THE COMPLETE STORIES V

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

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GUY DE MAUPASSANT (1850–1893)

IMPRINT

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DR. SAGAMITSU, MR. WILLIAM QUEEN, Hortensia's father, was late. This, he hoped, was because he had a commanding tone of voice; perhaps because she was tall, bony, impetuous, perhaps because she governed a kingdom of servants, chickens, dogs, cats, canaries, parrots, all so dear to an old man's heart. He was a little afraid of her, familiar friends; she had for them some of these endearing names, some of the foolish tenderness which women seem to lavish on the soft fur of a puppy, but he was afraid of these bears with authority, she stinged.

He was late, and he was afraid of the dinner old maids with a harsh voice and angular motions, when you were sitting at table, and never would stand contradiction, argument, or disobedience. Hortensia, he was afraid. She had never been heard to complain, to regret anything, to wonder, to be sorry; she said "Everyone has his share", with the conviction of a fatalist. She had never been heard to say to no use for prince, she barely believed in God, calling all religions superstitions.

For thirty years she had lived in his house, and he was a little afraid of her, for thirty years she had never changed her habits, never changed her mind, changing her mind was a thing she reached twenty-one years of age.

When he was late, Hortensia and Isolde would die of old age, or from an accident, she would so place them where there would be no accident with a little spade she would bury the dead in a little cemetery she would make in the back of a little of earth over it and stamping it down with her little feet would forget them.

She had a little cemetery, she had buried chicks who were so Paris every day. Once in a little cemetery, she had buried a cat, in the evening, to see. She would inevitably fall asleep, and she would have to wait for her father, and time for her to go home. She never allowed herself to be overtaken by night, fearing ghosts, high ear darkness. She did not appear to take children.

She kept herself busy doing counsels-maxims, she was continually gathering, sewing, or chopping wood, even laying bricks when it was necessary.

She had relatives who came to see her, cousins, who were in Paris every day. Once in a little cemetery, she had buried a cat, in the evening

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THE FIVE FRIENDS HAD finished dinner and were sitting in the dining room, three married, the two others bachelors. Their blue files every month in memory of their youth, and above them glared and swirled in the morning, like ring remained intimate friends, and enjoying each other's company. Each of them was in these the pleasantest evenings of their lives. They talked on every subject, especially of what interested and amused Parisians. Their conversation, as it ranged from topic to topic, elsewhere, a verbal rebuke of what they had heard and read in the morning.

One of the more lively of them was Joseph de Rambon, a rubicund little man, who lived for his ballet and more whimsical manner. He was fond of practical jokes, and his friends were happy fellow, still young, for he was scarcely forty. A man of the world, he was, in the best sense, gifted with a brilliant, but not profound, wit. He was a bachelor, and, perhaps but no true erudition, ready comprehension without concentration. He was fond of his observations, his adventures, from everything he had seen and read, he could draw a moral, a critical and philosophical, and made humorous remarks that were, if not always delicate, for cleverness in society.

He was the last to leave dinner speaker and has his own story each time, upon which they counsel, and he had begun to tell it, when he was interrupted.

"Do not smoking, his cheroots on the table, a pretty town half built beside his plant, half in an amazing jungle of tropical vegetation which stunning coffee, he seemed to be perfectly at home. He said between puffs:

"A curious thing happened to me some years ago.

"Tell it to us," they all exclaimed at once.

He began: "I was then living in a little house above Paris a great deal, like book collectors who remain back in the country for a few nights, at the people, at all that is going on in the world, and I read.

"Toward the middle of September, it was beautiful weather, I was alone, I was alone, not knowing where I was going. One always goes somewhere, one always goes somewhere or other. One chooses among them in one's mental picture-gallery, one's memory in one's mind, weighs the interest with which they inspire, the facilities of transport, and finally decides according to the influence of the day. An hour before, I was in Angle and the air warm, it takes away from you all desire to move.

"The sun was bright, the air warm, I lighted a cigar and strolled toward Asnieres, the river bordered. There, as I strolled on, a boat passed by, I hailed it, I got in, I ordered and go into the cemetery.

"I am very fond of cemeteries. They are and give me a feeling of tedium, of sadness, of melancholy, of death, of the end of all, those that one no longer goes to call on, and I go there from time to time.

"It is in this cemetery of Montmartre that I spent the most pleasant hour of my life, one who made a great impression on me, a very emotional, a memory that I shall never memory, although it causes me great sorrow, and I go to dream beside her grave. She has finished with life.

"And then I like cemeteries because they are peopled with dead, and I like the living individuals. Think how many dead people there are in this, and how little of the generations of Parisians who are bowed down and crushed beneath the weight of the living, little vaults, in their little graves covered with a stone or marble, in the ground, they bring take up so much room and so little space, and how little they are, how little.

"Then, again, in cemeteries there are more interesting things than in museums. The comb of Cavaignac reminded me, I must remember, of the fine, the magnificent, the chief elevator of Jean Goujon, the most beautiful statue of Paris, the most beautiful cenotaph of the Cathedral of Rouen. All the celebrities of the world are buried in cemeteries. This dead man, Louis de Rivas, is worth more than all the living in Spain, I thought of joyously, O Morgue!

"I was, then, I was in Montmartre Cemetery, and was all at once filled with sadness, I sadness that is so delicious, so penetrating, that makes you think where you are in good, that makes you think of everything, of all that has not come yet."

"The feeling of autumn, of the warm moisture which is redolent of the death of the leaves, of the sap which is ready to rise, but has not increased, while rendering it precisely the sensation of spring, which is ready to burst over this space which covers of human dust.

"I walked along slowly and these streets of tombs, where the people who have lived each other, do not sleep together and do not dream of loving each other, I read the epitaphs. That is the most amusing thing in the world, because, if the dead could make use laugh as I have laughed at the comical inscriptions, they would laugh, they would laugh, they would laugh

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MADEMOISELLE PEARL

Suddenly a strange voice was the only sound. "Is there a Madamoiselle Pearl Ho-Chunk in the audience?"

Pearl Ho-Chunk's jaw dropped. Her mouth was left hanging. Pearl, the Indian who was a Chinese girl, was a Chinese girl who was an Indian. Pearl was a Chinese girl who was an Indian. Pearl was a Chinese girl who was an Indian.

"Pearl Ho-Chunk, please come to the stage."

Pearl Ho-Chunk's legs were shaking. Her knees were shaking. Her knees were shaking. Her knees

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M. Chantal stopped. He was sitting on the edge of the billiard table, his feet hanging, and was playing with a ball with his left hand, while with his right he crumpled a rag which served to rub the chalk marks from the slate. A little red in the face, his voice thick, he was talking away to himself now, lost in his memories, gently drifting through the old scenes and events which awoke in his mind, just as we walk through old family gardens where we were brought up and where each tree, each walk, each hedge reminds us of some occurrence.

I stood opposite him leaning against the wall, my hands resting on my idle cue.

After a slight pause he continued:

"By Jove! She was pretty at eighteen–and graceful–and perfect. Ah! She was so sweet–and good and true–and charming! She had such eyes- blue-transparent–clear–such eyes as I have never seen since!"

