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Содержание

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INTRODUCTION TO THE ELECTIVE AFFINITIES

In the spring of the year 1807 Goethe began work on the second part of *Wilhelm Meister*. He had no very definite plot in view, but proposed to make room for a number of short stories, all relating to the subject of renunciation, which was to be the central theme of the *Wanderjahre*. In the course of the summer, while he was taking the waters at Karlsbad, two or three of the stories were written. The following spring he set about elaborating another tale of renunciation, the idea of which had

occurred to him some time before. But somehow it refused to be confined within the limits of a novelette. As he proceeded the matter grew apace, until it finally developed into the novel which was given to the world in 1809 under the title of *The Elective Affinities*.

When that which should be a short story is expanded into a novel one can usually detect the padding and the embroidery. So it is certainly in this case. Those long descriptions of landscape-gardening; the copious extracts from Ottilie's diary, containing many thoughts which would hardly have entered the head of such a girl; the pages given to subordinate characters, whose comings and goings have no very obvious connection with the story,—all these retard the narrative and tend to hide the essential idea. The strange title, too, has served to divert attention from the real centre of gravity. Had the tale been called, say, "Ottilie's Expiation," there would have been less room for misunderstanding and irrelevant criticism; there would have been less concern over the moral, and more over the artistic, aspect of the story.

What then was the essential idea? Simply to describe a peculiar tragedy resulting from the invasion of the marriage relation by lawless passion. As for the title, it should be remembered that there was just then a tendency to look for curious analogies between physical law and the operations of the human mind. Great interest was felt in suggestion, occult influence, and all that sort of thing. Goethe himself had lately

been lecturing on magnetism. He had also observed, as no one can fail to observe, that the sexual attraction sometimes seems to act like chemical affinity: it breaks up old unions, forms new combinations, destroys pre-existing bodies, as if it were a law that *must* work itself out, whatever the consequences. Such a process will now and then defy prudence, self-respect, duty, even religion,—going its way like a blind and ruthless law of physics. But if this is to happen the recombining elements must, of course, have each its specific character; else there is no affinity and no tragedy.

It is no part of the analogy that the pressure of sex is always and by its very nature like the attraction of atoms. Aside from the fact that character consists largely in the steady inhibition of instinct and passion by the will, there is this momentous difference between atoms or molecules, on the one hand, and souls on the other: the character of the atom or molecule is constant, that of the soul is highly variable. There is no room here for remarks on free will and determinism; suffice it to say that Goethe does not preach any doctrine of mechanical determinism in human relations. The scientific analogy must not be pressed too hard. It is really not important, since after all nothing turns on it. Whatever interest the novel has it would have if all reference to chemistry had been omitted. Goethe's thesis, if he can be said to have one, is simply that character is fate.

He imagines a middle-aged man and woman, Edward and Charlotte, who are, to all seeming, happily united in marriage.

Each has been married before to an unloved mate who has conveniently died, leaving them both free to yield to the gentle pull of long-past youthful attachment. Their feeling for each other is only a mild friendship, but that does not appear to augur ill, since they are well-to-do, and their fine estate offers them both a plenty of interesting work. Edward has a highly esteemed friend called the Captain, who is for the moment without suitable employment for his ability and energy. Edward can give him just the needed work, with great advantage to the property, and would like to do so. Charlotte fears that the presence of the Captain may disturb their pleasant idyl, but finally yields. She herself has a niece, Ottilie, a beautiful girl whom no one understands and who is not doing well at her boarding-school. Charlotte would like to have the girl under her own care. After much debate the pair take both the Captain and Ottilie into their spacious castle.

And now the elective affinity begins to do its disastrous work. Edward, who has always indulged himself in every whim and has no other standard of conduct, falls madly in love with the charming Ottilie, who has a passion for making herself useful and serving everybody. She adapts herself to Edward, fails to see what a shabby specimen of a man he really is, humors his whims, and worships him—at first in an innocent girlish way. Charlotte is not long in discovering that the Captain is a much better man than her husband; she loves him, but within the limits of wifely duty. In the vulgar world of prose such a tangle could be most easily straightened out by divorce and remarriage. This is what

Edward proposes and tries to bring about. The others are almost won over to this solution when the event happens that precipitates the tragedy: the child of Edward and Charlotte is accidentally drowned by Ottilie's carelessness.

It is a very dubious link in Goethe's fiction that this child, while the genuine offspring of Edward and Charlotte, has the features of Ottilie and the Captain. From the moment of the drowning Ottilie is a changed being. Her character quickly matures; like a wakened sleep-walker she sees what a dangerous path she has been treading. She feels that marriage with Edward would be a crime. She resists his passionate appeals, and her remorse takes on a morbid tinge. It becomes a fixed idea. Happiness is not for her. She must renounce it all. She must atone —atone—for her awful sin. For a moment they plan to send her back to school, but she cannot tear herself away from Edward's sinister presence. At last she refuses food and gradually starves herself to death. The wretched Edward does likewise.

Any just appreciation of Goethe's art in *The Elective Affinities* must begin by recognizing that it is about Ottilie. For her sake the book was written. It is a study of a delicately organized virgin soul caught in the meshes of an ignoble fate and beating its wings in hopeless misery until death ends the struggle. The other characters are ordinary people: Charlotte and the Captain ordinary in their good sense and self-control, Edward ordinary in his moral flabbiness and his foolish infatuation. His death, to be sure, is unthinkable for such a man and does but testify

to the unearthly attraction with which the girl is invested by Goethe's art. The figure of Ottilie, like that of her spiritual sister Mignon, is irradiated by a light that never was on sea or land. She is a creature of romance, and we learn without much surprise that her dead body performs miracles. One is reminded of that medieval lady who is doomed to eat the heart of her crusading lover and then refuses all other food and dies. That Edward is quite unworthy of the girl's love, that the death of the child is no sufficient reason for her morbid remorse, is quite immaterial, since at the end of the tale we are no longer in the realm of normal psychology. A season of dreamy happiness, as she moves about in a world unrealized; then a terrible shock, and after that, remorse, renunciation, hopelessness, the will to die. Such is the logic of the tale.

CHAPTER I

Edward—so we shall call a wealthy nobleman in the prime of life—had been spending several hours of a fine April morning in his nursery-garden, budding the stems of some young trees with cuttings which had been recently sent to him.

He had finished what he was about, and having laid his tools together in their box, was complacently surveying his work, when the gardener came up and complimented his master on his industry.

"Have you seen my wife anywhere?" inquired Edward, as he moved to go away.

"My lady is alone yonder in the new grounds," said the man; "the summer-house which she has been making on the rock over against the castle is finished today, and really it is beautiful. It cannot fail to please your grace. The view from it is perfect:—the village at your feet; a little to your right the church, with its tower, which you can just see over; and directly opposite you, the castle and the garden."

"Quite true," replied Edward; "I can see the people at work a few steps from where I am standing."

"And then, to the right of the church again," continued the gardener, "is the opening of the valley; and you look along over a range of wood and meadow far into the distance. The steps up the rock, too, are excellently arranged. My gracious lady understands

these things; it is a pleasure to work under her."

"Go to her," said Edward, "and desire her to be so good as to wait for me there. Tell her I wish to see this new creation of hers, and enjoy it with her."

The gardener went rapidly off, and Edward soon followed. Descending the terrace, and stopping as he passed to look into the hot-houses and the forcing-pits, he came presently to the stream, and thence, over a narrow bridge, to a place where the walk leading to the summer-house branched off in two directions. One path led across the churchyard, immediately up the face of the rock. The other, into which he struck, wound away to the left, with a more gradual ascent, through a pretty shrubbery. Where the two paths joined again, a seat had been made, where he stopped a few moments to rest; and then, following the now single road, he found himself, after scrambling along among steps and slopes of all sorts and kinds, conducted at last through a narrow more or less steep outlet to the summer-house.

Charlotte was standing at the door to receive her husband. She made him sit down where, without moving, he could command a view of the different landscapes through the door and window—these serving as frames, in which they were set like pictures. Spring was coming on; a rich, beautiful life would soon everywhere be bursting; and Edward spoke of it with delight.

"There is only one thing which I should observe," he added, "the summer-house itself is rather small."

"It is large enough for you and me, at any rate," answered Charlotte.

"Certainly," said Edward; "there is room for a third, too, easily."

"Of course; and for a fourth also," replied Charlotte. "For larger parties we can contrive other places."

"Now that we are here by ourselves, with no one to disturb us, and in such a pleasant mood," said Edward, "it is a good opportunity for me to tell you that I have for some time had something on my mind, about which I have wished to speak to you, but have never been able to muster up my courage."

"I have observed that there has been something of the sort," said Charlotte.

"And even now," Edward went on, "if it were not for a letter which the post brought me this morning, and which obliges me to come to some resolution today, I should very likely have still kept it to myself."

"What is it, then" asked Charlotte, turning affectionately toward him.

"It concerns our friend the Captain," answered Edward; "you know the unfortunate position in which he, like many others, is placed. It is through no fault of his own; but you may imagine how painful it must be for a person with his knowledge and talents and accomplishments, to find himself without employment. I—I will not hesitate any longer with what I am wishing for him. I should like to have him here with us for a time."

"We must think about that," replied Charlotte; "it should be considered on more sides than one."

"I am quite ready to tell you what I have in view," returned Edward. "Through his last letters there is a prevailing tone of despondency; not that he is really in any want. He knows thoroughly well how to limit his expenses; and I have taken care for everything absolutely necessary. It is no distress to him to accept obligations from me; all our lives we have been in the habit of borrowing from and lending to each other; and we could not tell, if we would, how our debtor and creditor account stands. It is being without occupation which is really fretting him. The many accomplishments which he has cultivated in himself, it is his only pleasure—indeed, it is his passion—to be daily and hourly exercising for the benefit of others. And now, to sit still, with his arms folded; or to go on studying, acquiring, and acquiring, when he can make no use of what he already possesses;—my dear creature, it is a painful situation; and alone as he is, he feels it doubly and trebly."

"But I thought," said Charlotte, "that he had had offers from many different quarters. I myself wrote to numbers of my own friends, male and female, for him; and, as I have reason to believe, not without effect."

"It is true," replied Edward; "but these very offers—these various proposals—have only caused him fresh embarrassment. Not one of them is at all suitable to such a person as he is. He would have nothing to do; he would have to sacrifice himself,

his time, his purposes, his whole method of life; and to that he cannot bring himself. The more I think of it all, the more I feel about it, and the more anxious I am to see him here with us."

"It is very beautiful and amiable in you," answered Charlotte, "to enter with so much sympathy into your friend's position; only you must allow me to ask you to think of yourself and of me, as well."

"I have done that," replied Edward. "For ourselves, we can have nothing to expect from his presence with us, except pleasure and advantage. I will say nothing of the expense. In any case, if he came to us, it would be but small; and you know he will be of no inconvenience to us at all. He can have his own rooms in the right wing of the castle, and everything else can be arranged as simply as possible. What shall we not be thus doing for him! and how agreeable and how profitable may not his society prove to us! I have long been wishing for a plan of the property and the grounds. He will see to it, and get it made. You intend yourself to take the management of the estate, as soon as our present steward's term is expired; and that, you know, is a serious thing. His various information will be of immense benefit to us; I feel only too acutely how much I require a person of this kind. The country people have knowledge enough, but their way of imparting it is confused, and not always honest. The students from the towns and universities are sufficiently clever and orderly, but they are deficient in personal experience. From my friend, I can promise myself both

knowledge and method, and hundreds of other circumstances I can easily conceive arising, affecting you as well as me, and from which I can foresee innumerable advantages. Thank you for so patiently listening to me. Now, do you say what you think, and say it out freely and fully; I will not interrupt you."

"Very well," replied Charlotte; "I will begin at once with a general observation. Men think most of the immediate—the present; and rightly, their calling being to do and to work; women, on the other hand, more of how things hang together in life; and that rightly too, because their destiny—the destiny of their families—is bound up in this interdependence, and it is exactly this which it is their mission to promote. So now let us cast a glance at our present and our past life; and you will acknowledge that the invitation of the Captain does not fall in so entirely with our purposes, our plans, and our arrangements. I will go back to those happy days of our earliest intercourse. We loved each other, young as we then were, with all our hearts. We were parted: you from me—your father, from an insatiable desire of wealth, choosing to marry you to an elderly and rich lady; I from you, having to give my hand, without any especial motive, to an excellent man, whom I respected, if I did not love. We became again free—you first, your poor mother at the same time leaving you in possession of your large fortune; I later, just at the time when you returned from abroad. So we met once more. We spoke of the past; we could enjoy and love the recollection of it; we might have been contented, in each other's

society, to leave things as they were. You were urgent for our marriage. I at first hesitated. We were about the same age; but I as a woman had grown older than you as a man. At last I could not refuse you what you seemed to think the one thing you cared for. All the discomfort which you had ever experienced, at court, in the army, or in traveling, you were to recover from at my side; you would settle down and enjoy life; but only with me for your companion. I settled my daughter at a school, where she could be more completely educated than would be possible in the retirement of the country; and I placed my niece Ottilie there with her as well, who, perhaps, would have grown up better at home with me, under my own care. This was done with your consent, merely that we might have our own lives to ourselves—merely that we might enjoy undisturbed our so-long-wished-for, so-long-delayed happiness. We came here and settled ourselves. I undertook the domestic part of the ménage, you the out-of-doors and the general control. My own principle has been to meet your wishes in everything, to live only for you. At least, let us give ourselves a fair trial how far in this way we can be enough for each other."

"Since the interdependence of things, as you call it, is your especial element," replied Edward, "one should either never listen to any of your trains of reasoning, or make up one's mind to allow you to be in the right; and, indeed, you have been in the right up to the present day. The foundation which we have hitherto been laying for ourselves, is of the true, sound sort; only,

are we to build nothing upon it? is nothing to be developed out of it? All the work we have done—I in the garden, you in the park—is it all only for a pair of hermits?"

"Well, well," replied Charlotte, "very well. What we have to look to is, that we introduce no alien element, nothing which shall cross or obstruct us. Remember, our plans, even those which only concern our amusements, depend mainly on our being together. You were to read to me, in consecutive order, the journal which you made when you were abroad. You were to take the opportunity of arranging it, putting all the loose matter connected with it in its place; and with me to work with you and help you, out of these invaluable but chaotic leaves and sheets to put together a complete thing, which should give pleasure to ourselves and to others. I promised to assist you in transcribing; and we thought it would be so pleasant, so delightful, so charming, to travel over in recollection the world which we were unable to see together. The beginning is already made. Then, in the evenings, you have taken up your flute again, accompanying me on the piano, while of visits backwards and forwards among the neighborhood, there is abundance. For my part, I have been promising myself out of all this the first really happy summer I have ever thought to spend in my life."

"Only I cannot see," replied Edward, rubbing his forehead, "how, through every bit of this which you have been so sweetly and so sensibly laying before me, the Captain's presence can be any interruption; I should rather have thought it would give it

all fresh zest and life. He was my companion during a part of my travels. He made many observations from a different point of view from mine. We can put it all together, and so make a charmingly complete work of it."

"Well, then, I will acknowledge openly," answered Charlotte, with some impatience, "my feeling is against this plan. I have an instinct which tells me no good will come of it."

"You women are invincible in this way," replied Edward. "You are so sensible, that there is no answering you, then so affectionate, that one is glad to give way to you; full of feelings, which one cannot wound, and full of forebodings, which terrify one."

"I am not superstitious," said Charlotte; "and I care nothing for these dim sensations, merely as such; but in general they are the result of unconscious recollections of happy or unhappy consequences, which we have experienced as following on our own or others' actions. Nothing is of greater moment, in any state of things, than the intervention of a third person. I have seen friends, brothers and sisters, lovers, husbands and wives, whose relation to each other, through the accidental or intentional introduction of a third person, has been altogether changed—whose whole moral condition has been inverted by it."

"That may very well be," replied Edward, "with people who live on without looking where they are going; but not, surely, with persons whom experience has taught to understand themselves."

"That understanding ourselves, my dearest husband," insisted

Charlotte, "is no such certain weapon. It is very often a most dangerous one for the person who bears it. And out of all this, at least so much seems to arise, that we should not be in too great a hurry. Let me have a few days to think; don't decide."

"As the matter stands," returned Edward, "wait as many days as we will, we shall still be in too great a hurry. The arguments for and against are all before us; all we want is the conclusion, and as things are, I think the best thing we can do is to draw lots."

"I know," said Charlotte, "that in doubtful cases it is your way to leave them to chance. To me, in such a serious matter, this seems almost a crime."

"Then what am I to write to the Captain?" cried Edward; "for write I must at once."

"Write him a kind, sensible, sympathizing letter," answered Charlotte.

"That is as good as none at all," replied Edward.

"And there are many cases," answered she, "in which we are obliged, and in which it is the real kindness, rather to write nothing than not to write."

CHAPTER II

Edward was alone in his room. The repetition of the incidents of his life from Charlotte's lips; the representation of their mutual situation, their mutual purposes, had worked him, sensitive as he was, into a very pleasant state of mind. While close to her—while in her presence—he had felt so happy, that he had thought out a warm, kind, but quiet and indefinite epistle which he would send to the Captain. When, however, he had settled himself at his writing-table, and taken up his friend's letter to read it over once more, the sad condition of this excellent man rose again vividly before him. The feelings which had been all day distressing him again awoke, and it appeared impossible to him to leave one whom he called his friend in such painful embarrassment.

