachman, pull up your window!'

While I was pulling it up, a young gentleman passed by, looked in at the window, and said at once:

'Why, it's Mam'zelle Godiche! And where are you off to all alone?'

'That, sir, is no business of yours,' answered she.

'You are perfectly right, mam'zelle,' said he, 'but you must admit that a young Miss like yourself, riding in a carriage all alone in the afternoon, is not likely to be going out to dress a lady's hair.'

'That's where you are wrong, Monsieur Galonnet,' replied Godiche. 'And what is more, here is a cap that I have just made up for a lady to wear at the Opera.'

And the cunning little wretch pulled out a bonnet that was hidden under her dress. When the gentleman saw it he bowed and smiled, and took himself off.

'Truly,' said Mademoiselle Godiche, when he had gone, 'men are very inquisitive. Why doesn't your wretched window shut properly? That was a tailor's son who lives on our staircase, and he is sure to tell everybody about this. 'Tis the spitefullest gossip in the quarter—and his silly sister too. Because a girl takes a little more trouble about her looks than they

do, she must be a baggage! I was dreadfully unlucky to meet him. Here are your fifteen sous: I won't go in your horrid carriage any farther. Lord, what am I going to say? If my aunt hears of it, I'm lost. Look at you,' she said to me, as I stood listening to her without a word, 'standing there like an idiot! Go where I told you to! I can't help what happened. I must take the cap, I suppose: the lady is expecting it: hurry up!'

So we went on. We arrived at the Pont Tournant, but there wasn't any lady waiting for a cap—not a sign of one. Mam'zelle Godiche looked to the right, and to the left, and everywhere. At last she said:

'My man, do you mind if I stay in your carriage until a cousin of mine turns up? He is going to take me out, when I have finished with my lady.'

'Certainly, mademoiselle,' said I, for I had taken a fancy to her. And I rather wanted to see her cousin, who I misdoubted was no more her cousin than I was.

At the end of a quarter of an hour or more, a tall young man came hurrying along from the direction of the Porte St. Honoré. I pointed him out to Mam'zelle Godiche:

'Isn't that your cousin?'

'Why, so it is. Please to call him, for he won't know that I'm in a carriage.'

I ran after the cousin, who was turning up the Chaillot road, and said to him:

'Sir, your cousin, Mam'zelle Godiche, wants a word with you.'

He thanked me heartily, ran up to the carriage and jumped in; and the two of them were soon whispering away to each other like a couple of one-eyed magpies, and so continued for some time. At last they asked me to drive them to some likely tavern, adding that I should have nothing to complain of, if I would wait and drive them back to Paris when they had had a bite of salad—and the like. As he spoke, the gentleman slipped a 'cart-wheel' into my hand, on account, as a token of good faith.

I suggested taking them to the widow Trophée's, at the entrance to the Bois, but they thought that was too public; so I suggested the Glacière at Chaillot, or Madame Liard's at the Roule; but they preferred the Glacière, and there soon after I deposited them.

As I pretty well guessed the sort of cousins they were, I tipped a wink to the landlady, who knows her way about as well as most people; and she had them put in a small room on the ground floor, looking on to the garden.

I set about putting up my horse: and as there were a great number of parties at the place, I took the cushions out of the carriage, and the landlady carried them inside, so that no one might go off with them.

After about two hours, Mam'zelle Godiche felt the need of taking some air in the garden: her cousin

came with her and they fell to watching the dancing. I was with two friends of mine, one of them an infantry private, and we were busy drinking a drop of wine, and eating the remains of a fricassee of chicken which the 'cousins' had sent out to us, with the salad that was left over; so that we were doing none so ill.

We were not far off the dancers, and I saw some one come up to Mam'zelle and ask her for a dance; she took the floor with her cousin next, and the two of them danced together very prettily.

They were busy dancing and could not attend to anything else, when Monsieur Galonnet appeared with two other men and two young ladies. One of them said to him as they passed us:

'Look, brother, there she is dancing with her lover, de l'Aulne!'

'The little hussy!' he observed. 'I thought as much. When I have had a glass, I'll go and ask her for a dance.'

No sooner said than done. Poor Mam'zelle went quite white, and Monsieur de l'Aulne quite grey, when Monsieur Galonnet, his hat in one hand and a white glove in the other, asked her politely for a dance. I could see that she was very anxious to refuse: but I could also see that she dared not, because she had danced with some one else, and it might have caused a scene, which would have been just what Monsieur Galonnet wanted, to judge by

his expression; but anyhow, she could not so insult a gentleman in a public tavern.

Still, she would have liked to have said No. And to show Monsieur Galonnet how little she thought of him, she danced the next time with Monsieur de l'Aulne, instead of with one of his two companions, two tailor's apprentices: though it is the custom to take a turn with new arrivals who have not yet danced.

The young ladies who had come with Monsieur Galonnet, one of whom had a face like one of those mottled beer-mugs, while the other was bandy-legged, had sat down at a table near ours. Says Pock-marks, speaking of Mam'zelle Godiche:

'The little wretch must be mighty shameless to come alone with her lover to a public restaurant. I would not display myself to every one as she does, not for anything you offered me.'

'As to that,' said Bandy-legs, ''tis because she likes showing off her fine satin dress, which, I make no doubt, didn't cost her a penny.'

'Yes,' returned the other, 'I would wager that booby de l'Aulne stole it from his father. He tried me with something of the sort, but he soon saw I wasn't that kind. Truly, a dress with a hooded cloak to it is very well suited to a drab like her. I wouldn't wear one, though my father is a master tailor and rents the best part of the house we live in; besides,

with the money I earn from my dressmaking I could easily buy one if I wanted. 'Tis only sluts that get such things for nothing. My papa is mighty anxious to turn those creatures out of doors: her aunt does not pay the rent very regularly. Good gracious, Gogo!' she added, abruptly. 'Look at the shameless way she dances—like a chorus girl from the Opera, I swear!'

'Indeed,' said the other, 'I should be sorry to dance as she does. You remember, Babet, the last time we were at the Gros-Caillou: did I wriggle myself like that? And I never learned to dance.'

'My poor mother,' said Babet, 'had me taught for three months by Monsieur Colin's dancing-master, at the Fair. We paid him twenty good sous a month, unknown to my father, who was told that a friend of my brother was teaching me for nothing. This gentleman got us seats sometimes for Monsieur Colin's shows on Sundays and holidays, for nothing, and there were girls on the stage who danced exactly like Godiche. No decent girl would behave so. She's no better than the mud on my shoes: I shan't notice her in future.'

'I suppose she puts on airs,' said Gogo, while Babet was getting her breath, 'because she is not ill-looking.'

'Not ill-looking indeed, mam'zelle!' said Babet, nearly choking herself in her indignation. 'You can't

know much about such matters. Do you say so because she has large black eyes? But she squints, as anyone can see. And if I liked to use the rouge-box I could have a complexion like hers. As for her snub nose . . .! Her mouth would not be so small if she was not always pinching it. She has a tolerable figure, I admit: but she isn't so tall as I. Did you notice what short skirts she wears?'

'Dreadful!' agreed Bandy-legs bitterly; 'so very vulgar!'

'She does it to display her spindle shanks,' said Babet. 'I wonder she gets round the room on those skinny toes.'

'That is quite true,' said Gogo, who was not so malicious as her friend, 'but that does not prevent the gentlemen making eyes at her. Perhaps she is intelligent.'

'Ah! I thought you would say that. She is just a giddy little minx, and, but for a few little words that those horrid men like to hear a girl use, she would have no more sense than a saucepan. I can assure you that with all my poor pock-marks I wouldn't be her,' Babet added, bridling, and then continued: 'Lord, how can she wear a dress cut so low? To show off her fine carcass, I suppose. I should be very sorry to expose myself like that. And if, vanity apart—But enough of the little drab. Though I should like to give her a piece of my mind.'

Mam'zelle Godiche, having danced all she wanted, was going back with Monsieur de l'Aulne to their room; but they had to pass in front of Babet, who, to start the quarrel she was looking for, for all her talk about not noticing her, said:

'Good morning, Mam'zelle Godiche, and how are you?'

'At your service, Mam'zelle Babet; fancy you being here!'

'As you see, mam'zelle: just as you are!'

'That's a pretty dress of yours,' said the seamstress.

'So is yours,' said she of the hats; 'and in such good taste. 'Tis a pretty little stuff at fifty sous, is it not? Alas, mine cost three francs five sous, and I had to bargain to get it for that.'

'Oh, dear me! we can't all have such lovely dresses as Mam'zelle Godiche!' said Babet, with a mirthless grin.

'I am having a dress made of taffeta: if you had not so much work, Mam'zelle Galonnet, I would have given it you to make.'

'Oh, I am not a good enough dressmaker for the likes of you!'

'You can't be serious: if I make your hats, you can surely make my dresses!'

'You have never made a hat for me, not one!'

'Come, come: why, you even owe me for two or three!'

'I owe you for hats, indeed! You had better think of paying the seven francs ten sous of rent you owe my papa.'

'I'll consider that as something on your account, mam'zelle.'

'You had much better pay your debts than wear a brocade dress and a cloak . . .'

'Well, anyhow I don't owe you for them, mam'zelle.'

'I don't know where you get such things if they aren't presents. You don't earn all that by making hats.'

'*You* would certainly find it difficult to earn as much.'

'I should be very sorry to earn it as you do, you shameless little hussy!'

'Saucy baggage!'

No sooner had my young lady made this last remark, than Babet Galonnet, who was just within reach, fetched her a good sound box on the ear, fair and square, like the crack of a whip. We all stood round like statues: only Monsieur de l'Aulne said to Babet:

'Really, mademoiselle, your behaviour is inexcusable, and if you weren't a lady, I would show you . . .'

'Rubbish, my little man!' said the seamstress; 'away with you; I shall tell your father you are stealing his money to spend it on creatures of this sort.'

Until that moment, Mam'zelle Godiche had been still dizzy from her box on the ear; but when she heard herself called a 'creature', she showed Pock-marks that she knew how to express herself: she bespattered her so heartily with the seventeen mortal sins that the lady of the needle fell upon her, tore the feathers out of her hat, flung them on the ground and stamped and spat upon them till they were a shapeless mass of mud and filth. She then made as though to scratch her eyes out, for I could see that she wanted to spoil her face, which was not pock-marked like her own; but Monsieur de l'Aulne received the scratches intended for his holiday cousin.

In the meantime little Galonnet and his friends had left a country dance to come and see what it was all about; and when he saw Monsieur de l'Aulne holding his sister's hands while she was kicking his shins, he thought he was beating her, and his three fellow-tailors began to belabour him to try and stop him, while Mam'zelle Godiche was shrieking like Merlusine.

So when I saw that, I just said to my friends:

'Come on, boys, I won't have my people knocked about.'

They were only too glad to take a hand. The soldier drew his hanger, the other was no mean performer with a cudgel, while I had my whip, so we belaboured their thick headpieces while they

defended themselves with the garden-seats. One of them tried to grab me by a tender part, but I fetched him a crack across the knuckles with my whip-handle: I laid him out as flat as a frog, so that he could not move hand or foot. At last we were dragged apart, and there was more than one black eye among the company.

While all this was going on, my lady and gentleman had gone back to their room, whither we went to tell them they need not be afraid, as we were a match for such carrion. Mam'zelle wept as though all her family were dead, and her cousin consoled her: he gave us the best part of a bottle for our pains, but, as usual, it wasn't worth half what he gave for it.

Mam'zelle Godiche could not wear her hat, which was nothing but a mass of mud; but she managed well enough with the hat belonging to the lady of the Pont Tournant, and no one would have known it wasn't hers. She was still quite upset, so we waited till the crowd had gone: she was afraid of Pock-marks, who had said she had not done with her, and that she would tell her aunt about it that very evening.

About ten o'clock I harnessed my horses, put my cushions in the carriage and drove quickly to the Rue des Cordeliers, where Godiche lived. My friends sat beside me: then I took Monsieur de l'Aulne back to the Châtelet, where he gave me another crown

piece and twenty-four sous for refreshment, which we wetted at M. de Capelain's.

It is very likely that Mam'zelle Godiche's aunt sang her niece a rather discordant *Te Deum* over the affair, but she seems to have cared little for that: for I have since seen her with Guards' officers, and I have often driven her in the company of Feathered Hats and Laced Coats. She always recognized me since that day, and always gave me something for myself, for though she went about with the Quality, she never put on airs with me.

THE STORY OF THE CUSTOMS OFFICER BORDEREAU AND MADAME MINUTIN

When Monsieur Périgord, who came from my part of France, and for whom I was driving, died, his wife disposed of everything, so that I found myself on the streets. I asked for employment from one of my friends who let out carriages on the Rue des Grands Augustins. As I had a good coat to my back, he gave me a coach to drive. Every day, after dinner, I went to pick up Monsieur Bordereau, an important gentleman at the Customs, at his house, and drove him somewhere or other, usually in the company of a lady; and fine ladies they were too.

One day when I had driven him to the end of the alley-way by the Orangery, at the entrance to the Tuileries, his man and I fell to talking about one thing and another; and as he was giving me all the ins and outs of his master's love affairs, I asked him if he knew the lady I had just come to fetch, and where I should be driving her.

'I have no idea!' answered La Fleur (for that was his name). 'All I know is that a sort of lady's-maid appeared this morning and stayed a long time with him, saying, as she went out, that her mistress would be at the Tuileries about four o'clock in the afternoon.'

La Fleur had scarcely said this when we saw Monsieur Bordereau in the company of two ladies, one of whom La Fleur recognized as the lady's-maid of the morning.

When they had got into the carriage, they did not know where to go. However, in the end I set them down at the Saint Laurent Fair. The servant took them off to the theatre there, and came back to join me. I pulled the carriage aside and got some one to look after the horses, and then we went off to take a walk and drink a glass or two at the fair.

When the play was nearly over, La Fleur went to find his master, and I to fetch my horses: but he came back to tell me not to be in any hurry, because Monsieur Bordereau was going to have supper with the ladies at Dubois'; so I again got some one to see to the horses, and went to meet him there, for at the fair it is not usual for servants to attend upon their masters at table. La Fleur and I expected to come in for what was over when they reached dessert, but we pretty near missed our meal, as you shall see.

Madame Dubois had put Monsieur Bordereau and the ladies in a curtained alcove at the end of the garden. Supper was brought in, and very merry they were, until the appearance of an English milord with Mademoiselle Tonton of the Opéra Comique, a girl friend of hers, and a respectable gentleman dressed in black. They all asked for supper, and they were

accommodated in a small summer-house with glass windows, at the entrance to the garden.

While we were waiting for the remains to be sent out to us for our supper, La Fleur and I amused ourselves by cracking a bottle at our master's expense in a small room near by; just then Monsieur Bordereau and Mademoiselle Tonton both emerged into the garden on the same private and urgent business, and ran straight into each other in the clear moonlight.

La Fleur mentioned to me when he saw Mademoiselle Tonton come in, that she had been in his master's stable for a time, but he had got rid of her because she went rather too fast for him. Mademoiselle Tonton suddenly recognized my master and said, loud enough for us to hear:

'So it's you, Monsieur Bordereau. You are not alone, I suppose: you are having supper here? How delightful! And which of our little sisters is with you? You still run after fairies, I'll wager!'

'I don't know any, mademoiselle, since I ceased to run after you.'

'You are impertinent, my fat friend,' replied she; 'and I have a good mind to have you soundly beaten for insulting me so.'

'So you've got some young snob with you?' said Monsieur Bordereau.

'Yes I have, you miserable little clerk, and you shall soon see him.'

And she began to shriek:

'Help, Milord, help! I am being insulted!'

Milord, the other girl and the gentleman immediately ran up to see what it was all about.

'Milord,' complained Tonton, 'this wretched little counter-jumper has dared to treat me as if I were a good-for-nothing and to abuse you into the bargain; see that he pays for it! Come, come, Milord,' she added, observing that he did not move, and trying to push him forward, 'give him a good thrashing.'

'You are a fool,' said the Englishman to Monsieur Bordereau.

He was then about to move off, but Mademoiselle Tonton held him back, saying:

'How, Milord, is this the way you defend a lady's reputation?'

'What do you want me to do, mam'zelle?' he asked. 'Even if I slit the fellow's nose for him, you would still be a dancer at the Opéra Comique.'

Tonton was just going to make a pretty sharp reply, when we heard the devil's own riot in the room near by: bottles and glasses smashed, and plates flying through the window. It was the black-coated personage who was making the disturbance, having discovered he was the husband of my gentleman's lady. He was in process of heartily kicking his wife's maid and calling her a number of disagreeable names

as she cowered in a corner. This dispute put an end to the other.