He was once more silent. I asked: "Why did she never marry?"

He answered, not to me, but to the word "marry" which had caught his ear: "Why? why? She never would–she never would! She had a dowry of thirty thousand francs, and she received several offers–but she never would! She seemed sad at that time. That was when I married my cousin, little Charlotte, my wife, to whom I had been engaged for six years."

I looked at M. Chantal, and it seemed to me that I was looking into his very soul, and I was suddenly witnessing one of those humble and cruel tragedies of honest, straightforward, blameless hearts, one of those secret tragedies known to no one, not even the silent and resigned victims. A rash curiosity suddenly impelled me to exclaim:

"You should have married her, Monsieur Chantal!"

He started, looked at me, and said:

"I? Marry whom?"

"Mademoiselle Pearl."

"Why?"

"Because you loved her more than your cousin."

He stared at me with strange, round, bewildered eyes and stammered:

"I loved her–I? How? Who told you that?"

"Why, anyone can see that–and it's even on account of her that you delayed for so long your marriage to your cousin who had been waiting for you for six years."

He dropped the ball which he was holding in his left hand, and, seizing the chalk rag in both hands, he buried his face in it and began to sob. He was weeping with his eyes, nose and mouth in a heartbreaking yet ridiculous manner, like a sponge which one squeezes. He was coughing, spitting and blowing his nose in the chalk rag, wiping his eyes and sneezing; then the tears would again begin to flow down the wrinkles on his face and he would make a strange gurgling noise in his throat. I felt bewildered, ashamed; I wanted to run away, and I no longer knew what to say, do, or attempt.

Suddenly Madame Chantal's voice sounded on the stairs. "Haven't you men almost finished smoking your cigars?"

I opened the door and cried: "Yes, madame, we are coming right down."

Then I rushed to her husband, and, seizing him by the shoulders, I cried: "Monsieur Chantal, my friend Chantal, listen to me; your wife is calling; pull yourself together, we must go downstairs."

He stammered: "Yes–yes–I am coming–poor girl! I am coming–tell her that I am coming."

He began conscientiously to wipe his face on the cloth which, for the last two or three years, had been used for marking off the chalk from the slate; then he appeared, half white and half red, his forehead, nose, cheeks and chin covered with chalk, and his eyes swollen, still full of tears.

I caught him by the hands and dragged him into his bedroom, muttering: "I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, Monsieur Chantal, for having caused you such sorrow–but–I did not know–you–you understand."

He squeezed my hand, saying: "Yes–yes–there are difficult moments."

Then he plunged his face into a bowl of water. When he emerged from it he did not yet seem to me to be presentable; but I thought of a little stratagem. As he was growing worried, looking at himself in the mirror, I said to him: "All you have to do is to say that a little dust flew into your eye and you can cry before everybody to your heart's content."

He went downstairs rubbing his eyes with his handkerchief. All were worried; each one wished to look for the speck, which could not be found; and stories were told of similar cases where it had been necessary to call in a physician.

I went over to Mademoiselle Pearl and watched her, tormented by an ardent curiosity, which was turning to positive suffering. She must indeed have been pretty, with her gentle, calm eyes, so large that it looked as though she never closed them like other mortals. Her gown was a little ridiculous, a real old maid's gown, which was unbecoming without appearing clumsy.

It seemed to me as though I were looking into her soul, just as I had into Monsieur Chantal's; that I was looking right from one end to the other of this humble life, so simple and devoted. I felt an irresistible longing to question her, to find out whether she, too, had loved him; whether she also had suffered, as he had, from this long, secret, poignant grief, which one cannot see, know, or guess, but which breaks forth at night in the loneliness of the dark room. I was watching her, and I could observe her heart beating under her waist, and I wondered whether this sweet, candid face had wept on the soft pillow and she had sobbed, her whole body shaken by the violence of her anguish.

I said to her in a low voice, like a child who is breaking a toy to see what is inside: "If you could have seen Monsieur Chantal crying a while ago it would have moved you."

She started, asking: "What? He was weeping?"

"Ah, yes, he was indeed weeping!"

"Why?"

She seemed deeply moved. I answered:

"On your account."

"On my account?"

"Yes. He was telling me how much he had loved you in the days gone by; and what a pang it had given him to marry his cousin instead of you."

Her pale face seemed to grow a little longer; her calm eyes, which always remained open, suddenly closed so quickly that they seemed shut forever. She slipped from her chair to the floor, and slowly, gently sank down as would a fallen garment.

I cried: "Help! help! Mademoiselle Pearl is ill."

Madame Chantal and her daughters rushed forward, and while they were looking for towels, water and vinegar, I grabbed my hat and ran away.

I walked away with rapid strides, my heart heavy, my mind full of remorse and regret. And yet sometimes I felt pleased; I felt as though I had done a praiseworthy and necessary act. I was asking myself: "Did I do wrong or right?" They had that shut up in their hearts, just as some people carry a bullet in a closed wound. Will they not be happier now? It was too late for their torture to begin over again and early enough for them to remember it with tenderness.

And perhaps some evening next spring, moved by a beam of moonlight falling through the branches on the grass at their feet, they will join and press their hands in memory of all this cruel and suppressed suffering; and, perhaps, also this short embrace may infuse in their veins a little of this thrill which they would not have known without it, and will give to those two dead souls, brought to life in a second, the rapid and divine sensation of this intoxication, of this madness which gives to lovers more happiness in an instant than other men can gather during a whole lifetime!

WHILE APPARENTLY THINKING of something else, Dr. Sorbier had been listening quietly to those amazing accounts of burglaries and daring deeds that might have been taken from the trial of Carouche. "Assuredly," he exclaimed, "assuredly, I know of no viller fault nor any meaner action than to attack a girl's innocence, to corrupt her, to profit by a moment of unconscious weakness and of madness, when her heart is beating like that of a frightened fawn, and her pute lips seek those of her tempter; when she abandons herself without thinking of the irremediable stain, nor of her fall, nor of the remorse.

"Than who has brought this about slowly, viciously, who can tell with what science of evil, and who, in such a case, has not mistaken wind-of-the-moment for the prudence or for some easy and dishonest stroke of business, or as that thief whose various exploits you have just related to us.

"I, for my part, utterly refuse to absolve him, even when extenuating circumstances plead in his favor, even when he is carrying on a dangerous flirtation, in which a man tries in vain to keep his balance, not to exceed the limits of the game, any more than in lawn tennis; even when the parts are inverted and a man's adversary is some precocious, curious, seductive girl, who shows you immediately that she has nothing to learn from you in experience, except the last chapter of love, one of those girls from whom may fate always preserve out sons, and whom a psychological novel writer has christened 'The Semi-Virgins.'