Edward was unaccustomed to deny himself anything. The only child, and consequently the spoilt child, of wealthy parents, who had persuaded him into a singular, but highly advantageous marriage with a lady far older than himself; and again by her petted and indulged in every possible way, she seeking to reward his kindness to her by the utmost liberality; after her early death his own master, traveling independently of every one, equal to all contingencies and all changes, with desires never excessive, but multiple and various—free-hearted, generous, brave, at times even noble—what was there in the world to cross or thwart him?

Hitherto, everything had gone as he desired! Charlotte had

become his; he had won her at last, with an obstinate, a romantic fidelity; and now he felt himself, for the first time, contradicted, crossed in his wishes, when those wishes were to invite to his home the friend of his youth—just as he was longing, as it were, to throw open his whole heart to him. He felt annoyed, impatient; he took up his pen again and again, and as often threw it down again, because he could not make up his mind what to write. Against his wife's wishes he would not go; against her expressed desire he could not. Ill at ease as he was, it would have been impossible for him, even if he had wished, to write a quiet, easy letter. The most natural thing to do, was to put it off. In a few words, he begged his friend to forgive him for having left his letter unanswered; that day he was unable to write circumstantially; but shortly, he hoped to be able to tell him what he felt at greater length.

The next day, as they were walking to the same spot, Charlotte took the opportunity of bringing back the conversation to the subject, perhaps because she knew that there is no surer way of rooting out any plan or purpose than by often talking it over.

It was what Edward was wishing. He expressed him self in his own way, kindly and sweetly. For although, sensitive as, he was, he flamed up readily—although the vehemence with which he desired anything made him pressing, and his obstinacy made him impatient—his words were so softened by his wish to spare the feelings of those to whom he was speaking, that it was impossible not to be charmed, even when one most disagreed, with him.

This morning, he first contrived to bring Charlotte into the happiest humor, and then so disarmed her with the graceful turn which he gave to the conversation, that she cried out at last:

"You are determined that what I refused to the husband you will make me grant to the lover. At least, my dearest," she continued, "I will acknowledge that your wishes,—and the warmth and sweetness with which you express them, have not left me untouched, have not left me unmoved. You drive me to make a confession;—till now, I too have had a concealment from you; I am in exactly the same position with you, and I have hitherto been putting the same restraint on my inclination which I have been exhorting you to put on yours."

"Glad am I to hear that," said Edward. "In the married state, a difference of opinion now and then, I see, is no bad thing; we learn something of each other by it."

"You are to learn at present, then," said Charlotte, "that it is with me about Ottilie as it is with you about the Captain. The dear child is most uncomfortable at the school, and I am thoroughly uneasy about her. Luciana, my daughter, born as she is for the world, is there training hourly for the world; languages, history, everything that is taught there, she acquires with so much ease that, as it were, she learns them off at sight. She has quick natural gifts, and an excellent memory; one may almost say she forgets everything, and in a moment calls it all back again. She distinguishes herself above every one at the school with the freedom of her carriage, the grace of her movement, and the

elegance of her address, and with the inborn royalty of nature makes herself the queen of the little circle there. The superior of the establishment regards her as a little divinity, who, under her hands, is shaping into excellence, and who will do her honor, gain her reputation, and bring her a large increase of pupils; the first pages of this good lady's letters, and her monthly notices of progress, are forever hymns about the excellence of such a child, which I have to translate into my own prose; while her concluding sentences about Ottilie are nothing but excuse after excuse—attempts at explaining how it can be that a girl in other respects growing up so lovely seems coming to nothing, and shows neither capacity nor accomplishment. This, and the little she has to say besides, is no riddle to me, because I can see in this dear child the same character as that of her mother, who was my own dearest friend; who grew up with myself, and whose daughter, I am certain, if I had the care of her education, would form into an exquisite creature.

"This, however, has not fallen in with our plan, and as one ought not to be picking and pulling, or for ever introducing new elements among the conditions of our lives, I think it better to bear, and to conquer as I can, even the unpleasant impression that my daughter, who knows very well that poor Ottilie is entirely dependent upon us, does not refrain from flourishing her own successes in her face, and so, to a certain extent, destroys the little good which we have done for her. Who are well trained enough never to wound others by a parade of their own advantages? and

who stands so high as not at times to suffer under such a slight? In trials like these, Ottilie's character is growing in strength, but since I have clearly known the painfulness of her situation, I have been thinking over all possible ways to make some other arrangement. Every hour I am expecting an answer to my own last letter, and then I do not mean to hesitate any more. So, my dear Edward, it is with me. We have both, you see, the same sorrows to bear, touching both our hearts in the same point. Let us bear them together, since we neither of us can press our own against the other."

"We are strange creatures," said Edward, smiling. "If we can only put out of sight anything which troubles us, we fancy at once we have got rid of it. We can give up much in the large and general; but to make sacrifices in little things is a demand to which we are rarely equal. So it was with my mother,—as long as I lived with her, while a boy and a young man, she could not bear to let me be a moment out of her sight. If I was out later than usual in my ride, some misfortune must have happened to me. If I got wet through in a shower, a fever was inevitable. I traveled; I was absent from her altogether; and, at once, I scarcely seemed to belong to her. If we look at it closer," he continued, "we are both acting very foolishly, very culpably. Two very noble natures, both of which have the closest claims on our affection, we are leaving exposed to pain and distress, merely to avoid exposing ourselves to a chance of danger. If this is not to be called selfish, what is? You take Ottilie. Let me have the Captain; and, for a

short period, at least, let the trial be made."

"We might venture it," said Charlotte, thoughtfully, "if the danger were only to ourselves. But do you think it prudent to bring Ottilie and the Captain into a situation where they must necessarily be so closely intimate; the Captain, a man no older than yourself, of an age (I am not saying this to flatter you) when a man becomes first capable of love and first deserving of it, and a girl of Ottilie's attractiveness?"

"I cannot conceive how you can rate Ottilie so high," replied Edward. "I can only explain it to myself by supposing her to have inherited your affection for her mother. Pretty she is, no doubt. I remember the Captain observing it to me, when we came back last year, and met her at your aunt's. Attractive she is,—she has particularly pretty eyes; but I do not know that she made the slightest impression upon me."

"That was quite proper in you," said Charlotte, "seeing that I was there; and, although she is much younger than I, the presence of your old friend had so many charms for you, that you overlooked the promise of the opening beauty. It is one of your ways; and that is one reason why it is so pleasant to live with you."

Charlotte, openly as she appeared to be speaking, was keeping back something, nevertheless; which was that at the time when Edward came first back from abroad, she had purposely thrown Ottilie in his way, to secure, if possible, so desirable a match for her protégée. For of herself, at that time, in connection with Edward, she never thought at all. The Captain, also, had a hint

given to him to draw Edward's attention to her; but the latter, who was clinging determinately to his early affection for Charlotte, looked neither right nor left, and was only happy in the feeling that it was at last within his power to obtain for himself the one happiness which he so earnestly desired; and which a series of incidents had appeared to have placed forever beyond his reach.

They were on the point of descending the new grounds, in order to return to the castle, when a servant came hastily to meet them, and, with a laugh on his face, called up from below, "Will your grace be pleased to come quickly to the castle? The Herr Mittler has just galloped into the court. He shouted to us, to go all of us in search of you, and we were to ask whether there was need; 'whether there is need,' he cried after us, 'do you hear? But be quick, be quick.'"

"The odd fellow," exclaimed Edward. "But has he not come at the right time, Charlotte? Tell him, there is need,—grievous need. He must alight. See his horse taken care of. Take him into the saloon, and let him have some luncheon. We shall be with him immediately."

"Let us take the nearest way," he said to his wife, and struck into the path across the churchyard, which he usually avoided. He was not a little surprised to find here, too, traces of Charlotte's delicate hand. Sparing, as far as possible, the old monuments, she had contrived to level it, and lay it carefully out, so as to make it appear a pleasant spot on which the eye and the imagination could equally repose with pleasure. The oldest stones had each

their special honor assigned them. They were ranged according to their dates along the wall, either leaning against it, or let into it, or however it could be contrived; and the string-course of the church was thus variously ornamented.

Edward was singularly affected as he came in upon it through the little wicket; he pressed Charlotte's hand, and tears started into his eyes. But these were very soon put to flight, by the appearance of their singular visitor. This gentleman had declined sitting down in the castle; he had ridden straight through the village to the churchyard gate; and then, halting, he called out to his friends, "Are you not making a fool of me? Is there need, really? If there is, I can stay till mid-day. But don't keep me. I have a great deal to do before night."

"Since you have taken the trouble to come so far," cried Edward to him, in answer, "you had better come through the gate. We meet at a solemn spot. Come and see the variety which Charlotte has thrown over its sadness."

"Inside there," called out the rider, "come I neither on horseback, nor in carriage, nor on foot. These here rest in peace: with them I have nothing to do. One day I shall be carried in feet foremost. I must bear that as I can. Is it serious, I want to know?"

"Indeed it is," cried Charlotte, "right serious. For the first time in our married lives, we are in a strait and difficulty, from which we do not know how to extricate ourselves."

"You do not look as if it were so," answered he. "But I will believe you. If you are deceiving me, for the future you shall help

yourselves. Follow me quickly, my horse will be none the worse for a rest."

The three speedily found themselves in the saloon together. Luncheon was brought in, and Mittler told them what that day he had done, and was going to do. This eccentric person had in early life been a clergyman, and had distinguished himself in his office by the never-resting activity with which he contrived to make up and put an end to quarrels: quarrels in families, and quarrels between neighbors; first among the individuals immediately about him, and afterward among whole congregations, and among the country gentlemen round. While he was in the ministry, no married couple was allowed to separate; and the district courts were untroubled with either cause or process. A knowledge of the law, he was well aware, was necessary to him. He gave himself with all his might to the study of it, and very soon felt himself a match for the best trained advocate. His circle of activity extended wonderfully, and people were on the point of inducing him to move to the Residence, where he would find opportunities of exercising in the higher circles what he had begun in the lowest, when he won a considerable sum of money in a lottery. With this, he bought himself a small property. He let the ground to a tenant, and made it the centre of his operations, with the fixed determination, or rather in accordance with his old customs and inclinations, never to enter a house when there was no dispute to make up, and no help to be given. People who were superstitious about names, and about what they imported,

maintained that it was his being called Mittler which drove him to take upon himself this strange employment.

Luncheon was laid on the table, and the stranger then solemnly pressed his host not to wait any longer with the disclosure which he had to make. Immediately after refreshing himself he would be obliged to leave them.

Husband and wife made a circumstantial confession; but scarcely had he caught the substance of the matter, when he started angrily up from the table, rushed out of the saloon, and ordered his horse to be saddled instantly.

"Either you do not know me, you do not understand me," he cried, "or you are sorely mischievous. Do you call this a quarrel? Is there any want of help here? Do you suppose that I am in the world to give *advice*? Of all occupations which man can pursue, that is the most foolish. Every man must be his own counsellor, and do what he cannot let alone. If all go well, let him be happy, let him enjoy his wisdom and his fortune; if it go ill, I am at hand to do what I can for him. The man who desires to be rid of an evil knows what he wants; but the man who desires something better than he has got is stone blind. Yes, yes, laugh as you will, he is playing blindman's-buff; perhaps he gets hold of something, but the question is what he has got hold of. Do as you will, it is all one. Invite your friends to you, or let them be, it is all the same. The most prudent plans I have seen miscarry, and the most foolish succeed. Don't split your brains about it; and if, one way or the other, evil comes of what you settle, don't fret; send for me, and

you shall be helped. Till which time, I am your humble servant."

So saying, he sprang on his horse, without waiting the arrival of the coffee.

"Here you see," said Charlotte, "the small service a third person can be, when things are off their balance between two persons closely connected; we are left, if possible, more confused and more uncertain than we were."

They would both, probably, have continued hesitating some time longer, had not a letter arrived from the Captain, in reply to Edward's last. He had made up his mind to accept one of the situations which had been offered him, although it was not in the least up to his mark. He was to share the ennui of certain wealthy persons of rank, who depended on his ability to dissipate it.

Edward's keen glance saw into the whole thing, and he pictured it out in just, sharp lines.

"Can we endure to think of our friend in such a position?" he cried; "you cannot be so cruel, Charlotte."

"That strange Mittler is right after all," replied Charlotte; "all such undertakings are ventures; what will come of them it is impossible to foresee. New elements introduced among us may be fruitful in fortune or in misfortune, without our having to take credit to ourselves for one or the other. I do not feel myself firm enough to oppose you further. Let us make the experiment; only one thing I will entreat of you—that it be only for a short time. You must allow me to exert myself more than ever, to use all my influence among all my connections, to find him some position

which will satisfy him in his own way."

Edward poured out the warmest expressions of gratitude. He hastened, with a light, happy heart, to write off his proposals to his friend. Charlotte, in a postscript, was to signify her approbation with her own hand, and unite her own kind entreaties with his. She wrote, with a rapid pen, pleasantly and affectionately, but yet with a sort of haste which was not usual with her; and, most unlike herself, she disfigured the paper at last with a blot of ink, which put her out of temper, and which she only made worse with her attempts to wipe it away.

Edward laughed at her about it, and, as there was still room, added a second postscript, that his friend was to see from this symptom the impatience with which he was expected, and measure the speed at which he came to them by the haste in which the letter was written.

The messenger was gone; and Edward thought he could not give a more convincing evidence of his gratitude, than in insisting again and again that Charlotte should at once send for Ottilie from the school. She said she would think about it; and, for that evening, induced Edward to join with her in the enjoyment of a little music. Charlotte played exceedingly well on the piano, Edward not quite so well on the flute. He had taken a great deal of pains with it at times; but he was without the patience, without the perseverance, which are requisite for the completely successful cultivation of such a talent; consequently, his part was done unequally, some pieces well, only perhaps too quickly—

while with others he hesitated, not being quite familiar with them; so that, for any one else, it would have been difficult to have gone through a duet with him. But Charlotte knew how to manage it. She held in, or let herself be run away with, and fulfilled in this way the double part of a skilful conductor and a prudent housewife, who are able always to keep right on the whole, although particular passages will now and then fall out of order.

CHAPTER III

The Captain came, having previously written a most sensible letter, which had entirely quieted Charlotte's apprehensions. So much clearness about himself, so just an understanding of his own position and the position of his friends, promised everything which was best and happiest.

The conversation of the first few hours, as is generally the case with friends who have not met for a long time, was eager, lively, almost exhausting. Toward evening, Charlotte proposed a walk to the new grounds. The Captain was delighted with the spot, and observed every beauty which had been first brought into sight and made enjoyable by the new walks. He had a practised eye, and at the same time one easily satisfied; and although he knew very well what was really valuable, he never, as so many persons do, made people who were showing him things of their own uncomfortable, by requiring more than the circumstances admitted of, or by mentioning anything more perfect, which he remembered having seen elsewhere.

When they arrived at the summer-house, they found it dressed out for a holiday, only, indeed, with artificial flowers and evergreens, but with some pretty bunches of natural corn-ears among them, and other field and garden fruit, so as to do credit to the taste which had arranged them.

"Although my husband does not like in general to have his

birthday or christening-day kept," Charlotte said, "he will not object today to these few ornaments being expended on a treble festival."

"Treble?" cried Edward.

"Yes, indeed," she replied. "Our friend's arrival here we are bound to keep as a festival; and have you never thought, either of you, that this is the day on which you were both christened? Are you not both named Otto?"

The two friends shook hands across the little table.

"You bring back to my mind," Edward said, "this little link of our boyish affection. As children, we were both called so; but when we came to be at school together, it was the cause of much confusion, and I readily made over to him all my right to the pretty laconic name."

"Wherein you were not altogether so very high-minded," said the Captain; "for I well remember that the name of Edward had then begun to please you better, from its attractive sound when spoken by certain pretty lips."

They were now sitting all three round the same table where Charlotte had spoken so vehemently against their guest's coming to them. Edward, happy as he was, did not wish to remind his wife of that time; but he could not help saying, "There is good room here for one more person."

At this moment the notes of a bugle were heard across from the castle. Full of happy thoughts and feelings as the friends all were together, the sound fell in among them with a strong force of

answering harmony. They listened silently, each for the moment withdrawing into himself, and feeling doubly happy in the fair circle of which he formed a part. The pause was first broken by Edward, who started up and walked out in front of the summer-house.

"Our friend must not think," he said to Charlotte, "that this narrow little valley forms the whole of our domain and possessions. Let us take him up to the top of the hill, where he can see farther and breathe more freely."

"For this once, then," answered Charlotte, "we must climb up the old footpath, which is not too easy. By the next time, I hope my walks and steps will have been carried right up."