'Here's a nice thing!' cried Tonton; 'a lawyer's wife trying to spoil the market for us Professional Ladies!'

This made the husband boil over: he was about to leap upon his wife; but Monsieur and Madame Dubois, who did not want a scandal for fear of the police, fell upon him and so trussed him up that he could not move anything but his tongue, which he did to some purpose.

However, he gradually calmed down, chiefly because Madame Dubois pointed out gently that he was more in the wrong than his wife, for this was her first visit, whereas he came every day in very odd sort of company indeed.

So, to conclude the disturbance, wine was brought in, and the husband and wife were made to drink together in token of reconciliation. Monsieur Bordereau introduced himself to Monsieur Minutin and offered to be of assistance to him at the Customs or elsewhere, if he should need any little accommodation of the kind.

'Do not take offence at all this, Monsieur Minutin,' said my gentleman, 'for there was surely no harm in it. I met your wife the day before yesterday for the first time, by accident, at the Comédie. We talked about the Opéra Comique, and she did me the

honour to accept an invitation. I had all the trouble in the world to get her to come to the supper which you have just thrown upon the floor. But we must order another; for you look hungry.'

'Not in the least,' said the lawyer; 'but the fact of the matter is, if this gets about, I shall be the laughing-stock of the Courts.'

'Have no fear, sir,' said Madame Dubois. 'I will see that Mademoiselle Tonton and her friend say nothing about it. I know how to make them hold their tongues. As for Milord, he's a babbler that no one will believe, when a woman like myself says the opposite.'

Milord and the two girls had already gone back into the summer-house, without troubling about the lawyer, when they saw that the squabble was coming to an end. Mademoiselle Tonton, who was not a young lady that bore malice for long, found that the supper for four did excellently well for three. When the fresh supper arrived the whole company sat down, and as there was nothing more to be said in private, La Fleur and I were made to wait at table, and the following conversation, and the mutual accommodation that I am now to relate, then took place.

I had written all this down, like the rest, in my own way; but as they all talked one after the other, the result was such a confusion of 'He said', 'He

answered', 'He added', 'He continued', that even I could not make head or tail of it. This put me about a good deal; but my literary friend from les Charniers suggested a way of avoiding this embarrassment and that was to put down the conversation in dialogue, like a play at the Comédie, and that is what I shall do. But you must bear in mind that only three persons are talking, because the lady's-maid, La Fleur, and I listened without uttering a word.

We start with Monsieur Bordereau:

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Truly, Monsieur Minutin, I am delighted to have made the acquaintance of a man like yourself: it will be a pleasure to do you any service that I can.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Sir, you do me too much honour. I accept your kind offer with all my heart. Times are hard, and it is difficult to keep up without the help of one's friends: especially in our household expenses; that is what ruins so many of my colleagues.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

I have no doubt that is so, Monsieur Minutin; but it is also said that you live in so vastly superior a style . . .

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

What would you have us do? 'Tis but what is due to

our position. Do you know what destroys us? Our wives' extravagance.

MADAME MINUTIN

My little man, I am quite sure you are not referring to me.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Just like the rest, Madame Minutin, just like the rest.

MADAME MINUTIN

Would you have me walk abroad looking like an old bawd?

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Tut, tut!

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

We must behave according to our station: you seem to have forgotten what we once were.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

I should much like to hear your story, if you do not mind telling it.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Not the least: I am not one of those who hide their origin when they have made their fortunes.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

That does you great credit: so now let us hear it, Monsieur Minutin. I would bet a hundred pistoles that it will make us laugh.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

By all means. I should explain . . .

MADAME MINUTIN

No, no, let me explain . . .

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Yes, I think Madame will make it more amusing.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Well, we are in Paris, and she can claim her rights.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

I like you in this mood, Monsieur Minutin—I think we shall do some satisfactory business together. I like a little freedom myself. Come, let us drink each other's health! We have been talking too long without drinking. More wine, there! Begin, madame, if you please: I am all attention.

MADAME MINUTIN

We owe everything to a stroke of good luck. I was but a shop-girl at a dressmaker's in the Rue St. Honoré. My looks are, as you see, passable: and they were all I had. Monsieur Minutin was then a lawyer's clerk. Clerk and shop-girl soon got to know each other. At the first sight of Monsieur Minutin, all my hopes of making my fortune by my person were destroyed by—love. We were both free and accountable to no one, so we thought ourselves at our own

disposal. I deserted my dressmaker and he abandoned the honourable company of lawyers' clerks; and the honeymoon was spent under the Port-à-l'Anglais Bridge.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Bravely done, indeed!

MADAME MINUTIN

But though we were vastly delighted with each other's company, that did not make it any easier to live.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Indeed?

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

It certainly was so.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

If I had known you in those days, you would not have been in such straits; I would have put some good business in your way. I have, indeed, never married, but that is because my interests lay in other directions.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

I was too jealous of my wife to look on her as an asset. So I had recourse to all manner of expedients: some of them succeeded, others did not. Finally, I set up as a lawyer's tout. A money-lender took refuge in my house one day and brought his plunder with him: I received them both very cordially. We were

getting up a case for the defaulting gentleman, when a too talkative neighbour revealed his whereabouts. The Law descended on me, carried him off, but left his effects behind. The accused died in prison, and as he had kept his mouth shut until his death, it was a simple matter to succeed to his estate.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Excellent! Quite a model method of handling trust funds.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

My wife was always ambitious, and to please her I joined the distinguished ranks of the notaries of Paris.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Admirable!

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Yes, but my wife's extravagance is ruining me. Look at her dress: it is hardly suited to a plain lawyer's wife.

MADAME MINUTIN

Oh, well, dresses are the damages for the wrongs of matrimony, and I insist upon my rights.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

You do well. A lawyer's wife has a position to keep up: you must surely know that, Monsieur Minutin?

MADAME MINUTIN

He has never known how to take his proper place in the world.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

My dear friend, you must stand up for your rights. One day I will tell you about a difference of opinion that I had with one of the Heads of our Department. Bless you, I soon made him see, in front of every one, that his ink had got pretty muddy. I'm not a man to be trifled with: when I set about a matter I go through with it.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

It is not altogether the way she dresses that annoys me; but she keeps company I do not like.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Ah, that is another matter!

MADAME MINUTIN

Come, come, Monsieur Minutin, you must see that I cannot shut myself up in your family or mine: we have nothing in common. I keep the company of a woman of my station. You have never known me insult you by going about with bawds and barristers' wives.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

I am quite sure you don't disgrace me. I am not complaining so much of the company you keep, but of the places you go to.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Ah, that is quite different!

MADAME MINUTIN

And, pray, what are your objections?

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Do you think it is nothing to go openly to parties and entertainments in the company of musketeers and abbés?

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

That is indeed going rather far.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

To appear in public with persons of that sort is to go out of one's way to become notorious: and my reputation stands or falls with yours.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

He is quite right.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Receive these people at home, madame, receive them at home!

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

That does not quite dispose of the matter: however, things may improve by and by. Have you any more grievances?

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Monsieur Bordereau, you are my friend?

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

My hand upon it!

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Then I will open my heart to you. I am as jealous as a man can be, but I am ruined. I still keep up appearances; but the crash is not far off.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Very well, my dear sir, we will come to the rescue.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

I should not, in truth, need the help of my friends if Madame Minutin would agree to enter into partnership with me.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

What? Does Madame draw up legal documents as well?

MADAME MINUTIN

What do you mean?

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

You know very well what I mean: what I allow you is not enough for your amusements and your clothes. Money must be coming to you from somewhere.

MADAME MINUTIN

But I win a great deal at play . . .

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

Shocking, shocking, my dear sir!

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Now, Madame Minutin, I am no longer young: and after a certain age a man gets rid of many prejudices.

Let us have a common purse: put the profits from *your* 'Deeds' into the family money-box.

MADAME MINUTIN

But, Monsieur Minutin . . .

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

You will perhaps lose by it: the office on the first floor will, no doubt, pay better than the one below. But you may come to terms in this way: pool the profits of both businesses, and Monsieur Minutin will pay the expenses of the establishment.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

I will do anything to maintain the honour of my profession. Do you consent, madame?

MADAME MINUTIN

Agreed!

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Now I can defy my colleagues.

MONSIEUR BORDEREAU

I should not keep a draft of *this* agreement! If a city dame be passably good-looking, she may well aspire to the dignity of a 'notaress'. You may rely on me, Monsieur Minutin. I will take an early opportunity of dining with you quietly, *en famille*.

MONSIEUR MINUTIN

Indeed, sir, you may be sure we shall not put you with the clerks!

When everything had been settled in this way, it was an hour after midnight, so Monsieur Bordereau asked for the bill, and paid it at once without any question. Madame Dubois asked if he or the other gentleman was going to pay for the broken bottles, plates and glasses.

'I should be very sorry to trouble him with it,' said Monsieur Bordereau. 'How much does it all come to?'

'I would charge anyone else fifty francs,' replied Madame Dubois; 'but as it is you who are paying, I will take two louis; that is cost price, and you may be sure I am making nothing out of it.'

Monsieur Bordereau produced two louis: the company got into the carriage and I drove them all back to their respective homes.

After that I often drove Madame Minutin and Monsieur Bordereau to his little house in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, where Monsieur came to call for them in the evening, until one fine day my old man shot the moon, as they say, owing my master a month's coach hire and me a month's drink-money.

I fancy Monsieur Minutin went to look for him: for he moved his belongings too, and to such good purpose that there was nothing left behind but waste paper.

THE CHEVALIER BRILLANTIN'S SUCCESSES WITH THE FAIR SEX

One of my friends, who was coachman to a city family, suggested that I should enter the service of the Chevalier Brillantin, to drive his carriage for him: and I agreed, little knowing what I was in for. It was the sorriest job you can imagine.

I shall always remember how, one morning, when the anteroom was full of creditors, he fell upon them with a shower of blows and kicks: I was, by his orders, bearing a hand at turning them out, when five or six of them set upon me in the street and beat me unmercifully; so, what with the cracks he was constantly giving me with the flat of his sword, I decided to clear out, and let his carriage and horses go hang.

When I was first in his service I was not up to all his little tricks. On one occasion, when he was coming out of the Opera, and there was a crowd at the door, he said to me loudly:

'To the house of the Marquise!'

'Which Marquise?' I asked.

'The Marquise at whose house I dined,' he answered.

'Ah! in the Rue de la Huchette,' I cried. 'I know where you mean!'

At this every one burst out laughing: and even then they did not know that the lady was a milliner. No matter: when he got out of the coach he promised me a sound thrashing when we got home. It was sound enough, though I escaped before he had finished: I ache when I think of it—however, I learned a good deal from it all. Next day the valet and the footman explained his little ways, and I made no more blunders.

The Chevalier had three or four ladies, milliners, dressmakers and the like, whom, for public purposes, he created Marquises and Comtesses. Their rooms were always on the fourth floor. He could furnish a room better and more cheaply than any upholsterer. He would turn some cheap figured hangings into Arras tapestry, and from rush-bottomed chairs he would create armchairs upholstered in the richest damask. Dresses and diamonds cost him just as little. He needed but his powers of speech to supply all he could wish for.

He certainly got every one to believe him, and sometimes he played such comical tricks that one could not help laughing: you shall hear.

One evening when he was dining in the Faubourg Saint-Germain with several friends, La Roche, his valet, came to tell him, while the company was still at table, that I was outside with his small grey coach and his night horses. He at once said, in a low tone

(which every one heard) to one of those present, that he had a rendezvous, but that they were to continue the party in his absence, for the affair would be over in an hour.

He got in, saying to me:

'To the Marais, as fast as you can!'

I drove, as I always did for him, at full speed; but he stopped me at the end of the street and told me to go, at a walking pace, to the Place aux Veaux.

When we arrived he got out to see whether anyone was coming. I could not imagine what he was at: but when he had made sure that there was no one, he began to tumble his hair about, run his fingers through it and, in a word, make it as untidy as he could. Then he undid his buttons and did them up again all askew; he pulled his stockings down, rumpled his cuffs, tore a button off one of them, put some rouge on the end of his nose, ripped the patch off his forehead, and dirtied his shoes; in fact, he made himself look like a Gentleman of the Road after some active business.

When this performance had been going on for half an hour, he got into his carriage again and ordered me to go slowly until I was near the house where his friends were, and then to drive into the courtyard at full gallop. His footman, La France, told me that he arrived in the room quite out of breath, and told his friends that it was not without a

great deal of trouble, as they could see for themselves, that he had had his way with the little Duchess.

He was full of devices of this kind, which were all accepted without any question; but he did once meet with a dreadful disaster over a County Magistrate's lady: this was the most exalted success he ever had, if indeed it can be called so, seeing how the affair turned out. If all had gone well, the Chevalier would certainly have boasted of it, and since he turned his milliners into Duchesses, he would have made the Magistrate's lady an Empress at least.

However, after all, honours were even, for the lady had been to Court a few times, on those occasions when every one goes to see the fountains on Saint Louis's Day and watch the procession of the Knights of the Holy Ghost. In addition to this, having seen a few genuine Duchesses and other ladies of condition at the Opera and elsewhere, she had learned the grand manner.

They had pretty well convinced each other that their tallow dips were crystal lamps: so much so, that at length the Magistrate's lady promised to sup one evening at a little establishment that the Chevalier kept for such purposes. She would have preferred it to have been at her own, which was furnished with all that was necessary for a rendezvous of the kind; but she had lent it to one of her friends, whom she allowed free use of it.

The lady was the first to arrive, as has become the fashion nowadays: and as soon as the Chevalier came the two of them sat down to a very pleasant little supper. As for me, I drank a couple of glasses, and then two more, and went off to get a bit of a nap in the garden, in the open air.

I had been dozing very comfortably for nearly an hour, when I was awakened by the sound of two voices near by. The night was as black as an oven; but I could easily recognize the Chevalier's voice, as he assured the Magistrate's lady that he had never loved anyone but her.

'Chevalier,' came the answer, 'dare I believe you? A man so popular must have had many great affairs.'

'That is so,' my master went on, 'and I would not be so foolish as to deny it. But I swear on my honour that I have never been so violently in love as I am at this moment.'

'It is just that violence that I am afraid of,' said the lady. 'You are aware, Chevalier, that I am a widow, and still young enough to be afraid for my reputation.'

'I swear to you,' said my master, 'that it is safe with me, and I know how to preserve it. Come, my Queen, resist me no more: yield to the eagerness of one who adores you.'

The conversation then came to an end for a short space: and then the lady said in lower tones:

'But—Chevalier, what can you be thinking of? you must take me for a shop-girl! Have you no respect for my feelings? Leave me, sir! This is abominable. No, I refuse! I am deeply shocked. How could you say that my reputation was safe in your hands? Go back whence you came: you are an impertinent fellow. A woman of my condition is not to be treated so!'

I realized that the Magistrate's lady had got rid of the Chevalier, for she asked for her carriage, and, in spite of all that my master could do, she got in and left him to his discomfiture.

The affair upset him a good deal and as, apart from that, he was in need of money, we went to a place near Orleans, where he had certain introductions that he thought might help him to some. There was, in the village, a very pretty girl who had lived a long while in Paris with her godmother, who had taken a fancy to her; but she had lately died, and Javotte had gone back to her mother in the country, which she did not like at all.

La Roche, who was, I forgot to mention, of the party, was angling for the young beauty to try to tempt her into his master's nets. He had made her believe that if she would marry him he would get his position of valet exchanged for that of porter at the Château, or go and live in Paris and let furnished rooms. The girl, who was no fool, preferred the

latter notion, because there is a good deal more freedom to be had in town than in the country. At the same time, she saw quite well that he was very likely setting a trap for her, and she did not believe half he said. I saw very well what La Roche was after: I wanted to open the girl's eyes to his crooked dealings, but I was afraid that if the Chevalier became aware of this, I should pay for it sooner or later. So I was very much at a loss what to do, when one fine day as I was in the park doing something or other, I saw Javotte pass, followed by La Roche. I followed them softly until they reached a little corner, where they sat down on the grass: I hid behind a bush, and listened to their conversation: I remember it exactly, and here it is, word for word.

La Roche said:

'Why won't you believe what I tell you of my master's kindness to me? He will never let me want for anything, and he told me yesterday that if I was fortunate enough to marry you, he would not let me leave his service, as was my idea. His intention is that you should stay here in the Château: he has settled on your room, it is in the left wing, by the copse, because he thinks it necessary that I should sleep near him and that you should be with me. We should, however, have different rooms, so that I can be more easily at call, and need not interrupt your sleep when, as may happen, he should want me in the night.'

'These arrangements,' answered Javotte, who was well aware of what was intended, 'are all that could be desired. I am sure you would be very much vexed if they were disturbed.'