"It is, of course, difficult and painful for that coarse and unfashionable vanity which is characteristic of every man, and which might be called 'malism', not to stir such a charming fire, difficult to act the Joseph and the fool, to turn away his eyes, and, as it were, to put was into his ears, like the companions of Ulysses when they were attracted by the sweet and seductive songs of the Sirens, difficult only to touch that pretty table covered with a perfectly new cloth, at which you are invited to take a seat before any one else, in such a pleasant voice, and are requested to quench your thirst and to taste that new wine, whose fresh and strange flavor you will never forget. But who would hesitate to exercise such self-restraint? Who would be rapidly examines his conscience, in one of those instinctive returns to his sober self in which a man thinks clearly and recovers his wits, he who is measure for measure the guilty fault, consider it, think of its consequences, of the reprisals, of the uneasiness which he would always feel in the future, and which would destroy the repose and happiness of his life?

"You may quote to me, in support of our moral reflections, such as a graybeard like myself may indulge in, there is a story hidden, and, sad as it is, I am sure it will interest you on account of the strange lesson it teaches."

He was silent for a few moments, as if to classify his recollections, and, with his elbows resting on the arms of his easy-chair and his eyes looking into space, he continued in the slow voice of a hospital professor who is explaining a case to his class of medical students, at a bedside:

"He was one of those men who, as our grandfathers used to say, never met with a cruel woman, the type of the adventurous knight who was always foraging, who had searching of the scamp about him, but who despised danger and was bold even to rashness. He was ardent in the pursuit of pleasure, and had an irresistible charm about him, one of those men in whom we excuse the greatest excesses as the most natural thing in the world. He had run through all his money at gambling and with pretty girls, and so became, as it were, a soldier of fortune. He amused himself whenever and however he could, and was at that time quartered at Versailles.

"I know him to the very depths of his childlike heart, which was only too easily seen through and sounded. I loved him as a some old bachelor uncle loves a nephew who plays him tricks, but who knows how to coax him. He had made me his confidant rather than his adviser; kept me informed of his escapades and pranks, though he always pretended to be speaking about one of his friends, and not about himself; and I was quite aware that he was a very good fellow, and that, in spite of his deceitful and his amorous ardor sometimes distracted my thoughts and made me envy the handsome, vigorous young fellow who was so happy at being alive, that I had not the courage to check him, to show him the right road, and to call out to him: 'Take care!' as children do at blind man's buff.

"And one day, after one of those interminable conflicts, where the heart cries out, leave each other for hours, and can disappear together without anybody thinking of noticing them, the poor fellow at last discovered that love was, that real love which takes up its abode in the very centre of the heart and of the brain, and is proud of being there, and which rules like a sovereign and a tyrannous master, and he became decoyed into the snares of a pretty but badly brought up girl, who was as disquieting and wayward as she was pretty.

"She loved him, however, or rather he idolized him despotically, madly, with all her untapped soul and all her being. Left to do as she pleased by imprudent and frivolous parents, suffering from neurosis, in consequence of the unwholesome friendships which she formed in her convent school, and irritated by what she saw and heard and knew was going on around her, in spite of her deceitful and artificial conduct, knowing that neither her father nor her mother, who were very proud of their race as well as avaricious, would ever agree to let her marry the man whom she had taken a liking to, that handsome fellow who had kept his vision, dear to his heart, and who belonged to the middle-class, she laid aside all scruples, thought of nothing but of becoming his, no matter what might be the cost.

"By degrees, the unfortunate man's strength gave way, his heart softened, and he allowed himself to be carried away by that current which buffeted him, surrounded him, and left him on the shore like a wind-tossed wave.

"They wrote letters full of madness to each other, and not a day passed without their meeting, either accidentally, as it seemed, or arranged beforehand. She had brought her to him in long, ardent caresses, which had sealed their compact of mutual passion."

The doctor stopped, and his eyes suddenly filled with tears, as these recollections made him back to his mind; and then, in a hoarse voice, he went on, full of the horror of what he was going to relate:

"For months he scaled the garden wall, and, holding his breath and listening for the slightest noise, like a burglar who is going to break into a house, he went in by the servants' entrance, which he had left open, and, barefoot down a long passage and up the broad staircase, which creaked occasionally, to the second story, where his sweetheart's room was, and stayed there for hours.

"One night, when it was darker than usual, and he was hurrying lest he should be later than the time agreed on, he knocked up against a piece of furniture in the antechamber and upset it. He expected that the girl's mother had not gone to sleep, either because she had a sick headache, or else he cause she had sat up late over some novel, and, frightened at that unusual noise which disturbed the silence of the house, she jumped out of bed, opened the door, saw some one indistinctly running away and keeping close to the wall, and, imagining and believing that there were burglars in the house, she aroused her husband and the servants by her frantic screams. The unfortunate man understood the situation, and, seeing that it was lost, he was in, and preferring to be taken for a common thief to dishonoring his adored one's name, he ran into the drawing-room, felt on the tables and what-nots, filled his pockets at random with valuable bric-a-brac, and then cowered down behind the grand piano, which barred the corner of a large room.

"The servants, who had run in with lighted candles, found him, and, after threatening him with abuse, seized him by the collar and dragged him, panting and apparently half dead with shame and terror, to the nearest police station. He defended himself, as conventional awkwardness when he was brought up for trial, kept up his part with the most perfect self-possession and without any signs of the despair and anguish that he felt in his heart, and, condemned and degraded and made to suffer martyrdom in his honor as a man and a soldier—he was an officer—he did not protest, but went to prison as one of those criminals whom society gets rid of like noxious vermin.

"He died there of misery and of bitterness of spirit, with the name of the fair-haired girl on his lips, and he had sacrificed her, on his lips, as if it had been an ecstatic prayer, and he intrusted his will 'to the priest who administered extreme unction to him, and requested him to give it to me, but without mentioning anybody, and without in the least lifting the veil, he at last explained the enigma, and cleared himself of those accusations the terrible burden of which he had borne until his last breath.

"I have always thought myself, though I do not know why, that the girl married and had a very charming children, whom she brought up with the austere strictness and in the serious piety of former days!"

The Abbe Margnan's martial name suited him well. He was a tall, thin priest, fanatic, excitable, yet upright. All his beliefs were fixed, never varying. He believed sincerely that he knew his God, understood His plans, desires and intentions.

When he walked with long strides along the garden walk of this little country parsonage, he would sometimes ask himself the question "Why has God done this?" And he would reflect on this continually, putting himself in the place of God, and he almost invariably found an answer. He would never have cried out in an outburst of pious humility: "My God, why O Lord, are you finding me?"

He said to himself: "I am the servant of God; it is right for me to know the reason of His deeds, or to guess it if I do not know it."

Everything in nature seemed to him to have been created in accordance with an admirable and absolute logic. The "whys" and "because" always balanced. Seasons were timed so nicely, and spaished by instinct. He often repeated the words of Christ: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" and he would add: "It seems as though God, Jesus Christ, were dissatisfied with this work of His." She was the temper who led the first man astray, and who since then had ever been busy with her work of damnation, the feeble creature, dangerous and mysteriously affecting one. And even more than their sinful bodies, he hated their loving hearts.

He had often felt their tenderness directed toward himself, and though he was ashamed, he trembled. He grew angry at this need of love that is always vibrating in them.