And so, among rocks, and shrubs, and bushes, they made their way to the summit, where they found themselves, not on a level flat, but on a sloping grassy terrace, running along the ridge of the hill. The village, with the castle behind it, was out of sight. At the bottom of the valley, sheets of water were seen spreading out right and left, with wooded hills rising immediately from their opposite margin, and, at the end of the upper water, a wall of sharp, precipitous rocks directly overhanging it, their huge forms reflected in its level surface. In the hollow of the ravine, where a considerable brook ran into the lake, lay a mill, half hidden among the trees, a sweetly retired spot, most beautifully surrounded; and through the entire semicircle, over which the view extended, ran an endless variety of hills and valleys, copse and forest, the early green of which promised the near approach

of a luxuriant clothing of foliage. In many places particular groups of trees caught the eye; and especially a cluster of planes and poplars directly at the spectator's feet, close to the edge of the centre lake. They were at their full growth, and they stood there, spreading out their boughs all around them, in fresh and luxuriant strength.

To these Edward called his friend's attention.

"I myself planted them," he cried, "when I was a boy. They were small trees which I rescued when my father was laying out the new part of the great castle garden, and in the middle of one summer had rooted them out. This year you will no doubt see them show their gratitude in a fresh set of shoots."

They returned to the castle in high spirits, and mutually pleased with each other. To the guest was allotted an agreeable and roomy set of apartments in the right wing of the castle; and here he rapidly got his books and papers and instruments in order, to go on with his usual occupation. But Edward, for the first few days, gave him no rest. He took him about everywhere, now on foot, now on horseback, making him acquainted with the country and with the estate; and he embraced the opportunity of imparting to him the wishes which he had been long entertaining, of getting at some better acquaintance with it, and learning to manage it more profitably.

"The first thing we have to do," said the Captain, "is to make a magnetic survey of the property. That is a pleasant and easy matter; and if it does not admit of entire exactness, it will be

always useful, and will do, at any rate, for an agreeable beginning. It can be made, too, without any great staff of assistants, and one can be sure of getting it completed. If by-and-by you come to require anything more exact, it will be easy then to find some plan to have it made."

The Captain was exceedingly skilful at work of thus kind. He had brought with him whatever instruments he required, and commenced immediately. Edward provided him with a number of foresters and peasants, who, with his instruction, were able to render him all necessary assistance. The weather was favorable. The evenings and the early mornings were devoted to the designing and drawing, and in a short time it was all filled in and colored. Edward saw his possessions grow out like a new creation upon the paper; and it seemed as if now for the first time he knew what they were, as if they now first were properly his own.

Thus there came occasion to speak of the park, and of the ways of laying it out; a far better disposition of things being made possible after a survey of this kind, than could be arrived at by experimenting on nature, on partial and accidental impressions.

"We must make my wife understand this," said Edward.

"We must do nothing of the kind," replied the Captain, who did not like bringing his own notions in collision with those of others. He had learnt by experience that the motives and purposes by which men are influenced are far too various to be made to coalesce upon a single point, even on the most solid

representations. "We must not do it," he cried; "she will be only confused. With her, as with all people who employ themselves on such matters merely as amateurs, the important thing is, rather that she shall do something, than that something shall be done. Such persons feel their way with nature. They have fancies for this plan or that; they do not venture on removing obstacles. They are not bold enough to make a sacrifice. They do not know beforehand in what their work is to result. They try an experiment —it succeeds—it fails; they alter it; they alter, perhaps, what they ought to leave alone, and leave what they ought to alter; and so, at last, there always remains but a patchwork, which pleases and amuses, but never satisfies."

"Acknowledge candidly," said Edward, "that you do not like this new work of hers."

"The idea is excellent," he replied; "if the execution were equal to it, there would be no fault to find. But she has tormented herself to find her way up that rock; and she now torments every one, if you must have it, that she takes up after her. You cannot walk together, you cannot walk behind one another, with any freedom. Every moment your step is interrupted one way or another. There is no end to the mistakes which she has made."

"Would it have been easy to have done it otherwise?" asked Edward.

"Perfectly," replied the Captain. "She had only to break away a corner of the rock, which is now but an unsightly object, made up as it is of little pieces, and she would at once have a sweep for

her walk and stone in abundance for the rough masonry work, to widen it in the bad places, and make it smooth. But this I tell you in strictest confidence. Her it would only confuse and annoy. What is done must remain as it is. If any more money and labor is to be spent there, there is abundance to do above the summer-house on the hill, which we can settle our own way."

If the two friends found in their occupation abundance of present employment, there was no lack either of entertaining reminiscences of early times, in which Charlotte took her part as well. They determined, moreover, that as soon as their immediate labors were finished, they would go to work upon the journal, and in this way, too, reproduce the past.

For the rest, when Edward and Charlotte were alone, there were fewer matters of private interest between them than formerly. This was especially the case since the fault-finding about the grounds, which Edward thought so just, and which he felt to the quick. He held his tongue about what the Captain had said for a long time; but at last, when he saw his wife again preparing to go to work above the summer-house, with her paths and steps, he could not contain himself any longer, but, after a few circumlocutions, came out with his new views.

Charlotte was thoroughly disturbed. She was sensible enough to perceive at once that they were right, but there was the difficulty with what was already done—and what was made was made. She had liked it; even what was wrong had become dear to her in its details. She fought against her convictions; she defended

her little creations; she railed at men who were forever going to the broad and the great. They could not let a pastime, they could not let an amusement alone, she said, but they must go and make a work out of it, never thinking of the expense which their larger plans involved. She was provoked, annoyed, and angry. Her old plans she could not give up, the new she would not quite throw from her; but, divided as she was, for the present she put a stop to the work, and gave herself time to think the thing over, and let it ripen by itself.

At the same time that she lost this source of active amusement, the others were more and more together over their own business. They took to occupying themselves, moreover, with the flower-garden and the hot-houses; and as they filled up the intervals with the ordinary gentlemen's amusements, hunting, riding, buying, selling, breaking horses, and such matters, she was every day left more and more to herself. She devoted herself more assiduously than ever to her correspondence on account of the Captain; and yet she had many lonely hours; so that the information which she now received from the school became of more agreeable interest.

To a long-drawn letter of the superior of the establishment, filled with the usual expressions of delight at her daughter's progress, a brief postscript was attached, with a second from the hand of a gentleman in employment there as an Assistant, both of which we here communicate.

POSTSCRIPT OF THE SUPERIOR

"Of Ottilie, I can only repeat to your ladyship what I have already stated in my former letters. I do not know how to find fault with her, yet I cannot say that I am satisfied. She is always unassuming, always ready to oblige others; but it is not pleasing to see her so timid, so almost servile.

"Your ladyship lately sent her some money, with several little matters for her wardrobe. The money she has never touched, the dresses lie unworn in their place. She keeps her things very nice and very clean; but this is all she seems to care about. Again, I cannot praise her excessive abstemiousness in eating and drinking. There is no extravagance at our table, but there is nothing that I like better than to see the children eat enough of good, wholesome food. What is carefully provided and set before them ought to be taken; and to this I never can succeed in bringing Ottilie. She is always making herself some occupation or other, always finding something which she must do, something which the servants have neglected, to escape the second course or the dessert; and now it has to be considered (which I cannot help connecting with all this) that she frequently suffers, I have lately learnt, from pain in the left side of her head. It is only at times, but it is distressing, and may be of importance. So much upon this otherwise sweet and lovely girl."

SECOND POSTSCRIPT, BY THE ASSISTANT

"Our excellent superior commonly permits me to read the letters in which she communicates her observations upon her pupils to their parents and friends. Such of them as are addressed to your ladyship I ever read with twofold attention and pleasure. We have to congratulate you upon a daughter who unites in herself every brilliant quality with which people distinguish themselves in the world; and I at least think you no less fortunate in having had bestowed upon you, in your step-daughter, a child who has been born for the good and happiness of others, and assuredly also for her own. Ottilie is almost our only pupil about whom there is a difference of opinion between myself and our reverend superior. I do not complain of the very natural desire in that good lady to see outward and definite fruits arising from her labors. But there are also fruits which are not outward, which are of the true germinal sort, and which develop themselves sooner or later in a beautiful life. And this I am certain is the case with your protégée. So long as she has been under my care, I have watched her moving with an even step, slowly, steadily forward —never back. As with a child it is necessary to begin everything at the beginning, so it is with her. She can comprehend nothing which does not follow from what precedes it; let a thing be as simple and easy as possible, she can make nothing of it if it is not in a recognizable connection; but find the intermediate links, and

make them clear to her, and then nothing is too difficult for her.

"Progressing with such slow steps, she remains behind her companions, who, with capacities of quite a different kind, hurry on and on, learn everything readily, connected or unconnected, recollect it with ease, and apply it with correctness. And again, some of the lessons here are given by excellent, but somewhat hasty and impatient teachers, who pass from result to result, cutting short the process by which they are arrived at; and these are not of the slightest service to her; she learns nothing from them. There is a complaint of her handwriting. They say she will not, or cannot, understand how to form her letters. I have examined closely into this. It is true she writes slowly, stiffly, if you like; but the hand is neither timid nor without character. The French language is not my department, but I have taught her something of it, in the step-by-step fashion; and this she understands easily. Indeed, it is singular that she knows a great deal, and knows it well, too; and yet when she is asked a question, it seems as if she knew nothing.

"To conclude generally, I should say she learns nothing like a person who is being educated, but she learns like one who is to educate—not like a pupil, but like a future teacher. Your ladyship may think it strange that I, as an educator and a teacher, can find no higher praise to give to any one than by a comparison with myself. I may leave it to your own good sense, to your deep knowledge of the world and of mankind, to make the best of my most inadequate, but well-intended expressions. You

may satisfy yourself that you have much happiness to promise yourself from this child. I commend myself to your ladyship, and I beseech you to permit me to write to you again as soon as I see reason to believe that I have anything important or agreeable to communicate."

This letter gave Charlotte great pleasure. The contents of it coincided very closely with the notions which she had herself conceived of Ottilie. At the same time, she could not help smiling at the excessive interest of the Assistant, which seemed greater than the insight into a pupil's excellence usually calls forth. In her quiet, unprejudiced way of looking at things, this relation, among others, she was contented to permit to lie before her as a possibility; she could value the interest of so sensible a man in Ottilie, having learnt, among the lessons of her life, to see how highly true regard is to be prized in a world where indifference or dislike are the common natural residents.

CHAPTER IV

The topographical chart of the property and its environs was completed. It was executed on a considerable scale; the character of the particular localities was made intelligible by various colors; and by means of a trigonometrical survey the Captain had been able to arrive at a very fair exactness of measurement. He had been rapid in his work. There was scarcely ever any one who could do with less sleep than this most laborious man; and, as his day was always devoted to an immediate purpose, every evening something had been done.

"Let us now," he said to his friend, "go on to what remains for us, to the statistics of the estate. We shall have a good deal of work to get through at the beginning, and afterward we shall come to the farm estimates, and much else which will naturally arise out of them. Only we must have one thing distinctly settled and adhered to. Everything which is properly *business* we must keep carefully separate from life. Business requires earnestness and method; *life* must have a freer handling. Business demands the utmost stringency and sequence; in life, inconsecutiveness is frequently necessary, indeed, is charming and graceful. If you are firm in the first, you can afford yourself more liberty in the second; while if you mix them, you will find the free interfering with and breaking in upon the fixed."

In these sentiments Edward felt a slight reflection upon

himself. Though not naturally disorderly, he could never bring himself to arrange his papers in their proper places. What he had to do in connection with others, was not kept separate from what depended only on himself. Business got mixed up with amusement, and serious work with recreation. Now, however, it was easy for him, with the help of a friend who would take the trouble upon himself; and a second "I" worked out the separation, to which the single "I" was always unequal.

In the Captain's wing, they contrived a depository for what concerned the present, and an archive for the past. Here they brought all the documents, papers, and notes from their various hiding-places, rooms, drawers, and boxes, with the utmost speed. Harmony and order were introduced into the wilderness, and the different packets were marked and registered in their several pigeon-holes. They found all they wanted in greater completeness even than they had expected; and here an old clerk was found of no slight service, who for the whole day and part of the night never left his desk, and with whom, till then, Edward had been always dissatisfied.

"I should not know him again," he said to his friend, "the man is so handy and useful."

"That," replied the Captain, "is because we give him nothing fresh to do till he has finished, at his convenience, what he has already; and so, as you perceive, he gets through a great deal. If you disturb him, he becomes useless at once."

Spending their days together in this way, in the evenings they

never neglected their regular visits to Charlotte. If there was no party from the neighborhood, as was often the case, they read and talked, principally on subjects connected with the improvement of the condition and comfort of social life.

Charlotte, always accustomed to make the most of opportunities, not only saw her husband pleased, but found personal advantages for herself. Various domestic arrangements, which she had long wished to make, but which she did not know exactly how to set about, were managed for her through the contrivance of the Captain. Her domestic medicine-chest, hitherto but poorly furnished, was enlarged and enriched, and Charlotte herself, with the help of good books and personal instruction, was put in the way of being able to exercise her disposition to be of practical assistance more frequently and more efficiently than before.

In providing against accidents, which, though common, yet only too often find us unprepared, they thought it especially necessary to have at hand whatever is required for the recovery of drowning men—accidents of this kind, from the number of canals, reservoirs, and waterworks in the neighborhood, being of frequent occurrence. This department the Captain took expressly into his own hands; and the observation escaped Edward, that a case of this kind had made a very singular epoch in the life of his friend. The latter made no reply, but seemed to be trying to escape from a painful recollection. Edward immediately stopped; and Charlotte, who, as well as he, had a general knowledge of

the story, took no notice of the expression.

"These preparations are all exceedingly valuable," said the Captain, one evening. "Now, however, we have not got the one thing which is most essential—a sensible man who understands how to manage it all. I know an army surgeon, whom I could exactly recommend for the place. You might get him at this moment, on easy terms. He is highly distinguished in his profession, and has frequently done more for me, in the treatment even of violent inward disorders, than celebrated physicians. Help upon the spot, is the thing you often most want in the country."

He was written for at once; and Edward and Charlotte were rejoiced to have found so good and necessary an object on which to expend so much of the money which they set apart for such accidental demands upon them.

Thus Charlotte, too, found means of making use, for her purposes, of the Captain's knowledge and practical skill; and she began to be quite reconciled to his presence, and to feel easy about any consequences which might ensue. She commonly prepared questions to ask him; among other things, it was one of her anxieties to provide against whatever was prejudicial to health and comfort, against poisons and such like. The lead-glazing on the china, the verdigris which formed about her copper and bronze vessels, etc., had long been a trouble to her. She got him to tell her about these, and, naturally, they often had to fall back on the first elements of medicine and chemistry.

An accidental, but welcome occasion for entertainment of this kind, was given by an inclination of Edward to read aloud. He had a particularly clear, deep voice, and earlier in life had earned himself a pleasant reputation for his feeling and lively recitations of works of poetry and oratory. At this time he was occupied with other subjects, and the books which, for some time past, he had been reading, were either chemical or on some other branch of natural or technical science.

One of his especial peculiarities—which, by-the-by, he very likely shares with a number of his fellow-creatures—was, that he could not bear to have any one looking over him when he was reading. In early life, when he used to read poems, plays, or stories, this had been the natural consequence of the desire which the reader feels, like the poet, or the actor, or the story-teller, to make surprises, to pause, to excite expectation; and this sort of effect was naturally defeated when a third person's eyes could run on before him, and see what was coming. On such occasions, therefore, he was accustomed to place himself in such a position that no one could get behind him. With a party of only three, this was unnecessary; and as with the present subject there was no opportunity for exciting feelings or giving the imagination a surprise, he did not take any particular pains to protect himself.

One evening he had placed himself carelessly, and Charlotte happened by accident to cast her eyes upon the page. His old impatience was aroused; he turned to her, and said, almost unkindly:

"I do wish, once for all, you would leave off doing a thing so out of taste and so disagreeable. When I read aloud to a person, is it not the same as if I was telling him something by word of mouth? The written, the printed word, is in the place of my own thoughts, of my own heart. If a window were broken into my brain or into my heart, and if the man to whom I am counting out my thoughts, or delivering my sentiments, one by one, knew beforehand exactly what was to come out of me, should I take the trouble to put them into words? When anybody looks over my book, I always feel as if I were being torn in two."

Charlotte's tact, in whatever circle she might be, large or small, was remarkable, and she was able to set aside disagreeable or excited expressions without appearing to notice them. When a conversation grew tedious, she knew how to interrupt it; when it halted, she could set it going. And this time her good gift did not forsake her.

"I am sure you will forgive me my fault," she said, when I tell you what it was this moment which came over me. I heard you reading something about Affinities, and I thought directly of some relations of mine, two of whom are just now occupying me a great deal. Then my attention went back to the book. I found it was not about living things at all, and I looked over to get the thread of it right again."

"It was the comparison which led you wrong and confused you," said Edward. "The subject is nothing but earths and minerals. But man is a true Narcissus; he delights to see his

own image everywhere; and he spreads himself underneath the universe, like the amalgam behind the glass."

"Quite true," continued the Captain. "That is the way in which he treats everything external to himself. His wisdom and his folly, his will and his caprice, he attributes alike to the animal, the plant, the elements, and the gods."

"Would you," said Charlotte, "if it is not taking you away too much from the immediate subject, tell me briefly what is meant here by Affinities?"

