

GIACOMO CASANOVA

THE MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA DE
SEINGALT, 1725-1798.

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The Memoirs of Jacques
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Volume 14: Switzerland

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Seingalt, 1725-1798.

Volume 14: Switzerland

CHAPTER XIII

I Resolve to Become a Monk—I go to Confession—
Delay of a Fortnight—Giustiniani, the Apostle Capuchin—
I Alter my Mind; My Reasons—My Pranks at the Inn—I
Dine With the Abbot

The cool way in which the abbot told these cock-and-bull stories gave me an inclination to laughter, which the holiness of the place and the laws of politeness had much difficulty in restraining. All the same I listened with such an attentive air that his reverence was delighted with me and asked where I was staying.

"Nowhere," said I; "I came from Zurich on foot, and my first visit was to your church."

I do not know whether I pronounced these words with an air

of compunction, but the abbot joined his hands and lifted them to heaven, as if to thank God for touching my heart and bringing me there to lay down the burden of my sins. I have no doubt that these were his thoughts, as I have always had the look of a great sinner.

The abbot said it was near noon and that he hoped I would do him the honour of dining with him, and I accepted with pleasure, for I had had nothing to eat and I knew that there is usually good cheer in such places. I did not know where I was and I did not care to ask, being willing to leave him under the impression that I was a pilgrim come to expiate my sins.

On our way from the church the abbot told me that his monks were fasting, but that we should eat meat in virtue of a dispensation he had received from Benedict XIV., which allowed him to eat meat all the year round with his guests. I replied that I would join him all the more willingly as the Holy Father had given me a similar dispensation. This seemed to excite his curiosity about myself, and when we got to his room, which did not look the cell of a penitent, he hastened to shew me the brief, which he had framed and glazed and hung up opposite the table so that the curious and scrupulous might have it in full view.

As the table was only laid for two, a servant in full livery came in and brought another cover; and the humble abbot then told me that he usually had his chancellor with him at dinner, "for," said he, "I have a chancery, since as abbot of Our Lady of Einsiedel I am a prince of the Holy Roman Empire."

This was a relief to me, as I now knew where I was, and I no longer ran the risk of shewing my ignorance in the course of conversation.

This monastery (of which I had heard before) was the Loretto of the Mountains, and was famous for the number of pilgrims who resorted to it.

In the course of dinner the prince—abbot asked me where I came from, if I were married, if I intended to make a tour of Switzerland, adding that he should be glad to give me letters of introduction. I replied that I was a Venetian, a bachelor, and that I should be glad to accept the letters of introduction he had kindly offered me, after I had had a private conference with him, in which I desired to take his advice on my conscience.

Thus, without premeditation, and scarcely knowing what I was saying, I engaged to confess to the abbot.

This was my way. Whenever I obeyed a spontaneous impulse, whenever I did anything of a sudden, I thought I was following the laws of my destiny, and yielding to a supreme will. When I had thus plainly intimated to him that he was to be my confessor, he felt obliged to speak with religious fervour, and his discourses seemed tolerable enough during a delicate and appetising repast, for we had snipe and woodcock; which made me exclaim,—

"What! game like that at this time of year?"

"It's a secret," said he, with a pleased smile, "which I shall be glad to communicate to you."

The abbot was a man of taste, for though he affected sobriety

he had the choicest wines and the most delicious dishes on the table. A splendid salmon-trout was brought, which made him smile with pleasure, and seasoning the good fare with a jest, he said in Latin that we must taste it as it was fish, and that it was right to fast a little.

While he was talking the abbot kept a keen eye on me, and as my fine dress made him feel certain that I had nothing to ask of him he spoke at ease.

When dinner was over the chancellor bowed respectfully and went out. Soon after the abbot took me over the monastery, including the library, which contained a portrait of the Elector of Cologne in semi-ecclesiastical costume. I told him that the portrait was a good though ugly likeness, and drew out of my pocket the gold snuffbox the prince had given me, telling him that it was a speaking likeness. He looked at it with interest, and thought his highness had done well to be taken in the dress of a grand-master. But I perceived that the elegance of the snuff-box did no harm to the opinion the abbot had conceived of me. As for the library, if I had been alone it would have made me weep. It contained nothing under the size of folio, the newest books were a hundred years old, and the subject-matter of all these huge books was solely theology and controversy. There were Bibles, commentators, the Fathers, works on canon law in German, volumes of annals, and Hoffman's dictionary.

"I suppose your monks have private libraries of their own," I said, "which contain accounts of travels, with historical and

scientific works."

"Not at all," he replied; "my monks are honest folk, who are content to do their duty, and to live in peace and sweet ignorance."

I do not know what happened to me at that moment, but a strange whim came into my head—I would be a monk, too. I said nothing about it at the moment, but I begged the abbot to take me to his private chamber.

"I wish to make a general confession of all my sins," said I, "that I may obtain the benefit of absolution, and receive the Holy Eucharist on the morrow."

He made no answer, but led the way to a pretty little room, and without requiring me to kneel down said he was ready to hear me.

I sat down before him and for three consecutive hours I narrated scandalous histories unnumerable, which, however, I told simply and not spicily, since I felt ascetically disposed and obliged myself to speak with a contrition I did not feel, for when I recounted my follies I was very far from finding the remembrance of them disagreeable.

In spite of that, the serene or reverend abbot believed, at all events, in my attrition, for he told me that since by the appointed means I had once more placed myself in a state of grace, contrition would be perfected in me.

According to the good abbot, and still more according to me, without grace contrition is impossible.

After he had pronounced the sacramental words which take

away the sins of men, he advised me to retire to the chamber he had appointed for me, to pass the rest of the day in prayer, and to go to bed at an early hour, but he added that I could have supper if I was accustomed to that meal. He told me that I might communicate at the first mass next morning, and with that we parted.

I obeyed with a docility which has puzzled me ever since, but at the time I thought nothing of it. I was left alone in a room which I did not even examine, and there I pondered over the idea which had come into my head before making my confession; and I quite made up my mind that chance, or rather my good genius, had led me to that spot, where happiness awaited me, and where I might shelter all my days from the tempests of the world.