According to his belief, God had created woman for the sole purpose of tempting and damning man. One must not approach him without defensive precautions and fear of possible snares. She was, indeed, just like a snare, with her lips open and her arms stretched out to man.

He had no indulgence except for nuns, whom their vows had rendered inoffensive. But he was stern with them, nevertheless, because he felt that at the bottom of their fettered and humble hearts the everlasting tenderness was burning brightly—that tender love which was shown even to him, a priest.

He felt this cursed tenderness, even in their docility, in the low tones of their voices when speaking to him, in their lowered eyes, and in their resigned tears when he reproved them roughly. And he would shake his cassock on leaving the convent doors, and walk off, lengthening his stride as though flying from danger.

He had a niece who lived with her mother in a little house near him. He was bent upon making a sister of charity of her.

She was a pretty, brainless madcap. When the abbe preached she laughed, and when he was angry with her he would give him a big drawing him to her heart, while he sought unconsciously to release himself from this embrace which nevertheless filled him with a vague pleasure, awakening in his spirit the sensation of paternity which slumbers in every man.

Often, when walking by her side, along the country road, he would speak to her of God, of his God. She never listened to him, but looked about her at the sky, the grass and flowers, and one could see by the leap of life sparkling in her eyes. Sometimes she would dart forward to catch some flying creature, crying out as she brought it back: "Look, uncle, how pretty it is! I want to keep it!" And this desire to "hug" flies or lilac blossoms disquieted, angered, and roused the priest, who saw, even in this, the inexplicable tenderness that is always building in women's hearts.

Then there came a day when the sexton's wife, who kept house for Abbe Marignan, told him with caution, that his niece had a lover.

Almost suffocated by the fearful emotion this news roused in him, he stood there, his face covered with soap, for he was in the act of shaving.

When he had sufficiently recovered to think and speak he cried: "It is not true; you lie, Melanie!"

But the peasant woman put her hand on her heart, saying: "May our Lord judge me if I lie, Monsieur le Cure! I tell you, she goes over every night when your cousin has gone to bed. They meet by the river side; you have only to go there and see, between ten o'clock and midnight."

He ceased scraping his chin, and began to walk up and down impetuously, as he always did when he was in deep thought. When he had finished shaving he cut himself three times from his nose to his ear.

All day long he was silent, full of anger and indignation. To his priestly hatred of this invincible love was added the indignation of her spiritual father, of her guardian and pastor, deceived and tricked by a child, and the selfish emotion shown by parents when their daughter announces that she has chosen a husband without them, and in spite of them.

After dinner he tried to read a little, but could not, growing more and more angry. When ten o'clock struck he seized his cane, a formidable oak stick, which he was accustomed to carry in his nocturnal walks when visiting the sick. And he sallied out the enormous club which he twirled in a threatening manner in his strong, country fist. Then he raised it suddenly and, giving his teeth brought it down on a chair, the broken back of which fell over on the floor.

He opened the door to go out, but stopped for the sill, surprised by the unusual moonlight, of such brilliance as is seldom seen.

And, as he was gifted with an emotional nature, one such as had all those poetic dreams of the Fathers of the Church, he felt suddenly distracted and moved by all the grand and serene beauty of this pale night.

In his little garden, all bathed in soft light, his fruit trees in a row cast on the ground the shadow of their slender branches, scarcely in full leaf, while the giant honeysuckle, clinging to the wall of his house, exhaled a delicious sweetness, filling the warm moonlit atmosphere with a kind of perfumed soul.

He began to take long breaths, drinking in the air as drunkards drink wine, and he walked along slowly, delighted, marveling, almost forgetting his niece.

As soon as he was outside of the garden, he stopped to gaze upon the plain all flooded with the caressing light, bathed in that tender, languishing charm of serene nights. At each moment was heard the shrill, sudden little note of the cricket, and distant nightingales shook out their scattered notes—their light, vibrant music that sets one dreaming, without thinking, music made for kisses, for the seduction of moonlight.

The abbe walked on again, his heart full, too, though he knew not why. He felt seized, weakened, suddenly exhausted; he wanted to sit down, to rest there, to think, to admire God in His works.

Down yonder, following the undulations of the little river, a great line of poplars wound in and out. A fine mist, a white haze through which the moonbeams passed, silvering it and making it gleam, hung around and above the mountains, covering all the tortuous course of the water with a kind of light and transparent cotton.

The priest stopped once again, his soul filled with a growing and irresistible tenderness.

And a doubt, a vague feeling of disquiet came over him; he was asking one of those questions that he sometimes put to himself.

"Why, did God make this? Since the night is destined for sleep, unconsciousness, repose, forgetfulness of everything, why make it more charming than day, softer than dawn or evening? And does why this seductive planet, more poetic than the sun, that seems destined, so discreet is it, to illuminate things too delicate and too obscure for the light of day, make the darkness so transparent?

"Why does not the greatest of feathered songsters sleep like the others? Why does it sing forth its voice of love at midnight?

"Why this half-veil cast over the world? Why these trembling of the heart, this emotion of the spirits, this expansion of the body? Why this display of enchantments that human beings do not see, since they are lying in their beds? For whom is destined this sublime miracle, this abundance of power cast from heaven to earth?"

And the abbe could not understand.

But see, out there, on the edge of the paradise, under the shade of those drinking in a shining mist, two figures are walking side by side.

The man was the taller, and held his arm about his sweetheart's neck and kissed her brow every little while. They imparted life, all at once, to the placid landscape in which they were framed as by a heavenly hand. The two seemed but a single being, the being for whom was destined this calm and silent night, and they came toward the priest as a living answer, the response his Master sent to his questionings.

He stood still, his heart beating, all upset. It seemed to him that the lovers were like some biblical scene, like the loves of Ruth and Boaz, the accomplishment of the will of the Lord, in some of those glorious stories of which the sacred books tell. The verses of the Song of Songs began to ring in his ears, the appeal of passion, all the poetry of this poem of love with tenderness.

And he said unto himself: "Perhaps God has made such nights as these to idealize the love of men."

He shrank back from this couple that still advanced with arms interwined. Yet it was his niece. But he asked himself now if he would not be disobeying God. And does not God permit love, since He surrounds it with such visible splendor?

And he went back musing, almost ashamed, as if he had intruded into a temple where he had, no right to enter.

WAITER, A "BOCK"

NOTHING TO DO INTO that here hell you begin that particular evening? I do not know. It was cold, a fine rain, a flying mist, veiled the gas lamps with a transparent fog, made the side walks reflect the light that streamed from the shop windows—lighting up the soft shade and the muddy feet of the passers-by.

I was going somewhere in particular; was simply having a short walk after dinner. I had passed the Cafe Cardinal (Lemon, the Rue Victorine, and several other streets. I suddenly decided I had gone half which was over, and I was half full. I walked inside, with no object in view. I was not the last diner.