'It could not be done without referring to the Chevalier, who must always be considered: if you knew how good he has been to me, and how kindly he assures me of his wish to advance my fortunes—wait and see what he will do for us: I am sure you will be surprised.'

'Not at all,' said Javotte; 'I expect it, and I expect all your devotion to your master deserves this good fortune. But tell me one thing: if I marry you, should I be expected to be equally *devoted* to him?'

'I fancy I understand you,' said the valet, laughing a little: 'any service he might ask of you need not make you uneasy so far as I am concerned. And although I love you dearly, I have too much good sense to fall into so common a mistake. No, I am not stupid enough to get the idea into my head that I alone could be attracted by you. It would be silly for a man to wish his wife to be beautiful in his eyes alone.'

'Ah, now I understand you,' answered Javotte. You are the sort who would be willing to lend yourself to certain little designs that the Chevalier might have upon my person.'

'You need not think so badly of me as that,' protested La Roche quickly: 'still, I think that, without

offence to decency, one need not dwell upon a hundred trifles that are not worth thinking of, though the generality of husbands get mightily vexed about them. Let me explain: assume we are married; the Chevalier has seen you; he knows you are beautiful, and when we are married he will see you at closer quarters and think so all the more. I know he is fond of making love to pretty girls, but that is all. The kind gentleman will want no more than this. He'll flatter you on your beauty and charm—and on all manner of things. Very well, must I go and be stupidly angry because he is gallant and polite, and takes a fancy to you? It is not my fault. I said nothing about you. Come now, should I not be very ungracious to play the jealous husband for a trifle said in passing, a trifle without serious meaning and intended to have none? 'Tis but a compliment that the first comer might pay you: for what I say to you of him I say of every one. Men have got into the habit of making love to pretty girls, and the girls have got into the habit of finding it very agreeable. Why try to resent a custom that has become established and, if I may say so, is generally accepted? Surely that would be the extremity of folly, mademoiselle; and in this matter I insist on being the master in my own house.'

'You mean,' said Javotte, 'that you alone are to possess authority, but I shall be expected to share the dishonour.'

'Dishonour,' said La Roche, 'is a vague term which every one interprets in his own way, and which no one clearly understands, because each one tries to make it embrace too much. I have no more wits than my neighbours: but my ordinary common sense tells me not to pay too much attention to a vain defamation, which when clearly understood can do little harm to anyone. Still, there are people stupid enough to try to lay down rules about it and to publish their fancies, which in their turn give birth to others. The more a man displays himself an ass, the less he is thought to be one. Can't we realize our own interests? What? Because a few dolts have thought fit to regard their wives as guardians of what is called our honour, must we cry "Stop thief!" when they let it slip? Why must I go and demand public satisfaction for an injury which would never have troubled me if my neighbour, who is not in the least concerned, had not thought fit to tell me all about it?'

'Husbands like you,' observed Javotte, 'ought to publish their views on morals.'

'Do you think,' pursued La Roche, 'that their wives would be ill-advised to contribute to the cost of publication? They are as much, or more nearly, concerned, than we are. I will prove it to you,' he added, 'if you will give me your attention for a moment.'

And without waiting for an answer, he continued:

'When we made you guardians of our honour we knew you would defend it badly: and by a refinement of folly—yes, of folly, for that is the appropriate word, we have used all the stratagems that we might call to our assistance against an enemy of proved vigilance and courage. We knew that you would yield to far less importunity: but we wanted to be able to reproach you as your naughtiness deserves. Nay, worse than this, and to our shame rather than to yours. When we have overcome you, we rejoice at your defeat, as though we had not lost more than you. So you must agree, mademoiselle . . .'

'That will do,' said Javotte, departing: 'I will listen to no more!'

La Roche tried to detain her, but she repulsed him in such a way that I could see he had nothing to hope for; and that is why I made bold to propose marriage to her on my own account.

I did so that evening, and I spoke my mind quite plainly: she did not turn me out or seem offended, so I felt hopeful, the more so that she could not know I had some prospects in Paris, with the savings I had put by: quite a nice little sum for a girl who had nothing at all.

Two days later Mademoiselle Javotte politely informed me that she was soon leaving for Paris with her mother, to try and find a good situation, and if I

liked to come and see them there, we might talk business.

No sooner said than done: the day after their departure I followed them on my own flat feet, after asking the Chevalier for my wages and my dismissal. He gave me the latter without any difficulty, but I am still awaiting the former. However, I caught my friends up at Montlhéry: thence we went on to Paris and put up at the house of a laundress of my acquaintance, where Mademoiselle Javotte and her mother were made very welcome.

But I never knew of any jobs that could be picked up in a horse's whisper (as they say). I had Mam'zelle Javotte and her mother round my neck for a while, and my little all began to be eaten up, so I suggested we might get married there and then. And as the mother saw I was just the match for her daughter, all was over in a fortnight. My mother-in-law went back to the country after the wedding: and I found the post I am going to tell you of, where my wife joined me afterwards.

THE STORY OF MADAME ALLAIN AND THE ABBÉ ÉVRARD

It was by the meresᵗ chance, and nothing else, that I entered this lady's service. One day when she was crossing the Pont-Neuf, a hackney cab came into such violent collision with her carriage that her coachman fell off his seat, and was too much hurt to get up again. As I happened to be looking on, I offered to get on the box, and she accepted. Her coachman being unable to drive since his fall, she gave him the poſt of porter: and I took his place.

She was a fine woman, a widow without children, nearly forty-two years old: she had once been very beautiful, and was ſtill good-looking.

There was a certain Abbé Évrard living in the house, who managed everything. He was as fat as a monk, though he would eat little but game; his face was as glowing and crimson as a rose, which was due to the excellent Burgundy he drank to fortify his ſtomach againſt the Breviary; and there was never a speck on his coat or on his beaver hat. He was a very neat gentleman indeed.

When I firſt saw him I took a fancy to him, for he looked a jolly fellow; but I soon found out my mistake.

When one is firſt in a new place it is difficult to get the hang of things: so one day I treated the porter

whom I had succeeded to some wine, and got him to tell me the ins and outs of the household.

He told me that Madame Allain, my mistress, was one of the best of women, if she was not crossed: because the Abbé had taught her that a servant must not say 'No' when the master says 'Yes': the master may be wrong, but it is not to be thought of that a servant should be more in the right than his master.

As for the Abbé, he was, as I could see with my own eyes, a pursy rogue, but withal so clever that only Madame could understand his discourses. He favoured the entire household with them, in the form of a lecture or sermon, on Sundays and Festivals, instead of letting us go to the Parish church, because Monsieur Évrard said that the theology there was very doubtful stuff.

Madame Barbe, who had been my mistress's governess, hardly did any work at all, on account of her age, except to take a cup of soup every morning to Monsieur Évrard, make his chocolate for him when he had risen, and his coffee after dinner; but Madame would not have her do a stroke of work except what she did for Monsieur Évrard.

Mademoiselle Douceur, the lady's-maid, did all that was necessary for Madame, except that she aired and warmed the Abbé's bed in winter, and saw that his hot-water-bottle was filled and at his feet when he was in bed.

Monsieur Coulis, the cook, had orders to pay particular attention to fricassees, and more especially to soups: because the Abbé was never tired of saying that good soup was the finest thing for the stomach.

There was no pastry-cook in the household at the moment, the last one having been dismissed because he did not meet with the satisfaction of Monsieur Évrard, who knew more about it than he did. Two had been sent for from Tours and from Rouen, to see which would suit best. In a word, every one had to obey the Abbé, who insisted on having his own way—indeed, he was lord and master of everything in the house, including the Baroness's money, of which he never gave the smallest account.

So when I had this all clear I managed accordingly, and took my orders from Monsieur rather than from Madame.

In spite of all that, I nearly lost my place. One day, having taken a glass or two, I had driven Monsieur Évrard for an airing in the avenues of Vincennes. On our return, as I was trying to pass the Porte Saint Antoine in front of some one else, we came into collision, not very violently, but enough to awaken the Abbé, who was dozing in the carriage.

He had no sooner got back home than he told Madame that I was a reckless fool who could not drive, and she must find some one more careful.

I, who knew nothing of what had happened, was very much astonished when Madame sent to tell me that I was to pack my box and leave next day, as she was going to engage another coachman. I could not help asking the reason why. And Monsieur replied that it was to teach me not to run into other carriages at the risk of killing people, and because I was a drunkard who stank of wine three miles off.

I was sorry to leave for such a paltry reason, but one can hardly stay with people against their will. Next day, as I was going up to the Abbé's room to get my money, my wife appeared with some clean linen for me, and I told her in the courtyard what had happened, while Monsieur Évrard looked at us from his window. Madame Guillaume burst into tears when she heard I had lost my place: I consoled her as well as I could, and went up to Monsieur Évrard's room to get my dues.

My wages were counted out and ready. As I was pocketing them, the Abbé was kind enough to ask:

'Who was that young woman you were talking to in the yard?'

'Monsieur,' says I, 'it was my wife.'

'So you are married?' says he.

'Yes, monsieur: I don't care who knows it.'

'Oh, that makes a great difference. We must have pity on people with a family. How many children have you?'

'The boy or the girl who is on the way,' I answered, 'will be the first.'

'That is a further reason for my pleading for you,' said he. 'Your wife's condition, and the misery in which, without employment, you would perhaps soon find yourself, inclines me to overlook your misbehaviour: you may return to your duties. I will obtain your forgiveness. Does your wife live near by?'

'On the contrary,' I answered; 'she is a long way away.'

'But it must tire her to come so far,' he continued; 'I think there is a little room above this where we could put her: she will then be more within reach of the help that may be so necessary in her condition. Madame Allain's charity embraces all manner of people without distinction; but it is natural that her servants should come first. I will ask her about a lodging for your wife: you may have her belongings brought here in the meantime.'

I was so dumbfounded at all this kindness, that I stood like a statue, quite unable to say 'thank you'. While I was telling all this to Madame Guillaume, our mistress sent for both of us.

After a number of questions and a good deal of hesitation, for the reason that Madame Allain had never been willing to have married people in her household, it was finally decided that my wife should

sleep in the small room above the Abbé's, and I, as before, in my room over the stable.

From a few remarks made by Mam'zelle Douceur, it seemed that she was not best pleased to see Madame Guillaume in the house; but as her advice had not been asked, there was nothing for it but to hold her tongue. However, a few days later, my wife came and took up her quarters: and what irritated the lady's-maid even more was that the Abbé had Madame Guillaume's meals sent to her in the pantry; and, later on, when her time was near, they were brought into her room, because she might hurt herself going up and down stairs: so that she was pretty well pampered.

I was so touched by all this kindness that I would have gone through ice for Madame and fire for the Abbé, who were taking such care of my wife and her offspring, who was a little girl, and arrived somewhat sooner than Madame Guillaume had thought: so that Madame Allain could only give her a cheap little layette instead of a more handsome one; but the Abbé told Madame Allain that there was no great harm in that, because the other one would do for my wife's first son.

All was peace in our establishment, and every one was happy, excepting only Mam'zelle Douceur, who never met me without making some sly insinuation about Madame Guillaume and the Abbé. At last I got

uneasy and kept watch on them for a long time, but without seeing anything of what Mam'zelle Douceur had suggested: so I decided that it was all gossip and no more.

One fine day she thought she had won: she brought me a love-letter from the Abbé (or so she said), which she had seen fall out of my wife's pocket. She read it to me several times from beginning to end, but how she could suggest that there was anything in it against my honour passed my understanding: and you shall see for yourself that there was nothing of the kind, for here it is:

My dearest Sister,

I taste at last with infinite satisfaction the fruits of that new life in which I have had the good fortune to instruct you: you are ready to enter into that perfect state, the ineffable delights of which have been my constant theme. I also note with pleasure that you are no longer troubled with those aridities which prevented the full and proper calefaction of your heart: which, in fact, made us despair of ever reaching the beatific state that is the reward of such spiritual unions and is so finely depicted by our greatest and most learned doctors. However, as I believe (indeed, I know from my own experience), it is sometimes profitable to depart from general principles, I cannot too often impress upon you that, to put an end to those cruel conflicts to which are

due the violent internal disturbances that still affect you, you must cease from contemplation for a time, without, however, losing sight of it, and enter upon a rather more active kind of existence. Henceforward you must co-operate with me, my dearest sister, in the perfecting of those sweet ecstasies of which your tepidity has hitherto deprived you, in spite of the trouble I have taken to make you enjoy them in all their fullness.

'Well, and what is there in all that?' I asked Mam'zelle Douceur, when she had finished reading the letter. 'There isn't a word of what you want me to believe. 'Tis a very fine sermon, and you want me to complain, because the Abbé is good enough to give my wife a little instruction. Not I, indeed! Why, I shall be grateful to him all my life!'

'Since you take it so well,' she answered, 'I'll give you another dose, Monsieur Guillaume! Are you so besotted that you can't see that all that rigmarole means your dishonour?'

'Indeed,' I answered. 'Why, you must be dreaming! Come, come, Mam'zelle Douceur, so long as that is all people say to my wife, I am not afraid of putting up at the Stag's Head Inn.'

'So much the better for your wife and for your own peace of mind, Monsieur Guillaume,' said she; 'but if you don't understand what the meaning is, the Abbé will soon make her see it. The scoundrel!

I've more than a mind to choke the brute, after what he promised me . . .!'

She began to cry, and left me hastily: which made me suspect that the Abbé had promised her more butter than bread.

I had this notion in my mind for more than a week; but something I noticed at the end of that time made me think quite differently about her and about Madame Guillaume too.

One morning while I was in my loft, turning over the oats as coachmen have to do, to prevent them getting too hot, from a corner where I was I saw Monsieur Évrard, through a window, sitting, in a dressing-gown, very close to Madame's bed, and whispering into her ear: I could not see the hands of either of them. This made me think that something might be going forward, and I remembered something else I had seen, when he was mending Madame's garter for her, as she lay on her sofa.

I was curious to see a little more, but how could I manage? I might be noticed through the window. Then I reflected that Madame had ordered me to come every morning to see whether she was going to use the carriage. It was a good excuse, and I went without more ado. I did not meet a soul until I got to the door of her room: it was half-open, so that I could only see with one eye, in the mirror on the opposite wall, what was going on upon the sofa, but

to make amends for that, I could hear what they said, and Madame Allain was then saying to M. Évrard:

'To what, my dear Abbé, am I to ascribe the coldness, not to say the indifference, with which you have treated me for some time past?'

'Coldness!' he answered; 'indifference! Why, I was never more attracted, more charmed by you, or in better case to respond to the kindness with which you overwhelm me!'

And it must have been as he said, for the conversation came to an end on both sides, except for a few words broken by sighs and gasps, and quite unintelligible to me: in fact, I was about to withdraw, when Mam'zelle Douceur appeared and asked me what I wanted.

'To know whether Madame was going out this morning,' said I; 'but I do not like to go in, because I think she is with the Abbé, engaged in serious conversation on matters which concern them alone.'

'Well, she may do as she likes,' observed the maid, venomously; 'but as for him, I'll make him pay for this, as sure as I stand here! You may go, Monsieur Guillaume,' she continued: 'but I may tell you, by the way, that gentlemen in gowns and bands are not always to be trusted.'

I understood very well from these words what

Mam'zelle Douceur meant as regards herself and Madame too. But I could not get into my head that an Abbé could be capable of such behaviour towards a mistress and a servant: one of the two must be enough for one man; and what was quite beyond me was that the little serpent thought me fool enough to believe that Madame Guillaume had a finger in the pie; the more so as I knew, from my own experience, that my wife was not at all loosely inclined, and also, the letter that he had written was not at all in the terms he had used to Madame.

As the days went by, however, it was clear at last that Mam'zelle Douceur was rather better informed about the Abbé than I was, and he did not treat her at all well over the business; so she went to Madame, who said nothing for a time, so as to play her game better, as you shall see.

As for Mam'zelle Douceur, she said the girl had gone into the country to see her relations: but several people in the house knew she had gone to spend a little while in a midwife's dovecote.

Madame Guillaume took her place as lady's-maid, and our mistress made her sleep next to her room, with the door open, because she had for some time been under the impression that she saw spirits at night that frightened her; and this arrangement made her feel more comfortable, for she did not hold with the Abbé, who said that ghosts only existed in

the heads of silly women. I was not very well pleased at the change, which prevented me going to see my wife, as I used to do sometimes when she was in the small room upstairs. However, I soon managed to get to her room up the small back stairs, making off about dawn to go and groom my horses.

However, one day, I don't know how it happened, I went so fast asleep that I never thought of getting up, as I usually did, at dawn, when I saw the light coming through the window though the curtain was still drawn. As it had been very hot all night, I was lying on the edge of the bed outside the bed-clothes, as one often does when one knows there is no one to see.