"Whether I stay here," said I, "depends on myself alone, as I am sure the abbot will not refuse me the cowl if I give him ten thousand crowns for my support."

All that was needed to secure my happiness seemed a library of my own choosing, and I did not doubt but that the abbot would let me have what books I pleased if I promised to leave them to the monastery after my death.

As to the society of the monks, the discord, envy, and all the bickerings inseparable from such a mode of life, I thought I had nothing to pass in that way, since I had no ambitions which could rouse the jealousy of the other monks. Nevertheless, despite my fascination, I foresaw the possibility of repentance, and I shuddered at the thought, but I had a cure for that also.

"When I ask for the habit," I said, "I will also ask that my novitiate be extended for ten years, and if repentance do not come in ten years it will not come at all. I shall declare that I do not wish for any cure or any ecclesiastical dignity. All I want is peace and leave to follow my own tastes, without scandalising anyone." I thought: I could easily remove any objections which might be made to the long term of my novitiate, by agreeing, in case I changed my mind, to forfeit the ten thousand crowns which I would pay in advance.

I put down this fine idea in writing before I went to bed; and in the morning, finding myself unshaken in my resolve, after I had communicated I gave my plan to the abbot, who was taking chocolate in his room.

He immediately read my plan, and without saying anything put it on the table, and after breakfast he walked up and down the room and read it again, and finally told me that he would give me an answer after dinner.

I waited till night with the impatience of a child who has been promised toys on its birthday—so completely and suddenly can an infatuation change one's nature. We had as good a dinner as on the day before, and when we had risen from the table the good abbot said,

"My carriage is at the door to take you to Zurich. Go, and let me have a fortnight to think it over. I will bring my answer in person. In the meanwhile here are two sealed letters, which please deliver yourself."

I replied that I would obey his instructions and that I would wait for him at the "Sword," in the hope that he would deign to grant my wishes. I took his hand, which he allowed me to kiss, and I then set out for Zurich.

As soon as my Spaniard saw me the rascal began to laugh. I guessed what he was thinking, and asked him what he was laughing at.

"I am amazed to see that no sooner do you arrive in Switzerland than you contrive to find some amusement which keeps you away for two whole days."

"Ah, I see; go and tell the landlord that I shall want the use of a good carriage for the next fortnight, and also a guide on whom I can rely."

My landlord, whose name was Ote, had been a captain, and was thought a great deal of at Zurich. He told me that all the carriages in the neighbourhood were uncovered. I said they would do, as there was nothing better to be had, and he informed me I could trust the servant he would provide me with.

Next morning I took the abbot's letters. One was for M. Orelli and the other for a M. Pestalozzi, neither of whom I found at home; but in the afternoon they both called on me, asked me to dinner, and made me promise to come with them the same evening to a concert. This is the only species of entertainment allowed at Zurich, and only members of the musical society can be present, with the exception of strangers, who have to be introduced by a member, and are then admitted on the payment

of a crown. The two gentlemen both spoke in very high terms of the Abbot of Einsiedel.

I thought the concert a bad one, and got bored at it. The men sat on the right hand and the women on the left. I was vexed with this arrangement, for in spite of my recent conversation I saw three or four ladies who pleased me, and whose eyes wandered a good deal in my direction. I should have liked to make love to them, to make the best of my time before I became a monk.

When the concert was over, men and women went out together, and the two citizens presented me to their wives and daughters, who looked pleasant, and were amongst those I had noticed.

Courtesy is necessarily cut short in the street, and, after I had thanked the two gentlemen, I went home to the "Sword."

Next day I dined with M. Orelli, and I had an opportunity for doing justice to his daughter's amiability without being able to let her perceive how she had impressed me. The day after, I played the same part with M. Pestalozzi, although his charming daughter was pretty enough to excite my gallantry. But to my own great astonishment I was a mirror of discretion, and in four days that was my character all over the town. I was quite astonished to find myself accosted in quite a respectful manner, to which I was not accustomed; but in the pious state of mind I was in, this confirmed me in the belief that my idea of taking the cowl had been a Divine inspiration. Nevertheless, I felt listless and weary, but I looked upon that as the inevitable consequence of so

complete a change of life, and thought it would disappear when I grew more accustomed to goodness.

In order to put myself, as soon as possible, on an equality with my future brethren, I passed three hours every morning in learning German. My master was an extraordinary man, a native of Genoa, and an apostate Capuchin. His name was Giustiniani. The poor man, to whom I gave six francs every morning, looked upon me as an angel from heaven, although I, with the enthusiasm of a devotee, took him for a devil of hell, for he lost no opportunity of throwing a stone at the religious orders. Those orders which had the highest reputation, were, according to him, the worst of all, since they led more people astray. He styled monks in general as a vile rabble, the curse of the human race.

"But," said I to him one day, "you will confess that Our Lady of Einsiedel . . ."

"What!" replied the Genoese, without letting me finish my remark, "do you think I should make an exception in favour of a set of forty ignorant, lazy, vicious, idle, hypocritical scoundrels who live bad lives under the cloak of humility, and eat up the houses of the poor simpletons who provide for them, when they ought to be earning their own bread?"

"But how about his reverend highness the abbot?"

"A stuck-up peasant who plays the part of a prince, and is fool enough to think himself one."

"But he is a prince."

"As much a prince as I am. I look upon him as a mere buffoon."

"What has he done to you?"

"Nothing; but he is a monk."

"He is a friend of mine."

"I cannot retract what I have said, but I beg your pardon."

This Giustiniani had a great influence upon me, although I did not know it, for I thought my vocation was sure. But my idea of becoming a monk at Einsiedel came to an end as follows:

The day before the abbot was coming to see me, at about six o'clock in the evening, I was sitting at my window, which looked out on the bridge, and gazing at the passers-by, when all at once a carriage and four came up at a good pace and stopped at the inn. There was no footman on it, and consequently the waiter came out and opened the door, and I saw four well-dressed women leave the carriage. In the first three I saw nothing noticeable, but the fourth, who was dressed in a riding-habit, struck me at once with her elegance and beauty. She was a brunette with fine and well-set eyes, arched eyebrows, and a complexion in which the hues of the lily and the rose were mingled. Her bonnet was of blue satin with a silver fillet, which gave her an air I could not resist. I stretched out from the window as far as I could, and she lifted her eyes and looked at me as if I had bade her do so. My position obliged me to look at her for half a minute; too much for a modest woman, and more than was required to set me all ablaze.