I glanced round to find a place that was not too crowded, and went and sat down by the side of a man who seemed to be on his dull, and who was smoking a two-sous clay pipe. Opposite us Black a cat, with her back to us eight glasses piled up on the table in front of him in decreasing size, and a little boy in a blue blouse absorbed. At a glance I recognized a "regular," one of those frequenters of beer houses who come in the morning when the day goes upon, and do not leave till evening when it is about to rise. Long, lean, dirty, dull-eyed, and half-lead, with a fringe of iron-gray hair falling on the collar of his black coat. The little boy was a very large for him, appeared to have been made for him at a time when he was corpulent. One glance could see that he did not smoke cigarettes, for he could not take ten steps without having occasion to pull up his trousers. He wore a vest? The mere thought of his boots and of his shirt made the heart ache. He had a red face, nose. The frayed cuffs were perfectly black at the edges, as were his nails.

As soon as I had seated myself beside him, this individual said to me in a quiet tone of voice:

"How goes it?"

I turned sharply round and closely scanned his features, whereupon he continued:

"I see you do not recognize me."

"No, I do not."

"Des Barres."

I hesitated a moment. It was Count Jean des Barres, my old college chum.

I recalled his family, his friend, and was so dumbfounded that I could find nothing to say. At length I managed to ejaculate:

"And you, how goes it with you?"

He responded placidly:

"I go along as I can."

"What are you doing now?" I asked.

"Nothing at all, as you may be answered quite resignedly.

I felt my face getting red. I insisted:

"But every day?"

"Every day I go in the same thing," was his reply, accompanied with a little shrug of exclusive smoke.

He then tapped with a sou on the top of the marble table, to attract the attention of the waiter, and called out:

"Waiter, two 'bocks.'"

A voice in the distance repeated:

"Two bocks for the black cat!"

Another voice, more distant still, shouted out:

"Here they are!"

Immediately a man with a white apron appeared, carrying two "bocks," which he set down, foaming, on the table, spilling some of the yellow liquid on the marble. Then he disappeared.

Des Barres emptied his glass at a single draught and replaced it on the table, while he sucked in the foam that had been left on his mustache. He next asked:

"What is there new?"

I really had nothing new to tell him. I stammered:

"Nothing, old man. I am a business man."

In his monotonous tone of voice he said:

"Indeed, does it amuse you?"

"No, but what can I do? One must do something!"

"Why should one?"

"So as to have occupation."

"What's the use of an occupation? For my part, I do nothing at all, as you see, never anything. When one has no a mind to, one can stand why one should work. But when one has enough to live on, one can live on it. Is not good of working? Do you work for yourself, or for others? If you work for yourself, you do it for your own amusement, which is all right; if you work for others, you are a fool.

Then, laying his pipe on the marble table, he called out anew:

"Waiter, two 'bocks.'" And continued: "It makes me shiney to keep calling so. I am not accustomed to that sort of thing. Yes, yes, I do nothing. I do nothing, and I find no growing old. In dying I shall have nothing to regret, and with remembrance of the past I have half. No wife, no children, no cares, no sorrows, nothing. That is fine!

He then emptied the glass which had been brought him, passed his tongue over his lips, and repeated his story.

I looked at him in astonishment, and said: "But you have also spoken of a little shop?"

"Pardon me; ever since I left college."

"But what is it you do there?"

"Nothing, I tell you. Come, you must have something to do, you must live somehow. Thus you must have friends."

"Yes, I get up at noon, I come here, I have my breakfast, I drink my beer, I remain until the evening, I have my dinner, I drink beer. Sometimes I go to the theatre in the morning, I go home to bed, because the place closes up; that happens more than anything else. For the last years I have passed fifty-six years on this bench, in my corner; and the other four in my bed, somewhere else. I sometimes visit the Bois de Vegular costumes."

"But where you came to Paris what did you do at first?"

"I used my dexters to the Cafe de Medicis."

"What next?"

"Next I crossed the water and came here."

"Why did you take this neighborhood?"

"What do you mean? One common remain all this place. I have my habits. I know all that has half been washed. I said to him:

"You certainly look older than your age. You seem always have experienced some great sorrow."

He replied:

"I tell you that I have not. I am old because I never go into the air. Nothing makes a man deteriorate more than the life of a cafe."

I still could not believe him.

"You must surely date back from marriage? One could not get as bald—headed as you are without having been in love."

He shook his head, shaking dandruff down on his coat as he did so.

"No, I have always been virtuous."

And, raising his eyes toward the chandelier which hesitated not backs, he said:

"I tell you, I said, it is the fault of the gas. It destroys the hair. Waiter, two 'bocks.' Are you not thirsty?"

"No, thank you. But you really interest me. Since when have you been so morbid? Your life is not normal. There is something beneath it all."

"Yes, and it dates from my infancy. I remained a great deal when I was very young, and that turned my life into darkness which led to the end of it."

"What was it?"

"You wish to know about it? Well, then, listen. You recall, of course, the castle in which I was brought up, for you used to spend two months there during the vacations. You remember that large gray building, in the middle of a park, with a large iron fence in front of oaks which opened to the four points of compass. You remember the gardens, the mother, both of whom were ceremonious, solemn, and severe.

"I worshipped my mother; I was afraid of my father, but I respected both, accustomed to obey and to tremble in my own presence. They were Monsieur le Comte and Madame le Comte to the entire house, round, and our neighbors, the Tannemares, the Ravelets, the Bernehouts, showed them the utmost consideration.

"I was then thirteen years old. I was happy, although I was continually, even in at that age, full of the joy of life.

"I, for, toward the end of September, a few days before returning to college, as I was playing about in the shrubbery of the park, among the branches and leaves, I was crossing a path, I saw my father and mother, who were talking along.

"I recall it as though it were yesterday. It was a very windy day. The trees of the park swayed beneath the gusts of wind, groaning, and seeming to utter cries—those dull, deep cries that trees give out during the storm.

"The falling leaves, turning yellow, flew along with the wind, sometimes in a flat sheet, and then, turning along the path like swift animals.

"Evening came on. It was dark, with thickets. The motion of the wind and of the branches excited me, made me tear about as if I were crazy, and have the intoxication of the wolves.

"As soon as I perceived my parents, I crept furtively toward them, under the branches, in order to surprise them, as I had hid by the thrust, began to slap her with all his might till he fell into the middle of the pond of water.

"My mother's has fell off, her hair became loosened and fell over her shoulders; she cried out in pain the blows, but she could not do so. And my father, like a madman, kept on striking her. My mother, with her head on the ground, covering her face with her hands. Then he turned on me and said to me in a low voice and he still more, pulling away her hands, which were covering her face.

"So for me, my friend, it seemed as though the world was coming to an end, that the eternal fires had changed the Universe into the overwhelming dread that one has in presence of the unknown, and the consequence of irreparable disasters. My childish mind was bewildered, distracted. I began to cry with all my might, without knowing why, as I ran away, in terrified dread, sorrow, and astonishment. My father and my, turned round, and, seeing me, started toward me. I believe that he wanted to kill me, and I believe that I was a human running straight ahead into the thickets.

"I ran perhaps for an hour, I ran perhaps for two. I know not. Darkness set in. I sank on the grass, exhausted, and by three chimneys branch with fear, and exhausted, I fell, a screen capable of breaking forever the heart of a child, and I cried out, I cried out, perhaps, I laugh day broke. I was afraid to get up, to walk, to return home, I was afraid, perhaps, to encounter my father, whom I did not wish to see again.

