

LEVER CHARLES JAMES

THE MARTINS OF CRO'
MARTIN, VOL. II (OF II)

Charles Lever

**The Martins Of Cro'
Martin, Vol. II (of II)**

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CHAPTER I. MR. HERMAN MERL

This much-abused world of ours, railed at by divines, sneered down by cynics, slighted by philosophers, has still some marvellously pleasant things about it, amongst which, first and foremost, *facile princeps*, is Paris! In every other city of Europe there is a life to be learned and acquired just like a new language. You have to gain the acquaintance of certain people, obtain admission to certain houses, submit yourself to ways, habits, hours, all peculiar to the locality, and conform to usages in which – at first, at least – you rarely find anything beyond penalties on your time and your patience. But Paris demands no such sacrifices. To enjoy it, no apprenticeship is required. You become free of the guild at the Porte St. Denis. By the time you reach the Boulevards you have ceased to be a stranger. You enter the “Frères” at dinner hour like an old habitué. The atmosphere of light, elastic gayety around you, the tone of charming politeness that meets your commonest inquiry, the courtesy bestowed upon your character as a foreigner, are all as exhilarating in their own way as your sparkling glass of Moët, sipped in the window, from which you look down on plashing fountains, laughing children, and dark-eyed grisettes! The whole thing, in its bustle and movement, its splendor, sunlight, gilded furniture, mirrors, and smart toilettes, is a piece of natural magic, with this difference, – that its effect is ever new, ever surprising!

Sad and sorrowful faces are, of course, to be met with, since grief has its portion everywhere; but that air of languid indifference, that look of wearied endurance, which we characterize by the classic term of “boredom,” is, indeed, a rare spectacle in this capital; and yet now at the window of a splendid apartment in the Place Vendôme, listlessly looking down into the square beneath, stood a young man, every line of whose features conveyed this same expression. He had, although not really above twenty-four or twenty-five, the appearance of one ten years older. On a face of singular regularity, and decidedly handsome, dissipation had left its indelible traces. The eyes were deep sunk, the cheeks colorless, and around the angles of the mouth were those tell-tale circles which betray the action of an oft-tried temper, and the spirit that has gone through many a hard conflict. In figure he was very tall, and seemed more so in the folds of a long dressing-gown of antique brocade, which reached to his feet; a small, dark green skull-cap, with a heavy silver tassel, covered one side of his head, and in his hand he held a handsome meerschaum, which, half mechanically, he placed from time to time to his lips, although its bowl was empty.

At a breakfast-table covered with all that could provoke appetite, sat a figure as much unlike him as could be. He was under the middle size, and slightly inclined to flesh, with a face which, but for some strange resemblance to what one has seen in pictures by the older artists, would have been unequivocally vulgar. The eyes were small, keen, and furtive; the nose, slightly concave in its outline, expanded beneath into nostrils wide and full; but the mouth, thick-lipped, sensual, and coarse, was more distinctive than all, and showed that Mr. Herman Merl was a gentleman of the Jewish persuasion, – a fact well corroborated by the splendor of a very flashy silk waistcoat, and various studs, gold chain, rings, and trinkets profusely scattered over his costume. And yet there was little of what we commonly recognize as the Jew in the character of his face. The eyes were not dark, the nose not aquiline; the hair, indeed, had the wavy massiveness of the Hebrew race; but Mr. Merl was a “Red Jew,” and the Red Jew, like the red partridge, is a species *per se*.

There was an ostentatious pretension in the “get up” of this gentleman. His moustache, his beard, his wrist-buttons, his shirt-studs, the camellia in his coat, – all, even to the heels of his boots, had been made studies, either to correct a natural defect, or show off what he fancied a natural

advantage. He seemed to have studied color like a painter, for his dark brown frock was in true keeping with the tint of his skin; and yet, despite these painstaking efforts, the man was indelibly, hopelessly vulgar. Everything about him was imitation, but it was imitation that only displayed its own shortcomings.

"I wonder how you can resist these oysters, Captain," said he, as he daintily adjusted one of these delicacies on his fork; "and the Chablis, I assure you, is excellent."

"I never eat breakfast," said the other, turning away from the window, and pacing the room with slow and measured tread.

"Why, you are forgetting all the speculations that used to amuse us on the voyage, – the delicious little dinners we were to enjoy at the 'Rocher,' the tempting dejeuners at 'Véfour's.' By Jove! how hungry you used to make me, with your descriptions of the appetizing fare before us; and here we have it now: Ardennes ham, fried in champagne; Ostend oysters, salmi of quails with truffles – and such truffles! Won't that tempt you?"

But his friend paid no attention to the appeal, and walking again to the window, looked out.

"Those little drummers yonder have a busy day of it," said he, lazily; "that's the fourth time they have had to beat the salute to Generals this morning."

"Is there anything going on, then?"

But he never deigned an answer, and resumed his walk.

"I wish you'd send away that hissing teakettle, it reminds me of a steamboat," said the Captain, peevishly; "that is, if you have done with it."

"So it does," said the other, rising to ring the bell; "there's the same discordant noise, and the – the – the – " But the rest of the similitude would n't come, and Mr. Merl covered his retreat with the process of lighting a cigar, – an invaluable expedient that had served to aid many a more ready debater in like difficulty.

It would be a somewhat tedious, perhaps not a very profitable task, to inquire how two men, so palpably dissimilar, had thus become what the world calls friends. Enough if we say that Captain Martin, – the heir of Cro' Martin, – when returning from India on leave, passed some time at the Cape, where, in the not very select society of the place, he met Mr. Merl. Now Mr. Merl had been at Ceylon, where he had something to do with a coffee plantation; and he had been at Benares, where opium interested him; and now again, at the Cape, a question of wine had probably some relation to his sojourn. In fact, he was a man travelling about the world with abundance of leisure, a well-stocked purse, and what our friends over the Strait would term an "industrial spirit." Messes had occasionally invited him to their tables. Men in society got the habit of seeing him "about," and he was in the enjoyment of that kind of tolerance which made every man feel, "He's not *my* friend, — *I* didn't introduce him; but he seems a good sort of fellow enough!" And so he was, – very good-tempered, very obliging, most liberal of his cigars, his lodgings always open to loungers, with pale ale, and even iced champagne, to be had for asking. There was play, too; and although Merl was a considerable winner, he managed never to incur the jealous enmity that winning so often imposes. He was the most courteous of gamblers; he never did a sharp thing; never enforced a strict rule upon a novice of the game; tolerated every imaginable blunder of his partner with bland equanimity; and, in a word, if this great globe of ours had been a green-baize cloth, and all the men and women whist-players, Mr. Herman Merl had been the first gentleman in it, and carried off "all the honors" in his own hand.

If he was highly skilled in every game, it was remarked of him that he never proposed play himself, nor was he ever known to make a wager: he always waited to be asked to make up a party, or to take or give the odds, as the case might be. To a very shrewd observer, this might have savored a little too much of a system; but shrewd observers are, after all, not the current coin in the society of young men, and Merl's conduct was eminently successful.

Merl suited Martin admirably. Martin was that species of man which, of all others, is most assailable by flattery. A man of small accomplishments, he sang a little, rode a little, played, drew,

fenced, fished, shot – all, a little – that is, somewhat better than others in general, and giving him that dangerous kind of pre-eminence from which, though the tumble never kills, it occurs often enough to bruise and humiliate. But, worse than this, it shrouds its possessor in a triple mail of vanity, that makes him the easy prey of all who minister to it.

We seldom consider how much locality influences our intimacies, and how impossible it had been for us even to know in some places the people we have made friends of in another. Harry Martin would as soon have thought of proposing his valet at “Brookes’s,” as walk down Bond Street with Mr. Merl. Had he met him in London, every characteristic of the man would there have stood out in all the strong glare of contrast, but at the Cape it was different. Criticism would have been misplaced where all was irregular, and the hundred little traits – any one of which would have shocked him in England – were only smiled at as the eccentricities of a “good-natured poor fellow, who had no harm in him.”

Martin and Merl came to England in the same ship. It was a sudden thought of Merl’s, only conceived the evening before she sailed; but Martin had lost a considerable sum at piquet to him on that night, and when signing the acceptances for payment, since he had not the ready money, somewhat peevishly remarked that it was hard he should not have his revenge. Whereupon Merl, tossing off a bumper of champagne, and appearing to speak under the influence of its stimulation, cried out, “Hang me, Captain, if you shall say that! I’ll go and take my passage in the ‘Elphinstone.’” And he did so, and he gave the Captain his revenge! But of all the passions, there is not one less profitable to indulge in. They played morning, noon, and night, through long days of sickening calm, through dreary nights of storm and hurricane, and they scarcely lifted their heads at the tidings that the Needles were in sight, nor even questioned the pilot for news of England, when he boarded them in the Downs. Martin had grown much older during that same voyage; his temper, too, usually imbued with the easy indolence of his father’s nature, had grown impatient and fretful. A galling sense of inferiority to Merl poisoned every minute of his life. He would not admit it; he rejected it, but back it came; and if it did not enter into his heart, it stood there knocking, – knocking for admission. Each time they sat down to play was a perfect duel to Martin.

As for Merl, his well-schooled faculties never were ruffled nor excited. The game had no power to fascinate *him*, its vicissitudes had nothing new or surprising to him; intervals of ill-luck, days even of dubious fortune might occur, but he knew he would win in the end, just as he knew that though there might intervene periods of bad weather and adverse winds, the good ship “Elphinstone” would arrive at last, and, a day sooner or a day later, discharge passengers and freight on the banks of the Thames.

You may forgive the man who has rivalled you in love, the banker whose “smash” has engulfed all your fortune, the violent political antagonist who has assailed you personally, and in the House, perhaps, answered the best speech you ever made by a withering reply. You may extend feelings of Christian charity to the reviewer who has “slashed” your new novel, the lawyer whose vindictive eloquence has exposed, the artist in “Punch” who has immortalized, you; but there is one man you never forgive, of whom you will never believe one good thing, and to whom you would wish a thousand evil ones, – he is your natural enemy, brought into the world to be your bane, born that he may be your tormentor; and this is the man who *always* beats you at play! Happily, good reader, you may have no feelings of the gambler, – you may be of those to whom this fatal vice has never appealed, or appealed in vain; but if you *have* “played,” or even mixed with those who have, you could n’t have failed to be struck with the fact that there is that one certain man from whom you never win! Wherever he is, there, too, is present your evil destiny! Now, there is no pardoning this, – the double injury of insult to your skill and damage to your pocket. Such a man as this becomes at last your master. You may sneer at his manners, scoff at his abilities, ridicule his dress, laugh at his vulgarity, – poor reprisals these! In his presence, the sense of that one superiority he possesses over you makes you quail! In the stern conflict, where your destiny and your capacity seem alike at issue, he conquers you, – not

to-day or to-morrow, but ever and always! There he sits, arbiter of your fate, – only doubtful how long he may defer the day of your sentence!

It is something in the vague indistinctness of this power – something that seems to typify the agency of the Evil One himself – that at once tortures and subdues you; and you ever hurry into fresh conflict with the ever-present consciousness of fresh defeat! We might have spared our reader this discursive essay, but that it pertains to our story. Such was the precise feeling entertained by Martin towards Merl. He hated him with all the concentration of his great hatred, and yet he could not disembarass himself of his presence. He was ashamed of the man amongst his friends; he avoided him in all public places; he shrunk from his very contact as though infected; but he could not throw off his acquaintance, and he nourished in his heart a small ember of hope that one day or other the scale of fortune would turn, and he might win back again all he had ever lost, and stand free and unembarrassed as in the first hour he had met him! Fifty times had he consulted Fortune, as it were, to ask if this moment had yet arrived; but hitherto ever unsuccessfully, – Merl won on as before. Martin, however, invariably ceased playing when he discovered that his ill-luck continued. It was an experiment, – a mere pilot balloon to Destiny; and when he saw the direction adverse, he did not adventure on the grand ascent. It was impossible that a man of Merl's temperament and training should not have detected this game. There was not a phase of the gambler's mind with which he was not thoroughly familiar.

Close intimacies, popularly called friendships, have always their secret motive, if we be but skilful enough to detect it. We see people associate together of widely different habits, and dispositions the most opposite, with nothing in common of station, rank, object, or pursuit. In such cases the riddle has always its key, could we only find it.

Mr. Martin had been some weeks in Paris with his family, when a brief note informed him that Merl had arrived there. He despatched an answer still briefer, asking him to breakfast on the following morning; and it was in the acceptance of this same invitation we have now seen him.

"Who's here just now?" said Merl, throwing down his napkin, and pushing his chair a little back from the table, while he disposed his short, fat legs into what he fancied was a most graceful attitude.

"Here? Do you mean in Paris?" rejoined Martin, pettishly, – for he never suffered so painfully under this man's intimacy as when his manners assumed the pretension of fashion.

"Yes, – of course, – I mean, who's in Paris?"

"There are, I believe, about forty-odd thousand of our countrymen and countrywomen," said the other, half contemptuously.

"Oh, I've no doubt; but my question took narrower bounds. I meant, who of *our* set, – who of us?"

Martin turned round, and fixing his eyes on him, scanned him from head to foot with a gaze of such intense insolence as no words could have equalled. For a while the Jew bore it admirably; but these efforts, after all, are only like the brief intervals a man can live under water, and where the initiated beats the inexperienced only by a matter of seconds. As Martin continued his stare, Merl's cheek tingled, grew red, and finally his whole face and forehead became scarlet.

With an instinct like that of a surgeon who feels he has gone deep enough with his knife, Martin resumed his walk along the room without uttering a word.

Merl opened the newspaper, and affected to read; his hand, however, trembled, and his eyes wandered listlessly over the columns, and then furtively were turned towards Martin as he paced the chamber in silence.

"Do you think you can manage that little matter for me, Captain?" said he at last, and in a voice attuned to its very humblest key.

"What little matter? Those two bills do you mean?" said Martin, suddenly.

"Not at all. I 'm not the least pressed for cash. I alluded to the Club; you promised you 'd put me up, and get one of your popular friends to second me."

“I remember,” said Martin, evidently relieved from a momentary terror. “Lord Claude Willoughby or Sir Spencer Cavendish would be the men if we could find them.”

“Lord Claude, I perceive, is here; the paper mentions his name in the dinner company at the Embassy yesterday.”

“Do you know him?” asked Martin, with an air of innocence that Merl well comprehended as insult.

“No. We ‘ve met, – I think we ‘ve played together; I remember once at Baden – ”

“Lord Claude Willoughby, sir,” said a servant, entering with a card, “desires to know if you ‘re at home?”

“And won’t be denied if you are not,” said his Lordship, entering at the same instant, and saluting Martin with great cordiality.

CHAPTER II. MR. MERL

The French have invented a slang word for a quality that deserves a more recognized epithet, and by the expression *chic* have designated a certain property by which objects assert their undoubted superiority over all their counterfeits. Thus, your coat from Nugee's, your carriage from Leader's, your bracelet from Storr's, and your bonnet from Madame Palmyre, have all their own peculiar *chic*, or, in other words, possess a certain invisible, indescribable essence that stamps them as the best of their kind, with an excellence unattainable by imitation, and a charm all their own!

Of all the products in which this magical property insinuates itself, there is not one to which it contributes so much as the man of fashion. He is the very type of *chic*. To describe him you are driven to a catalogue of negatives, and you only arrive at anything like a resemblance by an enumeration of the different things he is not.

The gentleman who presented himself to Martin at the close of our last chapter was in many respects a good specimen of his order. He had entered the room, believing Martin to be there alone; but no sooner had he perceived another, and that other one not known to him, than all the buoyant gayety of his manner was suddenly toned down into a quiet seriousness; while, taking his friend's arm, he said in a low voice, – "If you 're busy, my dear Martin, don't hesitate for a moment about sending me off; I had not the slightest suspicion there was any one with you."

"Nor is there," said Martin, with a supercilious glance at Merl, who was endeavoring in a dozen unsuccessful ways to seem unaware of the new arrival's presence.

"I want to introduce him to you," said Martin.

"No, no, my dear friend, on no account."

"I must; there's no help for it," said Martin, impatiently, while he whispered something eagerly in the other's ear.

"Well, then, some other day; another time – "

"Here and now, Claude," said Martin, peremptorily; while, without waiting for reply, he said aloud, "Merl, I wish to present you to Lord Claude Willoughby, – Lord Claude, Mr. Herman Merl."

Merl bowed and smirked and writhed as his Lordship, with a bland smile and a very slight bow, acknowledged the presentation.

"Had the pleasure of meeting your Lordship at Baden two summers ago," said the Jew, with an air meant to be the ideal of fashionable ease.

"I was at Baden at the time you mention," said he, coldly.

"I used to watch your Lordship's game with great attention; you won heavily, I think?"

"I don't remember, just now," said he, carelessly; not, indeed, that such was the fact, or that he desired it should be thought so; he only wished to mark his sense of what he deemed an impertinence.

"The man who can win at rouge-et-noir can do anything, in my opinion," said Merl.

"What odds are you taking on Rufus?" said Martin to Willoughby, and without paying the slightest attention to Merl's remark.

"Eleven to one; but I'll not take it again. Hecuba is rising hourly, and some say she 'll be the favorite yet."

"Is Rufus your Lordship's horse?" said the Jew, insinuatingly.

Willoughby bowed, and continued to write in his note-book.

"And you said the betting was eleven to one on the field, my Lord?"

"It ought to be fourteen to one, at least."

"I 'll give you fourteen to one, my Lord, just for the sake of a little interest in the race."

Willoughby ceased writing, and looked at him steadfastly for a second or two. "I have not said that the odds were fourteen to one."

"I understand you perfectly, my Lord; you merely thought that they would be, or, at least, ought to be."

"Merl wants a bet with you, in fact," said Martin, as he applied alight to his meerschaum; "and if you won't have him, I will."

"What shall it be, sir," said Lord Claude, pencil in hand; "in ponies – fifties?"

"Oh, ponies, my Lord. I only meant it, just as I said, to give me something to care for in the race."

"Will you put him up at the 'Cercle' after that?" whispered Martin, with a look of sly malice.

"I'll tell you when the match is over," said Willoughby, laughing; "but if I won't, here 's one that will. That's a neat phaeton of Cavendish's." And at the same instant Martin opened the window, and made a signal with his handkerchief.

"That's the thing for *you*, Merl," said Martin, pointing down to a splendid pair of dark chestnuts harnessed to a handsome phaeton. "It's worth five hundred pounds to any fellow starting an equipage to chance upon one of Cavendish's. He has not only such consummate taste in carriage and harness, but he makes his nags perfection."