I ran and took up my position at the window of my ante-chamber, which commanded a view of the staircase, and before long I saw her running by to rejoin her three companions. When she got opposite to my window she chanced to turn in that direction, and on seeing me cried out as if she had seen a ghost, but she soon recollected herself and ran away, laughing like a madcap, and rejoined the other ladies who were already in their room.

Reader, put yourself in my place, and tell me how I could have avoided this meeting. And you who would bury yourselves in monastic shades, persevere, if you can, after you have seen what I saw at Zurich on April 23rd.

I was in such a state of excitement that I had to lie down on my bed. After resting a few minutes, I got up and almost unconsciously went towards the passage window and saw the waiter coming out of the ladies' room.

"Waiter," said I, "I will take supper in the dining-room with everybody else."

"If you want to see those ladies, that won't do, as they have ordered their supper to be brought up to them. They want to go to bed in good time as they are to leave at day-break."

"Where are they going?"

"To Our Lady of Einsiedel to pay their vows."

"Where do they come from?"

"From Soleure."

"What are their names?"

"I don't know."

I went to lie down again, and thought how I could approach the fair one of my thoughts. Should I go to Einsiedel, too? But what could I do when I got there? These ladies are going to make their confessions; I could not get into the confessional. What kind of a figure should I cut among the monks? And if I were to meet the abbot on the way, how could I help returning with him? If I had had a trusty friend I would have arranged an ambuscade and carried off my charmer. It would have been an easy task, as she had nobody to defend her. What if I were to pluck up my heart and beg them to let me sup in their company? I was afraid of the three devotees; I should meet with a refusal. I judged that my charmer's devotion was more a matter of form than any thing else, as her physiognomy declared her to be a lover of pleasure, and I had long been accustomed to read womens' characters by the play of their features.

I did not know which way to turn, when a happy idea came into my head. I went to the passage window and stayed there till the waiter went by. I had him into the room, and began my discourse by sliding a piece of gold into his hand. I then asked him to lend me his green apron, as I wished to wait upon the ladies at supper.

"What are you laughing at?"

"At your taking such a fancy, sir, though I think I know why."

"You are a sharp fellow."

"Yes, sir, as sharp as most of them; I will get you a new apron. The pretty one asked me who you were."

"What did you tell her?"

"I said you were an Italian; that's all."

"If you will hold your tongue I will double that piece of gold."

"I have asked your Spaniard to help me, sir, as I am single-handed, and supper has to be served at the same time both upstairs and downstairs."

"Very good; but the rascal mustn't come into the room or he would be sure to laugh. Let him go to the kitchen, bring up the dishes, and leave them outside the door."

The waiter went out, and returned soon after with the apron and Le Duc, to whom I explained in all seriousness what he had to do. He laughed like a madman, but assured me he would follow my directions. I procured a carving-knife, tied my hair in a queue, took off my coat, and put on the apron over my scarlet waistcoat ornamented with gold lace. I then looked at myself in the glass, and thought my appearance mean enough for the modest part I was about to play. I was delighted at the prospect, and thought to myself that as the ladies came from Soleure they would speak French.

Le Duc came to tell me that the waiter was going upstairs. I went into the ladies' room and said, "Supper is about to be served, ladies."

"Make haste about it, then," said the ugliest of them, "as we have got to rise before day-break."

I placed the chairs round the table and glanced at my fair one, who looked petrified. The waiter came in, and I helped him to

put the dishes on the table, and he then said to me, "Do you stay here, as I have to go downstairs."

I took a plate and stood behind a chair facing the lady, and without appearing to look at her I saw her perfectly, or rather I saw nothing else. She was astonished the others did not give me a glance, and they could not have pleased me better. After the soup I hurried to change her plate, and then did the same office for the rest: they helped themselves to the boiled beef.

While they were eating, I took a boiled capon and cut it up in a masterly manner.

"We have a waiter who knows his work," said the lady of my thoughts.

"Have you been long at this inn?"

"Only a few weeks, madam."

"You wait very well."

"Madam is very good."

I had tucked in my superb ruffles of English point lace, but my frilled shirt front of the same material protruded slightly through my vest, which I had not buttoned carefully. She saw it, and said, "Come here a moment."

"What does madam require?"

"Let me see it. What beautiful lace!"

"So I have been told, madam, but it is very old. An Italian gentleman who was staying here made me a present of it."

"You have ruffles of the same kind, I suppose?"

"Yes, madam;" and so saying I stretched out my hand,

unbuttoning my waistcoat. She gently drew out the ruffle, and seemed to place herself in a position to intoxicate me with the sight of her charms, although she was tightly laced. What an ecstatic moment! I knew she had recognized me, and the thought that I could not carry the masquerade beyond a certain point was a veritable torment to me.

When she had looked a long time, one of the others said, "You are certainly very curious, my dear, one would think you had never seen lace before."

At this she blushed.

When the supper was done, the three ugly ladies each went apart to undress, while I took away the dishes, and my heroine began to write. I confess that I was almost infatuated enough to think that she was writing to me; however, I had too high an opinion of her to entertain the idea.

As soon as I had taken away the dishes, I stood by the door in the respectful manner becoming the occasion.

"What are you waiting for?" she said.

"For your orders, madam."

"Thank you, I don't want anything."

"Your boots, madam, you will like them removed before you retire."

"True, but still I don't like to give you so much trouble."

"I am here to attend on you, madam."

So saying, I knelt on one knee before her, and slowly unplaced her boots while she continued writing. I went farther; I unbuckled

her garters, delighting in the contemplation and still more in the touch of her delicately-shaped legs, but too soon for me she turned her head, and said,

"That will do, thank you. I did not notice that you were giving yourself so much trouble. We shall see you to-morrow evening."

"Then you will sup here, ladies?"

"Certainly."

I took her boots away, and asked if I should lock the door.

"No, my good fellow," said she, in the voice of a syren, "leave the key inside."

Le Duc took the charmer's boots from me, and said, laughing,

"She has caught you."