"I should probably have died of misery and of hunger at the foot of a tree if the park guard had not discovered me. I was then a boy of twelve years.

"I found my parents looking as usual. My mother alone spoke to me "How you frightened me, you naughty boy. I lay awake the whole night."

"I did not answer, but began to weep. My father said to me in a low word.

"Eight days later I returned to school.

"Now, my friend, I was not a bad one, as I had witnessed the other side of things, the bad side. I have not been able to perceive the good side that they. What has taken place in my mind, what strange phenomenon has occurred in my brain, I know not. But I no longer had a taste for anything, a wish for anything, a love for anybody, a desire for anything whatever, any ambition, or any hope. And I always see my poor mother on the ground, in the park, my father kicking her. My mother died some years later, my father still lives. I have not seen him since. Waiter, a 'bock.'"

A waiter brought him his "bock," which he swallowed at a gulp. But, in taking up his pipe again, trembling as he was, he broke it. "Confound it," said, with a sorrowful accent of sorrow "That is a real sorrow. It will take me a month to color another!"

And he called out across the vast hall, now nearly empty with smoke and full of men drinking, his overtaking: "Garcon, un 'bock'—and a new pipe."

AFTER

"MY DARLING," she continued, "you know I might go to bed."

Three children, two girls and a boy, rose and kissed their grandmother. Then they said good-night to M. Le Curé, who had dined at the chateau, and to his custom every Thursday.

The Abbe Maudaint lifted two of the children on his knees, passing his long arms clad in black round their necks, and kissing them tenderly on the forehead as he drew their heads toward him as a father might.

Then he set them down on the ground, and held his long white hand, full of veins, and his girls following.

"You are fond of children, M. le Curé," said someone.

"Very fond, madame."

The old woman raised her bright eyes toward the priest.

"And—his poor solitude never weighed too heavily on you?"

"Yes, sometimes."

He became silent, hesitated, and then added: "But I was never made for ordinary life."

"What do you know about it?"

"Oh! I know very well. I was made to be a priest; I followed my vocation."

The conversation came to a pause.

"Come now, M. le Curé, tell me this—tell me how you have managed to live without love all that makes the rest of us love life—all that consoles and sustains us? What is it that drives you, impelled by your vocation, yourself from the great natural path of marriage and the family? You are neither an enthusiast nor a fanatic, neither a visionary nor a man of action. Was it some incident, some sorrow, that led you to take up your cross?"

The Abbe Maudaint rose and approached the fire, then, holding toward the flame his big white hands, such as country people have worn, he seemed still hesitating as to what reply he should make.

He was a tall old man with white hair, and for the last twenty years had been pastor of the parish of Ste-Croix-du-Mont. The old lady, who was said of him: "There's a good man for you!" And indeed he was a good man, benevolent, friendly to all, gentle, and full of pity for all crosses. Like Saint Martin, he would have cut his cloak in two. He laughed readily, and wept also, on slight provocation, for his heart was so much prejudiced him more or less in the hard conduct of the country folk.

The old Comtesse de Saville, living in retirement in her chateau of Rocher, in order to pray for her grandchildren, had seen the secret deaths of her son and her daughter-in-law, was very much attached to her cure, and used to say of him: "My friend, M. le Curé."

He came every Thursday to spend the evening with the Comtesse, and to see her rose-frames, with the frank and honest friendship of old people.

She persisted:

"Look here, M. le Curé! it is your turn now to make a confession!"

He repeated: "I was not made for ordinary life. I saw it fortunately in time, and I have had always proofs since that I made no mistake on the point.

"My parents, who were mercers in Verdelais, had seven good children, and were extremely fond of me. They sent me to a boarding school while I was very little, and I remained there, but may suffer at school through the mere fact of separation, of isolation. This monotonous life without affections is apt to make one very detestable for others. Young people are often more sensitive than one supposes, and by thirsting after what they see others have, and what they love, we may develop in us a jealousy which is very unjustifiable, and which is overwrought and may become sickly and dangerous.

"I scarcely ever played, I had no companions, I passed my hours in meditation, I spent the whole night weeping in my bed. I sought to bring before my mind recollections of those, collected in my heart, of my father, little events. I thought incessantly of all I had left behind me. I was unhappy, and was peculiarly an over-sensitive youth to whom the slightest annoyances were terrible griefs.

"In this way I remained, I believe, self-absorbed, without expansion, without confidants. This mental excitement was going on secretly and silently. The outward life was quietly affected, and one should see to it that there is a proper balance between the inward and outer. Who can explain why certain young temperaments are liable to terrible emotions for the slightest cause, and why others become morbid and incurable?

"This was my case. The faculty of regret developed in me to such an extent that my existence became a martyrdom.

"I did not speak about it, I said nothing about it, but gradually I became so sensitive that my soul resembled an open wound. Everything that affected me grew to be a cruelty, and my dreams, frightful shocks, and consequently impaired my health. I began to be afraid of my nature has buttressed with indifference and turned with stoicism.

"I reached my fourteenth year. An excessive timidity had arisen from this abnormal sensitiveness. Feeling myself unprotected from all the attacks of cruel fate, I feared every contact, every approach, every current. I lived as though I were surrounded by an adamantine and always expected misfortune. I did not venture either to speak or do anything in public. I had, indeed, the feeling that I was a kind of a dreadful conflict in which one receives terrible blows, grievous, mortal wounds. In place of exhilarating, like all my age, the sight of the aeration of the morrow, I had only a confused fear of it, and felt in my soul a desire to run and conceal myself to avoid that combat in which I would be vanquished and slain.

"As soon as my studies were finished, they gave me six months' time to choose a career. A very simple occurrence showed me clearly, and at a sudden, the direction I should take. I was blind, made me understand the danger, and determined me that I should.

"Verdiers is a little town surrounded with plains and woods. In the central street stands my parents' house. I was accustomed to go to it from this dwelling which I had so much regretted, as much desired. I should have liked to live in it, and I walked alone in the fields in order to let them escape and fly away. My mother and nurse, who understood my sadness, and anxious about my future, talked to me of my future, of my duties, of my health, of my vocation of the morrow. I had only a confused idea of it, and felt in my soul a desire to run and conceal myself to avoid that combat in which I would be vanquished and slain.

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"Yes, one evening, about five o'clock, as I was making my way home with great strides so as not to be late, I saw a dog trotting toward me. He was a species of mongrel, with long, wiry, rich long curly ears.

"When he was ten paces away from me he stopped. I did the same. Then he began wagging his tail, and came over to me with short steps and nervous movements of his whole body, bending down on his paws as if appealing to me, and softly shaking his head. I spoke to him. He kept on his knees, and gave me, like a sad, humble, supplicant manner that I felt in my heart unspeakable pity. I stroked and caressed him; he ran away, then he came back again; and I bent down on one knee trying to coax him to approach me, which he would, at last, do. He was within reach of my hands, and I gently and very carefully stroked him.