"He drives very neatly," said Willoughby.

"What was it he gave for that near-side horse? – a thousand pounds, I think."

"Twelve hundred and fifty, and refused a hundred for my bargain," said a very diminutive, shrewd-looking man of about five-and-thirty, who entered the room with great affectation of juvenility. "I bought him for a cab, never expecting to 'see his like again,' as Shakspeare says."

"And you offered the whole concern yesterday to Damre-mont for fifty thousand francs?"

"No, Harry, that's a mistake. I said I 'd play him a match at piquet, whether he gave seventy thousand for the equipage or nothing. It was he that proposed fifty thousand. Mine was a handsome offer, I think."

"I call it a most munificent one," said Martin. "By the way, you don't know my friend here, Mr. Merl, Sir Spencer Cavendish." And the baronet stuck his glass in his eye, and scanned the stranger as unscrupulously as though he were a hack at Tattersairs.

"Where did he dig him up, Claude?" whispered he, after a second.

"In India, I fancy; or at the Cape."

"That fellow has something to do with the hell in St. James's Street; I 'll swear I know his face."

"I 've been telling Merl that he 's in rare luck to find such a turn-out as that in the market; that is, if you still are disposed to sell."

"Oh, yes, I'll sell it; give him the tiger, boots, cockade, and all, – everything except that Skye terrier. You shall have the whole, sir, for two thousand pounds; or, if you prefer it – "

A certain warning look from Lord Claude suddenly arrested his words, and he added, after a moment, – "But I 'd rather sell it off, and think no more of it."

"Try the nags; Sir Spencer, I'm sure, will have no objection," said Martin. But the baronet's face looked anything but concurrence with the proposal.

"Take them a turn round the Bois de Boulogne, Merl," said Martin, laughing at his friend's distress.

"And he may have the turn-out at his own price after the trial," muttered Lord Claude, with a quiet smile.

"Egad! I should think so," whispered Cavendish; "for, assuredly, I should never think of being seen in it again."

"If Sir Spencer Cavendish has no objection, – if he would permit his groom to drive me just down the Boulevards and the Rue Rivoli – "

The cool stare of the baronet did not permit him to finish. It was really a look far more intelligible than common observers might have imagined, for it conveyed something like recognition, – a faint approach to an intimation that said, "I 'm persuaded that we have met before."

"Yes, that is the best plan. Let the groom have the ribbons," said Martin, laughing with an almost schoolboy enjoyment of a trick. "And don't lose time, Merl, for Sir Spencer would n't miss his drive in the Champs Elysees for any consideration."

"Gentlemen, I am your very humble and much obliged servant!" said Cavendish, as soon as Merl had quitted the room. "If that distinguished friend of yours should not buy my carriage –"

"But he will," broke in Martin; "he must buy it."

"He ought, I think," said Lord Claude. "If I were in his place, there's only one condition I 'd stipulate for."

"And that is –"

"That you should drive with him one day – one would be enough – from the Barrière de l'Étoile to the Louvre."

"This is all very amusing, gentlemen, most entertaining," said Cavendish, tartly; "but who is he? – I don't mean that, – but what is he?"

"Martin's banker, I fancy," said Lord Claude.

"Does he lend any sum from five hundred to twenty thousand on equitable terms on approved personal security?" said Cavendish, imitating the terms of the advertisements.

"He 'll allow all he wins from you to remain in your hands at sixty per cent interest, if he doesn't want cash!" said Martin, angrily.

"Oh, then, I 'm right. It is my little Moses of St. James's Street. He was n't always as flourishing as we see him now. Oh dear, if any man, three years back, had told me that this fellow would have proposed seating himself in my phaeton for a drive round Paris, I don't believe – nay, I 'm sure – my head couldn't have stood it."

"You know him, then?" said Willoughby.

"I should think every man about town a dozen years ago must know him. There was a kind of brood of these fellows; we used to call them Joseph and his brethren. One sold cigars, another vended maraschino; this discounted your bills, that took your plate or your horses – ay, or your wardrobe – on a bill of sale, and handed you over two hundred pounds to lose at his brother's hell in the evening. Most useful scoundrels they were, – equally expert on 'Change and in the Coulisses of the Opera!"

"I will say this for him," said Martin, "he 's not a hard fellow to deal with; he does not drive a bargain ungenerously."

"Your hangman is the tenderest fellow in the world," said Cavendish, "till the final moment. It's only in adjusting the last turn under the ear that he shows himself 'ungenerous.'"

"Are you deep with him, Harry?" said Willoughby, who saw a sudden paleness come over Martin's face.

"Too deep!" said he, with a bitter effort at a laugh, – "a great deal too deep."

"We 're all too deep with those fellows," said Cavendish, as, stretching out his legs, he contemplated the shape and lustre of his admirably fitting boots. "One begins by some trumpery loan or so; thence you go on to a play transaction or a betting-book with them, and you end – egad, you end by having the fellow at dinner!"

"Martin wants his friend to be put up for the Club," said Willoughby.

"Eh, what? At the 'Cercle,' do you mean?"

"Why not? Is it so very select?"

"No, not exactly that; there are the due proportions of odd reputations, half reputations, and no reputations; but remember, Martin, that however black they be now, they all began white. When they started, at least, they were gentlemen."

"I suspect that does not make the case much better."

"No; but it makes *ours* better, in associating with them. Come, come, you know as well as any one that this is impossible, and that if you should do it to-day, I should follow the lead to-morrow, and our Club become only an asylum for unpayable tailors and unappeasable bootmakers!"

"You go too fast, sir," exclaimed Martin, in a tone of anger. "I never intended to pay my debts by a white ball in the ballot-box, nor do I think that Mr. Merl would relinquish his claim on some thousand pounds, even for the honor of being the club colleague of Sir Spencer Cavendish."

"Then I know him better," said the other, tapping his boot with his cane; "he would, and he 'd think it a right good bargain besides. From seeing these fellows at racecourses and betting-rooms, always cold, calm, and impassive, never depressed by ill-luck, as little elated by good, we fall into the mistake of esteeming them as a kind of philosophers in life, without any of those detracting influences that make you and Willoughby, and even myself, sometimes rash and headstrong. It is a mistake, though; they have a weakness, – and a terrible weakness, – which is, their passion to be thought in fashionable society. Yes, they can't resist that! All their shrewd calculations, all their artful schemes, dissolve into thin air, at the bare prospect of being recognized 'in society.' I have studied this flaw in them for many a year back. I 'll not say I haven't derived advantage from it."

"And yet you 'd refuse him admission into a club," cried Martin.

"Certainly. A club is a Democracy, where each man, once elected, is the equal of his neighbor. Society is, on the other hand, an absolute monarchy, where your rank flows from the fountain of honor, – the host. Take him along with you to her Grace's 'tea,' or my Lady's reception this evening, and see if the manner of the mistress of the house does not assign him his place, as certainly as if he were marshalled to it by a lackey. All his mock tranquillity and assumed ease of manner will not be proof against the icy dignity of a grande dame; but in the Club he's as good as the best, or he'll think so, which comes to the same thing."

"Cavendish is right, – that is, as much so as he can be in anything," said Willoughby, laughing. "Don't put him up, Martin."

"Then what am I to do? I have given a sort of a pledge. He is not easily put off; he does not lightly relinquish an object."

"Take him off the scent. Introduce him at the Embassy. Take him to the Courcelles."

"This is intolerable," broke in Martin, angrily. "I ask for advice, and you reply by a sneer and a mockery."

"Not at all. I never was more serious. But here he comes! Look only how the fellow lolls back in the phaeton. Just see how contemptuously he looks down on the foot-travellers. I'd lay on another hundred for that stare; for, assuredly, he has already made the purchase in his own mind."

"Well, Merl, what do you say to Sir Spencer's taste in horseflesh?" said Martin, as he entered.

"They 're nice hacks; very smart."

"Nice hacks!" broke in Cavendish, "why, sir, they're both thoroughbred; the near horse is by Tiger out of a Crescent mare, and the off one won the Acton steeple-chase. When you said hacks, therefore, you made a cruel blunder."

"Well, it's what a friend of mine called them just now," said Merl; "and remarked, moreover, that the large horse had been slightly fired on the – the – I forget the name he gave it."

"You probably remember your friend's name better," said Cavendish, sneeringly. "Who was he, pray?"

"Massingbred, – we call him Jack Massingbred; he's the Member for somewhere in Ireland."

"Poor Jack!" muttered Cavendish, "how hard up he must be!"

"But you like the equipage, Merl?" said Martin, who had a secret suspicion that it was now Cavendish's turn for a little humiliation.

"Well, it's neat. The buggy –"

"The buggy! By Jove, sir, you have a precious choice of epithets! Please to let me inform you that full-blooded horses are not called hacks, nor one of Leader's park-phaetons is not styled a buggy."

Martin threw himself into a chair, and after a moment's struggle, burst out into a fit of laughter.

"I think we may make a deal after all, Sir Spencer," said Merl, who accepted the baronet's correction with admirable self-control.

"No, sir; perfectly impossible; take my word for it, any transaction would be difficult between us. Good-bye, Martin; adieu, Claude." And with this brief leave-taking the peppery Sir Spencer left the room, more flushed and fussy than he had entered it.

"If you knew Sir Spencer Cavendish as long as we have known him, Mr. Merl," said Lord Claude, in his blindest of voices, "you'd not be surprised at this little display of warmth. It is the only weakness in a very excellent fellow."

"I 'm hot, too, my Lord," said Merl, with the very slightest accentuation of the "initial H," "and he was right in saying that dealings would be difficult between us."

"You mentioned Massingbred awhile ago, Merl. Why not ask him to second you at the Club?" said Martin, rousing himself suddenly from a train of thought.

"Well, somehow, I thought that he and you did n't exactly pull together; that there was an election contest, – a kind of a squabble."

"I 'm sure that *he* never gave you any reason to suspect a coldness between us; I know that *I* never did," said Martin, calmly. "We are but slightly acquainted, it is true, but I should be surprised to learn that there was any ill-feeling between us."

"One's opponent at the hustings is pretty much the same thing as one's adversary at a game, – he is against you to-day, and may be your partner to-morrow; so that, putting even better motives aside, it were bad policy to treat him as an implacable enemy," said Lord Claude, with his accustomed suavity. "Besides, Mr. Merl, you know the crafty maxim of the French moralist, 'Always treat your enemies as though one day they were to become your friends.'" And with this commonplace, uttered in a tone and with a manner that gave it all the semblance of a piece of special advice, his Lordship took his hat, and, squeezing Martin's hand, moved towards the door.

"Come in here for a moment," said Martin, pushing open the door into an adjoining dressing-room, and closing it carefully after them. "So much for wanting to do a good-natured thing," cried he, peevishly. "I thought to help Cavendish to get rid of those 'screws,' and the return he makes me is to outrage this man."

"What are your dealings with him?" asked Willoughby» anxiously.

"Play matters, play debts, loans, securities, post-obits, and every other blessed contrivance you can think of to swamp a man's present fortune and future prospects. I don't think he is a bad fellow; I mean, I don't suspect he 'd press heavily upon me, with any fair treatment on my part. My impression, in short, is that he'd forgive my not meeting his bill, but he 'd never get over my not inviting him to a dinner!"

"Well," said Willoughby, encouragingly, "we live in admirable times for such practices. There used to be a vulgar prejudice in favor of men that one knew, and names that the world was familiar with. It is gone by entirely; and if you only present your friend – don't wince at the title – your friend, I say – as the rich Mr. Merl, the man who owns shares in mines, canals, and collieries, whose speculations count by tens of thousands, and whose credit rises to millions, you'll never be called on to apologize for his parts of speech, or make excuse for his solecisms in good breeding."

"Will you put up his name, then, at the Club?" asked Martin, eagerly. "It would not do for *me* to do so."

"To be sure I will, and Massingbred shall be his seconder." And with this cheering pledge Lord Claude bade him good-bye, and left him free to return to Mr. Merl in the drawing-room. That gentleman had, however, already departed, to the no small astonishment of Martin, who now threw himself lazily down on a sofa, to ponder over his difficulties and weave all manner of impracticable schemes to meet them.

They were, indeed, very considerable embarrassments. He had raised heavy sums at most exorbitant rates, and obtained money – for the play-table – by pledging valuable reversions of various kinds, for Merl somehow was the easiest of all people to deal with; one might have fancied that he lent his money only to afford himself an occasion of sympathy with the borrower, just as he professed that

he merely betted “to have a little interest in the race.” Whatever Martin, then, suggested in the way of security never came amiss; whether it were a farm, a mill, a quarry, or a lead mine, he accepted it at once, and, as Martin deemed, without the slightest knowledge or investigation, little suspecting that there was not a detail of his estate, nor a resource of his property, with which the wily Jew was not more familiar than himself. In fact, Mr. Merl was an astonishing instance of knowledge on every subject by which money was to be made, and he no more advanced loans upon an encumbered estate than he backed the wrong horse or bid for a copied picture. There is a species of practical information excessively difficult to describe, which is not connoisseurship, but which supplies the place of that quality, enabling him who possesses it to estimate the value of an object, without any admixture of those weakening prejudices which beset your mere man of taste. Now, Mr. Merl had no caprices about the color of the horse he backed, no more than for the winning seat at cards; he could not be warped from his true interests by any passing whim, and whether he cheapened a Correggio or discounted a bill, he was the same calm, dispassionate calculator of the profit to come of the transaction.

Latterly, however, he had thrown out a hint to Martin that he was curious to see some of that property on which he had made such large advances; and this wish – which, according to the frame of mind he happened to be in at the moment, struck Martin as a mere caprice or a direct menace – was now the object of his gloomy reveries. We have not tracked his steps through the tortuous windings of his moneyed difficulties; it is a chapter in life wherein there is wonderfully little new to record; the Jew-lender and his associates, the renewed bill and the sixty per cent, the non-restored acceptances flitting about the world, sold and resold as damaged articles, but always in the end falling into the hands of a “most respectable party,” and proceeded on as a true debt; then, the compromises for time, for silence, for secrecy, – since these transactions are rarely, if ever, devoid of some unhappy incident that would not bear publicity; and there are invariably little notes beginning “Dear Moses,” which would argue most ill-chosen intimacies. These are all old stories, and the “Times” and the “Chronicle” are full of them. There is a terrible sameness about them, too. The dupe and the villain are stock characters that never change, and the incidents are precisely alike in every case. Humble folk, who are too low for fashionable follies, wonder how the self-same artifices have always the same success, and cannot conceal their astonishment at the innocence of our young men about town; and yet the mystery is easily solved. The dupe is, in these cases, just as unprincipled as his betrayer, and their negotiation is simply a game of skill, in which Israel is not always the winner.

If we have not followed Martin’s steps through these dreary labyrinths, it is because the path is a worn one; for the same reason, too, we decline to keep him company in his ponderings over them. All that his troubles had taught him was an humble imitation of the tricky natures of those he dealt with; so that he plotted and schemed and contrived, till his very head grew weary with the labor. And so we leave him.

CHAPTER III. A YOUNG DUCHESS AND AN OLD FRIEND

Like a vast number of people who have passed years in retirement, Lady Dorothea was marvellously disappointed with “the world” when she went back to it. It was not at all the kind of thing she remembered, or at least fancied it to be. There were not the old gradations of class strictly defined; there was not the old veneration for rank and station; “society” was invaded by hosts of unknown people, “names one had never heard of.” The great stars of fashion of her own day had long since set, and the new celebrities had never as much as heard of her. The great houses of the Faubourg were there, it is true; but with reduced households and dimly lighted salons, they were but sorry representatives of the splendor her memory had invested them with.

Now the Martins were installed in one of the finest apartments of the finest quarter in Paris. They were people of unquestionable station, they had ample means, lacked for none of the advantages which the world demands from those who seek its favors; and yet there they were, just as unknown, unvisited, and unsought after, as if they were the Joneses or the Smiths, “out” for a month’s pleasuring on the Continent.

A solitary invitation to the Embassy to dinner was not followed by any other attention; and so they drove along the Boulevards and through the Bois de Boulogne, and saw some thousands of gay, bright-costumed people, all eager for pleasure, all hurrying on to some scheme of amusement or enjoyment, while they returned moodily to their handsome quarter, as much excluded from all participation in what went on around them as though they were natives of Hayti.

Martin sauntered down to the reading-room, hoping vainly to fall in with some one he knew. He lounged listlessly along the bright streets, till their very glare addled him; he stared at the thousand new inventions of luxury and ease the world had discovered since he had last seen it, and then he plodded gloomily homeward, to dine and listen to her Ladyship’s discontented criticism upon the tiresome place and the odious people who filled it. Paris was, indeed, a deception and a snare to them! So far from finding it cheap, the expense of living – as they lived – was considerably greater than at London. It was a city abounding in luxuries, but all costly. The details which are in England reserved for days of parade and display, were here daily habits, and these were now to be indulged in with all the gloom of solitude and isolation.

What wonder, then, if her Ladyship’s temper was ruffled, and her equanimity unbalanced by such disappointments? In vain she perused the list of arrivals to find out some distinguished acquaintance; in vain she interrogated her son as to what was going on, and who were there. The Captain only frequented the club, and could best chronicle the names that were great at whist or illustrious at billiards.

“It surely cannot be the season here,” cried she, one morning, peevishly, “for really there isn’t a single person one has ever heard of at Paris.”

“And yet this is a strong catalogue,” cried the Captain, with a malicious twinkle in his eye. “Here are two columns of somebodies, who were present at Madame de Luygnes’ last night.”

“You can always fill salons, if that be all,” said she, angrily.

“Yes, but not with Tour du Pins, Tavannes, Rochefoucaulds, Howards of Maiden, and Greys of Allington, besides such folk as Pahlen, Lichtenstein, Colonna, and so forth.”

“How is it then, that one never sees them?” cried she, more eagerly.

“Say, rather, how is it one doesn’t know them,” cried Martin, “for here we are seven weeks, and, except to that gorgeous fellow in the cocked hat at the porter’s lodge, I have never exchanged a salute with a human being.”

"There are just three houses, they say, in all Paris, to one or other of which one must be presented," said the Captain – "Madame de Luygnes, the Duchesse de Cour-celles, and Madame de Mirecourt."

"That Madame de Luygnes was your old mistress, was she not, Miss Henderson?" asked Lady Dorothea, haughtily.

"Yes, my Lady," was the calm reply.

"And who are these other people?"

"The Duc de Mirecourt was married to 'Mademoiselle,' the daughter of the Duchesse de Luygnes."

"Have you heard or seen anything of them since you came here?" asked her Ladyship.