"What?"

"I saw it all, sir, you played your part as well as any actor in Paris; and I am certain that she will give you a louis to-morrow, but if you don't hand it over to me I will blow on the whole thing."

"That's enough, you rascal; get me my supper as quickly as possible."

Such are the pleasures which old age no longer allows me to enjoy, except in my memory. There are monsters who preach repentance, and philosophers who treat all pleasures as vanity. Let them talk on. Repentance only befits crimes, and pleasures are realities, though all too fleeting.

A happy dream made me pass the night with the fair lady; doubtless it was a delusion, but a delusion full of bliss. What

would I not give now for such dreams, which made my nights so sweet!

Next morning at day-break I was at her door with her boots in my hand just as their coachman came to call them. I asked them, as a matter of form, if they would have breakfast, and they replied merrily that they had made too good a supper to have any appetite at such an early hour. I went out of the room to give them time to dress, but the door was half open, and I saw reflected in the glass the snow-white bosom of my fair one; it was an intoxicating sight. When she had laced herself and put on her dress she called for her boots. I asked if I should put them on, to which she consented with a good grace, and as she had green velvet breeches, she seemed to consider herself as almost a man. And, after all, a waiter is not worth putting one's self out about. All the worst for him if he dare conceive any hopes from the trifling concessions he receives. His punishment will be severe, for who would have thought he could have presumed so far? As for me, I am now, sad to say, grown old, and enjoy some few privileges of this description, which I relish, though despising myself, and still more those who thus indulge me.

After she had gone I went to sleep again, hoping to see her in the evening. When I awoke I heard that the abbot of Einsiedel was at Zurich, and my landlord told me that his reverend highness would dine with me in my room. I told him that I wished to treat the abbot well, and that he must set the best dinner he could for us.

At noon the worthy prelate was shewn up to my room, and began by complimenting me on the good reputation I had at Zurich, saying that this made him believe that my vocation was a real one.

"The following distich," he added, "should now become your motto: *"Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna valete; Nil mihi vobiscum est: ludite nuns alios."*

"That is a translation of two verses from Euripides," I answered; "but, my lord, they will not serve me, as I have changed my mind since yesterday."

"I congratulate you," said he, "and I hope you will accomplish all your desires. I may tell you confidentially that it is much easier to save one's soul in the world where one can do good to one's neighbours, than in the convent, where a man does no good to himself nor to anyone else."

This was not speaking like the hypocrite Guistiniani had described to me; on the contrary, it was the language of a good and sensible man.

We had a princely dinner, as my landlord had made each of the three courses a work of art. The repast was enlivened by an interesting conversation, to which wit and humour were not lacking. After coffee I thanked the abbot with the greatest respect, and accompanied him to his carriage, where the reverend father reiterated his offers of serving me, and thus, well pleased with one another, we parted.

The presence and the conversation of this worthy priest had

not for a moment distracted my thoughts from the pleasing object with which they were occupied. So soon as the abbot had gone, I went to the bridge to await the blessed angel, who seemed to have been sent from Soleure with the express purpose of delivering me from the temptation to become a monk, which the devil had put into my heart. Standing on the bridge I built many a fine castle in Spain, and about six in the evening I had the pleasure of seeing my fair traveller once more. I hid myself so as to see without being seen. I was greatly surprised to see them all four looking towards my window. Their curiosity shewed me that the lady had told them of the secret, and with my astonishment there was some admixture of anger. This was only natural, as I not only saw myself deprived of the hope of making any further advances, but I felt that I could no longer play my part of waiter with any confidence. In spite of my love for the lady I would not for the world become the laughing-stock of her three plain companions. If I had interested her in my favour, she would certainly not have divulged my secret, and I saw in her doing so proof positive that she did not want the jest to go any further, or rather of her want of that spirit so necessary to ensure the success of an intrigue. If the three companions of my charmer had had anything attractive about them, I might possibly have persevered and defied misfortune; but in the same measure as beauty cheers my heart, ugliness depresses it. Anticipating the melancholy which I foresaw would result from this disappointment, I went out with the idea of amusing myself, and happening to meet

Giustiniani I told him of my misfortune, saying that I should not be sorry to make up for it by a couple of hours of the society of some mercenary beauty.

"I will take you to a house," said he, "where you will find what you want. Go up to the second floor and you will be well received by an old woman, if you whisper my name to her. I dare not accompany you, as I am well known in the town and it might get me into trouble with the police, who are ridiculously strict in these matters. Indeed I advise you to take care that nobody sees you going in."

I followed the ex-Capuchin's advice and waited for the dusk of the evening. I had a good reception, but the supper was poor, and the hours that I spent with two young girls of the working class were tedious. They were pretty enough, but my head was full of my perfidious charmer, and besides, despite their neatness and prettiness, they were wanting in that grace which adds so many charms to pleasure. The liberality of my payment, to which they were not accustomed, captivated the old woman, who said she would get me all the best stuff in the town; but she warned me to take care that nobody saw me going into her house.

When I got back Le Duc told me that I had been wise to slip away, as my masquerade had become generally known, and the whole house, including the landlord, had been eagerly waiting to see me play the part of waiter. "I took your place," he added. "The lady who has taken your fancy is Madame—, and I must confess she is vastly fine."

"Did she ask where the other waiter was?"

"No, but the other ladies asked what had become of you several times."

"And Madame said nothing?"

"She didn't open her mouth, but looked sad and seemed to care for nothing, till I said you were away because you were ill."

"That was stupid of you. Why did you say that?"

"I had to say something."

"True. Did you untie her shoe?"

"No; she did not want me to do so."

"Good. Who told you her name?"

"Her coachman. She is just married to a man older than herself."

I went to bed, but could only think of the indiscretion and sadness of my fair lady. I could not reconcile the two traits in her character. Next day, knowing that she would be starting early, I posted myself at the window to see her get into the carriage, but I took care to arrange the curtain in such a way that I could not be seen. Madame was the last to get in, and pretending that she wanted to see if it rained, she took off her bonnet and lifted her head. Drawing the curtain with one hand, and taking off my cap with the other, I wafted her a kiss with the tips of my fingers. In her turn she bowed graciously, returning my kiss with a good-natured smile.