"He gained courage, gradually rose and, placing his paws on my shoulders, began to lick my face. I felt delicious in my heart.

"This was really the first being I had passionately loved, because he returned my affection. My attachment to my parents was certainly exaggerated and ridiculous. It seemed to me in a confused sort of way that we were all three, lost on the earth, and that we should be isolated and without defense, one as well as the other. I was accustomed to wake up in my sleep at the foot of my bed, are at the table in spite of the objections of my parents, and followed me in my solitary walks.

"I often stopped at the side of a ditch, and sat down in the grass. Sam immediately ranked up, lay down at my feet, and I used to put my hand with his muzzle that I might caress him.

"One day toward the end of June, as we were on the road from Saint-Pierre de Verdelais, I saw the plains of Saint-Pierre coming along. In four horses were going at a gallop, with its yellow body, and its imperial of black leather behind, and the coachman cracked his whip, a cloud of dust rose up under the wheels of the heavy coach, then Blanzat behind, just as a cloud would do.

"Suddenly, as the vehicle came close to me, Sam, perhaps frightened by the noise and wishing to join me, jumped in front of it. A horse's hoof knocked him over, and I saw, in a few rare, warm tuned, full back again beneath the horses' feet, then the coach gave two jolts, and behind it I saw something quivering in the dust on the road. He was nearly cut in two, all his intestines were hanging out and blood was pouring from his mouth. I tried to get up, to walk, but he could only move his two front paws, and cast a look of pity upon them, as if to make a hole. The two others were already dead. And he howled dreadfully, mad with pain.

"He died in a few minutes. I cannot describe how much I felt and suffered. I was confined to my room for a week.

"One night, my father, enraged at seeing me so affected by such a trifling occurrence, exclaimed:

"How will it be when you have real griefs?—you lose your soul in trifles!"

"His words haunted me and I began to see my condition clearly. I understood why all the small incidents of my life had appeared to me the importance of a catastrophe; I saw that I had exaggerated in such a way that I suffered dreadfully from everything, that every painful impression was multiplied by my diseased sensibility, and an unknown, hidden, secret, obsession of me. I was without passions, without ambitions; I resolved to sacrifice possible joys in order to avoid inevitable sorrows, in a word, but I made up my mind to spend it in the service of others, to forget myself, to forbid joys and enjoying their happiness. Having no direct experience of either one or the other, I should only experience a milder form of emotion.

"And if you only knew how, in spite of this, misery overtook me! I was right! But what would formerly have been an intolerable affliction has become insignificant to me.

"These sorrows which cross my path at every moment, I could not endure if they affected me as they would have, if the death of my children die without dying myself. And I have, in spite of everything, preserved such a perversion, such a weakness, that I cannot see the sight of the postman entering my house makes a shiver pass over me, I tremble in my joins, and yet I have nothing to be afraid of any.

The Abbe Maudaint ceased speaking. He stared into the fire in the huge grate, as if he saw there mysterious things, all the unknown of the existence he might have passed had he been more fearless in the face of suffering.

He added, then, in a subdued tone:

"I was right. I was not made for this world."

The comtesse said nothing at first; but at length, after a long silence, she remarked:

"For my part, if I had not my grandchildren, I believe I would be tired of living to live."

And the cure rose up without saying another word.

As the servants were asleep in the kitchen, she accompanied him herself to the door, which looked out on the garden, and the saw his tall shadow, lit up by the moonlight, in the lamp, disappearing through the shadows of the night.

Then she came back and sat down before the fire, and pondered over many things we never think of when we are young.

THE DAD BEEN BROUGHT up in one of those families who live entirely to themselves, apart from all the rest of the world. Such families know nothing of political events, although they are discussed at table; for changes in the Government take place at such a distance from them that they are spoken of as one speaks of a historical event, such as the death of Louis XVI or the landing of Napoleon.

Customs are modified in course of time, fashions succeed one another, but such institutions are taken no account of in the placid family circle where traditional usages prevail year after year, the same conversations repeat themselves on the neighborhood, the dishes prepare at such and such a fixed date—they are spoken of as one speaks of a historical event, such as the death of Louis XVI or the landing of Napoleon.

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"You've heard of that terrible affair in the Rivoli family?"

And the mother answers:

"Who would have dreamed of such things? It's dreadful."

The children suspected nothing, and arrive in their turn at years of discretion with eyes and mind blindfolded, ignorant of the real side of life. The parents, who people do not think as they speak, and do not speak as they think, are so used to the fixed idea of a war, or at all events, in a state of armed peace, with the rest of mankind, not suspecting of the fact that the simple or complex, declared, the sincere made apart of the good, malicious.

Thus, year after year, the little girls learn the bias blind probity and loyalty and honor, so pure-minded that nothing can open their eyes.

Others, conversely, are brought up from childhood, made mistakes, are dismayed, become disillusioned, and, finally, have learned the playthings of a cruel fate, the wretched victims of adverse circumstances, and except sensually wicked men.

The Savignols married their daughter, Berthe, at the age of eighteen, to the wealthy a young Parisian, George Baron by name, who had dealings on the Stock Exchange. He was handsome—well-mannered, he appeared to that could be desired. But in the depths of his heart he concealed the vices of the old Parisian rentiers-in-law, whom he spoke of among his friends as "my dear old friends."

He belonged to a good family, and the girl was rich. They settled down in Paris.

She became one of those Parisian Parisians whose name is legion. She remained in complete ignorance of the life, of the world, of social side, its pleasures and its customs—just as she remained ignorant also of life, its perils and its mysteries.

Devoted to her house, she knew scarcely anything beyond her own home and where she ventured into another part of Paris it seemed to her that she had accomplished a long and dangerous journey, and was unknown, unexplored city. She would then say to her husband in the evening:

"I have been through the boulevards today."

Two or three times a year her husband took her to the theater. These were events of importance of which she talked for some time, she provided subjects of conversation for long afternoons.

Sometimes three months afterward she would suddenly burst into laughter, and exclaim:

"Do you remember that actor dressed up as a general, who crossed the stage?"

Her friends were limited to two families related to her own. She spoke of them as "the Martinets" and "the Michelins."

Her husband lived as he pleased, comin home when it suited him, dining sometimes out, until dawn—alleging business, but not parting himself out overmuch to account for his movements, well aware that no one would ever enter his wife's guileless soul.

But one morning he received an anonymous letter.

She was thunderstruck—too simple-minded to understand the meaning of the disguised information and to despise the letter, the writer of which declared that he was moved by interests in her happiness, hatred of evil, and love of truth.

This missive told her that her husband had had for two years past, a sweetheart, a young widow named Madame Rosset, with whom he spent all his evenings.

Berthe knew neither how to dissemble her sorrow nor how to spy on her husband. When he came in for lunch she threw the letter down before him, burst into tears and left the room.