"No, my Lady, except a hurried salute yesterday from a carriage as we drove in. I just caught sight of the Duchesse as she waved her hand to me."

"Oh, I saw it. I returned the salutation, never suspecting it was meant for *you*. And she was your companion – your dear friend – long ago?"

"Yes, my Lady," said Kate, bending down over her work, but showing in the crimson flush that spread over her neck how the speech had touched her.

"And you used to correspond, I think?" continued her Ladyship.

"We did so, my Lady."

"And she dropped it, of course, when she married, – she had other things to think of?"

"I 'm afraid, my Lady, the lapse was on *my* side," said Kate, scarcely repressing a smile at her own hardihood.

"*Your* side! Do you mean to say that you so far forgot what was due to the station of the Duchesse de Mirecourt, that you left her letter unreplied to?"

"Not exactly, my Lady."

"Then, pray, what do you mean?"

Kate paused for a second or two, and then, in a very calm and collected voice, replied, – "I told the Duchesse, in my last letter, that I should write no more, – that my life was thrown in a wild, unfrequented region, where no incident broke the monotony, and that were I to continue our correspondence, my letters must degenerate into a mere selfish record of my own sentiments, as unprofitable to read as ungraceful to write; and so I said good-bye – or *au revoir*, at least – till other scenes might suggest other thoughts."

"A most complimentary character of our Land of the West, certainly! I really was not aware before that Cro' Martin was regarded as an 'oubliette.'"

Kate made no answer, – a silence which seemed rather to irritate than appease her Ladyship.

"I hope you included the family in your dreary picture. I trust it was not a mere piece of what artists call still life, Miss Henderson?"

"No, my Lady," said she, with a deep sigh; but the tone and manner of the rejoinder were anything but apologetic.

"Now I call that as well done as anything one sees in Hyde Park," cried the Captain, directing attention as he spoke to a very handsome chariot which had just driven up to the door. "They're inquiring for somebody here," continued he, as he watched the Chasseur as he came and went from the carriage to the house.

"There's a Grandee of Spain, or something of that kind, lives on the fourth floor, I think," said Martin, dryly.

"The Duchesse de Mirecourt, my Lady," said a servant, entering, "begs to know if your Ladyship will receive her?"

Kate started at the words, and her color rose till her cheeks were crimsoned.

"A visit, I suspect, rather for you than me, Miss Henderson," said Lady Dorothea, in a half-whisper; and then turning to her servant, nodded her acquiescence.

"I 'm off," said Martin, rising suddenly to make his escape.

"And I too," said the Captain, as he made his exit by an opposite door.

The folding-doors of the apartment were at the same moment thrown wide, and the Duchess entered. Very young, – almost girlish, indeed, – she combined in her appearance the charming freshness of youth with that perfection of gracefulness which attaches to the higher classes of French society, and although handsome, more striking from the fascination of manner than for any traits of beauty. Courtesying slightly, but deferentially, to Lady Dorothea, she apologized for her intrusion by the circumstance of having, the day before, caught sight of her "dear governess and dear friend – " And as she reached thus far, the deep-drawn breathing of another attracted her. She turned and saw Kate, who, pale as a statue, stood leaning on a chair. In an instant she was in her arms, exclaiming, in a rapture of delight, "My dear, dear Kate, – my more than sister! You would forgive me, madam," said she, addressing Lady Dorothea, "if you but knew what we were to each other. Is it not so, Kate?"

A faint tremulous motion of the lips – all colorless as they were – was the only reply to the speech; but the young Frenchwoman needed none, but turning to her Ladyship, poured forth with native volubility a story of their friendship, the graceful language in which she uttered it lending those choice phrases which never seem exaggerations of sentiment till they be translated into other tongues. Mingling her praises with half reproaches, she drew a picture of Kate so flattering that Lady Dorothea could not help a sense of shrinking terror that one should speak in such terms of the governess.

"And now, dearest," added she, turning to Kate, "are we to see a great deal of each other? When can you come to me? Pardon me, madam, this question should be addressed to you."

"Miss Henderson is my secretary, Madame la Duchesse; she is also my companion," said Lady Dorothea, haughtily; "but I can acknowledge claims which take date before my own. She shall be always at liberty when you wish for her."

"How kind, how good of you!" cried the Duchess. "I could have been certain of that. I knew that my dear Kate must be loved by all around her. We have a little *fête* on Wednesday at St. Germain. May I bespeak her for that day?"

"Her Ladyship suffers her generosity to trench upon her too far," said Kate, in a low voice. "I am in a manner necessary to her, – that is, my absence would be inconvenient."

"But her Ladyship will doubtless be in the world herself that evening. There is a ball at the Duchesse de Sargance, and the Austrian Minister has something," rattled on the lively Duchess. "Paris is so gay just now, so full of pleasant people, and all so eager for enjoyment. Don't you find it so, my Lady?"

"I go but little into society!" said Lady Dorothea, stiffly.

"How strange! and I – I cannot live without it. Even when we go to our Château at Roche-Mire I carry away with me all my friends who will consent to come. We try to imitate that delightful life of your country houses, and make up that great family party which is the *beau idéal* of social enjoyment."

"And you like a country life, then?" asked her Ladyship.

"To be sure. I love the excursions on horseback, the forest drives, the evening walks in the trellised vines, the parties one makes to see a thousand things one never looks at afterwards; the little dinners on the grass, with all their disasters, and the moonlight drive homewards, half joyous, half romantic, – not to speak of that charming frankness by which every one makes confession of his besetting weakness, and each has some little secret episode of his own life to tell the others. All but Kate here," cried she, laughingly, "who never revealed anything."

"Madame la Duchesse will, I 'm sure, excuse my absence; she has doubtless many things she would like to say to her friend alone," said Lady Dorothea, rising and courtesying formally; and the young Duchess returned the salutation with equal courtesy and respect.

"My dear, dear Kate," cried she, throwing her arms around her as the door closed after her Ladyship, "how I have longed for this moment, to tell you ten thousand things about myself and

hear from you as many more! And first, dearest, are you happy? for you look more serious, more thoughtful than you used, – and paler, too.”

“Am I so?” asked Kate, faintly.

“Yes. When you’re not speaking, your brows grow stern and your lips compressed. Your features have not that dear repose, as Giorgevo used to call it. Poor fellow! how much in love he was, and you ‘ve never asked for him!”

“I never thought of him!” said she, with a smile.

“Nor of Florian, Kate!”

“Nor even of him.”

“And yet that poor fellow was really in love, – nay, don’t laugh, Kate, I know it. He gave up his career, everything he had in life, – he was a Secretary of Legation, with good prospects, – all to win your favor, becoming a ‘Carbonaro,’ or a ‘Montagnard,’ or something or other that swears to annihilate all kings and extirpate monarchy.”

“And after that?” asked Kate, with more of interest.

“After that, *ma chère*, they sent him to the galleys; I forget exactly where, but I think it was in Sicily. And then there was that Hungarian Count Nemescz, that wanted to kill somebody who picked up your bouquet out of the Grand Canal at Venice.”

“And whom, strangely enough, I met and made acquaintance with in Ireland. His name is Massingbred.”

“Not the celebrity, surely, – the young politician who made such a sensation by a first speech in Parliament t’other day? He’s all the rage here. Could it be him?”

“Possibly enough,” said she, carelessly. “He had very good abilities, and knew it.”

“He comes to us occasionally, but I scarcely have any acquaintance with him. But this is not telling me of yourself, child. Who and what are these people you are living with? Do they value my dear Kate as they ought? Are they worthy of having her amongst them?”

“I ‘m afraid not,” said Kate, with a smile. “They do not seem at all impressed with the blessing they enjoy, and only treat me as one of themselves.”

“But, seriously, child, are they as kind as they should be? That old lady is, to my thinking, as austere as an Archduchess.”

“I like her,” said Kate; “that is, I like her cold, reserved manner, unbending as it is, which only demands the quiet duties of servitude, and neither asks nor wishes for affection. She admits me to no friendship, but she exacts no attachment.”

“And you like this?”

“I did not say I should like it from *you*! said Kate, pressing the hand she held fervently to her lips, while her pale cheek grew faintly red.

“And you go into the world with her, – at least *her* world?”

“She has none here. Too haughty for second-rate society, and unknown to those who form the first class at Paris, she never goes out.”

“But she would – she would like to do so?”

“I ‘m sure she would.”

“Then mamma shall visit her. You know she is everything here; her house is the rendezvous of all the distinguished people, and, once seen in her salons, my Lady – how do you call her?”

“Lady Dorothea Martin.”

“I can’t repeat it – but no matter – her Ladyship shall not want for attentions. Perhaps she would condescend to come to me on Wednesday? Dare I venture to ask her?”

Kate hesitated, and the Duchess quickly rejoined, – “No, dearest, you are quite right; it would be hazardous, too abrupt, too unceremonious. You will, however, be with us; and I long to present you to all my friends, and show them one to whom I owe so much, and ought to be indebted to for

far more. I 'll send for you early, that we may have a long morning together." And so saying, she arose to take leave.

"I feel as though I 'll scarcely believe I had seen you when you have gone," said Kate, earnestly. "I'll fancy it all a dream – or rather, that my life since we met has been one, and that we had never parted."

"Were we not very happy then, Kate?" said the Duchess, with a half-sigh; "happier, perhaps, than we may ever be again."

"*You* must not say so, at all events," said Kate, once more embracing her. And they parted.

Kate arose and watched the splendid equipage as it drove away, and then slowly returned to her place at the work-table. She did not, however, resume her embroidery, but sat deep in reflection, with her hands clasped before her.

"Poor fellow!" said she, at length, "a galley-slave, and Massingbred a celebrity! So much for honesty and truth in this good world of ours! Can it always go on thus? That is the question I'm curious to hear solved. A little time may, perhaps, reveal it!" So saying to herself, she leaned her head upon her hand, deep lost in thought.

CHAPTER IV. A VERY GREAT FAVOR

Amongst the embarrassments of story-telling there is one which, to be appreciated, must have been experienced; it is, however, sufficiently intelligible to claim sympathy even by indicating, – we mean the difficulty a narrator has in the choice of those incidents by which his tale is to be marked out, and the characters who fill it adequately depicted.

It is quite clear that a great number of events must occur in the story of every life of which no record can be made; some seem too trivial, some too irrelevant for mention, and yet, when we come to reflect upon real life itself, how many times do we discover that what appeared to be but the veriest trifles were the mainsprings of an entire existence, and the incidents which we deemed irrelevant were the hidden links that connected a whole chain of events? How easy, then, to err in the selection! This difficulty presents itself strongly to us at present; a vast number of circumstances rise before us from which we must refrain, lest they should appear to indicate a road we are not about to travel; and, at the same time, we feel the want of those very events to reconcile what may well seem contradictions in our history.

It not unfrequently happens that an apology is just as tiresome as the offence it should excuse; and so, without further explanation, we proceed. Lady Dorothea soon found herself as much sought after as she had previously been neglected. The Duchesse de Luygues was the great leader of fashion at Paris; and the marked attentions by which she distinguished her Ladyship at once established her position. Of course her unquestionable claim to station, and her own high connections rendered the task less difficult; while it imparted to Lady Dorothea's own manner and bearing that degree of dignity and calm which never accompany an insecure elevation.

With such refinement of delicacy, such exquisite tact, was every step managed that her Ladyship was left to suppose every attention she received sprung out of her own undeniable right to them, and to the grace and charm of a manner which really had had its share of success some five-and-thirty years before. The gloomy isolation she had passed through gave a stronger contrast to the enjoyment of her present life; and for the first time for years she regained some of that courtly elegance of address which in her youth had pre-eminently distinguished her. The change had worked favorably in her temper also; and Martin perceived, with astonishment, that she neither made injurious comparisons between the present and the past, nor deemed the age they lived in one of insufferable vulgarity. It would scarcely have been possible for Lady Dorothea not to connect her altered position with the friendship between Kate Henderson and her former pupil; she knew it, and she felt it. All her self-esteem could not get over this consciousness; but it was a humiliation reserved for her own heart, since nothing in Kate's manner indicated even a suspicion of the fact. On the contrary, never had she shown herself more submissive and dependent. The duties of her office, multiplied as they were tenfold by her Ladyship's engagements, were all punctually acquitted, and with a degree of tact and cleverness that obtained from Lady Dorothea the credit of a charming note-writer. Nor was she indifferent to the effect Kate produced in society, where her beauty and fascination had already made a deep impression.

Reserving a peculiar deference and respect for all her intercourse with Lady Dorothea, Kate Henderson assumed to the world at large the ease and dignity of one whose station was the equal of any. There was nothing in her air or bearing that denoted the dependant; there was rather a dash of haughty superiority, which did not scruple to avow itself and bid defiance to any bold enough to question its claims. Even this was a secret flattery to Lady Dorothea's heart; and she saw with satisfaction the success of that imperious tone which to herself was subdued to actual humility.

Lady Dorothea Martin and her beautiful companion were now celebrities at Paris; and, assuredly, no city of the world knows how to shower more fascinations on those it favors. Life became to them a round of brilliant festivities. They received invitations from every quarter, and everywhere

were met with that graceful welcome so sure to greet those whose airs and whose dress are the ornaments of a salon. They “received” at home, too; and her Ladyship’s Saturdays were about the most exclusive of all Parisian receptions. Tacitly, at least, the whole management and direction of these “Evenings” was committed to Kate. Martin strictly abstained from a society in every way distasteful to him. The Captain had come to care for nothing but play, so that the Club was his only haunt; and it was the rarest of all events to see him pass even a few minutes in the drawing-room. He had, besides, that degree of shrinking dislike to Kate Henderson which a weak man very often experiences towards a clever and accomplished girl. When he first joined his family at Paris, he was struck by her great beauty and the elegance of a manner that might have dignified any station, and he fell partly in love, – that is to say, as much in love as a captain of hussars could permit himself to feel for a governess. He condescended to make small advances, show her petty attentions, and even distinguish her by that flattering stare, with his glass to his eye, which he had known to be what the poet calls “blush-compelling” in many a fair cheek in provincial circles.

To his marvellous discomfiture, however, these measures were not followed by any success. She never as much as seemed aware of them, and treated him with the same polite indifference, as though he had been neither a hussar nor a lady-killer. Of course he interpreted this as a piece of consummate cunning; he had no other measure for her capacity than would have been suited to his own. She was a deep one, evidently bent on drawing him on, and entangling him in some stupid declaration, and so he grew cautious. But, somehow, his reserve provoked as little as his boldness. She did not change in the least; she treated him with a quiet, easy sort of no-notice, – the most offensive thing possible to one bent upon being impressive, and firmly persuaded that he need only wish, to be the conqueror.

Self-worship was too strong in him to suffer a single doubt as to his own capacity for success, and therefore the only solution to the mystery of her manner was its being an artful scheme, which time and a little watching would surely explain. Time went on, and yet he grew none the wiser; Kate continued the same impassive creature as at first. She never sought, – never avoided him. She met him without constraint, – without pleasure, too. They never became intimate, while there was no distance in their intercourse; till at last, wounded in his self-esteem, he began to feel that discomfort in her presence which only waits for the slightest provocation to become actual dislike.

With that peevishness that belongs to small minds, he would have been glad to have discovered some good ground for hating her; and a dozen times a day did he fancy that he had “hit the blot,” but somehow he always detected his mistake ere long; and thus did he live on in that tantalizing state of uncertainty and indecision which combines about as much suffering as men of his stamp are capable of feeling.

If Lady Dorothea never suspected the degree of influence Kate silently exercised over her, the Captain saw it palpably, and tried to nourish the knowledge into a ground for dislike. But somehow she would no more suffer herself to be hated than to be loved, and invariably baffled all his attempts to “get up” an indignation against her. By numberless devices – too slight, too evanescent to be called regular coquetry – she understood how to conciliate him, even in his roughest moods, while she had only to make the very least possible display of her attractions to fascinate him in his happier moments. The gallant hussar was not much given to self-examination. It was one of the last positions he would have selected; and yet he had confessed to his own heart that, though he ‘d not like to marry her himself, he ‘d be sorely tempted to shoot any man who made her his wife.

Lady Dorothea and Kate Henderson were seated one morning engaged in the very important task of revising the invitation-book, – weeding out the names of departed acquaintance, and canvassing the claims of those who should succeed them. The rigid criticism as to eligibility showed how great an honor was the card for her Ladyship’s “Tea.” While they were thus occupied, Captain Martin entered the room with an open letter in his hand, his air and manner indicating flurry, if not actual agitation.

“Sorry to interrupt a privy council,” said he, “but I’ve come to ask a favor, – don’t look frightened; it’s not for a woman, my Lady, – but I want a card for your next Saturday, for a male friend of mine.”

“Kate has just been telling me that ‘our men’ are too numerous.”

“Impossible. Miss Henderson knows better than any one that the success of these things depends on having a host of men, – all ages, all classes, all sorts of people,” said he, indolently.

“I think we have complied with your theory,” said she, pointing to the book before her. “If our ladies are chosen for their real qualities, the men have been accepted with a most generous forbearance.”

“One more, then, will not damage the mixture.”

“Of course, Captain Martin, it is quite sufficient that he is a friend of yours – that you wish it – ”

“But it is no such thing, Miss Henderson,” broke in Lady Dorothea. “We have already given deep umbrage in many quarters – very high quarters, too – by refusals; and a single mistake would be fatal to us.”

“But why need this be a mistake?” cried Captain Martin, peevishly. “The man is an acquaintance of mine, – a friend, if you like to call him so.”

“And who is he?” asked my Lady, with all the solemnity of a judge.

“A person I met at the Cape. We travelled home together – saw a great deal of each other – in fact – I know him as intimately as I do – any officer in my regiment,” said the Captain, blundering and faltering at every second word.

“Oh! then he is one of your own corps?” said her Ladyship.

“I never said so,” broke he in. “If he had been, I don’t fancy I should need to employ much solicitation in his behalf; the – they are not usually treated in that fashion!”

“I trust we should know how to recognize their merits,” said Kate, with a look which sorely puzzled him whether it meant conciliation or raillery.

“And his name?” asked my Lady. “His name ought to be decisive, without anything more!”

“He’s quite a stranger here, knows nobody, so that you incur no risk as to any impertinent inquiries, and when he leaves this, to-morrow or next day, you ‘ll never see him again.” This the Captain said with all the confusion of an inexperienced man in a weak cause.

“Shall I address his card, or will you take it yourself, Captain Martin?” said Kate, in a low voice.

“Write Merl, – Mr. Herman Merl,” said he, dropping his own voice to the same tone.