"I shall be very glad indeed," replied the Captain, to whom Charlotte had addressed herself. "That is, I will tell you as well as I can. My ideas on the subject date ten years back; whether the scientific world continues to think the same about it, I cannot tell."

"It is most disagreeable," cried Edward, "that one cannot now-a-days learn a thing once for all, and have done with it. Our forefathers could keep to what they were taught when they were young; but we have, every five years, to make revolutions with them, if we do not wish to drop altogether out of fashion."

"We women need not be so particular," said Charlotte; "and, to speak the truth, I only want to know the meaning of the word. There is nothing more ridiculous in society than to misuse a strange technical word; and I only wish you to tell me in what sense the expression is made use of in connection with these things. What its scientific application is I am quite contented to leave to the learned; who, by-the-by, as far as I have been able to

observe, do not find it easy to agree among themselves."

"Whereabouts shall we begin," said Edward, after a pause, to the Captain, "to come most quickly to the point?"

The latter, after thinking as little while, replied shortly:

"You must let me make what will seem a wide sweep; we shall be on our subject almost immediately."

Charlotte settled her work at her side, promising the fullest attention.

The Captain began:

"In all natural objects with which we are acquainted, we observe immediately that they have a certain relation to themselves. It may sound ridiculous to be asserting what is obvious to every one; but it is only by coming to a clear understanding together about what we know, that we can advance to what we do not know."

"I think," interrupted Edward, "we can make the thing more clear to her, and to ourselves, with examples; conceive water, or oil, or quicksilver; among these you will see a certain oneness, a certain connection of their parts; and this oneness is never lost, except through force or some other determining cause. Let the cause cease to operate, and at once the parts unite again."

"Unquestionably," said Charlotte, "that is plain; rain-drops readily unite and form streams; and when we were children, it was our delight to play with quicksilver, and wonder at the little globules splitting and parting and running into one another."

"And here," said the Captain, "let me just cursorily

mention one remarkable thing—I mean, that the full, complete correlation of parts which the fluid state makes possible, shows itself distinctly and universally in the globular form. The falling water-drop is round; you yourself spoke of the globules of quicksilver; and a drop of melted lead let fall, if it has time to harden before it reaches the ground, is found at the bottom in the shape of a ball."

"Let me try and see," said Charlotte, "whether I can understand where you are bringing me. As everything has a reference to itself, so it must have some relation to others."

"And that," interrupted Edward, "will be different according to the natural differences of the things themselves. Sometimes they will meet like friends and old acquaintances; they will come rapidly together, and unite without either having to alter itself at all—as wine mixes with water. Others, again, will remain as strangers side by side, and no amount of mechanical mixing or forcing will succeed in combining them. Oil and water may be shaken up together, and the next moment they are separate again, each by itself."

"One can almost fancy," said Charlotte, "that in these simple forms one sees people that one is acquainted with; one has met with just such things in the societies amongst which one has lived; and the strangest likenesses of all with these soulless creatures are in the masses in which men stand divided one against the other, in their classes and professions; the nobility and the third estate, for instance, or soldiers and civilians."

"Then again," replied Edward, "as these are united under common laws and customs, so there are intermediate members in our chemical world which will combine elements that are mutually repulsive."

"Oil, for instance," said the Captain, "we make combine with water with the help of alkalis–"

"Do not go on too fast with your lesson," said Charlotte. "Let me see that I keep step with you. Are we not here arrived among the affinities?"

"Exactly," replied the Captain; "we are on the point of apprehending them in all their power and distinctness; such natures as, when they come in contact, at once lay hold of each other, each mutually affecting the other, we speak of as having an affinity one for the other. With the alkalis and acids, for instance, the affinities are strikingly marked. They are of opposite natures; very likely their being of opposite natures is the secret of their inter-relational effect—each reaches out eagerly for its companion, they lay hold of each other, modify each other's character, and form in connection an entirely new substance. There is lime, you remember, which shows the strongest inclination for all sorts of acids—a distinct desire of combining with them. As soon as our chemical chest arrives, we can show you a number of entertaining experiments which will give you a clearer idea than words, and names, and technical expressions."

"It appears to me," said Charlotte, "that, if you choose to

call these strange creatures of yours related, the relationship is not so much a relationship of blood as of soul or of spirit. It is the way in which we see all really deep friendship arise among men, opposite peculiarities of disposition being what best makes internal union possible. But I will wait to see what you can really show me of these mysterious proceedings; and for the present," she added, turning to Edward, "I will promise not to disturb you any more in your reading. You have taught me enough of what it is about to enable me to attend to it."

"No, no," replied Edward, "now that you have once stirred the thing, you shall not get off so easily. It is just the most complicated cases which are the most interesting. In these you come first to see the degrees of the affinities, to watch them as their power of attraction is weaker or stronger, nearer or more remote. Affinities begin really to interest only when they bring about separations."

"What!" cried Charlotte, "is that miserable word, which unhappily we hear so often now-a-days in the world; is that to be found in nature's lessons too?"

"Most certainly," answered Edward; "the title with which chemists were supposed to be most honorably distinguished was, artists of separation."

"It is not so any more," replied Charlotte; "and it is well that it is not. It is a higher art, and it is a higher merit, to unite. An artist of union is what we should welcome in every province of the universe. However, as we are on the subject again, give me

an instance or two of what you mean."

"We had better keep," said the Captain, "to the same instances of which we have already been speaking. Thus, what we call limestone is a more or less pure calcareous earth in combination with a delicate acid, which is familiar to us in the form of a gas. Now, if we place a piece of this stone in diluted sulphuric acid, this will take possession of the lime, and appear with it in the form of gypsum, the gaseous acid at the same time going off in vapor. Here is a case of separation; a combination arises, and we believe ourselves now justified in applying to it the words 'Elective Affinity;' it really looks as if one relation had been deliberately chosen in preference to another.

"Forgive me," said Charlotte, "as I forgive the natural philosopher. I cannot see any choice in this; I see a natural necessity rather, and scarcely that. After all, it is perhaps merely a case of opportunity. Opportunity makes relations as it makes thieves; and as long as the talk is only of natural substances, the choice to me appears to be altogether in the hands of the chemist who brings the creatures together. Once, however, let them be brought together, and then God have mercy on them. In the present case, I cannot help being sorry for the poor acid gas, which is driven out up and down infinity again."

"The acid's business," answered the Captain, "is now to get connected with water, and so serve as a mineral fountain for the refreshing of sound or disordered mankind."

"That is very well for the gypsum to say," said Charlotte. "The

gypsum is all right, is a body, is provided for. The other poor, desolate creature may have trouble enough to go through before it can find a second home for itself."

"I am much mistaken," said Edward, smiling, "if there be not some little *arrière pensée* behind this. Confess your wickedness! You mean me by your lime; the lime is laid hold of by the Captain, in the form of sulphuric acid, torn away from your agreeable society, and metamorphosed into a refractory gypsum."

"If your conscience prompts you to make such a reflection," replied Charlotte, "I certainly need not distress myself. These comparisons are pleasant and entertaining; and who is there that does not like playing with analogies? But man is raised very many steps above these elements; and if he has been somewhat liberal with such fine words as Election and Elective Affinities, he will do well to turn back again into himself, and take the opportunity of considering carefully the value and meaning of such expressions. Unhappily, we know cases enough where a connection apparently indissoluble between two persons, has, by the accidental introduction of a third, been utterly destroyed, and one or the other of the once happily united pair been driven out into the wilderness."

"Then you see how much more gallant the chemists are," said Edward.

"They at once add a fourth, that neither may go away empty."

"Quite so," replied the Captain. "And those are the cases

which are really most important and remarkable—cases where this attraction, this affinity, this separating and combining, can be exhibited, the two pairs severally crossing each other; where four creatures, connected previously, as two and two, are brought into contact, and at once forsake their first combination to form into a second. In this forsaking and embracing, this seeking and flying, we believe that we are indeed observing the effects of some higher determination; we attribute a sort of will and choice to such creatures, and feel really justified in using technical words, and speaking of 'Elective Affinities.'"

"Give me an instance of this," said Charlotte.

"One should not spoil such things with words," replied the Captain. "As I said before, as soon as I can show you the experiment, I can make it all intelligible and pleasant for you. For the present, I can give you nothing but horrible scientific expressions, which at the same time will give you no idea about the matter. You ought yourself to see these creatures, which seem so dead, and which are yet so full of inward energy and force, at work before your eyes. You should observe them with a real personal interest. Now they seek each other out, attract each other, seize, crush, devour, destroy each other, and then suddenly reappear again out of their combinations, and come forward in fresh, renovated, unexpected form; thus you will comprehend how we attribute to them a sort of immortality—how we speak of them as having sense and understanding; because we feel our own senses to be insufficient to observe them adequately, and

our reason too weak to follow them."

"I quite agree," said Edward, "that the strange scientific nomenclature, to persons who have not been reconciled to it by a direct acquaintance with or understanding of its object, must seem unpleasant, even ridiculous; but we can easily, just for once, contrive with symbols to illustrate what we are speaking of."

"If you do not think it looks pedantic," answered the Captain, "I can put my meaning together with letters. Suppose an A connected so closely with a B, that all sorts of means, even violence, have been made use of to separate them, without effect. Then suppose a C in exactly the same position with respect to D. Bring the two pairs into contact; A will fling himself on D, C on B, without its being possible to say which had first left its first connection, or made the first move toward the second."

"Now then," interposed Edward, "till we see all this with our eyes, we will look upon the formula as an analogy, out of which we can devise a lesson for immediate use. You stand for A, Charlotte, and I am your B; really and truly I cling to you, I depend on you, and follow you, just as B does with A. C is obviously the Captain, who at present is in some degree withdrawing me from you. So now it is only just that if you are not to be left to solitude a D should be found for you, and that is unquestionably the amiable little lady, Ottilie. You will not hesitate any longer to send and fetch her."

"Good," replied Charlotte; "although the example does not, in my opinion, exactly fit our case. However, we have been

fortunate, at any rate, in today for once having met all together; and these natural or elective affinities have served to unite us more intimately. I will tell you, that since this afternoon I have made up my mind to send for Ottilie. My faithful housekeeper, on whom I have hitherto depended for everything, is going to leave me shortly, to be married. (It was done at my own suggestion, I believe, to please me.) What it is which has decided me about Ottilie, you shall read to me. I will not look over the pages again. Indeed, the contents of them are already known to me. Only read, read!"

With these words, she produced a letter, and handed it to Edward.

CHAPTER V
LETTER OF THE LADY SUPERIOR

"Your ladyship will forgive the brevity of my present letter. The public examinations are but just concluded, and I have to communicate to all the parents and guardians the progress which our pupils have made during the past year. To you I may well be brief, having to say much in few words. Your ladyship's daughter has proved herself first in every sense of the word. The testimonials which I inclose, and her own letter, in which she will detail to you the prizes which she has won, and the happiness which she feels in her success, will surely please, and I hope delight you. For myself, it is the less necessary that I should say much, because I see that there will soon be no more occasion to keep with us a young lady so far advanced. I send my respects to your ladyship, and in a short time I shall take the liberty of offering you my opinion as to what in future may be of most advantage to her.

"My good assistant will tell you about Ottilie."

LETTER OF THE ASSISTANT

"Our reverend superior leaves it to me to write to you of Ottilie, partly because, with her ways of thinking about it, it

would be painful to her to say what has to be said; partly, because she herself requires some excusing, which she would rather have done for her by me.

"Knowing, as I did too well, how little able the good Ottilie was to show out what lies in her, and what she is capable of, I was all along afraid of this public examination. I was the more uneasy, as it was to be of a kind which does not admit of any especial preparation; and even if it had been conducted as usual, Ottilie never can be prepared to make a display. The result has only too entirely justified my anxiety. She has gained no prize; she is not even amongst those whose names have been mentioned with approbation. I need not go into details. In writing, the letters of the other girls were not so well formed, but their strokes were far more free. In arithmetic, they were all quicker than she; and in the more difficult problems, which she does the best, there was no examination. In French, she was outshone and outtalked by many; and in history she was not ready with her names and dates. In geography, there was a want of attention to the political divisions; and for what she could do in music there was neither time nor quiet enough for her few modest melodies to gain attention. In drawing she certainly would have gained the prize; her outlines were clear, and the execution most careful and full of spirit; unhappily, she had chosen too large a subject, and it was incomplete.

"After the pupils were dismissed, the examiners consulted together, and we teachers were partially admitted into the

council. I very soon observed that of Ottilie either nothing would be said at all, or if her name was mentioned, it would be with indifference, if not absolute disapproval. I hoped to obtain some favor for her by a candid description of what she was, and I ventured it with the greater earnestness, partly because I was only speaking my real convictions, and partly because I remembered in my own younger years finding myself in the same unfortunate case. I was listened to with attention, but as soon as I had ended, the presiding examiner said to me very kindly but laconically, 'We presume capabilities: they are to be converted into accomplishments. This is the aim of all education. It is what is distinctly intended by all who have the care of children, and silently and indistinctly by the children themselves. This also is the object of examinations, where teachers and pupils are alike standing their trial. From what we learn of you, we may entertain good hopes of the young lady, and it is to your own credit also that you have paid so much attention to your pupil's capabilities. If in the coming year you can develop these into accomplishments, neither yourself nor your pupil shall fail to receive your due praise.'

"I had made up my mind to what must follow upon all this; but there was something worse that I had not anticipated, which had soon to be added to it. Our good Superior, who like a trusty shepherdess could not bear to have one of her flock lost, or, as was the case here, to see it undistinguished, after the examiners were gone could not contain her displeasure, and said to Ottilie,

who was standing quite quietly by the window, while the others were exulting over their prizes: 'Tell me, for heaven's sake, how can a person look so stupid if she is not so?' Ottilie replied, quite calmly, 'Forgive me, my dear mother, I have my headache again today, and it is very painful.' Kind and sympathizing as she generally is, the Superior this time answered, 'No one can believe that,' and turned angrily away.

"Now it is true—no one can believe it—for Ottilie never alters the expression of her countenance. I have never even seen her move her hand to her head when she has been asleep.

"Nor was this all. Your ladyship's daughter, who is at all times sufficiently lively and impetuous, after her triumph today was overflowing with the violence of her spirits. She ran from room to room with her prizes and testimonials, and shook them in Ottilie's face. 'You have come badly off this morning,' she cried. Ottilie replied in her calm, quiet way, 'This is not the last day of trial.' 'But you will always remain the last,' cried the other, and ran away.

"No one except myself saw that Ottilie was disturbed. She has a way when she experiences any sharp unpleasant emotion which she wishes to resist, of showing it in the unequal color of her face; the left cheek becomes for a moment flushed, while the right turns pale. I perceived this symptom, and I could not prevent myself from saying something. I took our Superior aside, and spoke seriously to her about it. The excellent lady acknowledged that she had been wrong. We considered the whole

affair; we talked it over at great length together, and not to weary your ladyship, I will tell you at once the desire with which we concluded, namely, that you will for a while have Ottilie with yourself. Our reasons you will yourself readily perceive. If you consent, I will say more to you on the manner in which I think she should be treated. The young lady your daughter we may expect will soon leave us, and we shall then with pleasure welcome Ottilie back to us.

"One thing more, which another time I might forget to mention: I have never seen Ottilie eager for anything, or at least ask pressingly for anything. But there have been occasions, however rare, when on the other hand she has wished to decline things which have been pressed upon her, and she does it with a gesture which to those who have caught its meaning is irresistible. She raises her hands, presses the palms together, and draws them against her breast, leaning her body a little forward at the same time, and turns such a look upon the person who is urging her that he will be glad enough to cease to ask or wish for anything of her. If your ladyship ever sees this attitude, as with your treatment of her it is not likely that you will, think of me, and spare Ottilie."

Edward read these letters aloud, not without smiles and shakes of the head. Naturally, too, there were observations made on the persons and on the position of the affair.

"Enough!" Edward cried at last, "it is decided. She comes. You, my love, are provided for, and now we can get forward with our work. It is becoming highly necessary for me to move over

to the right wing to the Captain; evenings and mornings are the time for us best to work together, and then you, on your side, will have admirable room for yourself and Ottilie."

Charlotte made no objection, and Edward sketched out the method in which they should live. Among other things, he cried, "It is really very polite in this niece to be subject to a slight pain on the left side of her head. I have it frequently an the right. If we happen to be afflicted together, and sit opposite one another —I leaning on my right elbow, and she on her left, and our heads on the opposite sides, resting on our hands—what a pretty pair of pictures we shall make."

The Captain thought that might be dangerous. "No, no!" cried out Edward. "Only do you, my dear friend, take care of the D, for what will become of B, if poor C is taken away from it?"

"That, I should have thought, would have been evident enough," replied Charlotte.

"And it is, indeed," cried Edward; "he would turn back to his A, to his Alpha and Omega;" and he sprung up and taking Charlotte in his arms, pressed her to his breast.

CHAPTER VI

The carriage which brought Ottilie drove up to the door. Charlotte went out to receive her. The dear girl ran to meet her, threw herself at her feet, and embraced her knees.

"Why such humility?" said Charlotte, a little embarrassed, and endeavoring to raise her from the ground.