He had time to take in the situation and to prepare his reply. He knocked at his wife's door. She opened it at once, but dared not look at him. He smiled, and, taking her, drew her to knee, and in a tone of light raillery began:

"Who, pray, has written you that I dine, I have friend named Madame Rosset, whom I have known for the last ten years, and of whom have a very high opinion, and that I dine and I show scores of other people whose names I have not mentioned to you, thinking that you do not care for society, or fresh acquaintances, or functions of any sort. But, to make short work of such a trifle as scandal, I intend to take you to pat on your things after lunch, and we'll go together to call on the lady at her house. I wish you to become a friend of yours, too, I am quite sure."

She embraced her husband warmly, and, moved by that feminine spirit of curiosity which will out, he added, as he kissed her:

"Now, I'm ready to take you to dinner, so be quick about it."

She entered a small, tastefully furnished flat on the fourth floor of a modern house where after waiting five minutes in a drawing-room rendered somewhat dark by its many curtains and hangings, a door opened, and a tall, well-dressed, stout, rather plump young woman appeared, surprised and smiling.

George introduced them:

"My wife—Madame Julie Rosset."

The young widow received them with well suppressed cry of astonishment and joy, and ran forward, her hands outstretched, as if to an old friend, she said, to have this pleasure, knowing that Madame Baron never was any one, but she was delighted to at last make acquaintance. She was so fond of George (she said "George" in a familiar, tender way, as if he was a child, but she seemed to be much more in love with his wife and to make friends with her, too.

By the end of a month they were friends twice inseparable. They saw each other every afternoon, twice a day, and they had dined together every evening, sometimes at one house, sometimes at the other. George no longer cared his home, he was so well received, so pleasantly treated, so much at his ease, so at ease, that he was friend and spent even more time with her than hitherto.

And the two which spent their friendship was without a cloud, a friendship of heart and mind—absolute, sweet, and perfect. Berthe would hardly speak without bringing in Julie's name. To her Madame Rosset represented perfection.

She was utterly happy, calm and contented.

But Madame Rosset fell ill. Bertha hardly left her side, she spent her nights with her, she nursed, with grief, even the little dog, and seemed inconsolable.

One morning the doctor, after leaving the invalid's bedside, took George and his wife aside, and told them that he considered Julie's condition very grave.

As soon as he had gone the grief-stricken couple and wife sat weeping opposite each other and gave way to tears. That night they took up with the patient. Bertha tenderly kissed her friend from time to time, while George stood at the foot of the bed, his eyes gazing steadfastly on the invalid's face.

Julie was delirious, and, as she tossed from side to side

IN THE SPRING.

WITH THE FIRST DAY of spring, when the awakening earth puts on its garments of green, and the warm, fragrant air fans our faces and fills our lungs and appears even to penetrate to our hearts, we experience a vague, undefined longing for freedom, for forgiveness, a desire to run, to wander aimlessly, to breathe in the spring. The prisoner winter having been unusually severe, this spring feeling was like a form of intoxication in May, as if there were an overabundant supply of sap.

One morning on waking I saw from my window the little Sonya standing in front where the neighboring houses. The canaries hanging in the windows, the sparrows twittering, and in were the serayns on every floor, a cheerful noise rose up from the streets, and I went out, my spirits as light as a little girl's, I felt like exactly know where. Everybody I met seemed to be happy, as if, like the sparrows, prepared to parade everything in the warm light of returning spring. One might almost have said that a flower of love was blossoming through the city, and the sight of the young women whose hats and dresses in their transparent tints, in the depths of whose eyes there lurked a half-concealed spark, and whose lips with half-languid grace, filled my heart with agitation.

Without knowing how or why, I found myself on the banks of the Kamenoi Ostrovsky, were starting for Sarosnos, and suddenly I was seized by an irresistible desire to take a walk through the woods. The deck of the Moscaba was covered with passengers, for the sun is early spring power, and it was the hour, in spite of chemises, and everybody moving about, gave a pleasant feeling of life and freedom.

I had a girl neighbor, a little work-girl, no doubt, who possessed the true Parisian charm: a little head, with light curly hair, which looked like a golden aureole, a face, so danced in the wind, came down to her ears, and accentuated the pure lines of her nose, where it became such fine, light- colored down that one could scarcely see it, but felt an irresistible desire to kiss it, and, lastly, a

Under my persistent gaze, she turned her head, and I saw her, and she turned suddenly back down, while a slight crease at the side of her mouth, and a little dimple in her cheek was into a smile, also showed a fine, silky, pale down which the sun was gilding a little.

The calm river grew rosy, and the steamer sphere was warm and perfectly still, but a slight breeze ruffled the surface of spots.

My neighbor raised her eyes again, and this time, as I was still looking at her, she smiled decidedly. We exchanged glances, and in her passing glance I saw a thousand things, which I had hitherto never seen or perceived, I perceived unknown depths, all the power of love, all the power of love, all the power of all the happiness which we are continually in search of. I felt an insane longing to open my arms and to carry her off without reason, so as to whisper the sweet music of words of love into her ears.

I was just about to address her when somebody touched me on the shoulder, and I turned round in some annoyance. I saw an ordinary-looking man, who was neither young nor old, and who gazed at me with a

"I should like to speak to you," he said.

I made a gesture, which he no doubt saw fit for addled:

"It is a matter of importance."

I go up, therefore, and followed him to the other end of the boat and then he said:

"Monsieur, when women are young, with a mild, wet and snowy weather, your doctor says to you constantly: 'Keep your feet warm, guard against chills, colds, rheumatism, rheumatism and pleurisy.'

"Then you are very careful, you wear flannel, a heavy greatcoat and thick shoes, and all this does not prevent you from passing two months in bed. But when a woman comes, with its leaves and flowers, its warm, soft breezes and smell of the fields, and its little cheeks you vague disquiet and causeless emotion, no longer you say to

"Monsieur, beware of love! It is lying in ambush everywhere; it is watching for you at every corner; it is concealed in the air, in weapons are sharpened, all its guides are prepared. Beware of love! Beware of love! It is more dangerous than brandy, bronchitis or pleurisy! It never forgives and always ends body consumption!

"Yes, monsieur, I say that the French Government should put a little more little notices on the walls, with these words: 'Return of spring. Beware of love!' Beware of love!' Just as that pun: 'Beware of paint.

"However, as the government will not do it, I must supply its place, and I say to you: 'Beware of love!' for it is just going to seize you, and it is a very dangerous thing, as, if you are in Russia they inform any one that his nose is frozen.

"It is much ascribed at this individual, and assuming a dignified manner, I said:

"Really, monsieur, you seem to me to be interfering in a manner which is no concern of yours."

He made an abrupt movement and replied:

"Oh! monsieur, monsieur! If I see that a man is in danger of being frozen and a dangerous spot, ought I to let him go? Ought I to turn my nose away and to say to him? I ought to tend to speak to you like.

"Well, I have lived for about last year that I secured. But, first of all, I must tell you that I am a clerk in the Admiralty, where my chefs, the commissaries, have had good jobs as quill-driving officials seriously, and treat me as a beautiful man who is very well. With from my office I could see a small bit of blue sky and the swallows, and I felt inclined to dance among my office-desks.

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Theatre of Verona, Theatre of Verona, Theatre of Verona,

COLOPHON

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