CHAPTER XIV

I Leave Zurich—Comic Adventure at Baden—Soleure
—M. De Chavigni—M. and Madame * * * I Act in a Play
—I Counterfeit Sickness to Attain Happiness

M. Mote, my landlord, introduced his two sons to me. He had brought them up like young princes. In Switzerland, an inn-keeper is not always a man of no account. There are many who are as much respected as people of far higher rank are in other countries. But each country has its own manners. My landlord did the honours of the table, and thought it no degradation to make his guests pay for the meal. He was right; the only really degrading thing in the world is vice. A Swiss landlord only takes the chief place at table to see that everyone is properly attended to. If he have a son, he does not sit down with his father, but waits on the guests, with napkin in hand. At Schaffhaus, my landlord's son, who was a captain in the Imperial army, stood behind my chair and changed my plate, while his father sat at the head of the table. Anywhere else the son would have been waited on, but in his father's house he thought, and rightly, that it was an honour to wait.

Such are Swiss customs, of which persons of superficial understanding very foolishly make a jest. All the same, the vaunted honour and loyalty of the Swiss do not prevent them

from fleecing strangers, at least as much as the Dutch, but the greenhorns who let themselves be cheated, learn thereby that it is well to bargain before-hand, and then they treat one well and charge reasonably. In this way, when I was at Bale, I baffled the celebrated Imhoff, the landlord of the "Three Kings."

M. Ote complimented me on my waiter's disguise, and said he was sorry not to have seen me officiating, nevertheless, he said he thought I was wise not to repeat the jest. He thanked me for the honour I had done his house, and begged me to do him the additional favour of dining at his table some day before I left. I answered that I would dine with him with pleasure that very day. I did so, and was treated like a prince.

The reader will have guessed that the last look my charmer gave me had not extinguished the fire which the first sight of her had kindled in my breast. It had rather increased my flame by giving me hopes of being better acquainted with her; in short, it inspired me with the idea of going to Soleure in order to give a happy ending to the adventure. I took a letter of credit on Geneva, and wrote to Madame d'Urfe, begging her to give me a written introduction, couched in strong terms to M. de Chavigni, the French ambassador, telling her that the interests of our order were highly involved in my knowing this diplomatist, and requesting her to address letters to me at the post office at Soleure. I also wrote to the Duke of Wurtemberg, but had no answer from him, and indeed he must have found my epistle very unpleasant reading.

I visited the old woman whom Giustiniani had told me of several times before I left Zurich, and although I ought to have been well satisfied as far as physical beauty was concerned, my enjoyment was very limited, as the nymphs I wooed only spoke Swiss dialect—a rugged corruption of German. I have always found that love without speech gives little enjoyment, and I cannot imagine a more unsatisfactory mistress than a mute, were she as lovely as Venus herself.

I had scarcely left Zurich when I was obliged to stop at Baden to have the carriage M. Ote had got me mended. I might have started again at eleven, but on hearing that a young Polish lady on her way to Our Lady of Einseidel was to dine at the common table, I decided to wait; but I had my trouble for nothing, as she turned out to be quite unworthy of the delay.

After dinner, while my horses were being put in, the host's daughter, a pretty girl enough, came into the room and made me waltz with her; it chanced to be a Sunday. All at once her father came in, and the girl fled.

"Sir," said the rascal, "you are condemned to pay a fine of one louis."

"Why?"

"For having danced on a holy day."

"Get out; I won't pay."

"You will pay, though," said he, shewing me a great parchment covered with writing I did not understand.

"I will appeal."

"To whom, sir?"

"To the judge of the place."

He left the room, and in a quarter of an hour I was told that the judge was waiting for me in an adjoining chamber. I thought to myself that the judges were very polite in that part of the world, but when I got into the room I saw the rascally host buried in a wig and gown.

"Sir," said he, "I am the judge."

"Judge and plaintiff too, as far as I can see."

He wrote in his book, confirming the sentence, and mulcting me in six francs for the costs of the case.

"But if your daughter had not tempted me," said I, "I should not have danced; she is therefore as guilty as I."

"Very true, sir; here is a Louis for her." So saying he took a Louis out of his pocket, put it into a desk beside him, and said; "Now yours."

I began to laugh, paid my fine, and put off my departure till the morrow.

As I was going to Lucerne I saw the apostolic nuncio (who invited me to dinner), and at Fribourg Comte d'Afri's young and charming wife; but at ten leagues from Soleure I was a witness of the following curious circumstances.

I was stopping the night in a village, and had made friends with the surgeon, whom I had found at the inn, and while supper, which he was to share with me, was getting ready, we walked about the village together. It was in the dusk of the evening, and

at a distance of a hundred paces I saw a man climbing up the wall of a house, and finally vanishing through a window on the first floor.

"That's a robber," said I, pointing him out to the surgeon. He laughed and said,—

"The custom may astonish you, but it is a common one in many parts of Switzerland. The man you have just seen is a young lover who is going to pass the night with his future bride. Next morning he will leave more ardent than before, as she will not allow him to go too far. If she was weak enough to yield to his desires he would probably decline to marry her, and she would find it difficult to get married at all."

At Soleure I found a letter from Madame d'Urfe, with an enclosure from the Duc de Choiseul to the ambassador, M. de Chavigni. It was sealed, but the duke's name was written below the address.

I made a Court toilet, took a coach, and went to call on the ambassador. His excellency was not at home, so I left my card and the letter. It was a feast-day, and I went to high mass, not so much, I confess, to seek for God as for my charmer, but she was not there. After service I walked around the town, and on my return found an officer who asked me to dinner at the ambassador's.

Madame d'Urfe said that on the receipt of my letter she had gone straightway to Versailles, and that with the help of Madame de Grammont she had got me an introduction of the kind I

wanted. This was good news for me, as I desired to cut an imposing figure at Soleure. I had plenty of money, and I knew that this magic metal glittered in the eyes of all. M. de Chavigni had been ambassador at Venice thirty years before, and I knew a number of anecdotes about his adventures there, and I was eager to see what I could make out of him.