“Merl!” exclaimed Lady Dorothea, whose quick hearing detected the words. “Why, where on earth could you have made acquaintance with a man called Merl?”

“I have told you already where and how we met; and if it be any satisfaction to you to know that I am under considerable obligations – heavy obligations – to this same gentleman, perhaps it might incline you to show him some mark of attention.”

“You could have him to dinner at your Club, – you might even bring him here, when we’re alone, Harry; but really, to receive him at one of our Evenings! You know how curious people are, what questions they will ask: – ‘Who is that queer-looking man?’ – I ‘m certain he is so. – ‘Is he English?’ – ‘Who does he belong to?’ – ‘Does he know any one?’”

“Let them ask me, then,” said Martin, “and I may, perhaps, be able to satisfy them.” At the same moment he took up from the table the card which Kate had just written, giving her a look of grateful recognition as he did so.

“You ‘ve done this at your own peril, Miss Henderson,” said Lady Dorothea, half upbraidingly.

“At *mine*, be it rather,” said the Captain, sternly.

“I accept my share of it willingly,” said Kate, with a glance which brought a deep flush over the hussar’s cheek, and sent through him a strange thrill of pleasure.

“Then I am to suppose we shall be honored with your own presence on this occasion, – rare favor that it is,” said her Ladyship.

“Yes, I ‘ll look in. I promised Merl to present him.”

“Oh, you need n’t!” said she, peevishly. “Half the men merely make their bow when they meet me, and neither expect me to remember who they are or to notice them. I may leave your distinguished friend in the same category.”

A quick glance from Kate – fleeting, but full of meaning – stopped Martin as he was about to make a hasty reply. And, crumpling up the card with suppressed passion, he turned and left the room.

“Don’t put that odious name on our list, Miss Henderson,” said Lady Dorothea; “we shall never have him again.”

“I ‘m rather curious to see him,” said Kate. “All this discussion has imparted a kind of interest to him, not to say that there would seem something like a mystery in Captain Martin’s connection with him.”

“I confess to no such curiosity,” said my Lady, haughtily. “The taste to be amused by vulgarity is like the passion some people have to see an hospital; you may be interested by the sight, but you may catch a malady for your pains.” And with this observation of mingled truth and fallacy her Ladyship sailed proudly out of the room in all the conscious importance of her own cleverness.

CHAPTER V. A LETTER FROM HOME

While this discussion was going on, Martin was seated in his own room, examining the contents of his letter-bag, which the post had just delivered to him. A very casual glance at his features would have discovered that the tidings which met his eye were very rarely of a pleasant character. For the most part the letters were importunate appeals for money, subscriptions, loans, small sums to be repaid when the borrower had risen above his present difficulties, aids to effect some little enterprise on whose very face was failure. Then there were the more formal demands for sums actually due, written in the perfection of coercive courtesy, subjecting the reader to all the tortures of a moral surgical operation, a suffering actually increased by the very dexterity of the manipulator. Then came, in rugged hand and gnarled shape, urgent entreaties for abatements and allowances, pathetic pictures of failing crops, sickness and sorrow! Somewhat in contrast to these in matter – most strikingly unlike them in manner – was a short note from Mr. Maurice Scanlan. Like a rebutting witness in a cause, he spoke of everything as going on favorably; prices were fair, the oat crop a reasonable one. There was distress, to be sure, but who ever saw the West without it? The potatoes had partially failed; but as there was a great deal of typhus and a threat of cholera, there would be fewer to eat them. The late storms had done a good deal of mischief, but as the timber thrown down might be sold without any regard to the entail, some thousand pounds would thus be realized; and as the gale had carried away the new pier at Kilkieran, there would be no need to give a bounty to the fishermen who could not venture out to sea. The damage done to the house and the conservatories at Cro' Martin offered an opportunity to congratulate the owner on the happiness of living in a milder climate; while the local squabbles of the borough suggested a pleasant contrast with all the enjoyments of a life abroad.

On the whole, Mr. Scanlan's letter was rather agreeable than the reverse, since he contrived to accompany all the inevitable ills of fortune by some side-wind consolations, and when pushed hard for these, skilfully insinuated in what way "things might have been worse." If the letter did not reflect very favorably on either the heart or brain that conceived it, it well suited him to whom it was addressed. To screen himself from whatever might irritate him, to escape an unpleasant thought or unhappy reflection, to avoid, above all things, the slightest approach of self-censure, was Martin's great philosophy; and he esteemed the man who gave him any aid in this road. Now newspapers might croak their dark predictions about the coming winter, prophesy famine, fever, and pestilence; Scanlan's letter, "written from the spot," by "one who enjoyed every opportunity for forming a correct opinion," was there, and *he* said matters were pretty much as usual. The West of Ireland had never been a land of milk and honey, and nobody expected it ever would be, – the people could live in it, however, and pay rents too; and as Martin felt that he had no undue severity to reproach himself with, he folded up the epistle, saying that "when a man left his house and property for a while, it was a real blessing to have such a fellow as Scanlan to manage for him;" and truly, if one could have his conscience kept for a few hundreds a year, the compact might be a pleasant one. But even to the most self-indulgent this plan is impracticable; and so might it now be seen in Martin's heightened color and fidgety manner, and that even *he* was not as much at ease within as he wished to persuade himself he was.

Amid the mass of correspondence, pamphlets and newspapers, one note, very small and neatly folded, had escaped Martin's notice till the very last; and it was only as he heaped up a whole bundle to throw into the fire that he discovered this, in Mary's well-known hand. He held it for some time ere he broke the seal, and his features assumed a sadder, graver cast than before. His desertion of her – and he had not blinked the word to himself – had never ceased to grieve him; and however disposed he often felt to throw upon others the blame which attached to himself here, he attempted no casuistry, but stood quietly, without one plea in his favor, before his own heart.

The very consciousness of his culpability had prevented him writing to her as he ought; his letters were few, short, and constrained. Not all the generous frankness of hers could restore to him the candid ease of his former intercourse with her; and every chance expression he used was conned over and canvassed by him, lest it might convey some sentiment, or indicate some feeling foreign to his intention. At length so painful had the task become that he had ceased writing altogether, contenting himself with a message through Kate Henderson, – some excuse about his health, fatigue, – and so forth, ever coupled with a promise that he would soon be himself again, and as active a correspondent as she could desire.

To these apologies Mary always replied in a kindly spirit. Whatever sorrow they might have cost her she kept for herself; they never awakened one expression of impatience, not a word of reproach. She understood him thoroughly, – his easy indolence of disposition, his dislike to a task, his avoidance of whatever was possible to defer; more even than all these, his own unforgiveness of himself for his part towards her. To alleviate, so far as she might, the poignancy of the last, was for a while the great object of all her letters; and so she continued to expatiate on the happy life she was leading, her contentment with the choice she had made of remaining there, throwing in little playful sallies of condolence at her uncle's banishment, and jestingly assuring him how much happier he would be at home!

In whatever mood, however, she wrote, there was a striking absence of whatever could fret or grieve her uncle throughout all her letters. She selected every pleasant topic and the favorable side of every theme to tell of. She never forgot any little locality which he had been partial to, or any of the people who were his favorites; and, in fact, it might have seemed that the great object she had in view was to attach him more and more to the home he had left, and strengthen every tie that bound him to his own country. And all this was done lightly and playfully, and with a pleasant promise of the happiness he should feel on the day of his return.

These letters were about the pleasantest incidents in Martin's present life; and the day which brought him one was sure to pass agreeably, while he made vigorous resolutions about writing a reply, and sometimes got even so far as to open a desk and ruminate over an answer. It so chanced that now a much longer interval had occurred since Mary's last letter, and the appearance of the present note, so unlike the voluminous epistle she usually despatched, struck him with a certain dismay. "Poor Molly," said he, as he broke the seal, "she is growing weary at last; this continued neglect is beginning to tell upon her. A little more, and she 'll believe – as well she may – that we have forgotten her altogether."

The note was even briefer than he had suspected. It was written, too, in what might seem haste, or agitation, and the signature forgotten. Martin's hand trembled, and his chest heaved heavily as he read the following lines: —

"Cro' Martin, Wednesday Night

"Dearest Uncle, – You will not suffer these few lines to remain unanswered, since they are written in all the pressure of a great emergency. Our worst fears for the harvest are more than realized; a total failure in the potatoes – a great diminution in the oat crop; the incessant rains have flooded all the low meadows, and the cattle are almost without forage, while from the same cause no turf can be cut, and even that already cut and stacked cannot be drawn away from the bogs. But, worse than all these, typhus is amongst us, and cholera, they say, coming. I might stretch out this dreary catalogue, but here is enough, more than enough, to awaken your sympathies and arouse you to action. There is a blight on the land; the people are starving – dying. If every sense of duty was dead within us, if we could harden our hearts against every claim of those from whose labor we derive ease, from whose toil we draw wealth and leisure, we might still be recalled to better things by the glorious heroism of these poor people, so nobly courageous, so patient are they in their trials. It is not now that I can speak of the traits I have witnessed of their affection, their charity, their self-denial, and their daring – but now is the moment to show them that we, who have been dealt with more favorably by fortune, are not devoid of the qualities which adorn their nature.

"I feel all the cruelty of narrating these things to you, too far away from the scene of sorrow to aid by your counsel and encourage by your assistance; but it would be worse than cruelty to conceal from you that a terrible crisis is at hand, which will need all your energy to mitigate.

"Some measures are in your power, and must be adopted at once. There must be a remission of rent almost universally, for the calamity has involved all; and such as are a little richer than their neighbors should be aided, that they may be the more able to help them. Some stores of provisions must be provided to be sold at reduced rates, or even given gratuitously. Medical aid must be had, and an hospital of some sort established. The able-bodied must be employed on some permanent work; and for these, we want power from you and some present moneyed assistance. I will not harrow your feelings with tales of sufferings. You have seen misery here – enough, I say – you have witnessed nothing like this, and we are at but the beginning.

"Write to me at once yourself – this is no occasion to employ a deputy – and forgive me, dearest uncle, for I know not what faults of presumption I may have here committed. My head is confused; the crash of misfortunes has addled me, and each succeed so rapidly on each other, that remedies are scarcely employed than they have to be abandoned. When, however, I can tell the people that it is their own old friend and master that sends them help, and bids them to be of good cheer, – when I can show them that, although separated by distance, your heart never ceases to live amongst them, – I know well the magic working of such a spell upon them, and how, with a bravery that the boldest soldier never surpassed, they will rise up against the stern foes of sickness and famine, and do battle with hard fortune manfully.

"You have often smiled at what you deemed my exaggerated opinion of these poor people, – my over-confidence in their capacity for good. Oh – take my word for it – I never gave them credit for one half the excellence of their natures. They are on their trial now, and nobly do they sustain it!

"I have no heart to answer all your kind questions about myself, – enough that I am well; as little can I ask you about all your doings in Paris. I 'm afraid I should but lose temper if I heard that they were pleasant ones; and yet, with my whole soul, I wish you to be happy; and with this,

"Believe me your affectionate

"Mr. Repton has written me the kindest of letters, full of good advice and good sense; he has also enclosed me a check for £100, with an offer of more if wanted. I was low and depressed when his note reached me, but it gave me fresh energy and hope. He proposed to come down here if I wished; but how could I ask such a sacrifice, – how entreat him to face the peril?"

"Tell Captain Martin I wish to speak to him," said Martin, as he finished the perusal of this letter. And in a few minutes after, that gallant personage appeared, not a little surprised at the summons.

"I have got a letter from Mary here," said Martin, vainly endeavoring to conceal his agitation as he spoke, "which I want to show you. Matters are in a sad plight in the West. She never exaggerates a gloomy story, and her account is very afflicting. Read it."

The Captain lounged towards the window, and, leaning listlessly against the wall, opened the epistle.

"You have not written to her lately, then?" asked he, as he perused the opening sentence.

"I am ashamed to say I have not; every day I made a resolution; but somehow – "

"Is all this anything strange or new?" broke in the Captain. "I 'm certain I have forty letters from my mother with exactly the same story. In fact, before I ever broke the seal, I 'd have wagered an equal fifty that the potatoes had failed, the bogs were flooded, the roads impassable, and the people dying in thousands; and yet, when spring came round, by some happy miracle they were all alive and merry again!"

"Read on," said Martin, impatiently, and barely able to control himself at this heartless commentary.

"Egad! I 'd have sworn I had read all this before, except these same suggestions about not exacting the rents, building hospitals, and so forth; that *is* new. And why does she say, 'Don't write by deputy'? Who *was* your deputy?"

"Kate Henderson has written for me latterly."

"And I should say she 's quite equal to that sort of thing; she dashes off my mother's notes at score, and talks away, too, all the time she 's writing."

"That is not the question before us," said Martin, sternly.

"When I sent for you to read that letter, it was that you might advise and counsel me what course to take."

"If you can afford to give away a year's income in the shape of rent, and about as much more in the shape of a donation, of course you 're quite free to do it. I only wish that your generosity would begin at home, though; for I own to you I 'm very hard-up at this moment." This the Captain spoke with an attempted jocularity which decreased with every word, till it subsided into downright seriousness ere he finished.

"So far from being in a position to do an act of munificence, I am sorely pressed for money," said Martin.

The Captain started; the half-smile with which he had begun to receive this speech died away on his lips as he asked, "Is this really the case?"

"Most truly so," said Martin, solemnly.

"But how, in the name of everything absurd – how is this possible? By what stratagem could you have spent five thousand a year at Cro' Martin, and your estate was worth almost three times as much? Giving a very wide margin for waste and robbery, I 'd say five thousand could not be made away with there in a twelvemonth."

"Your question only shows me how carelessly you must have read my letters to you, in India," said Martin; "otherwise you could not have failed to see the vast improvements we have been carrying out on the property, – the roads, the harbors, the new quarries opened, the extent of ground covered by plantation, – all the plans, in fact, which Mary had matured – "

"Mary! Mary!" exclaimed the Captain. "And do you tell me that all these things were done at the instigation of a young girl of nineteen or twenty, without any knowledge, or even advice – "

"And who said she was deficient in knowledge?" cried Martin. "Take up the map of the estate; see the lands she has reclaimed; look at the swamps you used to shoot snipe over bearing corn crops; see the thriving village, where once the boatmen were starving, for they dared not venture out to sea without a harbor against bad weather."

"Tell me the cost of all this. What's the figure?" said the Captain; "that's the real test of all these matters, for if *your* income could only feed this outlay, I pronounce the whole scheme the maddest thing in Christendom. My mother's taste for carved oak cabinets and historical pictures is the quintessence of wisdom in comparison."

Martin was overwhelmed and silent, and the other went on, – "Half the fellows in 'ours' had the same story to tell, – of estates wasted, and fine fortunes squandered in what are called improvements. If the possession of a good property entails the necessity to spend it all in this fashion, one is very little better than a kind of land-steward to one's own estate; and, for my part, I 'd rather call two thousand a year my own, to do what I pleased with, than have a nominal twenty, of which I must disburse nineteen."

"Am I again to remind you that this is not the question before us?" said Martin, with increased sternness.

"That is exactly the very question," rejoined the Captain. "Mary here coolly asks you, in the spirit of this same improvement-scheme, to relinquish a year's income, and make a present of I know not how much more, simply because things are going badly with them, just as if everybody has n't

their turn of ill-fortune. Egad, I can answer for it, *mine* has n't been flourishing latterly, and yet I have heard of no benevolent plan on foot to aid or release me!"

To this heartless speech, uttered, however, in most perfect sincerity, Martin made no reply whatever, but sat with folded arms, deep in contemplation. At length, raising his head, he asked, "And have you, then, no counsel to give, – no suggestion to make me?"

"Well," said he, suddenly, "if Mary has not greatly overcharged all this story – "

"That she has not," cried Martin, interrupting him. "There 's not a line, not a word of her letter, I 'd not guarantee with all I 'm worth in the world."

"In that case," resumed the Captain, in the same indolent tone, "they must be in a sorry plight, and *I* think ought to cut and run as fast as they can. I know that's what *we* do in India; when the cholera comes, we break up the encampment, and move off somewhere else. Tell Mary, then, to advise them to keep out of 'the jungle,' and make for the hill country."

Martin stared at the speaker for some seconds, and it was evident how difficult he found it to believe that the words he had just listened to were uttered in deliberate seriousness.

"If you have read that letter, you certainly have not understood it," said he at last, in a voice full of melancholy meaning.

"Egad, it's only too easy of comprehension," replied the Captain; "of all things in life, there's no mistaking a demand for money."

"Just take it with you to your own room, Harry," said Martin, with a manner of more affection than he had yet employed. "It is my firm persuasion that when you have re-read and thought over it, your impression will be a different one. Con it over in solitude, and then come back and give me your advice."

The Captain was not sorry to adopt a plan which relieved him so speedily from a very embarrassing situation, and, folding up the note, he turned and left the room.

There are a great number of excellent people in this world who believe that "Thought," like "Écarté," is a game which requires two people to play. The Captain was one of these; nor was it within his comprehension to imagine how any one individual could suffice to raise the doubts he was called on to canvass or decide. "Who should he now have recourse to?" was his first question; and he had scarcely proposed it to himself when a soft low voice said, "What is puzzling Captain Martin? – can I be of any service to him?" He turned and saw Kate Henderson.

"Only think how fortunate!" exclaimed he. "Just come in here to this drawing-room, and give me your advice."

"Willingly," said she, with a courtesy the more marked because his manner indicated a seriousness that betokened trouble.

"My father has just dismissed me to cogitate over this epistle; as if, after all, when one has read a letter, that any secret or mystical interpretation is to come by all the reconsideration and reflection in the world."

"Am I to read it?" asked Kate, as he placed it in her hand.

"Of course you are," said he.

"There is nothing confidential or private in it which I ought not to see?"

"Nothing; and if there were," added he, warmly, "*you* are one of ourselves, I trust, – at least *I* think you so."

Kate's lips closed with almost stern % impressiveness, but her color never changed at this speech, and she opened the letter in silence. For some minutes she continued to read with the same impassive expression; but gradually her cheek became paler, and a haughty, almost scornful, expression settled on her lips. "So patient are they in their trials," said she, reading aloud the expression of Mary's note. "Is it not possible, Captain Martin, that patience may be pushed a little beyond a virtue, and become something very like cowardice, – abject cowardice? And then," cried she impetuously, and not waiting for his reply, "to say that now is the time to show these poor people the saving care

and protection that the rich owe them, as if the duty dated from the hour of their being struck down by famine, laid low by pestilence, or that the debt could ever be acquitted by the relief accorded to pauperism! Why not have taught these same famished creatures self-dependence, elevated them to the rank of civilized beings by the enjoyment of rights that give men self-esteem as well as liberty? What do you mean to do, sir? – or is that your difficulty?” cried she, hastily changing her tone to one of less energy.