When I awoke I heard a noise in Madame's room, which sounded like some one walking about: and I soon saw, over the foot of the bed, that it was Madame Allain, in nothing but her shift, coming into the room. Realizing that I was caught like a fox in a cornfield, I decided to make as though I were asleep, and I pretended to snore without moving hand or foot, while Madame was on her commode, which stood in a corner of the room just opposite me. After all, a widow has been married and is hardly an apprentice; so I stayed as I was, without moving and without appearing to awake, so as not to be at the pains of making my excuses. After all, she could scarcely reproach me for being in bed with my wife.

As soon as she had gone, I went off to my work in the ordinary way, and that day all was as usual.

The following night I wanted to see Madame Guillaume, but I found the door shut. That made me suppose that it was by the orders of Madame, who did not wish me to sleep with my wife. I was rather annoyed. I tapped at the door, but my wife did not open it. I thought that she was in her first sleep, and went away with my fish-basket empty, as you might say.

On the next day, when I was busy with my horses about four o'clock in the morning, I saw Madame at her window making signs to me to come up by the main staircase. She opened all the doors herself and, as I had my stable-boots on, she made me leave them in the anteroom so as not to make a noise.

I did not know what to make of all these precautions (she was wearing only a short petticoat); but she said:

'If you promise to say nothing of what I am going to show you, you will have good reason to be grateful to me.'

I promised anything she liked, and she led me across her own room to the door of my wife's room; there she was in bed, and the Abbé at her side, both of them asleep. This spectacle so took me aback that even if I had not promised Madame Allain to say nothing of what I had just seen, I should not have

been able to breathe a word. My mistress led me back to the anteroom and, shutting the door behind her, said:

'Well, Guillaume, and what do you think of it?'

'Madame,' said I, 'I would not have thought it. 'Tis a black business for a man of his cloth. I suppose I cannot touch him because of his position, but as for my wife, who has none, I'll thrash her until she cries for mercy.'

'That will not help you much, my poor Guillaume,' said she, 'and the noise will inform everybody of what it is just as well they should not know, for the honour of my house and for your own. But you need not be uneasy, I know how to pay them out, and you will see at once how I shall set about it. Finish grooming your horses, and at nine o'clock you will tell Father Simon that I beg his company to dinner here to-day.'

'And what will Father Simon do for us, madame?' says I; 'can he crown me with honour in place of those disagreeable growths with which that dog of an Abbé has ornamented my forehead? At the moment there is not a monk or a priest that I would trust.'

'And you are right,' says Madame; 'I fancy I have lost my taste for them too. But none the less, do as I tell you. I give you my word, my dear Guillaume, that we shall soon be rid of that rascally Abbé: and

you shall have the pleasure of seeing me turn him out.'

'It would be as well to turn my drab of a wife out at the same time.'

'I dare say it would,' she answered; 'but have patience, all will be well. I hope to find a way of curing the distress I have caused you by revealing your wife's conduct; and you will see that I did so that good might come of it. Stay with me, and I will make your fortune: I will take you from the stables and make you my footman. I shall not be the first woman to be waited on by a handsome young man like you. Say nothing of this to anyone and rely on me.' Thereupon she dismissed me and went back to her room.

It has been very justly said that the best cure for ill-luck is a stroke of good fortune, for the mere thought of what Madame Allain had promised me made me almost forget what I had just seen. Besides, when your wife has been shown capable of such lapses, the good opinion that you should always have of the lady, when you think her affection is reserved for you alone, is so greatly shaken, that you hardly mind any more whether she deserts her duty or not: for she is not worth your regard, since she has ceased to deserve it. A matter which need no longer cause you any concern will leave you indifferent. So I made up my mind what course I should take, and was very

little time about doing so, for I was not a whit cast down about the matter. All I wanted was to see how Father Simon would go to work, when he came to dinner, as he promised to do when I told him what had happened.

When he appeared, Monsieur Évrard pulled a very long face, for Father Simon was his pet aversion. They sat down to table, and Madame paid no attention to the Abbé's gloomy expression: all through dinner he tried to pick a quarrel with the monk, though the latter replied with good humour to all the sallies that were intended to make him lose his temper. I should add that Madame, contrary to her custom, took the monk's side; this was altogether too much for the Abbé, who flung down his finger napkin and rushed out in fury to go and sulk in his room.

This caused something of a scene, and none of the company knew what to think; but Madame took the ball on the bound:

'Guillaume,' said she, 'go and tell Monsieur Évrard that since he is so little sensible of the honour of being admitted to my table, and is wanting in respect to persons whom I esteem, he is to be good enough to absent himself in the future.'

This was an errand very much to my taste—more so than any amount of money she could have given me, and you may imagine I did not lose much time about it.

'I suppose,' said the Abbé, 'that you were also to tell me to leave the house?'

'No,' says I, 'but I would not be much surprised if you did so. When a man is forbidden the dinner-table, there is not much use in staying on.'

I was delighted to see that this last remark, which I had added on my own account, and out of my great kindness for him, made him very angry. I thought he was going to strike me, and indeed I would not have been sorry if he had, for I would have most heartily made some return on his broad back, for the crack on the head that he had once given me.

In the evening the Abbé sent to ask Madame if she would be kind enough to give him until the following day to deliver up his accounts: and Madame said she would. And so next day he did so, more or less—and rather less than more; but Madame was so relieved to be rid of him, that she paid no attention to various small matters, which really came to something quite considerable.

His furniture was very soon removed, for he had none: everything in his room belonged to the house. At last he departed, and there wasn't a soul in the place but was delighted, except Madame Guillaume, who made no sign, but thought all the more: for the dear creature disappeared two days afterwards in pursuit of her Abbé, and with her went the best of my belongings. The two of them must have gone a

long way, for I haven't seen a sign of them since, but that hardly troubles me, as you may suppose.

Madame Allain paid me at least twice the value of what my wife took with her, so I recovered all the sooner from my disappointment. She told me to find her a coachman and a lady's-maid, and I supplied both.

Although I could not read or write or add, I took charge of the household affairs, as the Abbé had done, so that every one in the house called me Monsieur Guillaume, if you please.

One morning when she was still in bed and I was explaining some matter, she suddenly said:

'You see, Guillaume, that I have great confidence in you: I hope you won't betray it like that rascal Évrard.'

'Why, indeed no, madame,' says I; 'I should be an ungrateful wretch if I did.'

One of her arms was lying on top of the bed-clothes, so I kissed her hand.

'How is this?' she asked. 'Growing gallant, are we?'

'Oh, madame!' I answered, 'would that I were as gallant as you are lovely, so that I might find favour in your eyes.'

'But do you know,' she went on, 'that you have just made me a declaration of love and that I ought to be angry with you?'

'But how would that help you?' I asked in my turn. 'I have made it and there it is, and you had better be pleased than angry. I know that a man of my quality can scarcely presume to speak with you; but I believe you would never repent of your kindness to me.'

'I should like to think so,' she answered; 'and if I am not mistaken, you are an honest man. But that is not enough: you must be discreet as well.'

'Lord, madame, you need not be afraid,' I said; 'I'm as dumb as fish when I must be.'

Then she fell to thinking, while I took her hand, and then her arm; then I drew back the bed-clothes from her bosom, which was as white as snow. I ventured to lay a finger, then a hand, then both my hands on her two breasts; and as she went on thinking, and made no sign, I ventured on a kiss. Ah, that brought her to herself:

'Leave me, Guillaume,' said she, sitting up. 'You are too bold, or I am too weak.'

'Very well, madame,' says I. 'Let me be bold and you shall be weak, and then we shall both be pleased.'

'No,' she answered; 'besides, I hear my maid coming; leave me, and remember if you want to win my favour you must be discreet.'

And as the maid was really and truly at the door, I said to madame, as I withdrew, that I thought we should understand each other very well. I only spoke

and acted thus because I was sure that she had been pretty well disposed to me, for some time past.

Next day, all went marvellously well: we agreed upon the best possible sort of understanding, to our mutual pleasure and satisfaction, and so continued, and the world never a whit the wiser.

So matters went forward for a matter of ten years: I did none so badly out of it, and can now live as I choose. Then the good soul died, and left me, like the other servants, a bit more in her will.

Since her death I have lived in the country near Paris. I got the schoolmaster to teach me to write, and read books, and this made me want to write one myself, for I see that every one does a little in this line.

If the public like these four stories, they are sure to like some more I could tell them: and that will encourage me. After that, what is to prevent me commencing author in good earnest? Why, who knows what might happen? The Academy has a fine large door to it, and I am no bigger than the rest of us. There is nothing against me, I fancy: I write like a hackney coachman, do I? Well, so do a great many others, and without the excuse of having been one.

LOVE'S ORDEAL
IN THE FOUR ELEMENTS

LOVE'S ORDEAL IN THE FOUR ELEMENTS

A NEW STORY

PART I

A lady named Cécile, whose other name I will not disclose, who was much addicted to intellectual pursuits, required a certain young gentleman, who was greatly taken by her, to offer her a story, in fulfilment of a forfeit he had lost at play. And this is what he wrote.

Eulalie was born to suffer the most singular caprices of fortune and of love: her beauty was equal to her birth, which is saying a great deal. Her life began at the Opera Ball in Paris, where her mother found herself under the necessity of bringing her into the world. The matter was taken in hand by a party of masked revellers; and, as one of them proved to be a midwife and another a nurse in their private capacities, the birth of the young Eulalie was greatly facilitated.

The young Alexis also entered upon the world at the same time. It was soon clear that he was fated to develop into a highly accomplished young gentleman. He it was who was destined by Heaven to bring about and to share Eulalie's adventures: for at our

birth our lot is always bound up with that of another: 'tis merely a matter of when we are to meet. However, the beautiful Eulalie was put out to nurse just as Alexis was being weaned. Their common star began by making them foster brother and sister: you may imagine how sympathetic to each other they became. Indeed, it is not unlikely that this preliminary encounter gave them an opportunity of becoming known to each other, of becoming more intimate, and so fulfilling their destiny. I will, if you please, pass over in silence all the delights of their ingenuous youth, in order to get forward with their entrancing story. Let us proceed, therefore, forthwith, to these poor children's adolescence: I say 'poor children', not implying that they were inadequately endowed with this world's goods, but referring to the vicissitudes of their affections. Fate, which seemed to have led them by the hand, did even more for them and made them neighbours; in fact, there was only the width of the street between them. Very soon their parents, who had been delighted to see the mutual attachment of these two young things and made it the subject of jests, began to fear the consequences. A disagreement which happened to arise between the two families at the time was the beginning of the misfortunes which threw our lovers' lives into confusion. So they were parted, and only managed to see each other coming out from Mass, and

wherever they might manage to meet, that is to say very seldom, when out for a walk, and never at all at public entertainments. Fortunately, they still lived opposite each other, and spent a good half of the day exchanging a hundred looks and a hundred sighs which the zephyrs continually and faithfully carried and brought back. This relief sufficed them; but their parents noticed it, and Eulalie was given another room. This last penalty seemed to them much more unbearable than the first. They could have passed their lives looking at each other across the street—at least they thought so. At that age nothing is believed impossible. They must help each other and find means of evading their tyrants' harshness. Fortune, who was but pretending to have abandoned them, got them out of their difficulty.

Most opportunely, Eulalie's house caught fire, and it was really marvellous to see how the whole building was instantly enveloped in flames. The occasion was too good to be missed. Alexis lost no time, and, reckless of smoke and flames, he plunged into the conflagration, to such purpose that he reached Eulalie's bedroom, pulled her out of bed with all the modesty he could command, took her in his arms, and carried her into his own house. He was only just in time, for the floor of Eulalie's bedroom gave way a moment later, and the building, which was almost burnt out, collapsed in ruins; indeed, the destruction was so

complete that there was nothing left but a heap of débris, without so much as the semblance of a house. The confusion was as great as the disorder: so much so that the parents, who were completely beside themselves, did not discover their daughter's timely rescue, nay more, they thought she had been burnt to death and buried beneath the ruins of the house and furniture. While they were lamenting her death, our lovers were secretly united in the greatest happiness life can give. Just imagine how they loved each other! The narrative is very laconic at this point: what cannot be defined cannot be described. So he kept her in his room on the third floor in the deepest secrecy, giving her any food he could get from the kitchen, and spending the last halfpenny of his pocket money; but love supplied what was wanting. Their fare was not lavish, but their happiness was profound. This may seem incredible to persons devoid of sentiment, but we will not trouble about them—they are not worth considering.

So our lovers spent whole days in each other's arms and in the contemplation of their happiness. They had no time to think of the future: the present was enough for them, and very good they found it. But their romance was spoilt by that fatality which never permits happiness to endure. A rascally valet noticed something: he blabbed, and one fine morning Eulalie was snatched from the arms of Love him-

self. What an awakening! (She was asleep at the moment—one must sleep sometimes.) A tiresome mother, a type but too common, peremptorily removed her; and the proceeding was emphasized by a slap or so on Eulalie's rosy cheeks. What had the poor child done but acted as any other would have done in her place? So parted they were, heartlessly torn asunder, and knew not what was to become of them; and Alexis was left with nothing but his satisfaction at having saved Eulalie from the fire and his sorrow at losing her, perhaps for ever. But there is a God—so they say—Who watches over children, and lovers too, for they are much the same.

Alexis, after a great deal of trouble, at last discovered that Eulalie was to be sent to a convent near Paris, and that she was apparently irrevocably lost to him. Her mother was, in fact, intending that she should become a nun for the rest of her life, whether she liked it or not, and, the better to prevail upon the girl, she made her believe that her lover was faithless. Young ladies, do not be deceived: 'tis the usual device of parents in such circumstances. Poor Eulalie knew no better: she let her mother have her way, and, in violence to her own feelings, she obeyed. The day of the fatal departure arrived. She rose for the last time from her bed: she was put into a coach and packed off without being allowed to take farewell of anyone in the neighbourhood. Then, and not until

then, the unhappy Eulalie realized all the burden of her misery: a faint ray of hope had always kept her up; when she observed that every step took her farther from her dear Alexis, and brought her nearer to irrevocable exile, she broke down. Despair came upon her, and she made a dreadful resolution which she did but await a favourable opportunity to carry out. But, you will ask, what of Alexis? Patience, dear reader! Every one in turn: we left him champing at the bit: he will soon reappear upon the scene.

Eulalie's carriage went forward until at a certain stage in the journey they came to a river which had to be crossed in a ferry. At the sight of this, Eulalie pretended to be afraid, and asked to be allowed to get out. Those escorting her hoped to make her more amenable and were very ready to indulge her; so she walked down to the ferry, and when she was near the edge, at a place where the current ran swiftest, she jumped right in. Shrieks of horror! But one of the servants showed some presence of mind: in a trice he jumped in after her, intending to rescue her or perish in the attempt. It was, in fact, Alexis, who, quite distraught, had disguised himself thus in order not to lose sight of his mistress. And as he had once plunged into fire to save her, it is not surprising that he plunged into the water to save her again.

However, the current, which was extremely swift, had already carried Eulalie and her lover a consider-

able distance: he made the most Herculean efforts to overtake her . . .

At this point the story has, unfortunately, been interrupted; but every effort will be made to induce the author to let us have the second instalment as soon as may be, and possibly it will not be the last.

PART II

My readers will not, I hope, have forgotten that we left our lovers being carried along by the stream. The spectators had lost sight of them and, not knowing what to do, contented themselves with commending them to the care of St. Nicholas. However, Alexis, for his part, was not at all inactive: far from it, he exerted himself to such good purpose, that he at last caught up his dear Eulalie, whose clothes and certain unconscious movements that she made from time to time brought her to the surface of the stream. But just as her lover was about to lay hold of her she sank again under his very eyes, and he lost her once more; this happened again and again, but Alexis persevered. With most commendable patience he returned to the charge, and without waiting for the dear object to come to the surface, he dived down into the depths in search of her, like a spaniel after a duck. But such a chase could not continue. Alexis,

exhausted, made a supreme effort, and at last managed to get hold of Eulalie's hair, which was floating on the surface. Encouraged by this success, he towed her to the bank and laid her on a grassy sward, which seemed to have been expressly intended for so lovely a burden. When, however, he had got her on dry land, he looked at her and thought that her life had left her in the watery depths. In the fury of his despair he was about to leap into the river: he bade farewell to his dead love with a thousand kisses on her lovely face, where only the pale lilies remained; but coming—as it chanced—upon her sweet mouth, he felt the faintest breath beneath his lips. Not merely would he have shared his soul with her, but he would gladly have bestowed it on her altogether. So he persevered and, whatever could be done to bring a dead lady back to life, you may be sure he did. Eulalie recovered her breath, sighed, opened her dying eyes, and cast one look upon her saviour, who was so overwhelmed at her return to life that he hardly realized his feelings: he was too happy to understand that such a relief may be more than can be borne, and that one may as easily die of joy as of despair. While the pair were occupied in this happy progress from death to life, the parents, friends, and fellow-travellers appeared one by one and crowded round our lovers, who, indeed, were not aware of their presence. They all congratulated Alexis, except

the mother, who thanked him coldly and removed her daughter to a distance, without allowing Alexis an opportunity for any of his appealing looks; in fact, as the saying goes, he was left to dry where he stood. This last exhibition of harshness distressed him more than any other. But he consoled himself with the satisfaction of having saved his adored one, and he resigned himself, bowing to Fate.