"It is not meant for humility," Ottilie answered, without moving from the position in which she had placed herself; "I am only thinking of the time when I could not reach higher than to your knees, and when I had just learnt to know how you loved me."

She stood up, and Charlotte embraced her warmly. She was introduced to the gentlemen, and was at once treated with especial courtesy as a visitor. Beauty is a welcome guest everywhere. She appeared attentive to the conversation, without taking a part in it.

The next morning Edward said to Charlotte, "What an agreeable, entertaining girl she is!"

"Entertaining!" answered Charlotte, with a smile; "why, she has not opened her lips yet!"

"Indeed!" said Edward, as he seemed to bethink himself; "that is very strange."

Charlotte had to give the new-comer but a very few hints on the management of the household. Ottilie saw rapidly all

the arrangements, and what was more, she felt them. She comprehended easily what was to be provided for the whole party, and what for each particular member of it. Everything was done with the utmost punctuality; she knew how to direct, without appearing to be giving orders, and when any one had left anything undone, she at once set it right herself.

As soon as she had found how much time she would have to spare, she begged Charlotte to divide her hours for her, and to these she adhered exactly. She worked at what was set before her in the way which the Assistant had described to Charlotte. They let her alone. It was but seldom that Charlotte interfered. Sometimes she changed her pens for others which had been written with, to teach her to make bolder strokes in her handwriting, but these, she found, would be soon cut sharp and fine again.

The ladies had agreed with one another when they were alone to speak nothing but French, and Charlotte persisted in it the more, as she found Ottilie more ready to talk in a foreign language, when she was told it was her duty to exercise herself in it. In this way she often said more than she seemed to intend. Charlotte was particularly pleased with a description, most complete, but at the same time most charming and amiable, which she gave her one day, by accident, of the school. She soon felt her to be a delightful companion, and before long she hoped to find in her an attached friend.

At the same time she looked over again the more early

accounts which had been sent her of Ottilie, to refresh her recollection with the opinion which the Superior and the Assistant had formed about her, and compare them with her in her own person. For Charlotte was of opinion that we cannot too quickly become acquainted with the character of those with whom we have to live, that we may know what to expect of them; where we may hope to do anything in the way of improvement with them, and what we must make up our minds, once for all, to tolerate and let alone.

This examination led her to nothing new, indeed; but much which she already knew became of greater meaning and importance. Ottilie's moderation in eating and drinking, for instance, became a real distress to her.

The next thing on which the ladies were employed was Ottilie's toilet. Charlotte wished her to appear in clothes of a richer and more *recherché* sort, and at once the clever active girl herself cut out the stuff which had been previously sent to her, and with a very little assistance from others was able, in a short time, to dress herself out most tastefully. The new fashionable dresses set off her figure. An agreeable person, it is true, will show through all disguises; but we always fancy it looks fresher and more graceful when its peculiarities appear under some new drapery. And thus, from the moment of her first appearance, she became more and more a delight to the eyes of all who beheld her. As the emerald refreshes the sight with its beautiful hues, and exerts, it is said, a beneficent influence on that noble

sense, so does human beauty work with far larger potency on the outward and on the inward sense; whoever looks upon it is charmed against the breath of evil, and feels in harmony with himself and with the world.

In many ways, therefore, the party had gained by Ottilie's arrival. The Captain and Edward kept regularly to the hours, even to the minutes, for their general meeting together. They never kept the others waiting for them either for dinner or tea, or for their walks; and they were in less haste, especially in the evenings, to leave the table. This did not escape Charlotte's observation; she watched them both, to see whether one more than the other was the occasion of it. But she could not perceive any difference. They had both become more companionable. In their conversation they seemed to consider what was best adapted to interest Ottilie; what was most on a level with her capacities and her general knowledge. If she left the room when they were reading or telling stories, they would wait till she returned. They had grown softer and altogether more united.

In return for this, Ottilie's anxiety to be of use increased every day; the more she came to understand the house, its inmates, and their circumstances, the more eagerly she entered into everything, caught every look and every motion; half a word, a sound, was enough for her. With her calm attentiveness, and her easy, unexcited activity, she was always the same. Sitting, rising up, going, coming, fetching, carrying, returning to her place again, it was all in the most perfect repose; a constant

change, a constant agreeable movement; while, at the same time, she went about so lightly that her step was almost inaudible.

This cheerful obligingness in Ottilie gave Charlotte the greatest pleasure. There was one thing, however, which she did not exactly like, of which she had to speak to her. "It is very polite in you," she said one day to her, "when people let anything fall from their hand, to be so quick in stooping and picking it up for them; at the same time, it is a sort of confession that they have a right to require such attention, and in the world we are expected to be careful to whom we pay it. Toward women, I will not prescribe any rule as to how you should conduct yourself. You are young. To those above you, and older than you, services of this sort are a duty; toward your equals they are polite; to those younger than yourself and your inferiors you may show yourself kind and good-natured by such things—only it is not becoming in a young lady to do them for men."

"I will try to forget the habit," replied Ottilie; "I think, however, you will in the meantime forgive me for my want of manners, when I tell you how I came by it. We were taught history at school; I have not gained as much out of it as I ought, for I never knew what use I was to make of it; a few little things, however, made a deep impression upon me, among which was the following: When Charles the First of England was standing before his so-called judges, the gold top came off the stick which he had in his hand, and fell down. Accustomed as he had been on such occasions to have everything done for him, he seemed

to look around and expect that this time too some one would do him this little service. No one stirred, and he stooped down for it himself. It struck me as so piteous, that from that moment I have never been able to see any one let a thing fall, without myself picking it up. But, of course, as it is not always proper, and as I cannot," she continued, smiling, "tell my story every time I do it, in future I will try to contain myself."

In the meantime the fine arrangements which the two friends had been led to make for themselves, went uninterruptedly forward. Every day they found something new to think about and undertake.

One day as they were walking together through the village, they had to remark with dissatisfaction how far behind-hand it was in order and cleanliness, compared to villages where the inhabitants were compelled by the expense of building-ground to be careful about such things.

"You remember a wish we once expressed when we were traveling in Switzerland together," said the Captain, "that we might have the laying out of some country park, and how beautiful we would make it by introducing into some village situated like this, not the Swiss style of building, but the Swiss order and neatness which so much improve it."

"And how well it would answer here! The hill on which the castle stands, slopes down to that projecting angle. The village, you see, is built in a semicircle, regularly enough, just opposite to it. The brook runs between. It is liable to floods; and do observe

the way the people set about protecting themselves from them; one with stones, another with stakes; the next puts up a boarding, and a fourth tries beams and planks; no one, of course, doing any good to another with his arrangement, but only hurting himself and the rest too. And then there is the road going along just in the clumsiest way possible,—up hill and down, through the water, and over the stones. If the people would only lay their hands to the business together, it would cost them nothing but a little labor to run a semi-circular wall along here, take the road in behind it, raising it to the level of the houses, and so give themselves a fair open space in front, making the whole place clean, and getting rid, once for all, in one good general work, of all their little trifling ineffectual makeshifts."

"Let us try it," said the Captain, as he ran his eyes over the lay of the ground, and saw quickly what was to be done.

"I can undertake nothing in company with peasants and shopkeepers," replied Edward, "unless I may have unrestricted authority over them."

"You are not so wrong in that," returned the Captain; "I have experienced too much trouble myself in life in matters of that kind. How difficult it is to prevail on a man to venture boldly on making a sacrifice for an after-advantage! How hard to get him to desire an end, and not hesitate at the means! So many people confuse means with ends; they keep hanging over the first, without having the other before their eyes. Every evil is to be cured at the place where it comes to the surface, and they will not

trouble themselves to look for the cause which produces it, or the remote effect which results from it. This is why it is so difficult to get advice listened to, especially among the many: they can see clearly enough from day to day, but their scope seldom reaches beyond the morrow; and if it comes to a point where with some general arrangement one person will gain while another will lose, there is no prevailing on them to strike a balance. Works of public advantage can be carried through only by an uncontrolled absolute authority."

While they were standing and talking, a man came up and begged of them. He looked more impudent than really in want, and Edward, who was annoyed at being interrupted, after two or three fruitless attempts to get rid of him by a gentler refusal, spoke sharply to him. The fellow began to grumble and mutter abusively; he went off with short steps, talking about the right of beggars. It was all very well to refuse them an alms, but that was no reason why they should be insulted. A beggar, and everybody else too, was as much under God's protection as a lord. It put Edward out of all patience.

The Captain, to pacify him, said, "Let us make use of this as an occasion for extending our rural police arrangements to such cases. We are bound to give away money, but we do better in not giving it in person, especially at home. We should be moderate and uniform in everything, in our charities as in all else; too great liberality attracts beggars instead of helping them on their way. At the same time there is no harm when one is on a journey, or

passing through a strange place, in appearing to a poor man in the street in the form of a chance deity of fortune and making him some present which shall surprise him. The position of the village and of the castle makes it easy for us to put our charities here on a proper footing. I have thought about it before. The public-house is at one end of the village, a respectable old couple live at the other. At each of these places deposit a small sum of money, and let every beggar, not as he comes in, but as he goes out, receive something. Both houses lie on the roads which lead to the castle, so that any one who goes there can be referred to one or the other."

"Come," said Edward, "we will settle that on the spot. The exact sum can be made up another time."

They went to the innkeeper, and to the old couple and the thing was done.

"I know very well," Edward said, as they were walking up the hill to the castle together, "that everything in this world depends on distinctness of idea and firmness of purpose. Your judgment of what my wife has been doing in the park was entirely right; and you have already given me a hint how it might be improved. I will not deny that I told her of it."

"So I have been led to suspect," replied the Captain; "and I could not approve of your having done so. You have perplexed her. She has left off doing anything; and on this one subject she is vexed with us. She avoids speaking of it. She has never since invited us to go with her to the summer-house, although at odd

hours she goes up there with Ottilie."

"We must not allow ourselves to be deterred by that," answered Edward. "If I am once convinced about anything good, which could and should be done, I can never rest till I see it done. We are clever enough at other times in introducing what we want, into the general conversation; suppose we have out some descriptions of English parks, with copper-plates, for our evening's amusement. Then we can follow with your plan. We will treat it first problematically, and as if we were only in jest. There will be no difficulty in passing into earnest."

The scheme was concerted, and the books were opened. In each group of designs they first saw a ground-plan of the spot, with the general character of the landscape, drawn in its rude, natural state. Then followed others, showing the changes which had been produced by art, to employ and set off the natural advantages of the locality. From these to their own property and their own grounds, the transition was easy.

Everybody was pleased. The chart which the Captain had sketched was brought and spread out. The only difficulty was, that they could not entirely free themselves of the plan in which Charlotte had begun. However, an easier way up the hill was found; a lodge was suggested to be built on the height at the edge of the cliff, which was to have an especial reference to the castle. It was to form a conspicuous object from the castle windows, and from it the spectator was to be able to overlook both the castle and the garden.

The Captain had thought it all carefully over, and taken his measurements; and now he brought up again the village road and the wall by the brook, and the ground which was to be raised behind it.

"Here you see," said he, "while I make this charming walk up the height, I gain exactly the quantity of stone which I require for that wall. Let one piece of work help the other, and both will be carried out most satisfactorily and most rapidly."

"But now," said Charlotte, "comes my side of the business. A certain definite outlay of money will have to be made. We ought to know how much will be wanted for such a purpose, and then we can apportion it out—so much work, and so much money, if not by weeks, at least by months. The cash-box is under my charge. I pay the bills, and I keep the accounts."

"You do not appear to have overmuch confidence in us," said Edward.

"I have not much in arbitrary matters," Charlotte answered. "Where it is a case of inclination, we women know better how to control ourselves than you."

It was settled; the dispositions were made, and the work was begun at once.

The Captain being always on the spot, Charlotte was almost daily a witness to the strength and clearness of his understanding. He, too, learnt to know her better; and it became easy for them both to work together, and thus bring something to completeness. It is with work as with dancing; persons who keep the same step

must grow indispensable to one another. Out of this a mutual kindly feeling will necessarily arise; and that Charlotte had a real kind feeling toward the Captain, after she came to know him better, was sufficiently proved by her allowing him to destroy her pretty seat, which in her first plans she had taken such pains in ornamenting, because it was in the lay of his own, without experiencing the slightest feeling about the matter.

CHAPTER VII

Now that Charlotte was occupied with the Captain, it was a natural consequence that Edward should attach himself more to Ottilie. Independently of this, indeed, for some time past he had begun to feel a silent kind of attraction toward her. Obliging and attentive she was to every one, but his self-love whispered that toward him she was particularly so. She had observed his little fancies about his food. She knew exactly what things he liked, and the way in which he liked them to be prepared; the quantity of sugar which he liked in his tea; and so on. Moreover, she was particularly careful to prevent draughts, about which he was excessively sensitive, and, indeed, about which, with his wife, who could never have air enough, he was often at variance. So, too, she had come to know about fruit-gardens and flower-gardens; whatever he liked, it was her constant effort to procure for him, and to keep away whatever annoyed him; so that very soon she grew indispensable to him—she became like his guardian angel, and he felt it keenly whenever she was absent. Besides all this, too, she appeared to grow more open and conversible as soon as they were alone together.

Edward, as he advanced in life, had retained something childish about himself, which corresponded singularly well with the youthfulness of Ottilie. They liked talking of early times, when they had first seen each other; and these reminiscences

led them up to the first epoch of Edward's affection for Charlotte. Ottilie declared that she remembered them both as the handsomest pair about the court; and when Edward would question the possibility of this, when she must have been so exceedingly young, she insisted that she recollected one particular incident as clearly as possible. He had come into the room where her aunt was, and she had hid her face in Charlotte's lap—not from fear, but from a childish surprise. She might have added, because he had made so strong an impression upon her—because she had liked him so much.

While they were occupied in this way, much of the business which the two friends had undertaken together had come to a standstill; so that they found it necessary to inspect how things were going on—to work up a few designs and get letters written. For this purpose, they betook themselves to their office, where they found their old copyist at his desk. They set themselves to their work, and soon gave the old man enough to do, without observing that they were laying many things on his shoulders which at other times they had always done for themselves. At the same time, the first design the Captain tried would not answer, and Edward was as unsuccessful with his first letter. They fretted for a while, planning and erasing, till at last Edward, who was getting on the worst, asked what o'clock it was. And then it appeared that the Captain had forgotten, for the first time for many years, to wind up his chronometer; and they seemed, if not to feel, at least to have a dim perception, that time was beginning

to be indifferent to them.

In the meanwhile, as the gentlemen were thus rather slackening in their energy, the activity of the ladies increased all the more. The every-day life of a family, which is composed of given persons, and is shaped out of necessary circumstances, may easily receive into itself an extraordinary affection, an incipient passion—may receive it into itself as into a vessel; and a long time may elapse before the new ingredient produces a visible effervescence, and runs foaming over the edge.

With our friends, the feelings which were mutually arising had the most agreeable effects. Their dispositions opened out, and a general goodwill arose out of the several individual affections. Every member of the party was happy; and they each shared their happiness with the rest.

Such a temper elevates the spirit, while it enlarges the heart, and everything which, under the influence of it, people do and undertake, has a tendency toward the illimitable. The friends could not remain any more shut up at home; their walks extended themselves further and further. Edward would hurry on before with Ottilie, to choose the path or pioneer the way; and the Captain and Charlotte would follow quietly on the track of their more hasty precursors, talking on some grave subject, or delighting themselves with some spot they had newly discovered, or some unexpected natural beauty.

One day their walk led them down from the gate at the right wing of the castle, in the direction of the hotel, and thence

over the bridge toward the ponds, along the sides of which they proceeded as far as it was generally thought possible to follow the water; thickly wooded hills sloped directly up from the edge, and beyond these a wall of steep rocks, making further progress difficult, if not impossible. But Edward, whose hunting experience had made him thoroughly familiar with the spot, pushed forward along an overgrown path with Ottilie, knowing well that the old mill could not be far off, which was somewhere in the middle of the rocks there. The path was so little frequented, that they soon lost it; and for a short time they were wandering among mossy stones and thickets; it was not for long, however, the noise of the water-wheel speedily telling them that the place which they were looking for was close at hand. Stepping forward on a point of rock, they saw the strange old, dark, wooden building in the hollow before them, quite shadowed over with precipitous crags and huge trees. They determined directly to climb down amidst the moss and the blocks of stone. Edward led the way; and when he looked back and saw Ottilie following, stepping lightly, without fear or nervousness, from stone to stone, so beautifully balancing herself, he fancied he was looking at some celestial creature floating above him; while if, as she often did, she caught the hand which in some difficult spot he would offer her, or if she supported herself on his shoulder, then he was left in no doubt that it was a very exquisite human creature who touched him. He almost wished that she might slip or stumble, that he might catch her in his arms and press her to his heart.

This, however, he would under no circumstances have done, for more than one reason. He was afraid to wound her, and he was afraid to do her some bodily injury.