“Exactly, – that is *my difficulty*. My father, I suspect, wishes me to concur in the pleasant project struck out by Mary, and that, by way of helping *them*, we should ruin *ourselves*.”

“And *you* are for – ” She stopped, as if to let him finish her question for her.

“Egad, I don’t know well what I’m for, except it be self-preservation. I mean,” said he, correcting himself, as a sudden glance of almost insolent scorn shot from Kate’s eyes towards him, – “I mean that I ‘m certain more than half of this account is sheer exaggeration. Mary is frightened, – as well she may be, – finding herself all alone, and hearing nothing but the high-colored stories the people brings her, and listening to calamities from morning to night.”

“But still it *may* be all true,” said Kate, solemnly. “It may be – as Miss Martin writes – that ‘there is a blight on the land.’”

“What’s to be done, then?” asked he, in deep embarrassment.

“The first step is to ascertain what is fact, – the real extent of the misfortune.”

“And how is that to be accomplished?” asked he.

“Can you not think of some means?” said she, with a scarcely perceptible approach to a smile.

“No, by Jove! that I cannot, except by going over there one’s self.”

“And why not that?” asked she, more boldly, while she fixed her large full eyes directly upon him.

“If *you* thought that I ought to go, – if you advised it and would actually say ‘Go’ – ”

“Well, if I should?”

“Then I’d set off to-night; though, to say truth, neither the journey nor the business are much to my fancy.”

“Were they ten times less so, sir, I’d say, ‘Go,’” said she, resolutely.

“Then go I will,” cried the Captain; “and I’ll start within two hours.”

CHAPTER VI. MR. MERL'S DEPARTURE

Worthy reader, you are neither weak of purpose nor undecided in action; as little are you easily moved by soft influences, when aided by long eyelashes. But had you been so, it would have been no difficult effort for you to comprehend the state of mind in which Captain Martin repaired to his room to make preparation for his journey. There was a kind of half chivalry in his present purpose that nerved and supported him. It was like a knight-errant of old setting out to confront a peril at the behest of his lady-love; but against this animating conviction there arose that besetting sin of small minds, – a sense of distrust, – a lurking suspicion that he might be, all this while, nothing but the dupe of a very artful woman.

“Who can tell,” said he to himself, “what plan she may have in all this, or what object she may propose to herself in getting *me* out of the way? I don't think she really cares one farthing about the distress of these people, supposing it all to be true; and as to the typhus fever and cholera, egad! if they be there, one ought to think twice before rushing into the midst of them. And then, again, what do I know about the country or its habits? I have no means of judging if it be poorer or sicklier or; more wretched than usual. To *my* eyes, it always seemed at the lowest depth of want and misery; every one went half starved and more than half naked. I 'm sure there is no necessity for my going some few hundred and odd miles to refresh my memory on this pleasant fact; and yet this is precisely what I 'm about to do. Is it by way of trying her power over me? By Jove, I 've hit it!” cried he, suddenly, as he stopped arranging a mass of letters which he was reducing to order before his departure. “That's her game; there's no doubt of it! She has said to herself, ‘This will prove him. If he do this at my bidding, he'll do more.’ Ay, but will he, mademoiselle? that's the question. A young hussar may turn out to be a very old soldier. What if I were just to tell her so. Girls of her stamp like a man all the better when he shows himself to be wide-awake. I 'd lay a fifty on it she 'll care more for me when she sees I 'm her own equal in shrewdness. And, after all, why should *I* go? I could send my valet, Fletcher, – just the kind of fellow for such a mission, – never knew the secret he could n't worm out; there never was a bit of barrack scandal he did n't get to the bottom of. He 'd be back here within a fortnight, with the whole state of the case, and I'll be bound there will be no humbugging *him*.”

This bright idea was not, however, without its share of detracting reflections, for what became of all that personal heroism on which he reposed such hope, if the danger were to be encountered by deputy? This was a puzzle, not the less that he had not yet made up his mind whether he 'd really be in love with Kate Henderson, or only involve *her* in an unfortunate attachment for *him*. While he thus pondered and hesitated, strewing his room with the contents of drawers and cabinets, by way of aiding the labor of preparation, his door was suddenly opened, and Mr. Merl made his appearance. Although dressed with all his habitual regard to effect, and more than an ordinary display of chains and trinkets, that gentleman's aspect betokened trouble and anxiety; at least, there was a certain restlessness in his eye that Martin well understood as an evidence of something wrong within.

“Are you getting ready for a journey, Captain?” asked he, as he entered.

“I was thinking of it; but I believe I shall not go. I 'm undecided.”

“Up the Rhine?”

“No; not in that direction.”

“South, – towards Italy, perhaps?”

“Nor there, either. I was meditating a trip to England.”

“We should be on the road together,” said Merl. “I'm off by four o'clock.”

“How so? What's the reason of this sudden start?”

“There's going to be a crash here,” said Merl, speaking in a lower tone. “The Government have been doing the thing with too high a hand, and there's mischief brewing.”

“Are you sure of this?” asked Martin.

"Only too sure, that's all. I bought in, on Tuesday last, at sixty-four and an eighth, and the same stock is now fifty-one and a quarter, and will be forty to-morrow. The day after – " Here Mr. Merl made a motion with his outstretched arm, to indicate utter extinction.

"You're a heavy loser, then?" asked Martin, eagerly.

"I shall be, to the tune of some thirteen thousand pounds. It was just on that account I came in here. I shall need money within the week, and must turn those Irish securities of yours into cash, – some of them at least, – and I want a hint from you as to which I ought to dispose of and which hold over. You told me one day, I remember, that there was a portion of the property likely to rise greatly in value – "

"*You* told me, sir," said Captain Martin, breaking suddenly in, "when I gave you these same bonds, that they should remain in your own hands, and never leave them. That was the condition on which I gave them."

"I suppose, Captain, you gave them for something; you did not make a present of them," said the Jew, coloring slightly.

"If I did not make a present of them," rejoined Martin, "the transaction was about as profitable to me."

"You owed me the money, sir; that, at least, is the way I regard the matter."

"And when I paid it by these securities, you pledged yourself not to negotiate them. I explained to you how the entail was settled, – that the property must eventually be mine, – and you accepted the arrangement on these conditions."

"All true, Captain; but nobody told me, at that time, there was going to be a revolution in Paris, – which there will be within forty-eight hours."

"Confounded fool that I was to trust the fellow!" said Martin to himself, but quite loud enough to be heard; then turning to Merl, he said, "What do you mean by converting them into cash? Are you about to sell part of our estate?"

"Nothing of the kind, Captain," said Merl, smiling at the innocence of the question. "I am simply going to deposit these where I can obtain an advance upon them. I promise you, besides, it shall not be in any quarter by which the transaction can reach the ears of your family. This assurance will, I trust, satisfy *you*, and entitle *me* to the information I ask for."

"What information do you allude to?" asked Martin, who had totally forgotten what the Jew announced as the reason of his visit.

"I asked you, Captain," said Merl, resuming the mincing softness of his usual manner, "as to which of these securities might be the more eligible for immediate negotiation?"

"And how should I know, sir?" replied the other, rudely. "I am very little acquainted with the property itself; I know still less about the kind of dealings you speak of. It does not concern me in the least what you do, or how you do it. I believe I may have given you bonds for something very like double the amount of all you ever advanced to me. I hear of nothing from my father but the immense resources of this, and the great capabilities of that; but as these same eventualities are not destined to better *my* condition, I have not troubled my head to remember anything about them. You have a claim of about twenty thousand against me."

"Thirty-two thousand four hundred and seventy-eight pounds," said the Jew, reading from a small note-book which he had just taken from his waistcoat pocket.

"That is some ten thousand more than ever I heard of," said Martin, with an hysterical sort of laugh. "Egad, Merl, the fellows were right that would not have you in the 'Cercle.' You 'd have 'cleared every man of them out,' – as well let a ferret into a rabbit warren."

"I was n't aware, – I had not heard that I was put up – "

"To be sure you were; in all form proposed, seconded, and duly blackballed. I own to you, I thought it very hard, very illiberal. There are plenty of fellows there that have no right to be particular; and so Jack Massingbred as much as told them. The fact is, Merl, you ought to have waited awhile,

and by the time that Harlowe and Spencer Cavendish and a few more such were as deep in your books as I am, you 'd have had a walk over. Willoughby says the same. It might have cost you something smart, but you 'd have made it pay in the end, – eh, Merl?”

To this speech, uttered in a strain of jocular impertinence, Merl made no reply. He had just torn one of his gloves in pieces in the effort to draw it on, and he was busily exerting himself to get rid of the fragments.

“Lady Dorothea had given me a card for you for Saturday,” resumed the Captain; “but as you ‘re going away – Besides, after this defeat at the Club, you could n’t well come amongst all these people; so there’s nothing for it but patience, Merl, patience – ”

“A lesson that may be found profitable to others, perhaps,” said the Jew, with one of his furtive looks at the Captain, who quailed under it at once.

“I was going to give you a piece of advice, Merl,” said he, in a tone the very opposite to his late bantering one. “It was, that you should just take a run over to Ireland yourself, and see the property.”

“I mean to do so, Captain Martin,” said the other, calmly.

“I can’t offer you letters, for they would defeat what you desire to accomplish; besides, there is no member of the family there at present but a young lady-cousin of mine.”

“Just the kind of introduction I ‘d like,” said the Jew, with all the zest of a man glad to say what he knew would be deemed an impertinence.

Martin grew crimson with suppressed anger, but never spoke a word.

“Is this the Cousin Mary I have heard you speak of,” said Merl, – “the great horsewoman, and she that ventures out alone on the Atlantic in a mere skiff?”

Martin nodded. His temper was almost an overmatch for him, and he dared not trust himself to speak.

“I should like to see her amazingly, Captain,” resumed Merl.

“Remember, sir, you have no lien upon *her*,” said Martin, sternly.

The Jew smirked and ran his fingers through his hair with the air of one who deemed such an eventuality by no means so very remote.

“Do you know, Master Merl,” said Martin, staring at him from head to foot with an expression the reverse of complimentary, “I ‘m half disposed to give you a few lines to my cousin; and if you ‘ll not take the thing as a *mauvais plaisanterie* on my part, I will do so.” “Quite the contrary, Captain. I ‘ll deem it a great favor, indeed,” said Merl, with an admirable affectation of unconsciousness.

“Here goes, then,” said Martin, sitting down to a table, and preparing his writing materials, while in a hurried hand he began: —

“Dear Cousin Mary, – This will introduce to you Mr. Herman Merl, who visits your remote regions on a tour of – What shall I say?”

“Pleasure, – amusement,” interposed Merl.

“No, when I *am* telling a fib, I like a big one, – I ‘ll say, philanthropy, Merl; and there’s nothing so well adapted to cover those secret investigations you are bent upon, – a tour of philanthropy.

“You will, I am sure, lend him all possible assistance in his benevolent object, – the same being to dispose of the family acres, – and at the same time direct his attention to whatever may be matter of interest, – whether mines, quarries, or other property easily convertible into cash, – treating him in all respects as one to whom I owe many obligations – and several thousand pounds.”

“Will that do, think you?”

“Perfectly; nothing better.”

“In return, I shall ask one favor at your hands,” said Martin, as he folded and addressed the epistle. “It is that you write me a full account of what you see in the West, – how the country looks, and the people. Of course it will all seem terribly poor and destitute, and all that sort of thing, to your eyes; but just try and find out if it be worse than usual. Paddy is such a shrewd fellow, Merl, that it will require all your own sharpness not to be taken in by him. A long letter full of detail – a dash of figures

in it – as to how many sheep have the rot, or how many people have caught the fever, will improve it, – you know the kind of thing I mean; and – I don't suppose you care about shooting, yourself, but you 'll get some one to tell you – are the birds plenty and in good condition. There's a certain Mr. Scanlan, if you chance upon him; he 's up to everything, and not a bad performer at dummy whist, – though I think *you* could teach him a thing or two.” Merl smiled and tried to look flattered, while the other went on: “And there 's another, called Henderson, – the steward, – a very shrewd person, – but *you* don't need all these particulars; you may be trusted to your own good guidance, – eh, Merl?”

Merl again smiled in the same fashion as before; in fact, so completely had he resumed the bland expression habitual to him, that the Captain almost forgot the unpleasant cause of his visit, and all the disagreeable incidents of the interview.

“You could n't give me a few lines to this Mr. Scanlan?” asked Merl, with an air of easy indifference.

“Nothing easier,” cried the Captain, reseating himself; then suddenly rising, with the expression of one to whom a sudden thought had just crossed the mind, “Wait one second for me here, Merl; I'll be back with you at once.” And as he spoke he dashed out of the room, and hastened to his father.

“By a rare piece of luck,” cried he, as he entered, “I 've just chanced upon the very fellow we want; an acquaintance I picked up at the Cape, – up to everything; he goes over to Ireland to-night, and he 'll take a run down to Cro' Martin, and send us his report of all he sees. Whatever he tells us may be relied upon; for, depend upon 't, no lady can humbug *him*. I 've just given him a note for Mary, and I 'll write a few lines also by way of introducing him to Scanlan.”

Martin could barely follow the Captain, as with rapid utterance he poured forth this plan. “Do I know him? What's his name?” asked he at last.

“You never saw him. His name is Merl, – Herman Merl, – a fellow of considerable wealth; a great speculator, – one of those Stock Exchange worthies who never deal in less than tens of thousands. He has a crotchet in his head about buying up half the West of Ireland, – some scheme about flax and the deep-sea fishery. I don't understand it, but I suppose *he* does. At all events, he has plenty of money, and the head to make it fructify; and if he only take a liking to it, he 's the very fellow to buy up Kilkieran, and the islands, and the rest of that waste district you were telling me of t'other night. But I must n't detain him. He starts at four o'clock; and I only ran over here to tell you not to worry yourself any more about Mary's letter. He 'll look to it all.”

And with this consolatory assurance the Captain hastened away, leaving Martin as much relieved in mind as an indolent nature and an easy conscience were sure to make him. To get anybody “to look to” anything had been his whole object in life; to know that, whatever happened, there was always somebody who misstated this, or neglected that, at whose door all the culpability – where there was such – could be laid and but for whom he had himself performed miracles of energy and devotedness, and endured all the tortures and trials of a martyr. He was, indeed, as are a great many others in this world, an excellent man to his own heart, – kind, charitable, and affectionate; a well-wisher to his kind, and hopeful of almost every one; but, all this while, his virtues, like a miser's gold, had no circulation; they remained locked up within him for his own use alone, and there he sat, counting them over and gazing at them, speculating upon all that this affluence could do, and – never doing it!

Life abounds with such men. They win respect while they live, and white marble records their virtues when they die! Nor are they all useless. Their outward bearing at least simulates whatever we revere in good men, and we accept them in the same spirit of compromise as we take stucco for stone; if they do no more, they show our appreciation of the “real article.”

The Captain was not long in inditing a short note to Scanlan, to whom, “strictly confidential,” Mr. Merl was introduced as a great capitalist and speculator, desirous to ascertain all the resources of the land. Scanlan was enjoined to show him every attention, making his visit in all respects as agreeable as possible.

“This fellow will treat you well, Merl,” said the Captain, as he folded the letter; “will give you the best salmon you ever tasted, and a glass of Gordon’s Madeira such as few could sport now-a-days. And if you have a fancy for a day with my Cousin Mary’s hounds, he ‘ll mount you admirably, and show you the way besides.” And with this speech Martin wished him good-bye; and closing the door after him, added, “And if he’ll kindly assist you to a broken neck, it’s about the greatest service he could render me!”

The laugh, silly and meaningless, that followed his utterance of this speech, showed that it was spoken in all the listlessness of one who had not really character enough to be even a “good hater.”

CHAPTER VII. THE CLUB

So little impression had Merl's gloomy forebodings made upon Captain Martin, that he actually forgot everything that this shrewd gentleman predicted, and only partially recalled them when the conversation the next morning at the Club turned on the disturbed state of the capital. People in "society" find it excessively difficult to believe in anything like an organized opposition to the authorities of a government. They are so accustomed to hear of street assemblages being scattered by a few soldiers, mobs routed by a handful of mounted policemen, that they are slow to imagine how any formidable movement can take its rise in such a source. But the maladies of states, like those of the human frame, are often mere trifles in their origin; chance, and the concurrence of events swell their importance, till they assume an aspect of perhaps greater menace than they deserve. This is essentially the case in revolutionary struggles, where, at the outset, none ever contemplates the extent to which the mischief may reach. The proclamation of the "Ordinances," as they were called, had produced a great excitement in Paris. Groups of men in every street were gathered around some one reading aloud the violent commentaries of the public papers; thoughtful and stern faces were met at every corner; a look of expectancy – an expression that seemed to say, What next? – was perceptible on all sides. Many of the shops were half closed, and in some the objects of great value were withdrawn to places of greater security. It was clear to see that men apprehended some great crisis; but whence it should come, or by whose instrumentality promoted, none seemed able to guess. Now and then a mounted orderly would ride by at a smart trot, or a patrol party of dragoons dash past; and the significant glance that followed them indicated how full of meaning these signs appeared.

The day passed in this state of anxious uncertainty; and although the journals discussed the condition of the capital as full of danger and menace, an ostentatious announcement in the "Moniteur" proclaimed Paris to be tranquil. In society – at least in the world of fashion and high life – there were very few who would have disputed the official despatch. "Who and what were they who could dispute the King's Government? Who and where were there either leaders or followers? In what way should they attempt it? The troops in and around Paris numbered something over forty thousand, commanded by an old Marshal of the Empire, now the trustiest adherent of royalty. The days of Mirabeaus and Robespierres and Dantons had passed away; nor were these times in which men would like to recall the reigns of terror and the guillotine." So they reasoned – or, if the phrase be too strong, so they talked – who lounged on soft-cushioned ottomans, or moved listlessly over luxurious carpets; all agreeing that it would be treasonable in the Ministers to retreat or abate one jot of the high prerogative of the Crown. Powdered heads shook significantly, and gold-embroidered vests heaved indignantly at the bare thought that the old spirit of '95 should have survived amongst them; but not one dreamed that the event boded seriously, or that the destinies of a great nation were then in the balance.

It is but five-and-twenty years ago; and how much more have we learned of the manufacture of revolutions in the interval! Barricades and street warfare have become a science, and the amount of resistance a half-armed populace can offer to a regular force is as much a matter of certainty as a mathematical theorem. At that period, however, men were but in the infancy of this knowledge; the traditions of the Great Revolution scarcely were remembered, and, for the most part, they were inapplicable.