However, after Eulalie had received all possible attention for her condition, she was made to get into her carriage and continue her journey. They arrived all too soon at the lugubrious spot where she was shortly to be immured. The party all said good-bye to her and left her as drenched with her own tears as if she had just emerged from the river; but her mother took small notice of her condition, and departed after enjoining the discreet nuns to instil into her a proper vocation for the religious life.

So there was our Eulalie between four walls. Her confinement seemed like a foretaste of Hell. She lived for a time among these vestals as if she had been among savages on a desert island. She saw nothing and heard nothing, until at last, among the crowd of young novices who surrounded her, she noticed one whose mysterious air reminded her extremely of Alexis. She inspected him carefully for several days in succession. His bearing, his demeanour, his cheerful habit of body, his accent, his very voice, his

meaning remarks—all these began unconsciously to prevail upon her heart. Alexis himself—it must be he! Our presentiments rarely deceive us, especially when they are founded on probability and supported by love. It was indeed Alexis, who, by the help of his youth and a modest cast of countenance, had managed to get himself admitted as a novice to the convent. He lost no time in convincing Eulalie that she had found her love again: and Eulalie bewailed her destiny no more. How delightful it is for two lovers to wear the same garb, live under the same roof, carry out the same tasks and duties, with nothing to distinguish them save that which does more particularly make them one! They proposed to make their profession in company: they had so often vowed eternal constancy! And the vows that were to come seemed but an accomplishment of what had gone before.

The time drew near. They sighed for the moment which was to unite them for ever, and they longed for the morrow. But the Demon Jealousy came to sunder them. Their close attachment, or rather the instinctive suspicion of certain of the nuns, made them watch the supposed novice with rather particular care. Happy lovers are blind: their felicity brings with it a feeling of security that often becomes extremely dangerous: in any case, Alexis was discovered. The nun who had privately and personally

investigated the question could no longer doubt the truth: and whether from despair, or from devotion to the Order, she at once revealed what she had seen, and furnished the Authorities of the convent, who had some difficulty in believing her, with an exact description of the matter. The question was carefully considered, and the nuns, who had expressed their incredulity, were secretly not at all sorry to have an opportunity of being convinced by an ocular demonstration: and this was most successfully carried out. One fine morning Alexis was caught as he jumped out of bed: escape was impossible; and the matter was so plain that he was thenceforward treated like a wolf that has taken refuge in a sheep-fold. However, after a good deal of discussion, more sensible counsels prevailed, and it was decided to keep the affair dark. Alexis was made to swear an oath that reassured the community and preserved each member of it in her original innocence; he was then required to surrender his monastic habit, which was then freshly consecrated, and he was provided with the old clothes of a sacristan who had lately died in the flower of his age in the service of the community. So Alexis was dismissed and forbidden to loiter in the neighbourhood, or to come within pistol shot of the convent. It was said that Eulalie was not the only inmate who missed him; as to that, I would not venture upon any speculations; in any case her grief was

as dreadful as her loss, though she hardly showed it. Fortunately for her it was decided, for her greater safety, that her novitiate should start again from the beginning. I say fortunately, because she thus still had a year before her. Give a debtor rope, they say, and his debts seem to vanish: time often brings to pass what would not otherwise have happened.

A woman who has been so repeatedly thwarted is capable of anything. Eulalie spent much time in futile scheming, until at last she hit upon the unusual device—for she could think of none other—of pretending to be with child. She found out all the most significant symptoms of such a condition and provided herself with means of gradually enlarging her figure. She had become popular in the convent, and obtained secretly all the help she needed. Such was the position of affairs when a rumour of what was going forward began to circulate amongst the community: and the fact of Alexis's sojourn in the establishment was hardly calculated to discredit it. The Chapter of the convent met once more in private, and it was decided to write to her mother, who, when she received the letter, fell into the most violent fury, and swore that she would give her daughter up for ever; that she would abandon her to her evil fate, deprive her of her inheritance, adding that she took the opportunity of conveying to her a Mother's Curse. What was to be done? Eulalie's supposed condition

continued to progress, and indeed visibly increased: and the consternation of the nuns increased likewise. If the birth of a daughter could have been reasonably anticipated, they might have kept her; but they were afraid she might give birth to a son and perhaps two of them, and what a scandal that would be! In this dubious situation it was intimated to Eulalie that she must make her own arrangements as expeditiously as possible, the more so as her time was near, and the unfortunate business, which was already known outside the convent, would soon be all over the neighbourhood.

She accepted her dismissal with the utmost cheerfulness, though she left the place without knowing what was to become of her. Love is all-sufficient: when a woman is in love she thinks she will never need for anything.

So our poor young friend was unfrocked, and she fled incontinently to the nearest refuge she could find, with the intention of there recovering her honour, which she had rather let slip of late: in other words, she abjured her pregnant state and reverted to virginity, and subsequently to martyrdom, as will be seen in the sequel.

The local magistrate, who was aware of her departure from the convent and of the reason for it, observing that the amplitude of figure which had distinguished her entrance upon the world had now

passed away, supposed that she had recently given birth to a child. Wherefore he immediately went to visit her, to congratulate her on a successful delivery, and at the same time to remind her that she must produce her offspring for his inspection. Not being able to obtain any explanation of her inability to do so, he had her arrested and carried to prison, quite convinced that she had made away with her infant. As may be easily supposed, she found it extremely awkward to establish that she had never been with child; and, unfortunately for her, nothing is so hard to prove. It was in vain that she denied it: her protestations fell upon deaf ears. The magistrate took the depositions of the entire community, one after the other, and they all confirmed his suspicions: indeed, they added that they knew very well what they were talking about, and were hardly to be taken in so easily. As the result of such undeniable evidence it was clearly established that Eulalie had been pregnant: and the magistrate convicted her of making away with her offspring, and in expiation of her offence condemned her to be hanged by the neck until she was dead.

The expeditiousness of the course of justice in the district in question will no doubt seem surprising: nevertheless it did so happen, and many a well-authenticated story lacks nothing except an appearance of probability. Perhaps Eulalie's innocence

might have been established by further investigations and reports from experts in such matters; but, either because such testimony can never be trusted, or for whatever other reason, no further steps were taken, and, on the very day following, the innocent creature was led to the place of execution, followed by a large crowd. Alexis was present. What were his feelings when he saw Eulalie standing patiently beneath the gallows and, what was worse, his Eulalie, false and faithless, condemned for a crime in which he could have had no part, for he had always treated her so respectfully that he was sure that her condition had been none of his business, and that he did not come into the matter at all! He was more distressed by such open infidelity than by the prospect of her death, which seemed a kind of vengeance for his wrongs, and he was tempted to leave her to her fate. And yet—who could watch a woman he has loved so deeply, and still loves, being hanged? For a lover's affection does not always perish with his mistress's fidelity, and love rarely dies a sudden death. However, time was pressing: Eulalie had but an instant to live: the dreadful rope by which she was to die already encircled that neck of ivory and alabaster. God in Heaven! A rope where his own arms should have been to clasp her to his heart for ever! Alexis could endure the sight no longer. Without a thought of danger, he collected a few bold fellows who were

as deeply touched as he was. Together they elbowed their way through the throng: Alexis cut the fatal rope with a single blow of his sword and received Eulalie in his arms, while his companions cleared a passage through the crowd with the flat of their swords and made a way for their escape; and the magistrate drew up an admirably accurate report of the occurrence.

Thus Eulalie, who had been on the point of destruction in fire, in water, and now, once more, in the air, was for the third time rescued by her lover. So our young friends took themselves off with remarkable celerity. In marvellous stories of this kind everything falls out as it should, and it will not seem surprising that Alexis met a horse which happened to be passing by, and which came in extremely useful; at the risk of killing it, he rode it in a manner that might well seem incredible, if everything were not possible in certain circumstances.

The Goddess of Fortune, who seemed disposed to a reconciliation with our lovers, after having bestowed on them the means of securing their safety, began to display further activity.

Alexis received news from home that his father lay at the point of death, and that there was no time to lose if he wished to receive the old gentleman's last breath, and his own inheritance. Torn as he was between his love and his duty to his father (and the

prospect of indigence), he decided not to let his father die without him. Once more he had to leave his darling Eulalie; but he hoped that this separation would be the last, and that, after it, they would never need to part again.

Yet certain persistent presentiments that refuse to be removed seemed to foreshadow some disaster: he could not shake them off; in spite of all he could do, they were with him when he ate and drank, when he came and went, when he sat at home and when he slept. He could not understand their meaning, and could not imagine what could befall him other than his father's death. So he departed, and the lovers' farewells were accompanied by more than usually heart-rending lamentations. Eulalie watched Alexis go, and scarcely had her dear one, who seemed but lent to her by Love, passed out of sight, than she fell into the most dreadful prostration. She displayed all the symptoms of the most dire and mortal malady: her courage, that had never failed her hitherto, suddenly collapsed. She was more completely overcome than a young gentlewoman distracted by the loss of a pet monkey or a parakeet. The seriousness of her condition soon became apparent: she took to her bed and there remained. In spite of the dearth of doctors in those parts the disease gained ground without assistance, and at last became so acute that she ceased to give any signs of life. The fatal moment occurred

exactly a fortnight, to the day, after the departure of Alexis, who, knowing nothing of what had happened, had hurried back post haste, and was just in time to be present at the obsequies of his Eulalie.

His despair knew no limits: all that he wanted to do was to share her grave, but even that slight consolation was denied him. He was brought back against his will to the house of his dead love, and grew even more distracted as he wandered from room to room ever seeking for her and finding her not.

Great griefs bring madness. Alexis's grief drove him to the wildest extravagances, for which he might indeed be forgiven. When a man loses everything, he may be excused for losing his wits as well. Still, he had enough left to enter upon a resolution that showed how deeply he had loved Eulalie, and that the passage of time could never diminish his affection. In order to carry out his grand design he waited until night had fallen, which, fortunately, was pretty soon; he then went forth to seek Eulalie's body where it lay in its last resting-place. And there, heedless of ghosts and spirits, he achieved his purpose and lay down beside her, being minded to be buried thus and so to die; he stretched himself out on the grass, overjoyed to be united to his mistress for ever. He covered himself with earth as well as he could, and, disposing himself at Eulalie's side, he began to

address her in the most affectionate terms, which should surely have warmed the poor cold clay, if he had not accompanied them with a flood of tears: a gentle sleep fell upon his eyes and closed them, and he thought that he was dead. He was mistaken, however, though Sleep is Death's brother and remarkably like his twin sister. As he lay thus, his mind was still awake, and in a delightful dream he continued the conversation with the dead lady who, for her part, appeared to be replying in a similar strain. Had anyone been able to listen to them he would no doubt have been extremely astonished to hear the dead expressing themselves with an elegance which the living might have found it difficult to achieve. Thus the night passed, when Alexis, who thought himself no longer living, began to feel some suspicion that he was mistaken. When he listened carefully he thought he could hear his neighbour sighing and groaning at his side: he remembered certain remarks and replies, certain lamentations and caresses which he thought had reached him from the other world, or, rather, he had thought himself already there in Eulalie's company. However, through a few apertures which had not been quite filled up, the sun began to penetrate the mystery, and, as they gathered strength, the rays gradually found their way to the depths of their sepulchre.

'Is it you, dear heart?' asked Eulalie. 'Could you

not bear to survive me? Ah, what a proof of love is this! I shall remember it for ever!'

'As you see,' replied Alexis, 'death has united us. How could I exist without you? Where you are there is life, and nowhere else; death with you is death no more.'

'But,' asked Eulalie, in good faith, 'are we dead? I hardly know: but I must confess that I find some difficulty in believing it.'

'But since we are buried, we must surely be dead,' answered Alexis; ''tis our shadows and our souls that are conversing thus. Feel how cold we are.'

'But we aren't!' they both cried, as they felt each other's bodies at the same moment.

'Ah!' said Alexis, 'this warmth is the warmth of love! 'Tis the fire that consumed us smouldering beneath its embers, kept alive by our companionship in death!'

'It may be so,' admitted Eulalie, 'but I seem to feel as if I were very much alive. After all, I have never been dead before, I don't know how one feels when one has passed away, so I must leave it to you.'

'I will believe anything you please,' returned Alexis, 'and I will only stay dead as long as you do! But let us look into the matter a little: life is well worth the trouble!'

So saying, they began to shake themselves and to free themselves somewhat from their melancholy integuments.

'Good Heavens!' cried Alexis, 'are we coming back to life? Can this be daylight? I don't know where we are or what may be our condition, but whatever it be let us take the risk, and get up and discover what is going forward. Why, I recognize the place perfectly: it is as if I had only just left it. Look at that hill to the left and the valley below it, that brook winding through its green meadows, all the glowing landscape and the fragrant flowers; I see—nay, I hear —the happy peasants of the neighbourhood dancing and singing to the music of their pipes. Here are browsing herds, frisking lambs, dogs and shepherds, rustic cabins and thatched roofs . . .'

While Alexis was delivering himself of this catalogue of the sights that met his eyes, Eulalie said to him:

'We shall be taken for persons in a Masquerade if we are seen. Let us take refuge in the house and then find out what has happened.'

They arrived at the outer gate, but no sooner had they entered than the entire household disappeared. The whole establishment was overcome with terror: they found none to talk to but each other, though that was enough. Both of them became gradually convinced that they were in perfect health. One by one the startled inmates of the house returned and ventured to consort with our two ghosts.

Eulalie and her lover were at length informed that

she was thought to have been sufficiently dead to be fit for burial: that she had apparently been seized by a weakness that had developed into coma; and, as has happened to more than one dead person of our acquaintance, she had been buried alive. There was nothing for it but to pass the matter over, and to accept the proffered excuses of the company.

In this way Alexis fulfilled the fourth ordeal of Love in the fourth element, and soon found himself in his own, which was in Eulalie's arms; and at last he married her, to the great satisfaction of every one acquainted with his story, the like of which is perhaps not likely to be heard of again, though there is nothing whatever improbable about it.

Those who may wish to draw some love-moral from the tale will find this one:

Hold on and I'll have you!

THE GALLANT AND TRAGIC STORY OF A YOUNG LADY WHO SLIPPED TO WIN A HUSBAND IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 1742

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DEDICATORY LETTER

To M. de . . .

For my part I cannot think how it has come about that no one has ever thought of dedicating books to the late and admired Monsieur de Molière, or at least to his servant-maid. Surely, since his death, he is quite a grand enough gentleman for the purpose. I think it highly desirable that, in recognition of his past merits, the authors of to-day should dedicate their works to him, unless it can be urged that this would be returning evil for good.

Since, Sir, I write very much in your manner, and since I have modelled myself, by which I mean my style, on your admirable works, I beg you to accept this trifling anecdote of gallantry and misadventure. I am also well aware that this provides me with the opportunity for a eulogy of your character, and that such is the practice of all authors towards their Mæcenates! *but I hardly know where to begin. It would have to be an entirely new portrait, because, allowing for the fact that you are like very few people, there are very few people who are like you. Where, indeed, could one find a*

mind so deeply philosophic, one that so despises the essentials and cares for nothing but the superfluities of life? Should I speak of the great art of attaining happiness? You, Sir, would be completely content if you could only learn not to disturb the pleasures that divert you by your continual search for a fresh one. Were I to touch upon your learning, the merest catalogue of your works would furnish a library. I would not venture to mention them all for fear of offending your modesty and bringing shame upon my idle readers.

And, indeed, you would have been even more prolific if you had not kept your talents under restraint. You are, in truth, a born poet: it is, indeed, obvious from the slight attention you pay to your prose writings, but, were further evidence needed, it is supplied by your library, where the very titles of the volumes are in verse.

The praises that you deserve do not blind me to your faults. I shall expose them frankly, and I shall begin by saying that your demeanour does not at all suggest a person of condition. You are neither ignorant nor arrogant: and although we all have enough troubles of our own, you have not lost the power of sympathizing with those of others. You depend, for your consideration in Society, on your intellect and your abilities, like any ordinary citizen. You look for friends and not for flatterers, and you are more sensible of the affection than of the respect with which

I subscribe myself, etc. . . .