What the meaning of this could be, we shall immediately learn. When they had got down, and were seated opposite each other at a table under the trees, and when the miller's wife had gone for milk, and the miller, who had come out to them, was sent to meet Charlotte and the Captain, Edward, with a little embarrassment, began to speak:

"I have a request to make, dear Ottilie; you will forgive me for asking it, if you will not grant it. You make no secret (I am sure you need not make any), that you wear a miniature under your dress against your breast. It is the picture of your noble father. You could hardly have known him; but in every sense he deserves a place by your heart. Only, forgive me, the picture is exceedingly large, and the metal frame and the glass, if you take up a child in your arms, if you are carrying anything, if the carriage swings violently, if we are pushing through bushes, or just now, as we were coming down these rocks—cause me a thousand anxieties for you. Any unforeseen blow, a fall, a touch, may be fatally injurious to you; and I am terrified at the possibility of it. For my sake do this: put away the picture, not out of your affections, not out of your room; let it have the brightest, the holiest place which you can give it; only do not wear upon your breast a thing, the presence of which seems to me, perhaps from an extravagant anxiety, so dangerous."

Ottilie said nothing, and while he was speaking she kept her eyes fixed straight before her; then, without hesitation and without haste, with a look turned more toward heaven than on Edward, she unclasped the chain, drew out the picture, and pressed it against her forehead, and then reached it over to her friend, with the words:

"Do you keep it for me till we come home; I cannot give you a better proof how deeply I thank you for your affectionate care."

He did not venture to press the picture to his lips; but he caught her hand and raised it to his eyes. They were, perhaps, two of the most beautiful hands which had ever been clasped together. He felt as if a stone had fallen from his heart, as if a partition-wall had been thrown down between him and Ottilie.

Under the miller's guidance, Charlotte and the Captain came down by an easier path, and now joined them. There was the meeting, and a happy talk, and then they took some refreshments. They would not return by the same way as they came; and Edward struck into a rocky path on the other side of the stream, from which the ponds were again to be seen. They made their way along it, with some effort, and then had to cross a variety of wood and copse—getting glimpses, on the land side, of a number of villages and manor-houses, with their green lawns and fruit-gardens; while very near them, and sweetly situated on a rising ground, a farm lay in the middle of the wood. From a gentle ascent, they had a view, before and behind, which showed them the richness of the country to the greatest advantage; and

then, entering a grove of trees, they found themselves, on again emerging from it, on the rock opposite the castle.

They came upon it rather unexpectedly, and were of course delighted. They had made the circuit of a little world; they were standing on the spot where the new building was to be erected, and were looking again at the windows of their home.

They went down to the summer-house, and sat all four in it for the first time together; nothing was more natural than that with one voice it should be proposed to have the way they had been that day, and which, as it was, had taken them much time and trouble, properly laid out and gravelled, so that people might loiter along it at their leisure. They each said what they thought; and they reckoned up that the circuit, over which they had taken many hours, might be traveled easily with a good road all the way round to the castle, in a single one.

Already a plan was being suggested for making the distance shorter, and adding a fresh beauty to the landscape, by throwing a bridge across the stream, below the mill, where it ran into the lake; when Charlotte brought their inventive imagination somewhat to a standstill, by putting them in mind of the expense which such an undertaking would involve.

"There are ways of meeting that too," replied Edward; "we have only to dispose of that farm in the forest which is so pleasantly situated, and which brings in so little in the way of rent: the sum which will be set free will more than cover what we shall require, and thus, having gained an invaluable walk, we

shall receive the interest of well-expended capital in substantial enjoyment—instead of, as now, in the summing up at the end of the year, vexing and fretting ourselves over the pitiful little income which is returned for it."

Even Charlotte, with all her prudence, had little to urge against this. There had been, indeed, a previous intention of selling the farm. The Captain was ready immediately with a plan for breaking up the ground into small portions among the peasantry of the forest. Edward, however, had a simpler and shorter way of managing it. His present steward had already proposed to take it off his hands—he was to pay for it by instalments—and so, gradually, as the money came in, they would get their work forward from point to point.

So reasonable and prudent a scheme was sure of universal approbation, and already, in prospect, they began to see their new walk winding along its way, and to imagine the many beautiful views and charming spots which they hoped to discover in its neighborhood.

To bring it all before themselves with greater fulness of detail, in the evening they produced the new chart. With the help of this they went over again the way that they had come, and found various places where the walk might take a rather different direction with advantage. Their other scheme was now once more talked through, and connected with the fresh design. The site for the new house in the park, opposite the castle, was a second time examined into and approved, and fixed upon for the termination

of the intended circuit.

Ottilie had said nothing all this time. At length Edward pushed the chart, which had hitherto been lying before Charlotte, across to her, begging her to give her opinion; she still hesitated for a moment. Edward in his gentlest way again pressed her to let them know what she thought—nothing had as yet been settled—it was all as yet in embryo.

"I would have the house built here," she said, as she pointed with her finger to the highest point of the slope on the hill. "It is true you cannot see the castle from thence, for it is hidden by the wood; but for that very reason you find yourself in another quite new world; you lose village and houses and all at the same time. The view of the ponds with the mill, and the hills and mountains in the distance, is singularly beautiful—I have often observed it when I have been there."

"She is right," Edward cried; "how could we have overlooked it. This is what you mean, Ottilie, is it not?" He took a lead pencil, and drew a great black rectangular figure on the summit of the hill.

It went through the Captain's soul to see his carefully and clearly-drawn chart disfigured in such a way. He collected himself, however, after a slight expression of his disapproval and went into the idea. "Ottilie is right," he said; "we are ready enough to walk any distance to drink tea or eat fish, because they would not have tasted as well at home—we require change of scene and change of objects. Your ancestors showed their judgment in the

spot which they chose for the castle; for it is sheltered from the wind, with the conveniences of life close at hand. A place, on the contrary, which is more for pleasure parties than for a regular residence, may be very well yonder there, and in the fair time of year the most agreeable hours may be spent there."

The more they talked it over, the more conclusive was their judgment in favor of Ottilie; and Edward could not conceal his triumph that the thought had been hers. He was as proud as if he had hit upon it himself.

CHAPTER VIII

Early the following morning the Captain examined the spot: he first threw off a sketch of what should be done, and afterward, when the thing had been more completely decided on, he made a complete design, with accurate calculations and measurements. It cost him a good deal of labor, and the business connected with the sale of the farm had to be gone into, so that both the gentlemen now found a fresh impulse to activity.

The Captain made Edward observe that it would be proper, indeed that it would be a kind of duty, to celebrate Charlotte's birthday with laying the foundation-stone. Not much was wanted to overcome Edward's disinclination for such festivities—for he quickly recollected that a little later Ottilie's birthday would follow, and that he could have a magnificent celebration for that.

Charlotte, to whom all this work and what it would involve was a subject for much serious and almost anxious thought, busied herself in carefully going through the time and outlay which it was calculated would be expended on it. During the day they rarely saw each other, so that the evening meeting was looked forward to with all the more anxiety.

Ottilie meantime was complete mistress of the household—and how could it be otherwise, with her quick methodical rays of working? Indeed, her whole mode of thought was suited better to home life than to the world, and to a more free existence.

Edward soon observed that she only walked about with them out of a desire to please; that when she stayed out late with them in the evening it was because she thought it a sort of social duty, and that she would often find a pretext in some household matter for going in again—consequently he soon managed so to arrange the walks which they took together, that they should be at home before sunset; and he began again, what he had long left off, to read aloud poetry—particularly such as had for its subject the expression of a pure but passionate love.

They ordinarily sat in the evening in the same places round a small table—Charlotte on the sofa, Ottilie on a chair opposite to her, and the gentlemen on each side. Ottilie's place was on Edward's right, the side where he put the candle when he was reading—at such times she would draw her chair a little nearer to look over him, for Ottilie also trusted her own eyes better than another person's lips, and Edward would then always make a move toward her, that it might be as easy as possible for her—indeed he would frequently make longer stops than necessary, that he might not turn over before she had got to the bottom of the page.

Charlotte and the Captain observed this, and exchanged many a quiet smile at it; but they were both taken by surprise at another symptom, in which Ottilie's latent feeling accidentally displayed itself.

One evening, which had been partly spoilt for them by a tedious visit, Edward proposed that they should not separate so

early—he felt inclined for music—he would take his flute, which he had not done for many days past. Charlotte looked for the sonatas which they generally played together, and they were not to be found. Ottilie, with some hesitation, said that they were in her room—she had taken them there to copy them.

"And you can, you will, accompany me on the piano?" cried Edward, his eyes sparkling with pleasure. "I think perhaps I can," Ottilie answered. She brought the music and sat down to the instrument. The others listened, and were sufficiently surprised to hear how perfectly Ottilie had taught herself the piece—but far more surprised were they at the way in which she contrived to adapt herself to Edward's style of playing. Adapt herself, is not the right expression—Charlotte's skill and power enabled her, in order to please her husband, to keep up with him when he went too fast, and hold in for him if he hesitated; but Ottilie, who had several times heard them play the sonata together, seemed to have learnt it according to the idea in which they accompanied each other—she had so completely made his defects her own, that a kind of living whole resulted from it, which did not move indeed according to exact rule, but the effect of which was in the highest degree pleasant and delightful. The composer himself would have been pleased to hear his work disfigured in a manner so charming.

Charlotte and the Captain watched this strange unexpected occurrence in silence, with the kind of feeling with which we often observe the actions of children—unable exactly to approve

of them, from the serious consequences which may follow, and yet without being able to find fault, perhaps with a kind of envy. For, indeed, the regard of these two for one another was growing also, as well as that of the others—and it was perhaps only the more perilous because they were both stronger, more certain of themselves, and better able to restrain themselves.

The Captain had already begun to feel that a habit which he could not resist was threatening to bind him to Charlotte. He forced himself to stay away at the hour when she commonly used to be at the works; by getting up very early in the morning he contrived to finish there whatever he had to do, and went back to the castle to his work in his own room. The first day or two Charlotte thought it was an accident—she looked for him in every place where she thought he could possibly be. Then she thought she understood him—and admired him all the more.

Avoiding, as the Captain now did, being alone with Charlotte, the more industriously did he labor to hurry forward the preparations for keeping her rapidly-approaching birthday with all splendor. While he was bringing up the new road from below behind the village, he made the men, under pretence that he wanted stones, begin working at the top as well, and work down, to meet the others; and he had calculated his arrangements so that the two should exactly meet on the eve of the day. The excavations for the new house were already done; the rock was blown away with gunpowder; and a fair foundation-stone had been hewn, with a hollow chamber, and a flat slab adjusted to

cover it.

This outward activity, these little mysterious purposes of friendship, prompted by feelings which more or less they were obliged to repress, rather prevented the little party when together from being as lively as usual. Edward, who felt that there was a sort of void, one evening called upon the Captain to fetch his violin—Charlotte should play the piano, and he should accompany her. The Captain was unable to refuse the general request, and they executed together one of the most difficult pieces of music with an ease, and freedom, and feeling, which could not but afford themselves, and the two who were listening to them, the greatest delight. They promised themselves a frequent repetition of it, as well as further practice together. "They do it better than we, Ottilie," said Edward; "we will admire them—but we can enjoy ourselves together too."

CHAPTER IX

The birthday was come, and everything was ready. The wall was all complete which protected the raised village road against the water, and so was the walk; passing the church, for a short time it followed the path which had been laid out by Charlotte, and then winding upward among the rocks, inclined first under the summer-house to the right, and then, after a wide sweep, passed back above it to the right again, and so by degrees out on to the summit. A large party had assembled for the occasion. They went first to church, where they found the whole congregation assembled in their holiday dresses. After service, they filed out in order; first the boys, then the young men, then the old; after them came the party from the castle, with their visitors and retinue; and the village maidens, young girls, and women, brought up the rear.

At the turn of the walk, a raised stone seat had been contrived, where the Captain made Charlotte and the visitors stop and rest. From here they could see over the whole distance from the beginning to the end—the troops of men who had gone up before them, the file of women following, and now drawing up to where they were. It was lovely weather, and the whole effect was singularly beautiful. Charlotte was taken by surprise, she was touched, and she pressed the Captain's hand warmly.

They followed the crowd who had slowly ascended, and were

now forming a circle round the spot where the future house was to stand. The lord of the castle, his family, and the principal strangers were now invited to descend into the vault, where the foundation-stone, supported on one side, lay ready to be let down. A well-dressed mason, a trowel in one hand and a hammer in the other, came forward, and with much grace spoke an address in verse, of which in prose we can give but an imperfect rendering.

"Three things," he began, "are to be looked to in a building—that it stand on the right spot; that it be securely founded; that it be successfully executed. The first is the business of the master of the house—his and his only. As in the city the prince and the council alone determine where a building shall be, so in the country it is the right of the lord of the soil that he shall say, 'Here my dwelling shall stand; here, and nowhere else.'"

Edward and Ottilie were standing opposite one another, as these words were spoken; but they did not venture to look up and exchange glances.

"To the third, the execution, there is neither art nor handicraft which must not in some way contribute. But the second, the founding, is the province of the mason; and, boldly to speak it out, it is the head and front of all the undertaking—a solemn thing it is—and our bidding you descend hither is full of meaning. You are celebrating your Festival in the deep of the earth. Here within this small hollow spot, you show us the honor of appearing as witnesses of our mysterious craft. Presently we shall lower down this carefully-hewn stone into its place; and

soon these earth-walls, now ornamented with fair and worthy persons, will be no more accessible—but will be closed in forever!

"This foundation-stone, which with its angles typifies the just angles of the building, with the sharpness of its molding, the regularity of it, and with the truth of its lines to the horizontal and perpendicular, the uprightness and equal height of all the walls, we might now without more ado let down—it would rest in its place with its own weight. But even here there shall not fail of lime and means to bind it. For as human beings who may be well inclined to each other by nature, yet hold more firmly together when the law cements them, so are stones also, whose forms may already fit together, united far better by these binding forces. It is not seemly to be idle among the working, and here you will not refuse to be our fellow-laborer;" with these words he reached the trowel to Charlotte, who threw mortar with it under the stone —several of the others were then desired to do the same, and then it was at once let fall. Upon which the hammer was placed next in Charlotte's, and then in the others' hands, to strike three times with it, and conclude, in this expression, the wedlock of the stone with the earth.

"The work of the mason," went on the speaker, "now under the free sky as we are, if it be not done in concealment, yet must pass into concealment—the soil will be laid smoothly in, and thrown over this stone, and with the walls which we rear into the daylight we in the end are seldom remembered. The works of the stone-

cutter and the carver remain under the eyes; but for us it is not to complain when the plasterer blots out the last trace of our hands, and appropriates our work to himself; when he overlays it, and smooths it, and colors it.

"Not from regard for the opinion of others, but from respect for himself, the mason will be faithful in his calling. There is none who has more need to feel in himself the consciousness of what he is. When the house is finished, when the soil is smoothed, the surface plastered over, and the outside all overwrought with ornament, he can even penetrate through all disguises and still recognize those exact and careful adjustments to which the whole is indebted for its being and for its persistence.

"But as the man who commits some evil deed has to fear, that, notwithstanding all precautions, it will one day come to light—so too must he expect who has done some good thing in secret, that it also, in spite of himself, will appear in the day; and therefore we make this foundation-stone at the same time a stone of memorial. Here, in these various hollows which have been hewn into it, many things are now to be buried, as a witness to some far-off world—these metal cases hermetically sealed contain documents in writing; matters of various note are engraved on these plates; in these fair glass bottles we bury the best old wine, with a note of the year of its vintage. We have coins too of many kinds, from the mint of the current year. All this we have received through the liberality of him for whom we build. There is space yet remaining, if guest or spectator desires to offer anything to

the after-world!"

After a slight pause the speaker looked round; but, as is commonly the case on such occasions, no one was prepared; they were all taken by surprise. At last, a merry-looking young officer set the example, and said, "If I am to contribute anything which as yet is not to be found in this treasure-chamber, it shall be a pair of buttons from my uniform—I don't see why they do not deserve to go down to posterity!" No sooner said than done, and then a number of persons found something of the same sort which they could do; the young ladies did not hesitate to throw in some of their side hair combs—smelling bottles and other trinkets were not spared. Only Ottilie hung back; till a kind word from Edward roused her from the abstraction in which she was watching the various things being heaped in. Then she unclasped from her neck the gold chain on which her father's picture had hung, and with a light gentle hand laid it down on the other jewels. Edward rather disarranged the proceedings, by at once, in some haste, having the cover let fall, and fastened down.

The young mason who had been most active through all this, again took his place as orator, and went on: "We lay down this stone for ever, for the establishing the present and the future possessors of this house. But in that we bury this treasure together with it, we do it in the remembrance—in this most enduring of works—of the perishableness of all human things. We remember that a time may come when this cover so fast sealed shall again be lifted; and that can only be when all shall

again be destroyed which as yet we have not brought into being.

"But now—now that at once it may begin to be, back with our thoughts out of the future—back into the present. At once, after the feast, which we have this day kept together, let us on with our labor; let no one of all those trades which are to work on our foundation, through us keep unwilling holiday. Let the building rise swiftly to its height, and out of the windows, which as yet have no existence, may the master of the house, with his family and with his guests, look forth with a glad heart over his broad lands. To him and to all here present herewith be health and happiness."

With these words he drained a richly cut tumbler at a draught, and flung it into the air, thereby to signify the excess of pleasure by destroying the vessel which had served for such a solemn occasion. This time, however, it fell out otherwise. The glass did not fall back to the earth, and indeed without a miracle.