What wonder, then, if people in society smiled scornfully at the purposeless masses that occasionally moved past beneath their windows, shouting with discordant voices some fragments of the "Marseillaise," or, as they approached the residence of any in authority, venturing on the more daring cry of "Down with the Ordinances!" The same tone of haughty contempt pervaded the "Club." Young men of fashion, little given to the cares of political life, and really indifferent to the action

of laws which never invaded the privileges of the play-table, or curtailed one prerogative of the “Coulisses,” felt an angry impatience at all the turbulence and riot of the public streets.

In a magnificently furnished salon of the Club a number of these young men were now assembled. Gathered from every nation of Europe, – many of them bearing names of high historical interest, – they were, so far as dress, air, and appearance went, no ignoble representatives of the class they belonged to. The proud and haughty Spaniard, the fierce-eyed, daring-looking Pole, the pale, intellectual-faced Italian, the courteous Russian, and the fair-haired, stalwart Saxon were all there; and, however dissimilar in type, banded together by the magic influence of the “set” they moved in, to an almost perfect uniformity of sentiment and opinion.

“I vote that any man be fined ten Louis that alludes, however remotely, to this confounded question again,” cried Count Gardoni, rising impatiently from his chair and approaching a card-table.

“And I second you!” exclaimed a Polish prince, with a Russian decoration at his button-hole.

“Carried *nem. con.*” said Captain Martin, seating himself at the play-table. “And now for the ‘Lansquenet.’” And in a moment every seat was occupied, and purses of gold and pocket-books of bank-notes were strewed over the board. They were all men who played high; and the game soon assumed the grave character that so invariably accompanies large wagers. Wonderfully little passed, except the terms of the game itself. Gambling is a jealous passion, and never admits its votaries to wander in their attention. And now large sums passed from hand to hand, and all the passions of hope and fear racked heads and hearts around, while a decorous silence prevailed; or, when broken, some softly toned voice alone interrupted the stillness.

“Are you going, Martin?” whispered the young French Count de Nevers, as the other moved noiselessly back from the table.

“It is high time, I think,” said Martin; “this is my seventeenth night of losing, – losing heavily, too. I’m sick of it!”

“Here ‘s a chance for you, Martin,” said a Russian prince, who had just assumed “the bank.” “You shall have your choice of color, and your own stake.”

“Thanks; but I’ll not be tempted.”

“I say red, and a thousand francs,” cried a Neapolitan.

“There ‘s heavier play outside, I suspect,” said Martin, as a wild, hoarse shout from the streets re-echoed through the room.

“A fine, – a fine, – Martin is fined!” cried several around the table.

“You have n’t left me wherewithal to pay it, gentlemen,” said he, laughing. “I was just about to retire, a bankrupt, into private life.”

“That’s platoon fire,” exclaimed the Pole, as the loud detonation of small arms seemed to shake the very room.

“Czernavitz also fined,” cried two together.

“I bow in submission to the Court,” said the Pole, throwing down the money on the table.

“Lend *me* as much more,” said Martin; “it may change my luck.” And with this gambler’s philosophy, he again drew nigh the table.

This slight interruption over, the game proceeded as before. Martin, however, was now a winner, every wager succeeding, and every bet he made a gain.

“There’s nothing like a dogged persistence,” said the Russian. “Fortune never turns her back on him who shows constancy. See Martin, now; by that very resolution he has conquered, and here we are, all cleared out!”

“I am, for one,” cried an Italian, flinging his empty purse on the table.

“There’s my last Louis,” said Nevers. “I reserve it to pay for my supper.”

“Martin shall treat us all to supper!” exclaimed another.

“Where shall it be, then?” said Martin; “here, or at my own quarters?”

“Here, by all means,” cried some.

"I 'm for the Place Vendôme," said the Pole, "for who knows but we shall catch a glimpse of that beautiful girl, Martin's 'Belle Irlandaise.'"

"I saw her to-night," said the Italian, "and I own she *is* all you say. She was speaking to Villemart, and I assure you the old Minister won't forget it in a hurry. Something or other he said about the noise in the street drew from him the word *canaille*. She turned round at once and attacked him. He replied, and the controversy grew warm; so much so, that many gathered around them to listen, amongst whom I saw the Duc de Guiche, Prince du Saulx, and the Austrian Minister. Nothing could be more perfect than her manner, – calm, without any effrontery; assured, and yet no sacrifice of delicacy. It was easy to see, too, that the theme was not one into which she stumbled by an accident; she knew every event of the Great Revolution, and used the knowledge with consummate skill, and, but for one slip, with consummate temper also.

"What was the slip you allude to?" cried the Russian.

"It was when Villemart, after a boastful enumeration of the superior merits of his order, called them the 'Enlighteners of the People.'

"You played that part on one occasion," said she; "but I scarcely thought you 'd like to refer to it."

"How so? When do you mean?" asked he.

"When they hung you to the lanterns," said she, with the energy of a tigress in her look. Pardié! at that moment I never saw anything so beautiful or so terrible."

A loud uproar in the street without, in which the sound of troop-horses passaging to and fro could be distinguished, now interrupted the colloquy. As the noise increased, a low, deep roar, like the sound of distant thunder, could be heard, and the Pole cried out, – "Messieurs les Sans-culottes, I strongly advise you to turn homewards, for, if I be not much mistaken, here comes the artillery."

"The affair may turn out a serious one, after all," broke in the Italian.

"A serious one!" echoed the Pole, scornfully. "How can it? Forty battalions of infantry, ten thousand sabres, and eight batteries; are they not enough, think you, to rout this contemptible herd of street rioters?"

"There – listen! It has begun already!" exclaimed Martin, as the sharp report of fire-arms, quite close to the windows, was followed by a crash, and then a wild, mad shout, half rage, half defiance.

"There's nothing for it, in these things, but speedy action," said the Pole; "grape and cavalry charges to clear the streets, and rifle practice at anything that shows itself at the windows."

"It is so easy, so very easy, to crush a mob," said the Russian, "if you only direct your attention to the leader, – think of nothing but *him*. Once you show that, whatever may be the fate of others, death must be his, the whole assemblage becomes a disorganized, unwieldy mass, to be sabred or shot down at pleasure."

"Soldiers have no fancy for this kind of warfare," said De Nevers, haughtily; "victory is never glorious, defeat always humiliation."

"But who talks of defeat?" exclaimed the Pole, passionately. "The officer who could fail against such an enemy should be shot by a court-martial. We have, I believe, every man of us here, served; and I asked you, what disproportion of force could suggest a doubt of success?"

As he spoke, the door of the room was suddenly opened, and a young man, with dress all disordered, and the fragment of a hat in his hand, entered.

"What, Massingbred!" cried one, "how came you to be so roughly handled?"

"So much for popular politeness!" exclaimed the Russian, as he took up the tattered remains of a dress-coat, and exhibited it to the others.

"Pardon me, Prince," replied Massingbred, as he filled a glass of water and drank it off, "this courtesy I received at the hands of the military. I was turning my cab from the Boulevard to enter this street, when a hoarse challenge of a sentry, saying I know not what, attracted my attention. I drew up short to learn, and then suddenly came a rush of the people from behind, which terrified my horse, and set him off at speed; the uproar increasing, the affrighted animal dashed madly onward,

the crowd flying on every side, when suddenly a bullet whizzed past my head, cutting my hat in two; a second, at the same instant, struck my horse, and killed him on the spot, cab and all rolling over as he fell. How I arose, gained my legs, and was swept away by the dense torrent of the populace, are events of which I am very far from clear. I only know that although the occurrence happened within half an hour ago, it seems to *me* an affair of days since."

"You were, doubtless, within some line of outposts when first challenged," said the Pole, "and the speed at which you drove was believed to be an arranged plan of attack, for you say the mob followed you."

"Very possibly your explanation is the correct one," said Massingbred, coolly; "but I looked for more steadiness and composure from the troops, while I certainly did not anticipate so much true courtesy and kindness as I met with from the people."

"Parbleu! here's Massingbred becoming Democrat," said one. "The next thing we shall hear is his defence of a barricade."

"You'll assuredly not hear that I attacked one in such company as inflicted all this upon me," rejoined he, with an easy smile.

"Here's the man to captivate your 'Belle Irlandaise,' Martin," cried one. "Already is he a hero and a martyr to Royal cruelty."

"Ah! you came too late to hear that," said the Pole, in a whisper to Massingbred; "but it seems La Henderson became quite a Charlotte Corday this evening, and talked more violent Republicanism than has been heard in a salon since the days of old Égalité."

"All lights must be extinguished, gentlemen," said the waiter, entering hastily. "The street is occupied by troops, and you must pass out by the Rue de Grenelle."

"Are the mobs not dispersing, then?" asked the Russian.

"No, your Highness. They have beaten back the troops from the Quai Voltaire, and are already advancing on the Louvre."

"What absurdity!" exclaimed the Pole. "If the troops permit this, there is treason amongst them."

"I can answer for it there is terror, at least," said Massingbred. "All the high daring and spirit is with what you would call the Sans-culottes."

"That a man should talk this way because he has lost a cab-horse!" cried the Pole, insolently.

"There are men who can bear the loss of a country with more equanimity, – I know that," whispered Massingbred in his ear, with all the calm sternness of an insult.

"You mean this for *me*?" said the Pole, in a low voice.

"Of course I do," was the answer.

"Where? – when? – how?" muttered the Pole, in suppressed passion.

"I leave all at your disposal," said Massingbred, smiling at the other's effort to control his rage.

"At Versailles, – to-morrow morning, – pistols."

Massingbred bowed, and turned away. At the same instant the waiter entered to say that the house must be cleared at once, or all within it consent to remain close prisoners.

"Come along, Martin," said Massingbred, taking his arm. "I shall want you to do me a favor. Let us make our escape by the Rue de Grenelle, and I'll engage to pilot you safely to your own quarters."

"Has anything passed between you and Czernavitz?" asked Martin, as they gained the street.

"A slight exchange of civilities which requires an exchange of shots," said Jack, calmly.

"By George! I'm sorry for it. He can hit a franc-piece at thirty paces."

"So can I, Martin; and, what's more, Anatole knows it. He's as brave as a lion, and it is my confounded skill has pushed him on to this provocation."

"He'll shoot you," muttered Martin, in a half reverie.

"Not impossible," said Massingbred. "He's a fellow who cannot conceal his emotions, and will show at once what he means to do."

“Well, what of that?”

“Simply, that if he intends mischief I shall know it, and send a bullet through his heart.”

Little as Martin had seen of Massingbred, – they were but Club acquaintances of a few weeks back, – he believed that he was one of those smart, versatile men who, with abundance of social ability, acquire reputation for higher capacity than they possess; but, above all, he never gave him credit for anything like a settled purpose or a stern resolution. It was, then, with considerable astonishment that he now heard him avow this deadly determination with all the composure that could vouch for its sincerity. There was, however, little time to think of these things. The course they were driven to follow, by by-streets and alleys, necessitated a long and difficult way. The great thoroughfares which they crossed at intervals were entirely in the possession of the troops, who challenged them as they approached, and only suffered them to proceed when well satisfied with their account. The crowds had all dispersed, and to the late din and tumult there had succeeded the deep silence of a city sunk in sleep, only broken by the hoarse call of the sentinels, or the distant tramp of a patrol.

“It is all over, I suppose,” said Martin. “The sight of the eight-pounders and the dark caissons has done the work.”

“I don’t think so,” said Massingbred, “nor do the troops think so. These mobs are not like ours in England, who, with plenty of individual courage, are always poltroons in the mass. These fellows understand fighting as an art, know how to combine their movements, arrange the modes of attack or defence, can measure accurately the means of resistance opposed to them, and, above all, understand how to be led, – something far more difficult than it seems. In *my* good borough of Oughterard, – or yours, rather, Martin, for I have only a loan of it, – a few soldiers – the army, as they would call them – would sweep the whole population before them. Our countrymen can get up a row, these fellows can accomplish a revolt, – there’s the difference.”

“And have they any real, substantial grievance that demands such an expiation?”

“Who knows?” said he, laughingly. “There never was a Government too bad to live under, – there never was one exempt from great vices. Half the political disturbances the world has witnessed have arisen from causes remote from State Government; a deficient harvest, a dear loaf, the liberty of the Press invaded, – a tyranny always resented by those who can’t read, – are common causes enough. But here we are now at the Place Vendôme, and certainly one should say the odds are against the people.”

Massingbred said truly. Two battalions of infantry, with a battery of guns in position, were flanked by four squadrons of Cuirassiers, the formidable array filling the entire “Place,” and showing by their air and attitude their readiness for any eventuality. A chance acquaintance with one of the staff enabled Massingbred and Martin to pass through their lines and arrive at their hotel.

“Remember,” said the officer who accompanied them, “that you are close prisoners now. My orders are that nobody is to leave the Place under any pretext.”

“Why, you can scarcely suspect that the Government has enemies in this aristocratic quarter?” said Massingbred, smiling.

“We have them everywhere,” was the brief answer, as he bowed and turned away.

“I scarcely see how I’m to keep my appointment at Versailles to-morrow morning,” said Massingbred, as he followed Martin up the spacious stairs. “Happily, Czernavitz knows me, and will not misinterpret my absence.”

“Not to say that he may be unable himself to get there,” said Martin. As he spoke, they had reached the door, opening which with his key, the Captain motioned to Massingbred to enter.

Massingbred stopped suddenly, and in a voice of deep meaning said, “Your father lives here?”

“Yes, – what then?” asked Martin.

“Only that I have no right to pass his threshold,” said the other, in a low voice. “I was his guest once, and I’m not sure that I repaid the hospitality as became me. You were away at the time.”

"You allude to that stupid election affair," said Martin. "I can only say that I never did, never could understand it. My only feeling was one of gratitude to you for saving me from being member for the borough. Come along," said he, taking his arm; "this is no time for your scruples, at all events."

"No, Martin, I cannot," said the other. "I 'd rather walk up to one of those nine-pounders there than present myself to your lady-mother – "

"But you needn't. You are *my* guest; these are *my* quarters. You shall see nobody but myself till you leave this. Remember what the Captain told us; we are prisoners here." And without waiting for a reply, Martin pushed him before him into the room.

"Two o'clock," said Massingbred, looking at his watch; "and we are to be at Versailles by eight."

"Well, leave all the care of that to me," said Martin; "and do you throw yourself on the bed there, and take some rest. Without you prefer to sup first?"

"No, an hour's sleep is what I stand most in need of; and so I 'll say good-night."

Massingbred said this less that he wanted repose than a brief interval to be alone with his own thoughts. And now, as he closed his eyes to affect sleep, it was really to commune with his own heart, and reflect over what had just occurred.

Independently that he liked Czernavitz personally, he was sorry for a quarrel at such a moment. There was a great game about to be played, and a mere personal altercation seemed something small and contemptible in the face of such events. "What will be said of us," thought he, "but that we were a pair of hot-headed fools, thinking more of a miserable interchange of weak sarcasms than of the high destinies of a whole nation? And it was *my* fault," added he to himself; "I had no right to reproach him with a calamity hard enough to bear, even without its being a reproach. What a strange thing is life, after all!" thought he; "everything of greatest moment that occurs in it the upshot of an accident, – my going to Ireland, my visit to the West, my election, my meeting with Kate Henderson, and now this duel." And, so ruminating, he dropped off into a sound sleep, undisturbed by sounds that might well have broken the heaviest slumber.

CHAPTER VIII. AN EVENING OF ONE OF THE “THREE DAYS”

On the evening which witnessed these events Lady Dorothea's “reception” had been more than usually brilliant. Numbers had come to show of how little moment they deemed this “street disturbance,” as they were pleased to call it; others, again, were curious to pick up in society the opinions formed on what was passing, among whom were several high in the favor of the Court and the confidence of the Government. All, as they arrived, had some little anecdote or adventure to relate as to the difficulties which beset them on the way, – the distances which they were obliged to travel, the obstructions and passwords and explanations which met them at every turn. These were all narrated in the easy, jocular tone of passing trifles, the very inconvenience of which suggested its share of amusement.

As the evening wore on, even these became less frequent; the streets were already thinning, and, except in some remote, unimportant parts of the capital, the troops were in possession of all the thoroughfares. Of course, the great topic of conversation was the bold stroke of policy then enacting, – a measure which all pronounced wise and just, and eminently called for.

To have heard the sentiments then uttered, the disparaging opinions expressed of the middle and humbler classes, the hopelessness of ever seeing them sufficiently impressed with their own inferiority, the adulation bestowed on the monarch and all around him, one might really have fancied himself back again at the Tuileries in the time of Louis the Fourteenth. All agreed in deeming the occasion an excellent one to give the people a salutary lesson; and it was really pleasant to see the warm interest taken by these high and distinguished persons in the fortunes of their less happy countrymen.

To Lady Dorothea's ears no theme could be more grateful; and she moved from group to group, delighted to mingle her congratulations with those around, and exchange her hopes and aspirations and wishes with theirs. Kate Henderson, upon whom habitually devolved the chief part in these “receptions,” was excited and flurried in manner; a more than ordinary effort to please being dashed, as it were, by some secret anxiety, and the expectation of some coming event. Had there been any one to watch her movements, he might have seen the eagerness with which she listened to each new account of the state of the capital, and how impatiently she drank in the last tidings from the streets; nor less marked was the expression of proud scorn upon her features, as she heard the insulting estimate of the populace, and the vainglorious confidence in the soldiery. But more than all these was her haughty indignation as she listened to the confused, mistaken opinions uttered on every side as to the policy of the Government and the benevolent intentions of the king. Once, and only once, did she forget the prudent resolve she wished to impose upon herself; but temper and caution and reserve gave way, as she heard a very distinguished person amusing a circle around him by an unfair and unfaithful portraiture of the great leaders of '92. It was then, when stung by the odious epithet of *canaille* applied to those for whose characters she entertained a deep devotion, that she forgot everything, and in a burst of indignant eloquence overwhelmed and refuted the speaker. This was the moment, too, in which she replied to Villemart by a word of terrible ferocity. Had the red cap of Liberty itself been suddenly hoisted in that brilliant assemblage, the dread and terror which arose could scarcely have been greater.

“Where are we?” cried the Marquise de Longueville. “I thought we were in the Place de Vendôme, and I find myself in the Faubourg St. Antoine!”

“Does my Lady know that her friend and confidante is a Girondist of the first water?” said an ex-Minister.

“Who could have suspected the spirit of Marat under the mask of Ninon de l'Enclos?” muttered Villemart.