I went to his house at the time appointed, and found all his servants in full livery, which I looked upon as a happy omen. My name was not announced, and I remarked that when I came in both sides of the door were opened for me by the page. A fine old man came forward to meet me, and paying me many well-turned compliments introduced me to those present. Then, with the delicate tact of the courtier, pretending not to recollect my name, he drew the Duc de Choiseul's letter from his pocket, and read aloud the paragraph in which the minister desired him to treat me with the utmost consideration. He made me sit on an easy chair at his right hand, and asked me questions to which I could only answer that I was travelling for my pleasure, and that I considered the Swiss nation to be in many respects superior to all other nations whatsoever.

Dinner was served, and his excellency set me on his right hand in a position of equal honour to his own. We were sixteen in company, and behind every chair stood a magnificent lackey in the ambassador's livery. In the course of conversation I got an opportunity of telling the ambassador that he was still spoken of at Venice with the utmost affection.

"I shall always remember," he said, "the kindness with which the Venetians treated me; but tell me, I beg, the names of those gentlemen who still remember me; they must be quite old now."

This was what I was waiting for. M. de Malipiero had told me of certain events which had happened during the regency, and M. de Bragadin had informed me of the ambassador's amours with the celebrated Stringhetta.

His excellency's fare was perfect, but in the pleasure of conversing I forgot that of eating. I told all my anecdotes so racily that his features expressed the pleasure I was affording him, and when we rose from the table he shook me by the hand, and told me he had not had so agreeable a dinner since he had been at Soleure.

"The recollection of my Venetian gallantries," said the worthy old man, "makes me recall many a happy moment; I feel quite young again."

He embraced me, and bade me consider myself as one of his family during my stay at Soleure.

After dinner he talked a good deal about Venice, praising the Government, and saying that there was not a town in the world where a man could fare better, provided he took care to get good oil and foreign wines. About five o'clock he asked me to come for a drive with him, getting into the carriage first to give me the best place.

We got out at a pretty country house where ices were served to us. On our way back he said that he had a large party every

evening, and that he hoped I would do him the honour to be present whenever it suited my inclinations, assuring me that he would do his best to amuse me. I was impatient to take part in the assembly, as I felt certain I should see my charmer there. It was a vain hope, however, for I saw several ladies, some old and ugly, some passable, but not one pretty.

Cards were produced, and I soon found myself at a table with a young lady of fair complexion and a plain-looking woman well advanced in years, who seemed, however, not to be destitute of wit. Though I was loosed I played on, and I lost five or six hundred fish without opening my lips. When it came to a profit and loss account, the plain woman told me I owed three louis.

"Three louis, madam."

"Yes, sir; we have been playing at two sous the fish. You thought, perhaps, we were playing for farthings."

"On the contrary, I thought it was for francs, as I never play lower." She did not answer this boast of mine, but she seemed annoyed. On rejoining the company after this wearisome game, I proceeded to scrutinize all the ladies present rapidly but keenly, but I could not see her for whom I looked, and was on the point of leaving, when I happened to notice two ladies who were looking at me attentively. I recognized them directly. They were two of my fair one's companions, whom I had had the honour of waiting on at Zurich. I hurried off, pretending not to recognize them.

Next day, a gentleman in the ambassador's suite came to tell me that his excellency was going to call on me. I told him that I

would not go out till I had the honour of receiving his master, and I conceived the idea of questioning him concerning that which lay next to my heart. However, he spared me the trouble, as the reader will see for himself.

I gave M. de Chavigni the best reception I could, and after we had discussed the weather he told me, with a smile, that he had the most ridiculous affair to broach to me, begging me to credit him when he said that he did not believe it for a moment.

"Proceed, my lord."

"Two ladies who saw you at my house yesterday told me in confidence, after you had gone, that I should do well to be on my guard, as you were the waiter in an inn at Zurich where they had stayed. They added that they had seen the other waiter by the Aar, and that in all probability you had run away from the inn together; God alone knows why! They said, furthermore, that you slipped away from my house yesterday as soon as you saw them. I told them that even if you were not the bearer of a letter from his grace the Duc de Choiseul I should have been convinced that they were mistaken, and that they should dine with you to-day, if they would accept my invitation. I also hinted that you might have merely disguised yourself as a waiter in the hopes of winning some favours from them, but they rejected the hypothesis as absurd, and said that you could carve a capon and change a plate dexterously enough, but were only a common waiter for all that, adding that with my permission they would compliment you on your skill to-day.

"Do so, by all means, ladies,' said I, 'M. Casanova and myself will be highly amused.' And now do you mind telling me whether there be any foundation of truth in the whole story?"

"Certainly, my lord, I will tell you all without reserve, but in confidence, as this ridiculous report may injure the honour of one who is dear to me, and whom I would not injure for the world."

"It is true, then? I am quite interested to hear all about it."

"It is true to a certain extent; I hope you don't take me for the real waiter at the 'Sword.'"

"Certainly not, but I supposed you played the part of waiter?"

"Exactly. Did they tell you that they were four in company."

"Ah, I have got it! Pretty Madame was one of the party. That explains the riddle; now I understand everything. But you were quite right in saying that discretion was needful; she has a perfectly blameless reputation."

"Ah! I did not know that. What happened was quite innocent, but it might be so garbled in the telling as to become prejudicial to the honour of a lady whose beauty struck me with admiration."

I told him all the details of the case, adding that I had only come to Soleure in the hopes of succeeding in my suit.

"If that prove an impossibility," said I, "I shall leave Soleure in three or four days; but I will first turn the three ugly companions of my charmer into ridicule. They might have had sense enough to guess that the waiter's apron was only a disguise. They can only pretend to be ignorant of the fact in the hope of getting some advantage over me, and injuring their friend, who was ill advised

to let them into the secret."

"Softly, softly, you go too fast and remind me of my own young days. Permit me to embrace you, your story has delighted me. You shall not go away, you shall stay here and court your charmer. To-day you can turn two mischievous women into ridicule, but do it in an easy way. The thing is so straightforward that M.— will be the first to laugh at it. His wife cannot be ignorant of your love for her, and I know enough of women to pronounce that your disguise cannot have displeased her. She does know of your love?"

"Undoubtedly."

He went away laughing, and at the door of his coach embraced me for the third time.