'You ask me who? Guess, if you can—and dare.'

THE STORY

It is a hundred to one that posterity will never know what used to go on in our time unless we take the trouble to record it: and that is why history was invented, for by its help we can live the lives of times gone by.

However this may be, there were once two young gentlemen, Comte and Marquis respectively, persons of some condition, with many connections in the Law and the Church. They were in a perpetual state of rivalry, and at the moment very much so, as they were in love with the same young lady, a girl of seventeen. She was certainly an undeniable beauty: large eyes, and between them the prettiest nose in the world; an exquisitely modelled mouth which, when she smiled, disclosed teeth as fine as ivory. She had the languishing airs of a blonde and the vivacity of a brunette, without being exactly either one or the other.

She was quite intelligent, and had had a fair education considering her age. She often went to the gallery at the Comédie Française, and sometimes to the Opera on Tuesdays, by the favour of Mademoiselle C . . . and even of Monsieur T . . . Her manners were extremely polished, as will appear from what follows. So it was not surprising that every one was in love with her, and especially a great many people like the Comte and the Marquis.

One day, during the recent cold weather, which every one will remember, Mademoiselle Javotte de Passy, for that was her name, felt disposed to take a walk, for after a turn in the open air the house does not seem so cold.

Our two lovers, who were in the habit of following her everywhere, observing her walking beside a frozen lake in some gardens so well known that I need not mention them, made ready to favour her with a display to which young people of their sort are much addicted—I mean that they proposed to show her how well they could skate.

Mademoiselle Javotte was delighted to watch them, and indeed and in truth their performance was vastly entertaining. Sometimes they would come down with a crack, but on purpose and merely to amuse. Suddenly they caught sight of a sledge such as is used in the northern parts of our continent. The Comte and the Marquis were neither stupid nor slow-witted, and brought it up to Mademoiselle Javotte, inviting her to get in: which, with a smile, she was very willing to do. There followed prolonged and somewhat discordant plaudits from the by-standers, who were glad to see the young lady so diverted. But you cannot rely on anything where Love is in question: he is a powerful but malevolent Deity who often raises us to the pinnacle of good fortune only to fling us once more into the most

awkward entanglements; and he uses all manner of disguises to deceive us. To listen to him one might suppose that all was sugar and honey, whereas it is nothing of the kind: and you are likely to spend the rest of your life biting your fingers in mortification.

However, a truce to moralizing: let us return to the story. Unnoticed by our two friends, the futile and besotted Demon of Jealousy crept into their hearts and became possessed of their souls. They fell into what looked like a concerted fury. Mademoiselle Javotte thought they were about to draw their swords upon each other: and she was the more uneasy because such turmoils do little to improve a young lady's reputation. She implored them to stay their hands and, to put an end to the affair, she said she wished to be put on shore again. No sooner had she said this than the dispute terminated by the propulsion of the sledge, with a singular unanimity, towards a part of the ice which had thawed: like the air in the opera, *I would sooner that dreadful monster* . . . etc.

Mademoiselle Javotte was on the point of being drowned alive when another stranger, usually known by the name of F. . . ., and who was very suitably disguised as an able seaman while disporting himself on the canal, bravely came forward, took a rope from his pocket, and, with all proper precautions which the perilous situation demanded, reached an end of it to the lady and dragged her on to dry land.

She at once arranged her dress, which had become disordered in her misadventure. He took her in his arms and carried her into a house which happened to be conveniently near by. There he laid her upon a bed which happened to be conveniently available, and lay down and fainted away beside her.

The affectionate conversation of two such tender hearts cannot possibly be reproduced here: 'twas but a confusion of inconsequent phrases, as might be expected in such a mishap. Confused cries of *I'm drowning! I'm drowning!* betrayed how deeply the accident had impressed itself on their minds.

The lovely creature had taken care to arrange herself with her feet near the fire, so the kind-hearted sailor threw himself on his knees, and made her, in set terms, a declaration of his feelings:

'Mademoiselle, I beg you to believe that I am truly sincere when I say that I have long awaited the happy moment that was ours to-day. I cannot say that I would give a guinea for this never to have happened, since it has given me the opportunity of declaring my passion, which I will now proceed to do, if you are truly quite dry; for I cannot but regard that as the most urgent matter.'

So touching an address was too affectionate not to be well received, and Mademoiselle Javotte replied with a gracious smile whose meaning conveyed all she could say in such a situation. He accordingly felt

encouraged to make himself known to her as an English nobleman with whom she was, indeed, unacquainted, but who had sent her several *unanimous* letters, by the agency of an aunt of hers (or some such relative) discovering his passion to her; he had now come to France to find out how matters stood, intending, if his prospects looked at all likely, to broach the question of marriage just as if he had been a native of France. The warmth of the feelings that had prompted so signal a devotion proved him ready —so violent was his passion—to dare anything in her service: so much so, that she married him in preference to the two other gentlemen, who had composed their differences over a bottle in the tavern below, under pretext of listening to what was going on above. They were excellently fooled, and had to find other objects for their matrimonial designs, while Milord and Milady departed to settle down in London (England), where they were soon engaged in the enjoyment of all the amenities of life, including a numerous offspring.

This story clearly establishes the fact that, although love may unite the sceptre and the shepherd's crook, that will not be the end of your troubles, far from it: hence a saying of a famous poet of to-day: *Go on swimming, take no risks*. It may also serve to show that one ought to know people very well indeed before quite marrying them.

THE MEMOIRS
OF THE MAGISTRATE GUILLERIN

THE MEMOIRS OF THE MAGISTRATE GUILLERIN

It is not because the late Mademoiselle Chaudron was my wife; but I can say without boasting that, since the day when man first had a bedfellow, never has there been so accomplished a helpmate. She gave me a good deal of trouble, I admit, but I forgave her because she was made like that, and also because, just as marriages are written down in heaven, households are, alas, so subject to turmoil that not a day can pass without one. Hence the saying of a certain author that a man should not place his finger between the hammer and the anvil, thereby signifying that a man should not marry. Apart from all that, the poor dear creature loved me as her life: and I may say in her praise that, but for the uncommonly bitter draughts that she made me swallow, I should not be as happy as I am this day.

I was much about in Society when I made her acquaintance. My late father observed to me one day:

'My son, you will succeed to the business some day: for none can tell who will live and who will die. Now tell me: you frequent the house of Madame Chaudron: a worthy lady, I don't say no: it isn't at all certain that she threw her late husband down the well, as most people say she did. Mark what I say:

although many people go to her house, she hasn't a penny. You are hovering round her daughters, and at your age I liked the society of the fair sex myself, the more so as the Chaudron ladies are lovely young fairies, and behave in a way that befits self-respecting young women. But that is not to the point.'

'Father, I see what the point is,' I answered.

Whereupon I returned to my room to think matters over in private, and to consider what steps I should take in the business. At length, realizing that I must act with decision, I clapped on my wig and went forth.

I went to Madame Chaudron's house, and no sooner had I sat down and begun to offer the usual compliments, than she asked, indicating the three young ladies, her daughters:

'With what intention have you been visiting my house for the last three months?'

'For a very good purpose indeed,' I answered, a little astonished that I should be surprised at the question, the more so as I had been expecting it.

'Very well,' she went on, 'you must to-day become affianced to the one whom you think will make you the most suitable wife, the more particularly because I am not the sort of mother (put yourself in my place) who would allow my daughters to get talked about; if you are an honourable man, you will understand me; if you are not, I say it just the same.'

I was conscious of the insult, and replied without a moment's hesitation:

'Certainly, madame. I am an honourable man and always shall be. I solicit the hand of the youngest Mademoiselle Chaudron. I have declared my affection for her, and she understands my feelings: I will now go and tell my father.'

I had all my wits about me: I ran off to find him, and with all the respect that is due from a son to his father, I told him straight out that I had just asked Mademoiselle Babiche Chaudron's hand in marriage. He looked at me fixedly for some time.

'And so you are marrying her, my son,' said he; 'I thought I had forbidden you to do so, and that not a quarter of an hour ago. She has nothing: you know what people say about her, and now they'll say so all the more. However, I'm your father: I must not be unreasonable, I give my consent to the marriage: let us go and visit the mother together.'

And off we went.

'Dear lady,' said he to Madame Chaudron (for I have always remembered his exact words); 'my son is little better than an ass, but I must show him a father's indulgence: since he needs must make a fool of himself, I'll not say No. Let us draw up the contract.'

No sooner said than done: and we went off to supper in our garden, but what happened at table

shows very clearly that you may not fight against the stars. I was sitting between Mademoiselle Babiche and the eldest Mademoiselle Chaudron. We were speaking of the engagement:

'I won't say what I think,' interrupted the eldest, in a pleasant voice, tossing off a bumper of *vin rosé;* 'but if you marry my sister Babiche, I hope this may poison me if I sign the contract for her!'

To which Madame Chaudron replied:

'Do you hear what she says, my son? She is the eldest of the family, and would marry anyone at all rather than let her sister get off before she does. What makes you prefer Babiche? Is it because you love her? That is not of the slightest consequence. If you marry her 'twill be quite a different story before the year is up.'

At this point M. Gaudion, the lawyer, made his appearance, almost, as it seemed, by pre-arrangement, but in reality quite by chance.

'Your servant,' says he—he was a snuffy old creature—'here is the contract all ready; but, as they say, who is going to hold the handle of the saucepan? In other words, which of the young ladies is going to be married?'

My father, who had not appeared to notice anything while all this was going on, was engaged with the youngest Mademoiselle Chaudron, to whom he was listening without saying a word himself, for she

was a bright and gay young lady; my father, look you, suddenly bellowed out:

'I'll have this one for my daughter-in-law, if I die for it! The young lady has just told me that if she had a husband she would not let anyone kill him but herself. 'Tis a very proper young creature, and she must have a good heart. I must have her for my son. Come, sir,' said he, 'thank Mademoiselle Babiche politely.'

I did so as follows:

'Mademoiselle, you must excuse and forgive me. I had not thought the matter over properly. But though I am marrying Mademoiselle your sister in place of yourself, it will be a real pleasure to me to become your brother-in-law.'

'Sir,' answered she, 'I would scorn to play the shrew. You may do as you will, I shall say nothing.'

With these words she boxed my ears with one hand, upset a pile of plates with the other, and departed.

'That is only to show how pleased she is,' said Madame Chaudron; 'don't let that spoil the party. Friend Gaudion, draw up the contract: we'll sign it to-morrow and try to get the marriage through by Sunday.'

Just as we were setting out for a celebration at my father's house, we came upon Alexandre Bernard's marionette show: the theatre was just being taken to

pieces, as they were going away. His eldest son, who was dressed as a girl, picked up his violin and played us back to the house; and before taking his leave, observed:

'It is the custom to kiss the lady upon such an occasion.'

Whereupon he embraced my intended very heartily, which put us all in excellent humour, though we had been pretty cheerful before. We invited him and his company to stay and play for us to dance after dinner. And they did so, and a very good evening it was.

About midnight, when I was dancing a jig with my intended: 'I think I must go and dress up,' says she. So she took young Bertrand by the arm and slipped off.

An hour later:

'Where is the lady?' says I.

We looked for her everywhere. Where could she be? She must be found: easier said than done. We searched all over the house and garden: not a sign.

''Tis some prank,' says Madame Chaudron,'which will make us all laugh.'

So saying, she called her two daughters and went off home. I escorted her back: her youngest daughter was not there; so I went to bed.

Next day, I awoke with the lark, while my father was still snoring, for he had been overtaken by wine

at the dance, and went to the stables. I took his mare and the road to Niort. 'I shall get some news there,' said I to myself, for they sell newspapers at Niort. I arrived there on the third day: and there in the public square was Monsieur Bertrand's theatre, and with him was my intended, who appeared to be playing the part of Chimène, for she was dressed as an Amazon. When the performance was over, seeing that Mademoiselle Chaudron was going away on the arm of young Bertrand, who was dressed as Harlequin:

'So there you are!' said I.

'Insolent creature!' said she; 'I don't know you.' And she made me a deep curtsy.

'She does not recognize me,' thought I, 'because she is all dressed up. However, she is polite, and I must not offend her. She might think that I had come for an explanation of her strange departure: I must be careful. Let us see how the wind blows to-morrow, and mum's the word. No one ever regrets having kept his mouth shut, and the more you scratch the more it itches.

'All may yet be well.'

THE LOSER WINS

(Fragment)

THE LOSER WINS

(Fragment)

The unfortunate Monsieur Usquebaugh, still dogged by misfortune, having long wandered about the town of ——, finally found himself on the Pont Royal, about midnight or one o'clock. There, worn out by fatigue and misery, stifled by his groans and blinded by his tears, he was abandoning himself freely to his grief, stretched out upon the first bench he could find, when a sudden and unlooked-for occurrence broke into his mournful reflections and roused him from a sleep that had begun to benumb his senses. At first he seemed to hear a noise and certain indistinguishable sounds coming from a distance. For an instant his despair gave way to curiosity, and he set himself to listen. Possibly the wind, which was in a favourable direction, may have carried the words to his ears, but, in any case, he was able (though he could see nothing) to make out the agonized appeals of a lady in distress. He soon understood what was happening, for although the night had seen fit to spread her darkest veils, the following furious address made the position clear:

'No, cruel one, your life is over! At last you must expiate your refusals, your harshness, and all your cruelties, most barbarous of women!'

And here flowed a torrent of invective in similar terms.

'Only death can rid me of a love that has been so abused, and you know too well which of us has most deserved it.'

So saying, he placed the poor lady on the edge of the parapet, with her legs on the side towards the river, and made ready to throw her over. In this dreadful situation, the unhappy creature, who had almost nothing left to cling to, clasped her hands together and, in the most pitiful tones, vainly appealed to her brutal executioner, whose heart grew more hardened than that of Pharaoh.

'What!' said she, holding on to the parapet as well as she could, 'in this last moment of my life, do you refuse to hear me?'

''Tis because I have heard you so often that I will hear you no more.'

'But what have I done to you?' said she.

'You have made me love you too deeply,' said he.

'But,' said she, 'I cannot think that anyone has ever drowned such a woman as I have been! Why, if I had loved you, and if, after having done so, I had been false and unfaithful to you, then, I admit, you would have had the right to be angry; but I have always hated you. In truth, 'tis perhaps most unfortunate that I am insensible to your passion: for I lose at least as much as you. But what can I do? It is

no easier for me to conceive a passion for you, than for you to get rid of the one that has possessed you: I should say the same to-morrow: to make you happy would be but to deceive you, for your happiness would not be real.'

'And what matter?' cried the desperate gentleman. 'Take me just the same: a real mistake is none the less true happiness! But I will not waste precious moments in futile argument: you know that until now I would sooner have died than crossed your slightest purpose. If I had been willing to use the law of the stronger, I should have been heart-whole this night. Ungrateful wretch! I wished to owe nothing but to your inclination, and that you yourself should offer me your heart. But all was in vain. Now I am too desperate not to bring the affair to an end. Once more, and for the last time, choose! Your heart or your life!'

'Neither!' said the unkind lady, frigidly.

'Tigress, 'tis too much!'

These were his very words. So saying, he gave way to his fury, seized his victim round the body, and having swung her back and forward for a while as though about to fling her into the river, he threw her into the middle of the roadway and, turning his despair against himself, he plunged into the water, crying:

'Let me die as I have lived!'

At this sudden change of front, and at the sound of his fall, the poor abandoned creature uttered a

loud shriek, and Usquebaugh haſtened to her aſſiſtance. Good Heavens! Imagine his amazement, when he recognized that the lady in queſtion was his wife, who had been torn from his arms on the day following their wedding, and whoſe abduction and faithleſsness he had been lamenting for the paſt six weeks: for he could not but ſuſpect that she had had a hand in the affair. She was easily able to defend herself againſt this reproach, and all the others. Her reſiſtance, and her raviſher's despair, together with the short interview between them, squared perfectly with her innocence. Love is always very ready to think a miſtress innocent.

Thus our two spouses found themselves brought together once more by one of the moſt remarkable adventures that have ever been recorded on the Pont Royal.

Lucretia, intact, returned to her husband's arms in the ſtate in which she had left them, and found in him as devoted, though less violent, a lover than her deceased suitor. For this reason we have called our ſtory *The Loser Wins*, because ladies may learn from it that fidelity is a useful possession, and that irregular passions bring sorrow upon those who give way to them. We may, further, be quite sure that after the exchange of the indiſpensable explanation their firſt thought was the rescue of the unhappy gentleman who had drowned himself on their account.