“What is this I hear, dearest Kate?” cried the Duchesse de Mirecourt, as she drew the young girl’s arm within her own. “They tell me you have terrified every one, – that Madame de Soissons has gone home ill, and the old Chevalier de Gardonnes has sent for his confessor.”

“I have been very rash, very foolish,” said Kate, as a deadly pallor came over her; “but I could bear it no longer. Besides, what does it matter? They ‘ll hear worse, and bear it too, before three days are over.”

“Then it is all true?” cried the Duchess, eagerly. “You told Villemart that when the Government spoke with grape-shot, the people replied with the guillotine!”

“Not exactly,” said Kate, with a faint smile. “But are they all going?”

“Of course they are. You have frightened them almost to death; and I know you only meant it for jest, – one of those little half-cruel jests you were ever fond of. Come with me and say so, – come, dearest.” And she drew her, as she spoke, into the crowded salon, now already a scene of excited leave-taking. The brilliant company, however, fell back as they came forward, and an expression of mingled dismay and compassion was turned towards the young Duchess, who with a kind of heroic courage drew Kate’s arm closer within her own.

“I am come to make an explanation, messieurs et mesdames,” said the Duchess, with her most captivating smile; “pray vouchsafe me a hearing. My friend – my dearest, best friend here – has, in a moment of sportive pleasantry, suffered herself to jest – ”

“It was a jest, then?” broke in Madame de Longueville, haughtily.

“Just as that is,” replied Kate, lifting her hand and pointing in the direction whence came a terrible crash of artillery, followed by the rattle of musketry.

“Let us go, – let us away!” was now heard in affrighted accents on every side; and the splendid assemblage, with less of ceremony than might be expected, began to depart. Lady Dorothea alone was ignorant of what had occurred, and witnessed this sudden leave-taking with amazement. “You are surely not afraid?” said she to one; “there is nothing serious in all this.”

“She has told us the reverse, my Lady,” was the reply. “We should be compromised to remain longer in her company.”

“Adieu, my Lady. I wish we left you in safer companionship.”

“Farewell, Madame, and pray be warned of your danger,” whispered another.

“Your Ladyship may be called upon to acquit debts contracted by another, if Mademoiselle continues a member of your family,” said Villemart, as he bowed his departure.

“Believe me, Madame, none of us include *you* in the terrible sentiments we have listened to.”

These, and a vast number of similar speeches attended the leave-taking of nearly each of her guests, till Lady Dorothea, confused, almost stunned by reiterated shocks, sat silently accepting these mysterious announcements, and almost imagining herself in all the bewilderment of a dream.

Twice she made an effort to ask some explanation, but failed; and it was only as the Duchesse de Mirecourt drew nigh to say farewell, that in a faint, weak voice she said, – “Can you tell me what all are hinting at, or am I only confusing myself with the terrible scenes without?”

“I ‘d have prevented it had I been near. I only heard it when too late, my Lady,” said the Duchess, sorrowfully.

“Prevented what? – heard what?” cried Lady Dorothea.

“Besides, she has often said as much amongst ourselves; we only laughed, as indeed every one would do now, did not events present so formidable an aspect.”

“Who is she you speak of? Tell me, I beseech you. What does this mean?”

“I am the culprit, my Lady,” said Kate, approaching with all the quiet stateliness of her peculiar manner. “I have routed this gorgeous assembly, shocked your most distinguished guests, and horrified all whose sentiments breathe loyalty! I am sincerely sorry for my offence; and it is a grave one.”

“*You – you* have dared to do this?”

“Too true, madam,” rejoined Kate.

“How and to whom have you had the insolence – ”

She stopped, overcome by passion; and Kate replied, – “To all who pleased to listen, my Lady, I have said what doubtless is not often uttered in such choice company, but what, if I mistake not greatly, their ears will grow familiar with erelong.”

“Nay, nay,” said the Duchess, in a tone of apology, “the matter is not so serious as all this. Every one now is terrified. This disturbance, the soldiery, the vast crowds that beset the streets, have all produced so much excitement that even a few words spoken at random are enough to cause fear. It is one of Kate’s fancies to terrorize thus over weak minds. She has the cruel triumph of not knowing what fear is. In a word, it is a mere trifling event, sure to be forgotten in the midst of such scenes as we are passing through.”

This attempt at explanation, poured forth with rapid utterance, did not produce on Lady Dorothea the conviction it was intended to impose, and her Ladyship received the last adieus of the Duchess with a cold and stately formality; and then, as the door closed after her, turned to Kate Henderson, and said, – “I want *your* explanation of all this. Let me have it.”

“It is easily given, my Lady,” said Kate, calmly. And then, in a voice that never trembled nor varied, she narrated briefly the scene which had just occurred, not extenuating in the slightest her own share in the transaction, or offering a single syllable of excuse.

“And you, being who and what you are, dared thus to outrage the best blood of France!” exclaimed Lady Dorothea, trembling all over with passion.

“Perhaps, my Lady, if I sought for an apology, it would be in the fact of being who and what I am.”

“And do you imagine that after conduct such as this, after exposing me to a partnership in the shame that attaches to yourself, that you are any longer to enjoy the shelter of my roof?”

“It never occurred to me to think of that, madam,” said Kate, with an ill-repressed scorn.

“Then it is for *me* to remind you of it,” said her Ladyship, sternly. “You shall, first of all, write me an humble apology for this vulgar tirade, this outrage upon my company, and then you shall leave the house. Sit down there, and write as I shall dictate to you.”

Kate seated herself with an air of implicit obedience at a writing-table, and took up a pen.

“Write,” cried Lady Dorothea, sternly. “Begin, ‘My Lady.’ No. ‘I approach your Ladyship for the last time.’ No, not that. ‘If the sincere sorrow in which I pen these lines.’ No. Do it yourself. You best can express the shame your heart should feel in such a moment. Let the words be your own!”

Kate leaned over the paper and wrote rapidly for a few seconds. Having finished, she read over the lines, and seemed to reflect on them.

“Show me that paper!” cried Lady Dorothea, impatiently. But, without obeying the command, Kate said, – “Your Ladyship will not be able to leave Paris for at least forty hours. By that time the Monarchy will have run its course in France. You will probably desire, however, to escape from the scenes of turbulence sure to ensue. This will secure you a free passage, whichever road you take.”

“What raving is all this?” said Lady Dorothea, snatching the paper from her hand, and then reading aloud in French, – “The authorities are required to aid and tender all assistance in their power to Lady Dorothea Martin and all who accompany her, neither giving nor suffering any opposition to be given to her or them in the prosecution of their journey.”

(Signed) “Jules Lagrange,

“Minister of Police *ad interim*”

“And this in your own hand, too!” exclaimed Lady Dorothea, contemptuously.

“Yes, madam; but it will entitle it to the seal of the Prefecture, and entitle *you* to all that it professes.”

“So that I have the honor to shelter within my walls a chief of this insurrection, – if it be worthy of such a name; one in the confidence of this stupid *canaille*, who fancy that the fall of a Monarchy is like a row in a *guinguette*!”

“Your Ladyship is no longer in a position to question me or arraign my actions. Before two days are over, the pageant of a king will have passed off the stage, and men of a different stamp take the direction of affairs. One of these will be he whose name I have affixed to that paper, – not without due warranty to do so. Your Ladyship may or may not choose to avail yourself of it.”

“I spurn the imposition,” said Lady Dorothea, tearing it in fragments. “So poor a cheat could not deceive *me*. As for yourself – ”

“Oh, do not bestow a thought upon *me*, my Lady. I can suffice for my own guidance. I only wait for morning to leave this house.”

“And it is to a city in such a state as this you would confide yourself. Truly, mademoiselle, Republicanism has a right to be proud of you. You are no half-convert to its principles.”

“Am I again to say, my Lady, that your control over me has ceased?”

“It has not. It shall not cease till I have restored you to the humble roof from which I took you,” said Lady Dorothea, passionately. “Your father is our creature; he has no other subsistence than what we condescend to bestow on him. He shall know, when you re-enter his doors, why and for what cause you are there. Till that time come, you are, as you have been, in my service.”

“No, my Lady, the tie between us is snapped. Dependence is but a sad part at the best; but so long as it is coupled with a certain show of respect it is bearable. Destroy *that*, and it is mere slavery, abject and degrading. I cannot go back to your Ladyship’s service.” And she gave to the last word an emphasis of intense scorn.

“You must and you shall,” said Lady Dorothea. “If *you* are forgetful of what it is your duty to remember, I am not. Here you shall remain; without,” added she, in an accent of supreme contempt, “your counsel and direction shall be sought after by the high and mighty individuals who are so soon to administer the affairs of this nation.”

The loud roll of a drum, followed by the louder clank of sabres and musketry, here startled the speakers; and Kate, hastening to the window, opened it, and stepped out upon the balcony. Day was just dawning; a gray half-light covered the sky, but the dark shadows of the tall houses still stretched over the Place. Here, now, the troops were all in motion; a sudden summons having roused them to form in rank. The hasty character of the movement showed that some emergency was imminent, – a fact confirmed by the frequent arrival and departure of orderlies at full speed.

After a brief interval of preparation the infantry formed in column, and, followed by the artillery and cavalry, moved out of the Place at a quick step. The measured tramp of the foot-soldiers, the clattering noise of the train and the dragoons could be heard long after they had passed out of sight; and Kate stood listening eagerly as to what would come next, when suddenly a man in plain clothes rode hastily from one of the side-streets into the centre of the Place. He looked around him for a moment or two, and then disappeared. Within a few seconds after, a dull, indistinct sound seemed to rise from the ground, which swelled gradually louder and louder, and at last grew into the regular footfall of a great multitude moving in measured time; and now a vast crowd poured into the Place, silent and wordless. On they came from the various quarters that opened into the square, – men, for the most part clad in blouses or in the coarse garb of laborers. They were armed either with musket or sword, and in many instances wore the cross-belt of the soldier. They proceeded at once to barricade the square at its opening into the Rue de la Paix, – a work which they accomplished with astonishing speed and regularity; for, while Kate still looked, a formidable rampart was thrown up across the entire street, along which a line of armed men was stationed, every one of whom, by his attitude and gesture, betrayed the old discipline of a soldier’s life. Orders were given and obeyed, movements made, and dispositions effected, with all the regularity and precision of regular troops; and by the ready obedience of all, and the steady attitude observed, it was easy to see that these men were trained to arms and to habits of discipline. Not less evident was it that they who commanded them were not new to such duties. But, more important than all such signs was the fact that here and there through

the mass might be seen the uniform of a soldier, or the epaulette of an officer, showing that desertion to the ranks of the people had already begun.

Kate was so occupied in attentive observation of the scene that she had not noticed the arrival of another person in the apartment, and whose voice now suddenly attracted her. It was Martin himself, hastily aroused from his bed by his servant, who in great alarm told him that the capital was in open revolt, the king's troops beaten back, and the people victorious everywhere. "There 's not a moment to lose," cried he; "we must escape while we can. The road to Versailles is yet in possession of the troops, and we can take that way."

Lady Dorothea, partly overcome by the late scene, partly stunned by the repeated shocks she experienced, made no reply whatever; and Martin, judging from the expression of her features the anxiety she was suffering, hastily added, "Let me see Kate Henderson, – where is she?"

Lady Dorothea merely pointed towards the balcony, but did not utter a word.

"Oh, have I found you?" said Martin, stepping out upon the balcony. "You see what is doing, – I might say what is done," added he; "for I believe the game is well-nigh decided. Nothing but an overwhelming force will now crush this populace. We must get away, and at once. Will you give the orders? Send for post-horses; tell them to pack up whatever they can, – direct everything, in fact. My Lady is too ill, – too much overcome to act, or think of anything. Our whole reliance is upon you." While he was yet uttering these broken, disjointed sentences, he had drawn Kate by the arm within the room, and now stood beside Lady Dorothea's chair. Her Ladyship raised her head and fixed her eyes upon Kate, who sustained the gaze calmly and steadily, nor by the slightest movement displayed one touch of any emotion. The glance, at first haughty and defiant, seemed at length to grow weaker under the unmoved stare of the young girl, and finally she bent down her head and sat as though overcome.

"Come, Dora," said Martin, kindly, "rouse yourself; you are always equal to an effort when necessity presses. Tell Kate here what you wish, and she 'll do it."

"I want no aid, – no assistance, sir. Miss Henderson is her own mistress, – she may do what, or go where she pleases."

Martin made a sign to Kate not to mind what he believed to be the mere wandering of an over-excited brain; and then bending down over the chair, said, "Dear Dora, we must be active and stirring; the people will soon be masters of the capital, – for a while, at least, – and there is no saying what excesses they will commit."

"Do not offend Miss Henderson, sir," interposed Lady Dorothea; "she has equal confidence in their valor and their virtue."

"What does this mean? – when did she fall into this state?" asked he, eagerly. And although only spoken in a whisper, Lady Dorothea overheard them, and said, – "Let *her* tell you. She can give you the very fullest explanation."

"But, Dora, this is no time for trifling; we are here, in the midst of an enraged populace and a maddened soldiery. There, listen! – that was artillery; and now, hear! – the bells of the churches are sounding the alarm."

"They are ringing the knell of the Monarchy!" said Kate, solemnly.

A hoarse, wild shout – aery like that of enraged wild beasts – arose from the Place beneath, and all rushed to the window to see what had occurred. It was a charge of heavy cavalry endeavoring to force the barricade; and now, vigorously repulsed by the defenders, men and horses were rolling on the ground in terrible confusion, while on the barricade itself a hand-to-hand conflict was raging.

"Sharp work, by George!" said a voice behind Kate's shoulder. She turned and saw Captain Martin, who had just joined them unobserved.

"I thought you many a mile away," said Kate, in a whisper.

"So I should have been," replied he, in the same tone, "but I was n't going to lose this. I knew it was to come off to-day, and I thought it would have been a thousand pities to be absent."

“And are your wishes, then, with these gallant fellows?” said she, eagerly. “Do I hear you aright, that it was to aid them you remained? There! see how they bear down on the soldiery; they will not be restrained; they are crossing the barricade, and charging with the bayonet. It is only for liberty that men can fight thus. Oh that I were a man, to be amongst them!”

A stray shot from beneath here struck the architrave above their heads, and sent down a mass of plaster over them.

“Come, Dora, this is needless peril,” said Martin, drawing her within the room. “If you will not leave this, at least do not expose yourself unnecessarily.”

“But it is exactly to get away – to escape while there is time – that I came for,” said the Captain. “They tell me that the mob are getting the best of it, and, worse again, that the troops are joining them; so, to make sure, I ‘ve sent off Fenton to the post for horses, and I ‘m expecting him every moment. But here he is. Well, have you got the horses?”

“No, sir: the horses have all been taken by the people to mount orderlies; the postmaster, too, has fled, and everything is in confusion. But if we had horses the streets are impassable; from here to the Boulevard there are no less than five barricades.”

“Then what is to be done?” cried Martin.

“They say, sir,” replied Fenton, “that by gaining the outer Boulevard on foot, carriages and horses are easily found there, to reach Belleville, St. Germain, or Versailles.”

“He is right,” said the Captain; “there is nothing else to be done. What do *you* think?” said he, addressing Kate, who stood intently watching the movements in the Place beneath.

“Yes; do you agree with this plan?” asked Martin, approaching her.

“Look!” cried she, eagerly, and not heeding the question; “the troops are rapidly joining the people, – they come in numbers now, – and yonder is an officer in his uniform.”

“Shame on him!” exclaimed Lady Dorothea, indignantly.

“So say I too,” said Kate. “He who wears a livery should not assume the port and bearing of a free man. This struggle is for liberty, and should only be maintained by the free!”

“How are we to pass these barricades?” cried Martin, anxiously.

“I will be your guide, sir, if that be all,” said Kate. “You may trust me. I promise no more than I can perform.”

“She speaks truly,” said Lady Dorothea. “Alas that we should see the day when we cannot reject the aid!”

“There is a matter I want to speak to you about,” said Martin, drawing his father aside, and speaking in a low, confidential tone. “Massingbred – Jack Massingbred – is now here, in my room. I know all about my mother’s dislike to him, and *he* knows it; indeed, he has as much as owned to me that he deserved it all. But what is to be done? We cannot leave him here.”

“How came he to be here?” asked Martin.

“He accompanied me from the Club, where, in an altercation of some sort, he had just involved himself in a serious quarrel. He came here to be ready to start this morning for Versailles, where the meeting was to take place; but indeed he had no thought of accepting shelter under our roof; and when he found where he was, it was with the greatest difficulty I could persuade him to enter. None of us anticipated such a serious turn of affairs as this; and now, of course, a meeting will be scarcely possible. What are we to do with him?”

“Ask him frankly to join us if we obtain the horses.”

“But my mother?”

“I ‘ll speak to her, – but it were better you did it, Harry. These are not times to weigh scruples and balance difficulties. I don’t myself think that Massingbred treated us fairly, but it is not now I ‘d like to remember it. There, go; tell her what you have told me, and all will be well.”

The Captain drew nigh Lady Dorothea, and, leaning over her chair, whispered to her for some minutes. At first, a slight gesture of impatience burst from her, but afterwards she seemed to hear him calmly and tranquilly.

"It would seem as though the humiliations of this night are never to have an end," said she, with a sigh. "But I'll bear my share of them."

"Remember," said the other, "that it was by no choice of *his* he came here. His foot was on the threshold before he suspected it."

"Miss Henderson sent me, my Lady," said a servant, entering hastily, "to say that there is not a minute to be lost. They are expecting an attack on the barricade in the Rue de la Paix, and we ought to pass through at once."

"By whose orders?" began she, haughtily; then, checking herself suddenly, and in a voice weak and broken, added: "I am ready. Give me your arm, Harry, and do not leave me. Where is Mr. Martin?" asked she.

"He is waiting for your Ladyship at the foot of the stairs with another gentleman," said the servant.

"That must be Massingbred, for I told them to call him," said the Captain.

When Lady Dorothea, supported by the arm of her son, had reached the gate, she found Martin and Massingbred standing to receive them, surrounded by a numerous escort of servants, each loaded with some portion of the family baggage.

"A hasty summons, sir," said she, addressing Massingbred, and thus abruptly avoiding the awkwardness of a more ceremonious meeting. "A few hours back none of us anticipated anything like this. Will it end seriously, think you?"

"There is every prospect of such, madam," said he, bowing respectfully to her salutation. "Every moment brings fresh tidings of defection among the troops, while the Marshal is paralyzed by contradictory orders."

"Is it always to be the fate of monarchy to be badly served in times of peril?" said she, bitterly.