I could not doubt that my charmer had told the whole story to her three friends as they were returning from Einsiedel to Zurich, and this made the part they had played all the more ill-natured; but I felt that it was to my interest to let their malice pass for wit.

I went to the ambassador's at half-past one, and after making my bow to him I proceeded to greet the company, and saw the two ladies. Thereupon, with a frank and generous air, I went up to the more malicious-looking of the two (she was lame, which may have made me think her more ill-looking) and asked if she recognized me.

"You confess, then, that you are the waiter at the 'Sword'?"

"Well, not quite that, madam, but I confess that I was the waiter for an hour, and that you cruelly disdained to address

a single word to me, though I was only a waiter, because I longed for the bliss of seeing you. But I hope I shall be a little more fortunate here, and that you will allow me to pay you my respectful homage."

"This is very wonderful! You played your part so well that the sharpest eye would have been deceived. Now we shall see if you play your new part as well. If you do me the honour to call on me I will give you a good welcome."

After these complimentary speeches, the story became public property, and the whole table was amusing itself with it, when I had the happiness of seeing M.— and Madame coming into the room.

"There is the good-natured waiter," said she to her husband.

The worthy man stepped forward, and politely thanked me for having done his wife the honour of taking off her boots.

This told me that she had concealed nothing, and I was glad. Dinner was served, M. de Chavigni made my charmer sit at his right hand, and I was placed between my two calumniators. I was obliged to hide my game, so, although I disliked them intensely, I made love to them, hardly raising my eyes to glance at Madame, who looked ravishing. I did not find her husband either as old or as jealous as I had expected. The ambassador asked him and his wife to stay the evening to an impromptu ball, and then said, that in order for me to be able to tell the Duc de Choiseul that I was well amused at Soleure, he would be delighted to have a play, if Madame would act the fair 'Ecoissaise' again. She said she should

be delighted, but two more actors were wanted.

"That is all right," said the kind old gentleman, "I will play Montrose."

"And I, Murray," I remarked.

My lame friend, angry at this arrangement, which only left her the very bad part of Lady Alton, could not help lancing a shaft at me.

"Oh! why isn't there a waiter's part in the play?" said she, "you would play it so well."

"That is well said, but I hope you will teach me to play Murray even better."

Next morning, I got the words of my part, and the ambassador told me that the ball would be given in my honour. After dinner I went to my inn, and after making an elaborate toilette I returned to the brilliant company.

The ambassador begged me to open the ball, and introduced me to the highest born but not the most beautiful lady in the place. I then danced with all the ladies present until the good-natured old man got me the object of my vows as a partner in the quadrilles, which he did so easily that no one could have made any remark. "Lord Murray," said he, "must dance with no one but Lindane."

At the first pause I took the opportunity of saying that I had only come to Soleure for her sake, that it was for her sake that I had disguised myself at Zurich, and that I hoped she would permit me to pay my addresses to her.

"I cannot invite you to my house," said she, "for certain sufficient reasons; but if you will stay here some time we shall be able to see each other. But I entreat you not to shew me any marked attention in public, for there are those who will spy upon our actions, and it is not pleasant to be talked about."

I was quite satisfied with this, and told her that I would do all in my power to please her, and that the most prying eyes should have nothing to fix on. I felt that the pleasure I looked forward to would be rendered all the sweeter by a tincture of mystery.

I had proclaimed myself as a novice in the mimic art, and had entreated my lame friend to be kind enough to instruct me. I therefore went to her in the morning, but she could only flatter herself that hers was a reflected light, as I had opportunities for paying my court to my charmer in her house, and however great her vanity may have been, she must have had some suspicions of the truth.

This woman was a widow, aged between thirty and forty years, of a jaundiced complexion, and a piercing and malicious aspect. In her efforts to hide the inequality of her legs, she walked with a stiff and awkward air; and, wishing to be thought a wit, she increased her natural dullness by a ceaseless flow of small talk. I persisted in behaving towards her with a great air of respect, and one day she said that, having seen me in the disguise of a waiter, she would not have thought I was a man of a timid nature.

"In what respect do you think me timid?" said I; to which she gave me no answer, but I knew perfectly well what she meant.

I was tired of my part, and I had determined to play it no more when we had acted L'Ecossaïse.

All the best people at Soleure were present at our first performance. The lame lady was delighted with the horror inspired by her acting; but she might credit a great deal of it to her appearance. M. de Chavigni drew forth the tears of the audience, his acting was said to be better than the great Voltaire's. As for me, I remember how near I was to fainting when, in the third scene of the fifth act, Lindane said to me,

"What! You! You dare to love me?"

She pronounced these words with such fiery scorn that all the spectators applauded vehemently. I was almost put out of countenance, for I thought I detected in her voice an insult to my honour. However, I collected myself in the minute's respite which the loud applause gave me, and I replied,—

"Yes; I adore you! How should I not?"

So pathetically and tenderly did I pronounce these words that the hall rang again with the applause, and the encores from four hundred throats made me repeat the words which, indeed, came from my heart.

In spite of the pleasure we had given to the audience, we judged ourselves not perfect in our parts, and M. de Chavigni advised us to put off our second performance for a couple of days.

"We will have a rehearsal to-morrow at my country house," said he, "and I beg the favour of all your companies to dinner

there."

However, we all made each other compliments on our acting. My lame friend told me I had played well, but not so well as in the part of waiter, which really suited me admirably. This sarcasm got the laugh on her side, but I returned it by telling her that my performance was a work of art, while her playing of Lady Alton was pure nature. M. de Chavigni told Madame that the spectators were wrong to applaud when she expressed her wonder at my loving her, since she had spoken the words disdainfully; and it was impossible that Lindane could have despised Murray. The ambassador called for me the next day in his carriage, and when we reached his country-house we found all the actors assembled there. His excellency addressed himself in the first place to M.—, telling him he thought his business was as good as done, and that they would talk about it after dinner. We sat down to table, and afterwards rehearsed the piece without any need of the prompter's assistance.

Towards evening the ambassador told the company that he would expect them to supper that evening at Soleure, and everyone left with the exception of the ambassador, myself, and M.— and Madame—. Just as we were going I had an agreeable surprise.