In order to get forward with the buildings, they had already thrown out the whole of the soil at the opposite corner; indeed, they had begun to raise the wall, and for this purpose had reared a scaffold as high as was absolutely necessary. On the occasion of the festival, boards had been laid along the top of this, and a number of spectators were allowed to stand there. It had been meant principally for the advantage of the workmen themselves. The glass had flown up there, and had been caught by one of them, who took it as a sign of good luck for himself. He waved it round without letting it out of his hand, and the letters E and O

were to be seen very richly cut upon it, running one into the other. It was one of the glasses which had been executed for Edward when he was a boy.

The scaffoldings were again deserted, and the most active among the party climbed up to look round them, and could not speak enough in praise of the beauty of the prospect on all sides. How many new discoveries does not a person make when on some high point he ascends but a single story higher. Inland many fresh villages came in sight. The line of the river could be traced like a thread of silver; indeed, one of the party thought that he distinguished the spires of the capital. On the other side, behind the wooded hill, the blue peaks of the far-off mountains were seen rising, and the country immediately about them was spread out like a map.

"If the three ponds," cried some one, "were but thrown together to make a single sheet of water, there would be everything here which is noblest and most excellent."

"That might easily be effected," the Captain said. "In early times they must have formed all one lake among the hills here."

"Only I must beseech you to spare my clump of planes and poplars that stand so prettily by the centre pond," said Edward. "See!" He turned to Ottilie, bringing her a few steps forward, and pointing down—"those trees I planted myself."

"How long have they been standing there?" asked Ottilie.

"Just about as long as you have been in the world," replied Edward. "Yes, my dear child, I planted them when you were still

lying in your cradle."

The party now betook themselves back to the castle. After dinner was over they were invited to walk through the village to take a glance at what had been done there as well. At a hint from the Captain, the inhabitants had collected in front of the houses. They were not standing in rows, but formed in natural family groups; part were occupied at their evening work, part out enjoying themselves on the new benches. They had determined, as an agreeable duty which they imposed upon themselves, to have everything in its present order and cleanliness, at least every Sunday and holiday.

A little party, held together by such feelings as had grown up among our friends, is always unpleasantly interrupted by a large concourse of people. All four were delighted to find themselves again alone in the large drawing-room, but this sense of home was a little disturbed by a letter which was brought to Edward, giving notice of fresh guests who were to arrive the following day.

"It is as we supposed," Edward cried to Charlotte. "The Count will not stay away; he is coming tomorrow."

"Then the Baroness, too, is not far off," answered Charlotte.

"Doubtless not," said Edward. "She is coming, too, tomorrow, from another place. They only beg to be allowed to stay for a night; the next day they will go on together."

"We must prepare for them in time, Ottilie," said Charlotte.

"What arrangement shall I desire to be made?" Ottilie asked.

Charlotte gave a general direction, and Ottilie left the room.

The Captain inquired into the relation in which these two persons stood toward each other, and with which he was only very generally acquainted. They had some time before, both being already married, fallen violently in love with each other; a double marriage was not to be interfered with without attracting attention. A divorce was proposed. On the Baroness's side it could be effected, on that of the Count it could not. They were obliged seemingly to separate, but their position toward each other remained unchanged, and though in the winter at the Residence they were unable to be together, they indemnified themselves in the summer, while making tours and staying at watering-places.

They were both slightly older than Edward and Charlotte, and had been intimate with them from early times at court. The connection had never been absolutely broken off, although it was impossible to approve of their proceedings. On the present occasion their coming was most unwelcome to Charlotte; and if she had looked closely into her reasons for feeling it so, she would have found it was on account of Ottilie. The poor innocent girl should not have been brought so early in contact with such an example.

"It would have been more convenient if they had not come till a couple of days later," Edward was saying; as Ottilie re-entered, "till we had finished with this business of the farm. The deed of sale is complete. One copy of it I have here, but we want a second, and our old clerk has fallen ill." The Captain offered his

services, and so did Charlotte, but there was something or other to object to in both of them.

"Give it to me," cried Ottilie, a little hastily.

"You will never be able to finish it," said Charlotte.

"And really I must have it early the day after tomorrow, and it is long," Edward added.

"It shall be ready," Ottilie cried; and the paper was already in her hands.

The next morning, as they were looking out from their highest windows for their visitors, whom they intended to go some way and meet, Edward said, "Who is that yonder, riding slowly along the road?"

The Captain described accurately the figure of the horse-man.

"Then it is he," said Edward; "the particulars, which you can see better than I, agree very well with the general figure, which I can see too. It is Mittler; but what is he doing, coming riding at such a pace as that?"

The figure came nearer, and Mittler it veritably was. They received him with warm greetings as he came slowly up the steps.

"Why did you not come yesterday?" Edward cried, as he approached.

"I do not like your grand festivities," answered he; "but I am come today to keep my friend's birthday with you quietly."

"How are you able to find time enough?" asked Edward, with a laugh.

"My visit, if you can value it, you owe to an observation which

I made yesterday. I was spending a right happy afternoon in a house where I had established peace, and then I heard that a birthday was being kept here. Now this is what I call selfish, after all, said I to myself: you will only enjoy yourself with those whose broken peace you have mended. Why cannot you for once go and be happy with friends who keep the peace for themselves? No sooner said than done. Here I am, as I determined with myself that I would be."

"Yesterday you would have met a large party here; today you will find but a small one," said Charlotte; "you will meet the Count and the Baroness, with whom you have had enough to do already, I believe."

Out of the middle of the party, who had all four come down to welcome him, the strange man dashed in the keenest disgust, seizing at the same time his hat and whip. "Some unlucky star is always over me," he cried, "directly I try to rest and enjoy myself. What business have I going out of my proper character? I ought never to have come, and now I am persecuted away. Under one roof with those two I will not remain, and you take care of yourselves. They bring nothing but mischief; their nature is like leaven, and propagates its own contagion."

They tried to pacify him, but it was in vain. "Whoever strikes at marriage," he cried;—"whoever, either by word or act, undermines this, the foundation of all moral society, that man has to settle with me, and if I cannot become his master, I take care to settle myself out of his way. Marriage is the beginning

and the end of all culture. It makes the savage mild; and the most cultivated has no better opportunity for displaying his gentleness. Indissoluble it must be, because it brings so much happiness that what small exceptional unhappiness it may bring counts for nothing in the balance. And what do men mean by talking of unhappiness? Impatience it is which from time to time comes over them, and then they fancy themselves unhappy. Let them wait till the moment is gone by, and then they will bless their good fortune that what has stood so long continues standing. There never can be any adequate ground for separation. The condition of man is pitched so high, in its joys and in its sorrows, that the sum which two married people owe to each other defies calculation. It is an infinite debt, which can only be discharged through all eternity.

"Its annoyances marriage may often have; I can well believe that, and it is as it should be. We are all married to our consciences, and there are times when we should be glad to be divorced from them; mine gives me more annoyance than ever a man or a woman can give."

All this he poured out with the greatest vehemence: he would very likely have gone on speaking longer, had not the sound of the postilions' horns given notice of the arrival of the visitors, who, as if on a concerted arrangement, drove into the castle-court from opposite sides at the same moment. Mittler slipped away as their host hastened to receive them, and desiring that his horse might be brought out immediately, rode angrily off.

CHAPTER X

The visitors were welcomed and brought in. They were delighted to find themselves again in the same house and in the same rooms where in early times they had passed many happy days, but which they had not seen for a long time. Their friends too were very glad to see them. The Count and the Baroness had both those tall fine figures which please in middle life almost better than in youth. If something of the first bloom had faded off them, yet there was an air in their appearance which was always irresistibly attractive. Their manners too were thoroughly charming. Their free way of taking hold of life and dealing with it, their happy humor, and apparent easy unembarrassment, communicated itself at once to the rest; and a lighter atmosphere hung about the whole party, without their having observed it stealing on them.

The effect made itself felt immediately on the entrance of the new-comers. They were fresh from the fashionable world, as was to be seen at once, in their dress, in their equipment, and in everything about them; and they formed a contrast not a little striking with our friends, their country style, and the vehement feelings which were at work underneath among them. This, however, very soon disappeared in the stream of past recollection and present interests, and a rapid, lively conversation soon united them all. After a short time they again separated. The ladies

withdrew to their own apartments, and there found amusement enough in the many things which they had to tell one another, and in setting to work at the same time to examine the new fashions, the spring dresses, bonnets, and such like; while the gentlemen were employing themselves looking at the new traveling chariots, trotting out the horses, and beginning at once to bargain and exchange.

They did not meet again till dinner; in the meantime they had changed their dress. And here, too, the newly arrived pair showed to all advantage. Everything they wore was new, and in a style which their friends at the castle had never seen, and yet, being accustomed to it themselves, it appeared perfectly natural and graceful.

The conversation was brilliant and well sustained, as, indeed, in the company of such persons everything and nothing appears to interest. They spoke in French that the attendants might not understand what they said, and swept in happiest humor over all that was passing in the great or the middle world. On one particular subject they remained, however, longer than was desirable. It was occasioned by Charlotte asking after one of her early friends, of whom she had to learn, with some distress, that she was on the point of being separated from her husband.

"It is a melancholy thing," Charlotte said, "when we fancy our absent friends are finally settled, when we believe persons very dear to us to be provided for for life, suddenly to hear that their fortunes are cast loose once more; that they have to strike into a

fresh path of life, and very likely a most insecure one."

"Indeed, my dear friend," the Count answered, "it is our own fault if we allow ourselves to be surprised at such things. We please ourselves with imagining matters of this earth, and particularly matrimonial connections, as very enduring; and as concerns this last point, the plays which we see over and over again help to mislead us; being, as they are, so untrue to the course of the world. In a comedy we see a marriage as the last aim of a desire which is hindered and crossed through a number of acts, and at the instant when it is reached the curtain falls, and the momentary satisfaction continues to ring on in our ears. But in the world it is very different. The play goes on still behind the scenes, and when the curtain rises again we may see and hear, perhaps, little enough of the marriage."

"It cannot be so very bad, however," said Charlotte, smiling. "We see people who have gone off the boards of the theatre, ready enough to undertake a part upon them again."

"There is nothing to say against that," said the Count. "In a new character a man may readily venture on a second trial; and when we know the world we see clearly that it is only this positive, eternal duration of marriage in a world where everything is in motion, which has anything unbecoming about it. A certain friend of mine, whose humor displays itself principally in suggestions for new laws, maintained that every marriage should be concluded only for five years. Five, he said, was a sacred number—pretty and uneven. Such a period would be

long enough for people to learn each other's character, bring a child or two into the world, quarrel, separate, and what is best, get reconciled again. He would often exclaim, 'How happily the first part of the time would pass away!' Two or three years, at least, would be perfect bliss. On one side or the other there would not fail to be a wish to have the relation continue longer, and the amiability would increase the nearer they got to the parting time. The indifferent, even the dissatisfied party, would be softened and gained over by such behavior; they would forget, as in pleasant company the hours pass always unobserved, how the time went by, and they would be delightfully surprised when, after the term had run out, they first observed that they had unknowingly prolonged it."

Charming and pleasant as all this sounded, and deep (Charlotte felt it to her soul) as was the moral significance which lay below it, expressions of this kind, on Ottilie's account, were most distasteful to her. She knew very well that nothing was more dangerous than the licentious conversation which treats culpable or semi-culpable actions as if they were common, ordinary, and even laudable, and of such undesirable kind assuredly were all which touched on the sacredness of marriage. She endeavored, therefore, in her skilful way, to give the conversation another turn, and, when she found that she could not, it vexed her that Ottilie had managed everything so well that there was no occasion for her to leave the table. In her quiet observant way a nod or a look was enough for her to signify to the head servant

whatever was to be done, and everything went off perfectly, although there were a couple of strange men in livery in the way who were rather a trouble than a convenience. And so the Count, without feeling Charlotte's hints, went on giving his opinions on the same subject. Generally, he was little enough apt to be tedious in conversation; but this was a thing which weighed so heavily on his heart, and the difficulties which he found in getting separated from his wife were so great that it had made him bitter against everything which concerned the marriage bond—that very bond which, notwithstanding, he was so anxiously desiring between himself and the Baroness.

"The same friend," he went on, "has another law which he proposes. A marriage shall be held indissoluble only when either both parties, or at least one or the other, enter into it for the third time. Such persons must be supposed to acknowledge beyond a doubt that they find marriage indispensable for themselves; they have had opportunities of thoroughly knowing themselves; of knowing how they conducted themselves in their earlier unions; whether they have any peculiarities of temper, which are a more frequent cause of separation than bad dispositions. People would then observe each other more closely; they would pay as much attention to the married as to the unmarried, no one being able to tell how things may turn out."

"That would add no little to the interest of society," said Edward. "As things are now, when a man is married nobody cares any more either for his virtues or for his vices."

"Under this arrangement," the Baroness struck in, laughing, "our good hosts have passed successfully over their two steps, and may make themselves ready for their third."

"Things have gone happily with them," said the Count. "In their case death has done with a good will what in others the consistorial courts do with a very bad one.

"Let the dead rest," said Charlotte, with a half serious look.

"Why so," persevered the Count, "when we can remember them with honor? They were generous enough to content themselves with less than their number of years for the sake of the larger good which they could leave behind them."

"Alas! that in such cases," said the Baroness, with a suppressed sigh, "happiness is bought only with the sacrifice of our fairest years."

"Indeed, yes," answered the Count; "and it might drive us to despair, if it were not the same with everything in this world. Nothing goes as we hope. Children do not fulfil what they promise; young people very seldom; and if they keep their word, the world does not keep its word with them."

Charlotte, who was delighted that the conversation had taken a turn at last, replied cheerfully:

"Well, then, we must content ourselves with enjoying what good we are to have in fragments and pieces, as we can get it; and the sooner we can accustom ourselves to this the better."

"Certainly," the Count answered, "you two have had the enjoyment of very happy times. When I look back upon the years

when you and Edward were the loveliest couple at the court, I see nothing now to be compared with those brilliant times, and such magnificent figures. When you two used to dance together, all eyes were turned upon you, fastened upon you, while you saw nothing but each other."

"So much has changed since those days," said Charlotte, "that we can listen to such pretty things about ourselves without our modesty being shocked at them."

"I often privately found fault with Edward," said the Count, "for not being more firm. Those singular parents of his would certainly have given way at last; and ten fair years is no trifle to gain."

"I must take Edward's part," struck in the Baroness. "Charlotte was not altogether without fault—not altogether free from what we must call prudential considerations; and although she had a real, hearty love for Edward, and did in her secret soul intend to marry him, I can bear witness how sorely she often tried him; and it was through this that he was at last unluckily prevailed upon to leave her and go abroad, and try to forget her."

Edward bowed to the Baroness, and seemed grateful for her advocacy.

"And then I must add this," she continued, "in excuse for Charlotte. The man who was at that time suing for her, had for a long time given proofs of his constant attachment to her; and, when one came to know him well, was a far more lovable person than the rest of you may like to acknowledge."

"My dear friend," the Count replied, a little pointedly, "confess, now, that he was not altogether indifferent to yourself, and that Charlotte had more to fear from you than from any other rival. I find it one of the highest traits in women, that they continue so long in their regard for a man, and that absence of no duration will serve to disturb or remove it."

"This fine feature, men possess, perhaps, even more," answered the Baroness. "At any rate, I have observed with you, my dear Count, that no one has more influence over you than a lady to whom you were once attached. I have seen you take more trouble to do things when a certain person has asked you, than the friend of this moment would have obtained of you, if she had tried."

"Such a charge as that one must bear the best way one can," replied the Count. "But as to what concerns Charlotte's first husband, I could not endure him, because he parted so sweet a pair from each other—a really predestined pair, who, once brought together, have no reason to fear the five years, or be thinking of a second or third marriage."

"We must try," Charlotte said, "to make up for what we then allowed to slip from us."

"Aye, and you must keep to that," said the Count; "your first marriages," he continued, with some vehemence, "were exactly marriages of the true detestable sort. And, unhappily, marriages generally, even the best, have (forgive me for using a strong expression) something awkward about them. They destroy the

delicacy of the relation; everything is made to rest on the broad certainty out of which one side or other, at least, is too apt to make their own advantage. It is all a matter of course; and they seem only to have got themselves tied together, that one or the other, or both, may go their own way the more easily."

At this moment, Charlotte, who was determined once for all that she would put an end to the conversation, made a bold effort at turning it, and succeeded. It then became more general. She and her husband and the Captain were able to take a part in it. Even Ottilie had to give her opinion; and the dessert was enjoyed in the happiest humor. It was particularly beautiful, being composed almost entirely of the rich summer fruits in elegant baskets, with epergnes of lovely flowers arranged in exquisite taste.

The new laying-out of the park came to be spoken of; and immediately after dinner they went to look at what was going on. Ottilie withdrew, under pretence of having household matters to look to; in reality, it was to set to work again at the transcribing. The Count fell into conversation with the Captain, and Charlotte afterward joined them. When they were at the summit of the height, the Captain good-naturedly ran back to fetch the plan, and in his absence the Count said to Charlotte:

"He is an exceedingly pleasing person. He is very well informed, and his knowledge is always ready. His practical power, too, seems methodical and vigorous. What he is doing here would be of great importance in some higher sphere."