"It is very difficult to awaken loyalty against one's convictions of right, madam. I mean," added he, as a gesture of impatience broke from her, "that these acts of the king, having no support from his real friends, are weak stimulants to evoke deeds of daring and courage."

"They are unworthy supporters of a Crown who only defend what they approve of. This is but Democracy at best, and smacks of the policy which has little to lose and everything to gain by times of trouble."

"And yet, madam, such cannot be the case here; at least, it is assuredly not so in the instance of him who is now speaking with Miss Henderson." And he pointed to a man who, holding the bridle of his horse on his arm, walked slowly at Kate's side in the street before the door.

"And who is he?" asked she, eagerly.

"The greatest banker in Paris, madam, – one of the richest capitalists of Europe, – ready to resign all his fortune in the struggle against a rule which he foresees intended to bring back the days of a worn-out, effete monarchy, rather than a system which shall invigorate the nation, and enrich it by the arts of commerce and trade."

"But his name – who is he?" asked she, more impatiently.

"Charles Lagrange, madam."

"I have heard the name before. I have seen it somewhere lately," said she, trying to remember where and how.

"You could scarcely have paid your respects at Neuilly, madam, without seeing him. He was, besides, the favored guest at Madame de Mirecourt's."

"You would not imply, sir, that the Duchess condescended to any sympathy with this party?"

"More than half the Court, madam, are against the Crown; I will not say, however, that they are, on that account, for the people."

"There! she is making a sign to us to follow her," said Martin, pointing towards Kate, who, still conversing with her companion, motioned to the others to come up.

"It is from that quarter we receive our orders," said Lady Dorothea, sneeringly, as she prepared to follow.

"What has she to do with it?" exclaimed the Captain. "To look at her, one would say she was deep in the whole business."

A second gesture, more urgent than before, now summoned the party to make haste.

Through the Place, crowded as it was by an armed and excited multitude, way was rapidly made for the little party who now issued from the door of the hotel. Kate Henderson walked in front, with Massingbred at her side talking eagerly, and by his gestures seeming as though endeavoring to extenuate or explain away something in his conduct; next came Lady Dorothea, supported between her husband and her son, and while walking slowly and with faltering steps, still carrying her head proudly erect, and gazing on the stern faces around her with looks of haughty contempt. After them were a numerous retinue of servants, with such effects as they had got hurriedly together, – a terror-struck set, scarcely able to crawl along from fear.

As they drew nigh the barricade, some men proceeded to remove a heavy wagon which adjoined a house, and by the speed and activity of their movements, urged on as they were by the orders of one in command, it might be seen that the operation demanded promptitude.

"We are scarcely safe in this," cried the officer. "See! they are making signs to us from the windows, – the troops are coming. If you pass out now, you will be between two fires."

"There is yet time," said Kate, eagerly. "Our presence in the street, too, will delay them, and give you some minutes to prepare. And as for ourselves, we shall gain one of the side-streets easily enough."

"Tie your handkerchief to your cane, sir," said the officer to Massingbred.

"My flag is ready," said Jack, gayly; "I only hope they may respect it."

"Now – now!" cried Kate, with eagerness, and beckoning to Lady Dorothea to hasten, "the passage is free, and not a second to be lost!"

"Are you not coming with us?" whispered Martin to her, as they passed out.

"Yes; I'll follow. But," added she, in a lower tone, "were the choice given me, it is here I'd take my stand."

She looked full at Massingbred as she spoke, and, bending down his head, he said, "Had it been your place, it were mine also!"

"Quick, – quick, my Lady," said Kate. "They must close up the passage at once. They are expecting an attack." And so saying, she motioned rapidly to Martin to move on.

"The woman is a fiend," said Lady Dorothea; "see how her eyes sparkle, and mark the wild exultation of her features."

"Adieu, sir, – adieu!" said Kate, waving her hand to one who seemed the chief of the party. "All my wishes are with you. Were I a man, my hand should guarantee my heart."

"Come – come back!" cried the officer. "You are too late. There comes the head of the column."

"No, never – never!" exclaimed Lady Dorothea, haughtily; "protection from such as these is worse than any death."

"Give me the flag, then," cried Kate, snatching it from Massingbred's hand, and hastening on before the others. And now the heavy wagon had fallen back to its place, and a serried file of muskets peeped over it.

"Where's Massingbred?" asked the Captain, eagerly.

"Yonder, – where he ought to be!" exclaimed Kate, proudly, pointing to the barricade, upon which, now, Jack was standing conspicuously, a musket on his arm.

The troops in front were not the head of a column, but the advanced guard of a force evidently at some distance off, and instead of advancing on the barricade, they drew up and halted in triple file

across the street. Their attitude of silent, stern defiance – for it was such – evoked a wild burst of popular fury, and epithets of abuse and insult were heaped upon them from windows and parapets.

“They are the famous Twenty-Second of the Line,” said the Captain, “who forced the Pont-Neuf yesterday and drove the mob before them.”

“It is fortunate for us that we fall into such hands,” said Lady Dorothea, waving her handkerchief as she advanced. But Kate had already approached the line, and now halted at a command from the officer. While she endeavored to explain how and why they were there, the cries and menaces of the populace grew louder and wilder. The officer, a very young subaltern, seemed confused and flurried; his eyes turned constantly towards the street from which they had advanced, and he seemed anxiously expecting the arrival of the regiment.

“I cannot give you a convoy, Mademoiselle,” he said; “I scarcely know if I have the right to let you pass. We may be attacked at any moment; for aught I can tell, *you* may be in the interests of the insurgents – ”

“We are cut off, Lieutenant,” cried a sergeant, running up at the moment. “They have thrown up a barrier behind us, and it is armed already.”

“Lay down your arms, then,” said Kate, “and do not sacrifice your brave fellows in a hopeless straggle.”

“Listen not to her, young man, but give heed to your honor and your loyalty,” cried Lady Dorothea. “Is it against such an enemy as this French soldiers fear to advance?”

“Forward!” cried the officer, waving his sword above his head. “Let us carry the barricade!” And a wild yell of defiance from the windows repeated the speech in derision.

“You are going to certain death!” cried Kate, throwing herself before him. “Let *me* make terms for you, and they shall not bring dishonor on you.”

“Here comes the regiment!” called out the sergeant. “They have forced the barricade.” And the quick tramp of a column, as they came at a run, now shook the street.

“Remember your cause and your King, sir,” cried Lady Dorothea to the officer.

“Bethink you of your country, – of France, – and of Liberty!” said Kate, as she grasped his arm.

“Stand back! – back to the houses!” said he, waving his sword. “*Voltigeurs*, to the front!”

The command was scarcely issued, when a hail of balls rattled through the air. The defenders of the barricade had opened their fire, and with a deadly precision, too, for several fell at the very first discharge.

“Back to the houses!” exclaimed Martin, dragging Lady Dorothea along, who, in her eagerness, now forgot all personal danger, and only thought of the contest before her.

“Get under cover of the troops, – to the rear!” cried the Captain, as he endeavored to bear her away.

“Back – back – beneath the archway!” cried Kate, as, throwing her arms around Lady Dorothea, she lifted her fairly from the ground, and carried her within the deep recess of a *porte cochère*. Scarcely, however, had she deposited her in safety, than she fell tottering backwards and sank to the ground.

“Good Heavens! she is struck,” exclaimed Martin, bending over her.

“It is nothing, – a spent shot, and no more,” said Kate, as she showed the bullet which had perforated her dress beneath the arm.

“A good soldier, by Jove!” said the Captain, gazing with real admiration on the beautiful features before him; the faint smile she wore heightening their loveliness, and contrasting happily with their pallor.

“There they go! They are up the barricade already; they are over it, – through it!” cried the Captain. “Gallantly done! – gloriously done! No, by Jove! they are falling back; the fire is murderous. See how they bayonet them. The troops must win. They move together; they are like a wall! In vain, in vain; they cannot do it! They are beaten, – they are lost!”

“Who are lost?” said Kate, in a half-fainting voice.

“The soldiers. And there ‘s Massingbred on the top of the barricade, in the midst of it all. I see his hat They are driven back – beaten – beaten!”

“Come in quickly,” cried a voice from behind; and a small portion of the door was opened to admit them. “The soldiers are retiring, and will kill all before them.”

“Let *me* aid you; it is *my* turn now,” said Lady Dorothea, assisting Kate to rise. “Good Heavens! her arm is broken, – it is smashed in two.” And she caught the fainting girl in her arms.

Gathering around, they bore her within the gate, and had but time to bar and bolt it when the hurried tramp without, and the wild yell of popular triumph, told that the soldiers were retreating, beaten and defeated.

“And this to save me!” said Lady Dorothea, as she stooped over her. And the scalding tears dropped one by one on Kate’s cheek.

“Tear this handkerchief, and bind it around my arm,” said Kate, calmly; “the pain is not very great, and there will be no bleeding, the doctors say, from a gun-shot wound.”

“I’ll be the surgeon,” said the Captain, addressing himself to the task with more of skill than might be expected. “I ‘ve seen many a fellow struck down who did n’t bear it as calmly,” muttered he, as he bent over her. “Am I giving you any pain?”

“Not in the least; and if I were in torture, that glorious cheer outside would rally me. Hear! – listen! – the soldiers are in full retreat; the people, the noble-hearted people, are the conquerors!”

“Be calm, and think of yourself,” said Lady Dorothea, mildly, to her; “such excitement may peril your very life.”

“And it is worth a thousand lives to taste of it,” said she, while her cheek flushed, and her dark eyes gleamed with added lustre.

“The street is clear now,” said one of the servants to Martin, “and we might reach the Boulevard with ease.”

“Let us go, then,” said Lady Dorothea. “Let us look to *her* and think of nothing till she be cared for.”

CHAPTER IX. SOME CONFESSIONS OF JACK MASSINGBRED

Upon two several occasions have we committed to Jack Massingbred the task of conducting this truthful history; for the third time do we now purpose to make his correspondence the link between the past and what is to follow. We are not quite sure that the course we thus adopt is free from its share of inconvenience, but we take it to avoid the evils of reiteration inseparable from following out the same events from merely different points of view. There is also another advantage to be gained. Jack is before our readers; we are not. Jack is an acquaintance; we cannot aspire to that honor. Jack's opinions, right or wrong as they may be, are part and parcel of a character already awaiting their verdict. What he thought and felt, hoped, feared, or wished, are the materials by which he is to be judged; and so we leave his cause in his own hands.

His letter is addressed to the same correspondent to whom he wrote before. It is written, too, at different intervals, and in different moods of mind. Like the letters of many men who practise concealment with the world at large, it is remarkable for great frankness and sincerity. He throws away his mask with such evident signs of enjoyment that we only wonder if he can ever resume it; but crafty men like to relax into candor, as royalty is said to indulge with pleasure in the chance moments of pretended equality. It is, at all events, a novel sensation; and even that much, in this routine life of ours, is something!

He writes from Spa, and after some replies to matters with which we have no concern, proceeds thus: —

“Of the Revolution, then, and the Three Glorious Days as they are called, I can tell you next to nothing, and for this simple reason, that I was there fighting, shouting, throwing up barricades, singing the ‘Marseillaise,’ smashing furniture, and shooting my ‘Swiss,’ like the rest. As to who beat the troops, forced the Tuileries, and drove Marmont back, you must consult the newspapers. Personal adventures I could give you to satiety, hairbreadth ‘scapes and acts of heroism by the dozen; but these narratives are never new, and always tiresome. The serious reflectiveness sounds like humbug, and, if one treats them lightly, the flippancy is an offence. Jocular heroism is ever an insult to the reader.

“You say, *‘Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?’* and I answer, it was all *her* doing. Yes, Harry, *she* was there. I was thinking of nothing less in the world than a great ‘blow for freedom,’ as the ‘Globe’ has it. I had troubled my head wonderfully little about the whole affair. Any little interest I took was in the notion that if our ‘natural enemies,’ the French, were to fall to and kill each other, there would be so much the fewer left to fight against us; but as to who was to get the upper hand, or what they were to do when they had it, I gave myself no imaginable concern. I had a vague, shadowy kind of impression that the government was a bad one, but I had a much stronger conviction that the people deserved no better. My leanings – my instincts, if you prefer it – were with the Crown. The mob and its sentiments are always repulsive. Popular enthusiasm is a great ocean, but it is an ocean of dirty water, and you cannot come out clean from the contact; and so I should have wished well to royalty, but for an accident, – a mere trifle in its way, but one quite sufficient, even on historic grounds, to account for a man’s change of opinions. The troops shot my cab-horse, sent a bullet through poor ‘Beverley,’ and seriously damaged a new hat which I wore at the time, accompanying these acts with expressions the reverse of compliment or civility. I was pitched out into the gutter, and, most appropriately you will say, I got up a Radical, a Democrat, a Fourierist, – anything, in short, that shouts ‘Down with Kings, and up with the Sovereign People!’

“My principles – don’t smile at the word – led me into a stupid altercation with a very pleasant acquaintance, and we parted to meet the next morning in hostility, – at least, such was our understanding; but by the time that our difference should have been settled, *I* was carried away on

a stretcher to the Hôtel Dieu, wounded, and he was flung, a corpse, into the Seine. I intended to have been a most accurate narrator of events, journalizing for you, hour by hour, with all the stirring excitement of the present tense, but I cannot; the crash and the hubbub are still in my brain, and the infernal chaos of the streets is yet over me. Not to speak of my wound, – a very ugly sabre-cut in the neck, – severing I don't know what amount of nerves, arteries, and such-like 'small deer,' every one of which, however, has its own peculiar perils in the shape of aneurisms, tetanus, and so forth, in case I am not a miracle of patience, calmness, and composure.

"The Martins are nursing and comforting and chicken-brothing me to my heart's content, and La Henderson, herself an invalid, with a terrible broken arm, comes and reads to me from time to time. What a girl it is! Wounded in a street encounter, she actually carried Lady Dorothea into a portecochère, and when they had lost their heads in terror, could neither issue an order to the servants nor know what way to turn, she took the guidance of the whole party, obtained horses and carriages and an escort, escaped from Paris, and reached Versailles in the midst of flying courtiers and dismayed ministers, and actually was the very first to bring the tidings that the game of monarchy was up, – that the king had nothing left for it but an inglorious flight. To the Duchesse de Mire-court she made this communication, which it seems none of the court-followers had the courage or honesty to do before. The Duchess, in her terror, actually dragged her into the presence of the king, and made her repeat what she had said. The scene, as told me, was quite dramatic; the king took her hand to lead her to a seat, but it was unfortunately of the wounded arm, and she fainted. The sight of the wounded limb so affected the nerves of monarchy that he gave immediate orders to depart, and was off within an hour.

"How they found me out a patient in a ward of the Hôtel Dieu, rescued and carried me away with them, I have heard full half a dozen times, but I 'm far from being clear enough to repeat the story; and, indeed, when I try to recall the period, the only images which rise up before me are long ranges of white coverlids, pale faces, and groans and cries of suffering, with the dark curly head of a great master of torture peeping at me, and whom, I am told, is the Baron Dupuytren, the Surgeon-in-Chief. After these comes a vision of litters and *charrettes*, – sore joltings and stoppages to drink water – But I shall rave if I go on. Better I should tell you of my pleasant little bedroom here, opening on a small garden, with a tiny fountain trying to sprinkle the wild myrtle and blush-roses around it, and sportively sending its little plash over me, as the wind wafts it into my chamber. My luxurious chair and easy-cushioned sofa, and my table littered with everything, from flowers to French romances; not to speak of the small rustic seat beside the window, where she has been sitting the last hour, and has only quitted to give me time to write this to you. I know it – I see it – all you can say, all that you are saying at this moment, is fifty times more forcibly echoing within my own heart, and repeating in fitful sentences: 'A ruined man – a broken fortune – a mad attachment – a life of struggle, difficulty, and failure!' But why should it be failure? Such a girl for a wife ought in itself to be an earnest of success. Are not her qualities exactly those that do battle with the difficulties of fortune? Self-denial – ambition – courage – an intense, an intuitive knowledge of the world – and then, a purpose-like devotion to whatever she undertakes, that throws an air of heroism over all her actions.

"Birth – blood – family connections – what have they done for me, except it be to entail upon me the necessity of selecting a career amidst the two or three that are supposed to suit the well-born? I may be a Life Guardsman, or an unpaid attaché, but I must not be a physician or a merchant. Nor is it alone that certain careers are closed against us, but certain opinions too. I must not think ill of the governing class, – I must never think well of the governed.

"Well, Harry, the colonies are the remedy for all this. There, at least, a man can fashion existence as arbitrarily as he can the shape and size of his house. None shall dictate his etiquette, no more than his architecture; and I am well weary of the slavery of this old-world life, with our worship of old notions and old china, both because they are cracked, damaged, and useless. I 'll marry her. I have made up my mind on 't. Spare me all your remonstrances, all your mock compassion. Nor is it like a fellow who has not seen the world in its best gala suit, affecting to despise rank, splendor, and high

station. *I have* seen the thing. I have cantered my thoroughbred along Rotten Row, eaten my truffled dinners in Belgravia, whispered my nonsense over the white shoulders of the fairest and best-born of England's daughters. I know to a decimal fraction the value of all these; and, what 's more, I know what one pays for them, – the miserable vassalage, the poor slavery of mind, soul, and body they cost!

“It is the terror of exclusion here, the dread of coldness there – the possibility of offence to ‘his Grace’ on this side, or misconception by ‘her Ladyship’ on that – sway and rule a man so that he may neither eat, drink, nor sleep without a ‘Court Guide’ in his pocket. I ‘ve done with it! now and forever, – I tell you frankly, – I return no more to this bondage.

“I have written a farewell address to my worthy constituents of Oughterard. I have told them that, ‘feeling an instinct of independence within me, I can no longer remain their representative; that, as a man of honor, I shrink from the jobbery of the little borough politicians, and, as a gentleman, I beg to decline their intimacy.’ They took me for want of a better – I leave them for the same reason.

“To my father I have said: ‘Let us make a compromise. As your son I have a claim on the House. Now, what will you give for my share? I ‘ll neither importune you for place, nor embarrass you with solicitations for employment. Help me to stock my knapsack, and I ‘ll find my road myself.’ *She* knows nothing of these steps on my part; nor shall she, till they have become irrevocable. She is too proud ever to consent to what would cost me thus heavily; but the expense once incurred, – the outlay made, – she cannot object to what has become the law of my future life.

“I send off these two documents to-night; this done, I shall write to her an offer of marriage. What a fever I ‘m in! and all because I feel the necessity of defending myself to *you*

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