"Will you come with me," said the Ambassador to M.—, "we can talk the matter over at our ease? M. Casanova will have the honour of keeping your wife company in your carriage."

I gave the fair lady my hand respectfully, and she took it with

an air of indifference, but as I was helping her in she pressed my hand with all her might. The reader can imagine how that pressure made my blood circulate like fire in my veins.

Thus we were seated side by side, our knees pressed tenderly against each other. Half an hour seemed like a minute, but it must not be thought that we wasted the time. Our lips were glued together, and were not set apart till we came within ten paces of the ambassador's house, which I could have wished at ten leagues distance. She was the first to get down, and I was alarmed to see the violent blush which overspread her whole face. Such redness looked unnatural; it might betray us; our spring of happiness would soon be dry. The watchful eye of the envious Alton would be fixed upon us, and not in vain; her triumph would outweigh her humiliation. I was at my wits' end.

Love and luck, which have so favoured me throughout the course of my life, came to my aid. I had about me a small box containing hellebore. I opened it as if by instinct, and invited her to take a small pinch. She did so, and I followed her example; but the dose was too strong, and as we were going up the stairs we began to sneeze, and for the next quarter of an hour we continued sneezing. People were obliged to attribute her high colour to the sneezing, or at least no one could give voice to any other suppositions. When the sneezing fit was over, this woman, who was as clever as she was pretty, said her headache was gone, but she would take care another time not to take so strong a dose. I looked out of the corner of my eye at the malicious widow, who

said nothing but seemed deep in thought.

This piece of good luck decided me on staying at Soleure till my love was crowned with success, and I determined to take a country house. I shall not have much opinion of my readers if they find themselves in my position—rich, young, independent, full of fire, and having only pleasure to seek for—and do not follow my example. A perfect beauty was before me with whom I was madly in love, and who, I was sure, shared that love. I had plenty of money, and I was my own master. I thought this a much better plan than turning monk, and I was above caring "what people would say." As soon as the ambassador had returned, which he always did at an early hour on account of his advanced age, I left the company and went to see him in his private room. In truth I felt I must give him that confidence which he had so well deserved.

As soon as he saw me he said,—

"Well, well, did you profit by the interview I got you?"

I embraced him, and said,—

"I may hope for everything."

When I was telling him about the hellebore he was lavish in his compliments on my presence of mind, for, as he said, such an unusual colour would have made people think there had been some kind of a combat—a supposition which would not have tended towards my success. After I had told him all, I imparted my plan.

"I shall do nothing in a hurry," said I, "as I have to take

care that the lady's honour does not suffer, and I trust to time to see the accomplishment of my wishes. I shall want a pretty country house, a good carriage, two lackeys, a good cook, and a housekeeper. All that I leave to your excellency, as I look upon you as my refuge and guardian angel."

"To-morrow, without fail, I will see what I can do, and I have good hopes of doing you a considerable service and of rendering you well content with the attractions of Soleure."

Next day our rehearsal went off admirably, and the day after the ambassador spoke to me as follows:

"So far as I can see, what you are aiming at in this intrigue is the satisfying of your desires without doing any harm to the lady's reputation. I think I know the nature of your love for her well enough to say that if she told you that your leaving Soleure was necessary to her peace of mind you would leave her at once. You see that I have sounded you well enough to be a competent adviser in this delicate and important affair, to which the most famous events in the annals of diplomacy are not to be compared."

"Your excellency does not do sufficient justice to a career which has gained you such distinction."

"That's because I am an old man, my dear fellow, and have shaken off the rust and dust of prejudices, and am able to see things as they really are, and appreciate them at their true value. But let us return to your love-affair. If you wish to keep it in the dark, you must avoid with the greatest care any action which

may awaken suspicion in the minds of people who do not believe that anything is indifferent. The most malicious and censorious will not be able to get anything but the merest chance out of the interview I procured you today, and the accident of the sneezing bout, defy the most ill-natured to draw any deductions; for an eager lover does not begin his suit by sending the beloved one into convulsions. Nobody can guess that your hellebore was used to conceal the blush that your caresses occasioned, since it does not often happen that an amorous combat leaves such traces; and how can you be expected to have foreseen the lady's blushes, and to have provided yourself with a specific against them? In short, the events of to-day will not disclose your secret. M.—who, although he wishes to pass for a man devoid of jealousy, is a little jealous; M.—himself cannot have seen anything out of the common in my asking him to return with me, as I had business of importance with him, and he has certainly no reasons for supposing that I should be likely to help you to intrigue with his wife. Furthermore, the laws of politeness would have forbidden me, under any circumstances, offering the lady the place I offered him, and as he prides himself on his politeness he can raise no possible objection to the arrangement which was made. To be sure I am old and you are young—a distinction not unimportant in a husband's eyes." After this exordium, added the good-natured ambassador, with a laugh, "an exordium which I have delivered in the official style of a secretary of state, let us see where we are. Two things are necessary for you to obtain

your wished-for bliss. The first thing, which concerns you more particularly, is to make M.— your friend, and to conceal from him that you have conceived a passion for his wife, and here I will aid you to the best of my ability. The second point concerns the lady's honour; all your relations with her must appear open and above-board. Consider yourself under my protection; you must not even take a country house before we have found out some plan for throwing dust into the eyes of the observant. However, you need not be anxious; I have hit upon a plan.

"You must pretend to be taken ill, but your illness must be of such a kind that your doctor will be obliged to take your word for the symptoms. Luckily, I know a doctor whose sole idea is to order country air for all complaints. This physician, who is about as clever as his brethren, and kills or cures as well as any of them, will come and feel my pulse one of these days. You must take his advice, and for a couple of louis he will write you a prescription with country air as the chief item. He will then inform everybody that your case is serious, but that he will answer for your cure."

"What is his name?"

"Doctor Herrenschwand."

"What is he doing here? I knew him at Paris; he was Madame du Romain's doctor."

"That is his brother. Now find out some polite complaint, which will do you credit with the public. It will be easy enough to find a house, and I will get you an excellent cook to make your gruel and beef-tea."

The choice of a complaint cost me some thought; I had to give it a good deal of attention. The same evening I managed to communicate my plan to Madame who approved of it. I begged her to think of some way of writing to me, and she said she would.

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