A 'PERSIAN LETTER' FROM A PARISIAN TO A TURKISH FRIEND

A 'PERSIAN LETTER' FROM A PARISIAN TO A TURKISH FRIEND

My dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the honour of your letter, and I take the privilege of thanking you for the information which you sent me therein: for it is always agreeable to receive news from some one who goes frequently into Society.

Your new Vizier seems a very pretty fellow, and I should think he is very well aware of it. I had indeed suspected (for I am not unfamiliar with such matters) that he owes his position to women, for it is just the same in our country. They push their friends as far as they can, and, indeed, nothing is so useful to a man as the favour of the fair sex. I take the liberty of making this observation, in passing, to you, as a highly accomplished gentleman, not at all likely to fall into the embarrassments that are by no means uncommon in your country and elsewhere. For instance, it is now Lent with us, the season that you call Ramadan: hence the following incident.

A respectable young lady, whose husband was major-domo to an assistant Inspector of Taxes, had some time previously conceived a violent passion for the son of what you would call a pork-butcher. The young man was often in the habit, when he came to

the house with his account, of bringing, unbeknown to his father, a saveloy, which he carried under his apron and offered to the lady in private, for she was very partial to such little attentions. A week ago the husband, coming back home somewhat earlier than usual, went up to his room; when his wife and the pork-butcher heard him they were dreadfully taken aback: the husband, suspecting that all was not as it should be, inquired what the gentleman was doing up there, and the latter boldly replied:

'Sir, I had taken the liberty of bringing the lady a trifling delicacy for her luncheon.'

And he ran incontinently down the stairs four at a time. But as the young lady appeared quite overcome by her private emotions, he asked her:

'And what may the delicacy be?'

'Alas!' said she; ''tis a saveloy.'

'Indeed, and where is it?'

'He has taken it away with him,' said she. 'I had but touched it.'

'A saveloy,' said he, 'when it is fast-time! Disgusting!'

'Pardon me, my little man,' she answered graciously, 'they are meant for dainty ladies like your wife.'

The husband accepted this counterfeit coinage as though it had been genuine. Really, the adroitness of women is beyond all praise.

I send you some new publications, very curious and interesting to a man of your distinction of mind, of whom I beg to subscribe myself, etc.

THE TURK'S REPLY TO THE 'PERSIAN LETTER' FROM PARIS

THE TURK'S REPLY TO THE 'PERSIAN LETTER' FROM PARIS

My dear Sir,

Although I am unknown to you, not being the Turkish gentleman to whom your valued letter was addressed, I shall make haste to disabuse your mind of the embarrassment you might have felt at getting no answer, because, in Turkey, Turkish gentlemen are often unable to read: and I shall take the liberty of favouring you with certain reflections I have made, in the way of observations, on the incorrigible ignorance displayed in your letter.

You were so good as to inform me (for you may suppose that I am your Turkish gentleman)—you insinuate, I say, quite by the way, that there are pork-butchers in our country, a most infamous suggestion: and you would use a saveloy to destroy a lady's reputation—I am sure you understand me. I may point out that this is not London: for since you are a Persian, and inclined to speak ill of your neighbour, why not try to be somewhat convincing? You must be aware that there is not a city in the land where the Watch are so idle that young ladies may be seen in the streets playing chuck-farthing with ragamuffins, in defiance of their parents, like deserted orphans, and can't find a situation in consequence. If a girl

wants to attract us, she must look as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. But, alas, too many of them look like brazen strumpets, and parents are rightly called betrayers of their children, when they don't do all they can to bring them up in the way they should go. 'Tis only that will help a girl to take the right turning and a boy to get on in life.

THE WAY THINGS HAPPEN

THE WAY THINGS HAPPEN

Mademoiselle Brechet was telling a distinguished friend of hers the other day that she had met Monsieur Daviliers at the house of one of her relatives where she was dining, and that he, after hearing her sing certain little drinking songs while the company was at table, said to her:

'Truly, mademoiselle, you ought to go on the Stage.'

'Sir, what do you take me for?' she asked. 'I'm not that sort of girl: I want to go back to my convent.' She was, in fact, at school at a convent.

A few days later she was dining once more in the same place; and Monsieur Daviliers, who was also there, again said to her, when she had again delighted the company:

'Truly, mademoiselle, you ought to go on the Stage.'

'I snubbed him,' said she, 'not ill-naturedly, but in such a way that I believed he would hardly mention the matter again. However, the same company met once more at dinner, and Monsieur Daviliers again made the same observation. Well, this time I was really angry, and set about him properly: I cried, and I longed with all my heart to get back to my convent.

'And the next day I entered the Opera.'

THE TRUE STORY OF A GENTLEMAN'S SUPPER PARTY TO TWO LADIES WHOM HE DESIRED TO MARRY

THE TRUE STORY OF A GENTLEMAN'S SUPPER PARTY TO TWO LADIES WHOM HE DESIRED TO MARRY

A man never ruins himself by extravagance upon a suitable occasion: which is why we should not mind flinging money about a little when fortune has seen fit to bestow it on us.

A gentleman called Guillaume, who was in love with two women, aspired, with the most honourable intentions, to the favours of both. After much effort he managed to get them both to sup with him, a company of three, including himself. The feast was worthy of his magnificence: never was such a lavish entertainment, such game and roasts, such a diversity of fruit, not to mention the wines and other liquors. The bottles went pretty rapidly round the table, and the talk, in which neither Cupid nor Bacchus was neglected, was continuous. Our friend divided his attentions between the fair lady and the dark one, having it in mind to win the hand of one of them, for he had ascertained in the neighbourhood that they were extremely rich and extremely beautiful. But evil intentions are never rewarded: for one of the young ladies, having eaten considerably of several ragouts, pretended to leave the room, really in order to see what might be going forward in her absence;

and in fact the gentleman took the opportunity to make love to the fair lady, who felt very disposed to marry him in the absence of the other. The dark lady, however, reappeared, after hearing the conversation over the dessert, in such a state of fury that she snatched up a knife and made as though to stab him in her anger. But the other one, seeing that there had been some understanding with her cousin, snatched up a fork which was lying on the table, and they both of them went out after upsetting everything upon it, dishes, candles, and even wine, with the most emphatic imprecations that they would never look upon his face again.

And that is why Damon, coming in shortly afterwards, could not find a single glass to drink out of, and lamented his unhappy friend's mishap, pointing out that a man should lay out his money more carefully, and not be carried away by his passionate impulses, especially when he is coursing two hares with one hound.

A DOG-FIGHT WHICH BROKE OFF AN ENGAGEMENT

A DOG-FIGHT WHICH BROKE OFF AN ENGAGEMENT

I don't know why people make such a fuss of dogs, after what has just happened at a certain dinner in the Parish of Bonnes-Nouvelles, the very day of the wedding, as you shall hear. The guests were eating pretty heartily, and all of them, without thinking, threw their bones under the table, where a couple of curs were gnawing them, as is not uncommon at entertainments of the kind; so much so that the bitch fell out with Médor and raised such a fearful disturbance that the company could not hear themselves speak, and kicked out in all directions to try to put an end to it. In the course of all this, Sultane, the bitch, inadvertently trod on the bridegroom's foot, and he (suspecting something else) was seized by the most frightful jealousy. The innocent bride, who had not trod on anybody's toes, and was ignorant of this incident, behaved as if nothing had happened. The bridegroom fell to glaring furiously at his cousin, who was sitting on the other side of the lady, and who most unfortunately proceeded to drink her health, a courtesy which she very civilly returned, and no harm intended. At this outrage, the worthy Dorimène—for that was his name—fell upon the lady and tore all her finery to rags. Upon this outburst the

company broke up, the bride's mother withdrew her consent, and the marriage did not take place. Consider, after that, whether you ought to take your dogs into company.

TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

A certain lady, whether of set purpose or not, tormented Monsieur Tirsis night and day, to find out whether he was not hiding an eel under some rock, as they say—in other words, keeping a mistress.

Since discretion is one of the principal duties of gallantry, the chevalier made no very definite reply; but 'tis hard to resist for long a lovely mouth and lovely eyes as well. The lady was as delightful as a lady ought to be when she feels inquisitive about such matters; and there were few things in the world that she was not well qualified to find out. Her charms lent absolute authority to her entreaties. One Saint Catherine's Day, which was her birthday, she received in the early morning a small parcel from Monsieur Tirsis, sealed with a monogram unknown to her. She opened it and found—what? You may fairly ask. A small pocket mirror with the following inscription at the bottom of the frame: '*I did not dare to tell you my conqueror's name: here is her face.*' Whereupon the lady went into her chamber, packed the mirror up again, and sent it back by the same bearer to the gallant gentleman, who was greatly mortified at getting his parcel back. He thought the lady despised him: however, with trembling fingers he opened it; imagine his ecstasy when he found she had added these comforting words below his own: '*I can but say the same.*'

DIALOGUE IN THE FORM OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT MARRIAGE

DIALOGUE IN THE FORM OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT MARRIAGE

Q. What is the first thing that a man must do before marriage, when he intends setting up an establishment?

A. He must find a wife who possesses every quality he can think of to make him happy.

Q. What is a woman's most essential part in providing for her husband's happiness?

A. Her head.

Q. If you find a girl who suits you, what must you do before marrying her?

A. Find out if she is not married already.

Q. If you are inclined to marry anyone, what more is necessary?

A. She must be likewise so inclined.

Q. How will you know if she be a virgin?

A. By making private inquiries in the neighbourhood among people likely to know.

Q. How must you behave to find favour with the parents of your intended wife?

A. With politeness, kindness, and generosity.

Q. What do you understand by politeness and kindness?

A. Always to speak fair; constantly to offer the

company snuff, if you possess a snuff-box made of tortoise-shell, silver, horn, or indeed of any sort; and, if the young lady uses one, take out your back-scratcher and scratch her at once. 'Tis an attention she will much appreciate.

Q. And generosity?

A. Not to be too particular about money. But keep an eye on it all the same: and when you go out for an airing, treat the company to biscuits, cakes, shortbread and so forth, not forgetting liquid refreshments.

Q. And when you have done your duty to the father and mother, what then?

A. Ask them, very politely, whether you may have their daughter.

Q. And if they say No?

A. Perhaps that will be intended to make you all the more eager to have her.

Q. And if they say Yes?

A. That may mean that no one else wants her.

Q. And how can one find all that out?

A. Not with any certainty until the morning after the wedding.

Q. Why not before?

A. Because they are not going to give anything away.

Q. So one must be uncommonly circumspect?

A. Most certainly, and even so one is often caught.

Q. And if one be caught, what then?
A. Keep your mouth shut.
Q. And if she prove bad tempered?
A. Beat her.
Q. And if she be stronger than you?
A. Then—well, then, 'tis all up with you!

THE WATER-CARRIER
OR
THE SEAMSTRESS'S LOVE-STORY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARGOT A Seamstress

MRS. PIPPIN (*her mother*) An Apple-seller

MRS. KIDNEY A Tripe-seller

WHISTLE A Water-carrier

JOE
JACQUES } Lackeys
GILES

RUNABOUT A Magistrate's Clerk

Scene: A Street in Paris

THE WATER-CARRIER
OR
THE SEAMSTRESS'S LOVE-STORY

SCENE I

[MARGOT *in her booth. Enter* JOE.]

MARGOT

Joe! Joe, I say!

JOE

What's the matter? I'm in a hurry.

MARGOT

In a hurry, are you? Time was when you weren't, you wretch!

JOE

The Devil take me if I haven't some business that won't wait!

MARGOT

Ah, Joe! where are the days, Joe, when I wanted to send you away? 'Now you must go,' says I. 'My lord will be angry with you and send you packing.' And you said, 'No matter, if he don't like me, he can do as he pleases: he's not the only master in Paris.' And all because you wanted—well, you know what . . .

JOE

Well, well; my lord has got more hard to please, and I should be very sorry to leave him.

[*Enter* WHISTLE, *carrying a water-jar.*]

WHISTLE

Water, ho! Water, ho! . . . your servant, Mademoiselle Margot.

MARGOT

Your very humble, Mr. Whistle. [*Exit* WHISTLE.] That is all very well, but what about our marriage?

JOE

Our marriage? Oh! There's no hurry about that!

MARGOT

No hurry, says you! Why, look at me! Every one will notice it soon, and they'll all be talking about me, and if I can't say I'm Joe's wife, I don't know what will become of me.

JOE

Come, come, Margot; you're not so badly off: you've got something to look forward to. I don't see what you're at. You're always on the wrong tack: damme, I can't see . . .

MARGOT

Aren't you sorry for what you've done to me?

JOE

'Tis very tiresome indeed; but I don't see why I

should be the only one to distress myself about it. I'll go and tell Jacques, Giles, and La Fleur . . .

MARGOT

And what may you mean by that, pray, you wretch?

JOE

Gently, Mademoiselle Margot, I must ask you: no hard words please, or I'll soon find a way to stop your mouth. What do I mean? You know very well what I mean: mine weren't the only cakes in the oven.

MARGOT

Listen to him! Just as if I were a common . . .

JOE

No, that you're not.

MARGOT

Do you see what I look like?

JOE

Indeed I do.

MARGOT

Then that's why I ask you. God forgive me, I believe you're making a fool of a poor girl. Will you marry me or won't you?

JOE

I tell you my lord would never allow me.

MARGOT

That's not true: take me to see him now, or I'll go by myself. I'll tell him . . .

JOE

You'll tell him that I've slept with you. He'll be vastly interested, I'm sure.

MARGOT

We shall see. I'll ask him for justice.

JOE

And you'll get it. He'll forbid me to see you again.

MARGOT

And do you mean to say you'll obey him?

JOE

Well, he's my master, I suppose.

MARGOT

And doesn't your own offspring touch your heart?

JOE

Thank you for nothing: why choose me?

MARGOT [*sobbing*]

Oh, what shall I do! Men are all scoundrels: when they get what they want, they treat you like dirt.

JOE

Well, I fancy you won't be snivelling very long.

MARGOT

Good-bye, my little gaol-bird: don't keep the hangman waiting, he's looking for you.

[*Exit* JOE]

What *shall* I do now? I can't hook the brute—he just spits at me. I must find some one to share the brat. I don't want to have it all alone, and it's not far off now.

SCENE II

[*The same. Enter* MRS. PIPPIN, *carrying her basket.*]

MRS. PIPPIN

Pears, hot from the oven; pears! Listen, Margot, if you talk any more to that fellow Joe, there'll be trouble in this house, so I warn you.

MARGOT

I don't talk to him, I don't. I only answer what he says.

MRS. PIPPIN

Oh, yes, I dare say: I like the lad, and you promised to leave him to me; and I've done everything I could for you. Well, why aren't you singing the way you usually do?

MARGOT

I couldn't be singing, dear Mrs. Pippin, and you know why: I feel too sad.

MRS. PIPPIN

Hoity-toity, my girl! The same old story. Well, you've had it sprung on you, that's what's the matter with you, and if every girl hanged herself for that, there wouldn't be so many married women. Did you do what I told you?

MARGOT

Yes.

MRS. PIPPIN

You must try and look smart every day.

MARGOT

So I do: can't you see?

MRS. PIPPIN [*looking at her and laughing*]

Well, I can see you've tried. Come, wake up, put a little life into your backside.

MARGOT

I do try, and it makes me die laughing.

MRS. PIPPIN

I've told everybody that you've had some money left you, that you won't take anyone who asks: and as proof of that, here's a sack of oyster-shells that you must hide in the booth so that every one can see them. Do you understand?

MARGOT

Very well.

MRS. PIPPIN

I told them we were going to buy you some second-hand underclothes in the Market Arcade. If there was nothing to do but talk, I've done wonders. Anyhow, I expect to be at the wedding.

MARGOT

I'm sure I don't want you there. But when will the damned wedding be, and who'll have me in the state I am in?

MRS. PIPPIN

Since the matter is so, it can't be otherwise. You

must have a good large husband to cover matters up. That's what I say, and I shall say it again.

MARGOT

Easier said than done.

MRS. PIPPIN

Because you've already done the easiest part of it, you mustn't throw the handle after the hatchet. Husbands are soft stuff, and a woman can pull them out or shut them up just as she likes.

MARGOT

How?

MRS. PIPPIN

Give him brandy. Then she can persuade him all day long that the moon is made of green cheese, and the stupidest drab has more sense than the flyest knave, so long as the drink is in him.

MARGOT

When we've nailed one I can manage him well enough, you may be sure of that.

MRS. PIPPIN

Will you tell him so?

MARGOT

Not on your life! But I'm very sad, and things are very bad: when I see so many girls who . . . I can't help crying.

MRS. PIPPIN

That's right, cry away: that won't help you. The only cure for your complaint is a husband.

MARGOT

Well, let's think.

MRS. PIPPIN

Can't you think of anyone? never mind what he looks like.

MARGOT

I don't.

MRS. PIPPIN

Is there anyone who makes eyes at you?

MARGOT

Anyone who looks like wanting to . . .?

MRS. PIPPIN

Exactly.

MARGOT

The sort of fellow who comes up to my room, I suppose?

MRS. PIPPIN

No, not those: they've come up too often and are out of breath, look you: try to get hold of the gentlemen who want to come, they're the sort for you.

MARGOT

I see: well, the likeliest one is Mr. Whistle.

MRS. PIPPIN

What! our friend the Keeper of the Buckets?

MARGOT

Yes, the water-carrier, I mean: he always sets down his buckets by my booth to take a rest, even when he isn't tired. Every time he passes, he says, 'Good morning, Mademoiselle Margot' or, 'Will you have a pinch?'

MRS. PIPPIN

Mind he doesn't throw you on the midden like the others would have done if it hadn't been for me.

MARGOT

The fountain is at the end of the street, as you know, Mrs. Pippin, and before he goes on his rounds he comes to my booth first, if there's no one there.

MRS. PIPPIN

Well, he's none so bad: he earns his living, he's young and healthy, and he's out all day.

MARGOT

And when he's not, he can go on my errands and . . .

MRS. PIPPIN

You'll arrange that well enough. But what could you have done without me? I've talked so much about your having come into money, and all the rest of it, that you'll find the whole pack of them wanting you —in Holy Matrimony I mean—Jacques, Giles, La Fleur and so on. Lord, you should be grateful to me!

MARGOT

Well, 'tis a charity to take pity on a poor young girl.

MRS. PIPPIN

Here's your Aunt Kidney: does she know about all this? I was looking for her everywhere to tell her.

MARGOT

She doesn't know anything: don't go blabbing to her.

MRS. PIPPIN

Blabbing, indeed! you know very well that I only want to stop her talking—I'll only tell her just enough. I should think I know how to hold my tongue.

SCENE III

[*The same. Enter* MRS. KIDNEY.]

MRS. KIDNEY [*speaking through her nose*]

Here, niece, here's a tasty bit of lights for your dinner.

MRS. PIPPIN

Lights is cat's food, sister Kidney; and I shouldn't wonder if she were tired of it.

MRS. KIDNEY

For the Lord's sake! she doesn't expect soup every day of the week, I suppose? And here you are, chattering like a couple of magpies. And never a thought of work, I suppose? You're above it, aren't you?

MRS. PIPPIN

Work, sister? you needn't go on about that. There's work and to spare.

MRS. KIDNEY

I'm delighted to hear it: keep on with it.

MRS. PIPPIN

Indeed, she does as much as she can.

MRS. KIDNEY

When you're not drunk, sister Pippin, you're much too kind: you spoil that young limb of yours—she's getting lazy. You should have seen me at that age. Why, I used to start at four in the morning, and sing all the time.

MARGOT

I'm not lazy, Aunt, from doing nothing.

MRS. KIDNEY

All very fine: I should like to see you at it.

MRS. PIPPIN

Come now, Mrs. Kidney: here's more butter than is needed to make a quarter-pound. 'Tis marriage we're thinking of.

MRS. KIDNEY

Marriage, indeed! Ah, I remember the old days! Lord! You should have seen me then, back and front! I always got something for nothing wherever I went. Those were fine times: you could get drunk

for threepence. It's all changed now, and if I did not still know how to make the lads lively, I should have to stand and look on: and that's poor work, truly. But your husband isn't dead, Mrs. Pippin. I saw him only yesterday, or I'm much mistaken.

MRS. PIPPIN

Oh! My husband's full of life.

MRS. KIDNEY

I don't know about to-day, but yesterday he was full of wine. Nasty drunken fellows men are! But what's the wedding then?

MRS. PIPPIN

Your niece Margot's wedding.

MRS. KIDNEY

My niece Margot, indeed! And pray, who's going to saddle that lazy mare?

MRS. PIPPIN

As to that, you may be quite sure that all those who want her won't have her. You stay here and you'll see some fine doings. Just give your consent.

MRS. KIDNEY

I'll give my consent fast enough, and little good I'll get from it: that's not likely to make me much fatter. But who's the man?

MRS. PIPPIN

The first who wants her.

MRS. KIDNEY

How now, sister, what do you take us for? I've got some family pride, I have.

MRS. PIPPIN

I know what I know, and don't you make any mistake, sister Kidney. Look, you don't need any spectacles to see that, do you? [*points at* MARGOT].

MRS. KIDNEY

You shameless little bitch! If it wasn't for your great belly I'd thrash you, I'd tear your hair out! God forgive me for speaking so! The abandoned little hussy! And how did you come by that, pray?

MARGOT

You don't need me to tell you that, Aunt.

MRS. PIPPIN

Quite right, sister Kidney: you haven't forgotten how that's done.

MRS. KIDNEY

I dare say not: but here's a girl without a character!

MRS. PIPPIN

And what of that? We'll soon have her married.

MRS. KIDNEY

Yes, to a private in the Horse Marines! She wanted but that to make her a fine match. Eleven francs was all she had, and now she must go on like this before she's got a husband, the little wretch!

MARGOT

Now don't get angry, Aunt: let us do what we can.

MRS. KIDNEY

I'm to say nothing about such goings on o' nights, am I? No, indeed! I'll have every one know, if only to make her ashamed.

MARGOT

Aunt, please!

MRS. PIPPIN

Sister, sister!

SCENE IV

[*The same. Enter* JACQUES *and* GILES.]

JACQUES

Off with you, Giles!

GILES

No, you go on, Jacques! I want to speak to Margot.

JACQUES

So do I. Let us go together: 'tis a fine girl, eh?

GILES

You know what's good for you, I dare say. Good morning, Margot.

MARGOT

'Servant, Mr. Giles: have you come for something?

GILES

Well, one always comes for something from a pretty girl.

MARGOT

You are very kind, Mr. Giles.

JACQUES [*looking at* MARGOT]

But, surely . . .?

MRS. KIDNEY

Yes, that's a bag that's far too full.

MRS. PIPPIN

Well, really Margot, you might try and hide it!

JACQUES

She'd find that pretty difficult: come, my pretty one, out with it; you're not one for hiding things. What is all that, pray?

MRS. PIPPIN

Be silent, Margot! Didn't you know 'tis part of her legacy?

MRS. KIDNEY

A legacy of dung!

JACQUES

Well, it may go with the rest. Come, my pet!

MARGOT

Enough of that, thank you.

MRS. KIDNEY

Get away with you, you dirty scavengers! I'll take it for you, Margot.

MARGOT

All in good time, Aunt.

JACQUES

I'll take her now. I don't need to wait: I'm not particular.

MRS. KIDNEY

Skittles, fellow!

JACQUES

See here, Mrs. Kidney, I know what I'm about.

MRS. KIDNEY

Get away with you, you dirty stinking rascals! That's not the way to set about it.

GILES

Quite right, Mrs. Kidney: I know better than he does, though. I have come, Mrs. Kidney, to ask the pleasure of . . .

MRS. PIPPIN [*aside to* MARGOT]

There, what did I tell you?

JACQUES

But so have I.

MRS. KIDNEY

Damn my eyes! You aren't making game of me, both of you?

GILES

Nary a bit.

JACQUES

All in earnest, I swear.

MRS. KIDNEY

Well, although I'm her aunt, I can't make her marry more than one of you. She'd better say which she likes best and have done with it.

JACQUES

Ah! That'll be me.

GILES

Excellent! Margot, your hand on it.

JACQUES

Gently, Giles, that's for me to say.

MRS. KIDNEY

Come, Margot, is it so difficult to choose one of 'em?

MRS. PIPPIN

You'd better take one while you can get one, my child.

MARGOT

But, Aunt, there are two of them.

JACQUES

Come, I'm sick of this: we don't want so much butter to make a quarter-pound. She'll marry me.

GILES

You, indeed! Me, I fancy.

JACQUES

But she's in the family way!

GILES

That's exactly why she belongs to me.

MRS. KIDNEY

'Me! You! Me! You!' Give over, both of you! And you're a couple of liars, too: my niece is a good girl. I'm her Aunt Kidney, and I should like to hear anyone say 'No' to me.

JACQUES

Oh, stop your mouth, mother: I know what she is better than you do.

GILES

That's good! As if I didn't know better than you.

MRS. KIDNEY

Hark at them! Oh! Give over, do!

GILES

Jacques!

JACQUES

Giles!

MRS. PIPPIN

Come, come, we can't have two friends fighting over this! Spin a penny for her: that's soon done.

JACQUES

To Hell with your penny, Mrs. Pippin!

MRS. PIPPIN

Would you speak so to me, you dirty dog? Come, Giles, go to the Magistrate and swear the child is yours, and we'll see if the mother . . .

JACQUES

And I'll do just the same, of course.

MRS. KIDNEY

I won't have my niece brought into court, you rascal: understand that, both of you, and if there were a hundred of you, I'd say the same.

GILES

We'll only speak to the Clerk, so don't be angry. Why, here he comes!

SCENE V

[*The same. Enter* RUNABOUT.]

GILES

Your servant, Mr. Runabout. Here's something for you [*hands him a coin*]. Now write.

RUNABOUT

Write what?

JACQUES

That it's me who has put Margot in the family way. I speak plain, I do.

GILES

Plain or not, you write that the baby's mine, Mister Clerk. 'Twas I who gave you the half-dollar, you must write what I tell you.

JACQUES

As if I hadn't got a half-dollar too. Here it is.

RUNABOUT

Now, I understand; but as your business is mutual, it will go upon the same sheet of paper.

JACQUES

As you please: you know your own business.

GILES

Just as you like.

MRS. KIDNEY

Damn my eyes: 'tis very rich! My niece to be put into writing; mum's the word!

RUNABOUT

Peace, good woman! Let us proceed to business. Your names and professions?

JACQUES, GILES

Valets.

RUNABOUT

And what does this lady say to all this?

MARGOT [*curtsying*]

I don't know nothing, I don't.

RUNABOUT

I understand that she doesn't know which of them is the father of her child—very good [*writes*].

JACQUES [*to* GILES]

I'll comb your hair for you when he's finished!

GILES [*to* JACQUES]

Yes, I'm only waiting till I can handle you properly.

MRS. KIDNEY

Oh, Mrs. Pippin, what's the good of all this writing?

MRS. PIPPIN

Indeed, it will be a pity if the wretched girl is the death of somebody, when we're trying to put it all straight.

SCENE VI

[*The same. Enter* WHISTLE.]

MRS. PIPPIN

Come hither, friend Whistle!

WHISTLE

And what is all this, pray: what is going forward? What are you all doing, and what is that good gentleman scribbling away for? And what may you be chattering about?

MRS. KIDNEY

It's Lovely Lazy Bones that is the matter.

MRS. PIPPIN

Both of them want her.

WHISTLE

How? Want her for what?

MRS. PIPPIN

Because of her legacy, didn't you know?

WHISTLE

I didn't, on my faith.

MRS. PIPPIN

Well, there it is, and she goes with it.

WHISTLE

What? Mademoiselle Margot, legacy and all, for a bit of writing?

RUNABOUT

Have you anything to add?

JACQUES, GILES

No, sir!

RUNABOUT

Very well, then, listen:

> 'Appeared before us this day one Jacques of the one part, and one Giles of the other part, describing themselves as gentlemen's valets. Deponents state that, as the result of a friendly acquaintance with one Margot, a public seamstress, which, however, speedily degenerated into extreme familiarity, culminating in a carnal relationship, thus giving rise to the child she

now carries, they are each severally and respectively desirous of taking to wife the said Margot, with all her rights and her possessions, present and to come.'

WHISTLE

Quite a little parcel!

RUNABOUT

'But whereas the said Jacques and Giles persist in the same claims upon the person and products of the above named Margot, they are agreed that the judge might go on f——ing about this matter for ever.'

Sign, gentlemen.

JACQUES

Certainly: let me have it.

GILES

I won't, though.

[*They fall to blows.*]

WHISTLE [*after scratching his head*]

Look you, Mr. Commissary, listen to me.

RUNABOUT

What is it, my friend?

WHISTLE

I have an idea. Those louts will never agree. 'Tis a matter on which all men are blind—a very dark

matter indeed. Now write down this, since you must be after writing. I will take Margot for herself, and her baby against the legacy.

[JACQUES *and* GILES *attack* WHISTLE. *The women shriek, the booth is upset, the sack falls open and the oyster-shells are discovered.*]

JACQUES

Well, we're nicely taken in: there's the legacy!

GILES

Give me back my signature!

JACQUES

I'm out of it too.

RUNABOUT

Gently, gentlemen, you can't behave like that.

JACQUES

Don't you trouble yourself, my friend.

GILES

That fool signed just as we did. Let him marry her. He is more sure of what he'll get than what we are.

WHISTLE

I'll see you both damned before I'll marry a bag of oyster-shells.

JACQUES

We'll find a way to make you.

[*The fight recommences: the women shriek:* WHISTLE *defends himself bravely.*]

RUNABOUT [*aside*]

I see we must arrange this matter. There's nothing to be got out of those ruffians. [*Exit.*]

SCENE VII

[*The same. The fight and uproar continue, and only cease upon the arrival of* RUNABOUT *with a Bottle and some glasses.*]

RUNABOUT [*aside, before addressing the combatants*]

Here's a joram of brandy: now we shall have peace. [*Aloud*] Gentlemen, a glass, in the King's name!

[*They drink; but he gives a brimming glass to* WHISTLE.]

WHISTLE

Two against one, that's not fair. Still, I couldn't bear their insolence.

RUNABOUT

Another drop, Mr. Whistle. 'Twill do you good.

WHISTLE

Gladly: wine is good stuff: it makes one drunk.

RUNABOUT

Two against one didn't seem to frighten you. Why be afraid of a mother and her baby?

WHISTLE

True, but . . .

RUNABOUT

Another glass, Mr. Whistle, and think it over: there's no other way out.

WHISTLE [*drinking*]

If it wasn't for those damned oyster-shells—if there was a little money in it—I wouldn't say No.

RUNABOUT [*to* JACQUES *and* GILES]

Come, that's only fair; you signed, gentlemen.

MRS. PIPPIN

You must all put something in the pot.

MRS. KIDNEY

If you don't, I shall keep you to the writing; I'll make you look silly; I'll have the police after you.

JACQUES

I don't mind giving fifteen francs, on condition Giles gives as much.

GILES

Fifteen francs is too much for the dirty little drab, why . . .

MRS. KIDNEY

Dirty, indeed! Dirty, is it? Margot is as clean as a new penny. Lord help us! Everything has gone up: it's hard to live; times aren't what they were. It can't be done at the price, it's too cheap altogether.

JACQUES

To listen to you, Mrs. Kidney, one might think it has cost us nothing at all.

RUNABOUT [*giving* WHISTLE *a drink*]

Well, now, let them make the pool up to fifty francs, and I should advise you to take the matter up, Mr. Whistle.

JACQUES

Twenty-five francs, Mr. Runabout? You can't be serious!

GILES

I'll never agree to twenty-five francs.

RUNABOUT

It is fifty francs in every country. I know it to my cost. Fifty francs for killing a policeman, foundering a post-horse or putting a girl in the family way. Can't be done for less.

WHISTLE [*stammering*]

B–b–but, in that case, it's a hundred francs. Two of them signed, if I'm not mistaken.

RUNABOUT

Yes, but there's only one girl in the family way: be reasonable, Mr. Whistle. And you yourself signed that you would take her as she was.

GILES

Come, we mustn't haggle like this. We must come down with it like men. Here are twenty-five francs, on the understanding that we drink them.

JACQUES

Very well: I'll come to the wedding.

WHISTLE [*half-drunk*]

That's fair doings, that is: you're good fellows, so you are, and I'll have you at the wedding, so I will. I agree: give us a kiss, Margot, my little pet.

MARGOT

May I, Aunt?

MRS. KIDNEY

Listen to the creature! She asks if she may, when . . . well, I won't go on.

MARGOT

Ah! but I wasn't getting married then.

MRS. KIDNEY

True, true, but you mustn't do that sort of thing again.

MARGOT

I'll be very careful, Aunt, now I've got a good kind husband.

WHISTLE

I'll answer for you, my dear.

MRS. KIDNEY

Kiss me, niece, kiss me, nephew, kiss me all of you!

MRS. PIPPIN [*singing*]

'Off we go to the bottle shop . . .'

[*Exit all save* RUNABOUT]

There, go and amuse yourselves: and let none of you speak ill of Justice after this. If you'd had any money that piece of paper of mine was enough to ruin you all. [*He tears it up.*]

SONG AND DANCE

CURTAIN


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