Charlotte listened to the Captain's praises with an inward delight. She collected herself, however, and composedly and clearly confirmed what the Count had said. But she was not a little startled when he continued:

"This acquaintance falls most opportunely for me. I know of a situation for which he is perfectly suited, and I shall be doing the greatest favor to a friend of mine, a man of high rank, by recommending to him a person who is so exactly everything which he desires."

Charlotte felt as if a thunder-stroke had fallen on her. The Count did not observe it: women, being accustomed at all times to hold themselves in restraint, are always able, even in the most extraordinary cases, to maintain an apparent composure; but she heard not a word more of what the Count said, though he went on speaking.

"When I have made up my mind upon a thing," he added, "I am quick about it. I have put my letter together already in my head, and I shall write it immediately. You can find me some messenger who can ride off with it this evening."

Charlotte was suffering agonies. Startled with the proposal, and shocked at herself, she was unable to utter a word. Happily, the Count continued talking of his plans for the Captain, the desirableness of which was only too apparent to Charlotte.

It was time that the Captain returned. He came up and unrolled his design before the Count. But with what changed eyes Charlotte now looked at the friend whom she was to lose. In her

necessity, she bowed and turned away, and hurried down to the summer-house. Before she was half way there, the tears were streaming from her eyes, and she flung herself into the narrow room in the little hermitage, and gave herself up to an agony, a passion, a despair, of the possibility of which, but a few moments before, she had not had the slightest conception.

Edward had gone with the Baroness in the other direction toward the ponds. This ready-witted lady, who liked to be in the secret about everything, soon observed, in a few conversational feelers which she threw out, that Edward was very fluent and free-spoken in praise of Ottilie. She contrived in the most natural way to lead him out by degrees so completely that at last she had not a doubt remaining that here was not merely an incipient fancy, but a veritable, full-grown passion.

Married women, if they have no particular love for one another, yet are silently in league together, especially against young girls. The consequences of such an inclination presented themselves only too quickly to her world-experienced spirit. Added to this, she had been already, in the course of the day, talking to Charlotte about Ottilie; she had disapproved of her remaining in the country, particularly being a girl of so retiring a character; and she had proposed to take Ottilie with her to the residence of a friend who was just then bestowing great expense on the education of an only daughter, and who was only looking about to find some well-disposed companion for her—to put her in the place of a second child, and let her share in

every advantage. Charlotte had taken time to consider. But now this glimpse of the Baroness into Edward's heart changed what had been but a suggestion at once into a settled determination; and the more rapidly she made up her mind about it, the more she outwardly seemed to flatter Edward's wishes. Never was there any one more self-possessed than this lady; and to have mastered ourselves in extraordinary cases, disposes us to treat even a common case with dissimulation—it makes us inclined, as we have had to do so much violence to ourselves, to extend our control over others, and hold ourselves in a degree compensated in what we outwardly gain for what we inwardly have been obliged to sacrifice. To this feeling there is often joined a kind of secret, spiteful pleasure in the blind, unconscious ignorance with which the victim walks on into the snare. It is not the immediately doing as we please which we enjoy, but the thought of the surprise and exposure which is to follow. And thus was the Baroness malicious enough to invite Edward to come with Charlotte and pay her a visit at the grape-gathering; and, to his question whether they might bring Ottilie with them, to frame an answer which, if he pleased, he might interpret to his wishes.

Edward had already begun to pour out his delight at the beautiful scenery, the broad river, the hills, the rocks, the vineyard, the old castles, the water-parties, and the jubilee at the grape-gathering, the wine-pressing, etc., in all of which, in the innocence of his heart, he was only exuberating in the anticipation of the impression which these scenes were to make

on the fresh spirit of Ottilie. At this moment they saw her approaching, and the Baroness said quickly to Edward that he had better say nothing to her of this intended autumn expedition —things which we set our hearts upon so long before so often failing to come to pass. Edward gave his promise; but he obliged his companion to move more quickly to meet her; and at last, when they came very close, he ran on several steps in advance. A heartfelt happiness expressed itself in his whole being. He kissed her hand as he pressed into it a nosegay of wild flowers which he had gathered on his way.

The Baroness felt bitter in her heart at the sight of it. Even whilst she was able to disapprove of what was really objectionable in this affection, she could not bear to see what was sweet and beautiful in it thrown away on such a poor paltry girl.

When they had collected again at the supper-table, an entirely different temper was spread over the party. The Count, who had in the meantime written his letter and dispatched a messenger with it, occupied himself with the Captain, whom he had been drawing out more and more—spending the whole evening at his side, talking of serious matters. The Baroness, who sat on the Count's right, found but small amusement in this; nor did Edward find any more. The latter, first because he was thirsty, and then because he was excited, did not spare the wine, and attached himself entirely to Ottilie, whom he had made sit by him. On the other side, next to the Captain, sat Charlotte; for her it was hard, it was almost impossible, to conceal the emotion under which

she was suffering.

The Baroness had sufficient time to make her observations at leisure. She perceived Charlotte's uneasiness, and occupied as she was with Edward's passion for Ottilie, she easily satisfied herself that her abstraction and distress were owing to her husband's behavior; and she set herself to consider in what way she could best compass her ends.

Supper was over, and the party remained divided. The Count, whose object was to probe the Captain to the bottom, had to try many turns before he could arrive at what he wished with so quiet, so little vain, but so exceedingly laconic a person. They walked up and down together on one side of the saloon, while Edward, excited with wine and hope, was laughing with Ottilie at a window, and Charlotte and the Baroness were walking backward and forward, without speaking, on the other side. Their being so silent, and their standing about in this uneasy, listless way, had its effect at last in breaking up the rest of the party. The ladies withdrew to their rooms, the gentlemen to the other wing of the castle; and so this day appeared to be concluded.

CHAPTER XI

Edward went with the Count to his room. They continued talking, and he was easily prevailed upon to stay a little time longer there. The Count lost himself in old times, spoke eagerly of Charlotte's beauty, which, as a critic, he dwelt upon with much warmth.

"A pretty foot is a great gift of nature," he said. "It is a grace which never perishes. I observed it today, as she was walking. I should almost have liked even to kiss her shoe, and repeat that somewhat barbarous but significant practice of the Sarmatians, who know no better way of showing reverence for any one they love or respect, than by using his shoe to drink his health out of."

The point of the foot did not remain the only subject of praise between two old acquaintances; they went from the person back upon old stories and adventures, and came on the hindrances which at that time people had thrown in the way of the lovers' meetings—what trouble they had taken, what arts they had been obliged to devise, only to be able to tell each other that they loved.

"Do you remember," continued the Count, "an adventure in which I most unselfishly stood your friend when their High Mightinesses were on a visit to your uncle, and were all together in that great, straggling castle? The day went in festivities and glitter of all sorts; and a part of the night at least in pleasant conversation."

"And you, in the meantime, had observed the back-way which led to the court ladies' quarter," said Edward, "and so managed to effect an interview for me with my beloved."

"And she," replied the Count, "thinking more of propriety than of my enjoyment, had kept a frightful old duenna with her. So that, while you two, between looks and words, got on extremely well together, my lot, in the meanwhile, was far from pleasant."

"It was only yesterday," answered Edward, "when we heard that you were coming, that I was talking over the story with my wife and describing our adventure on returning. We missed the road, and got into the entrance-hall from the garden. Knowing our way from thence as well as we did, we supposed we could get along easily enough.

"But you remember our surprise on opening the door. The floor was covered over with mattresses on which the giants lay in rows stretched out and sleeping. The single sentinel at his post looked wonderingly at us; but we, in the cool way young men do things, strode quietly on over the outstretched boots, without disturbing a single one of the snoring children of Anak."

"I had the strongest inclination to stumble," the Count said, "that there might be an alarm given. What a resurrection we should have witnessed."

At this moment the castle clock struck twelve.

"It is deep midnight," the Count added, laughing, "and just the proper time; I must ask you, my dear Edward, to show me

a kindness. Do you guide me tonight, as I guided you then. I promised the Baroness that I would see her before going to bed. We have had no opportunity of any private talk together the whole day. We have not seen each other for a long time, and it is only natural that we should wish for a confidential hour. If you will show me the way there, I will manage to get back again; and in any case, there will be no boots for me to stumble over."

"I shall be very glad to show you such a piece of hospitality," answered Edward; "only the three ladies are together in the same wing. Who knows whether we shall not find them still with one another, or make some other mistake, which may have a strange appearance?"

"Do not be afraid," said the Count; "the Baroness expects me. She is sure by this time to be in her own room, and alone."

"Well, then, the thing is easy enough," Edward answered.

He took a candle, and lighted the Count down a private staircase leading into a long gallery. At the end of this, he opened a small door. They mounted a winding flight of stairs, which brought them out upon a narrow landing-place; and then, putting the candle in the Count's hand, he pointed to a tapestried door on the right, which opened readily at the first trial, and admitted the Count, leaving Edward outside in the dark.

Another door on the left led into Charlotte's sleeping-room. He heard her voice, and listened. She was speaking to her maid. "Is Ottilie in bed?" she asked. "No," was the answer; "she is sitting writing in the room below." "You may light the night-

lamp," said Charlotte; "I shall not want you any more. It is late. I can put out the candle, and do whatever I may want else myself."

It was a delight to Edward to hear that Ottilie was writing still. She is working for me, he thought triumphantly. Through the darkness, he fancied he could see her sitting all alone at her desk. He thought he would go to her, and see her; and how she would turn to receive him. He felt a longing, which he could not resist, to be near her once more. But, from where he was, there was no way to the apartments which she occupied. He now found himself immediately at his wife's door. A singular change of feeling came over him. He tried the handle, but the bolts were shot. He knocked gently. Charlotte did not hear him. She was walking rapidly up and down in the large dressing-room adjoining. She was repeating over and over what, since the Count's unexpected proposal, she had often enough had to say to herself. The Captain seemed to stand before her. At home, and everywhere, he had become her all in all. And now he was to go; and it was all to be desolate again. She repeated whatever wise things one can say to oneself; she even anticipated, as people so often do, the wretched comfort that time would come at last to her relief; and then she cursed the time which would have to pass before it could lighten her sufferings—she cursed the dead, cold time when they would be lightened. At last she burst into tears; they were the more welcome, since tears with her were rare. She flung herself on the sofa, and gave herself up unreservedly to her sufferings. Edward, meanwhile, could not take himself from the door. He

knocked again; and a third time rather louder; so that Charlotte, in the stillness of the night, distinctly heard it, and started up in fright. Her first thought was—it can only be, it must be, the Captain; her second, that it was impossible. She thought she must have been deceived. But surely she had heard it; and she wished, and she feared to have heard it. She went into her sleeping-room, and walked lightly up to the bolted tapestry-door. She blamed herself for her fears. "Possibly it may be the Baroness wanting something," she said to herself; and she called out quietly and calmly, "Is anybody there?" A light voice answered, "It is I." "Who?" returned Charlotte, not being able to make out the voice. She thought she saw the Captain's figure standing at the door. In a rather louder tone, she heard the word "Edward!" She drew back the bolt, and her husband stood before her. He greeted her with some light jest. She was unable to reply in the same tone. He complicated the mysterious visit by his mysterious explanation of it.

"Well, then," he said at last, "I will confess, the real reason why I am come is, that I have made a vow to kiss your shoe this evening."

"It is long since you thought of such a thing as that," said Charlotte.

"So much the worse," he answered; "and so much the better."

She had thrown herself back in an armchair, to prevent him from seeing the slightness of her dress. He flung himself down before her, and she could not prevent him from giving her shoe

a kiss. And when the shoe came off in his hand, he caught her foot and pressed it tenderly against his breast.

Charlotte was one of those women who, being of naturally calm temperaments, continue in marriage, without any purpose or any effort, the air and character of lovers. She was never expressive toward her husband; generally, indeed, she rather shrank from any warm demonstration on his part. It was not that she was cold, or at all hard and repulsive, but she remained always like a loving bride, who draws back with a kind of shyness even from what is permitted. And so Edward found her this evening, in a double sense. How sorely did she not long that her husband would go; the figure of his friend seemed to hover in the air and reproach her. But what should have had the effect of driving Edward away only attracted him the more. There were visible traces of emotion about her. She had been crying; and tears, which with weak persons detract from their graces, add immeasurably to the attractiveness of those whom we know commonly as strong and self-possessed.

Edward was so agreeable, so gentle, so pressing; he begged to be allowed to stay with her. He did not demand it, but half in fun, half in earnest, he tried to persuade her; he never thought of his rights. At last, as if in mischief, he blew out the candle.

In the dim lamplight, the inward affection, the imagination, maintained their rights over the real; it was Ottilie that was resting in Edward's arms; and the Captain, now faintly, now clearly, hovered before Charlotte's soul. And so, strangely intermingled,

the absent and the present flowed in a sweet enchantment one into the other.

And yet the present would not let itself be robbed of its own unlovely right. They spent a part of the night talking and laughing at all sorts of things, the more freely as the heart had no part in it. But when Edward awoke in the morning, on his wife's breast, the day seemed to stare in with a sad, awful look, and the sun to be shining in upon a crime. He stole lightly from her side; and she found herself, with strange enough feelings, when she awoke, alone.

CHAPTER XII

When the party assembled again at breakfast, an attentive observer might have read in the behavior of its various members the different things which were passing in their inner thoughts and feelings. The Count and the Baroness met with the air of happiness which a pair of lovers feel, who, after having been forced to endure a long separation, have mutually assured each other of their unaltered affection. On the other hand, Charlotte and Edward equally came into the presence of the Captain and Ottilie with a sense of shame and remorse. For such is the nature of love that it believes in no rights except its own, and all other rights vanish away before it. Ottilie was in child-like spirits. For her—she was almost what might be called open. The Captain appeared serious. His conversation with the Count, which had roused in him feelings that for some time past had been at rest and dormant, had made him only too keenly conscious that here he was not fulfilling his work, and at bottom was but squandering himself in a half-activity of idleness.

Hardly had their guests departed, when fresh visitors were announced—to Charlotte most welcomely, all she wished for being to be taken out of herself, and to have her attention dissipated. They annoyed Edward, who was longing to devote himself to Ottilie; and Ottilie did not like them either; the copy which had to be finished the next morning early being still

incomplete. They staid a long time, and immediately that they were gone she hurried off to her room.

It was now evening. Edward, Charlotte, and the Captain had accompanied the strangers some little way on foot, before the latter got into their carriage, and previous to returning home they agreed to take a walk along the water-side.

A boat had come, which Edward had had fetched from a distance, at no little expense; and they decided that they would try whether it was easy to manage. It was made fast on the bank of the middle pond, not far from some old ash trees on which they calculated to make an effect in their future improvements. There was to be a landing-place made there, and under the trees a seat was to be raised, with some wonderful architecture about it: it was to be the point for which people were to make when they went across the water.

"And where had we better have the landing-place on the other side?" said Edward. "I should think under my plane trees."

"They stand a little too far to the right," said the Captain. "You are nearer the castle if you land further down. However, we must think about it."

The Captain was already standing in the stern of the boat, and had taken up an oar. Charlotte got in, and Edward with her —he took the other oar; but as he was on the point of pushing off, he thought of Ottilie—he recollected that this water-party would keep him out late; who could tell when he would get back? He made up his mind shortly and promptly; sprang back to the

bank, and reaching the other oar to the Captain, hurried home —making excuses to himself as he ran.

Arriving there he learnt that Ottilie had shut herself up—she was writing. In spite of the agreeable feeling that she was doing something for him, it was the keenest mortification to him not to be able to see her. His impatience increased every moment. He walked up and down the large drawing-room; he tried a thousand things, and could not fix his attention upon any. He was longing to see her alone, before Charlotte came back with the Captain. It was dark by this time, and the candles were lighted.

At last she came in beaming with loveliness: the sense that she had done something for her friend had lifted all her being above itself. She put down the original and her transcript on the table before Edward.

"Shall we collate them?" she said, with a smile.

Edward did not know what to answer. He looked at her—he looked at the transcript. The first few sheets were written with the greatest carefulness in a delicate woman's hand—then the strokes appeared to alter, to become more light and free—but who can describe his surprise as he ran his eyes over the concluding page? "For heaven's sake," he cried, "what is this? this is my hand!" He looked at Ottilie, and again at the paper; the conclusion, especially, was exactly as if he had written it himself. Ottilie said nothing, but she looked at him with her eyes full of the warmest delight. Edward stretched out his arms. "You love me!" he cried: "Ottilie, you love me!" They fell on each other's

breast—which had been the first to catch the other it would have been impossible to distinguish.

From that moment the world was all changed for Edward. He was no longer what he had been, and the world was no longer what it had been. They parted—he held her hands; they gazed in each other's eyes. They were on the point of embracing each other again.

Charlotte entered with the Captain. Edward inwardly smiled at their excuses for having stayed out so long. Oh! how far too soon you have returned, he said to himself.

They sat down to supper. They talked about the people who had been there that day. Edward, full of love and ecstasy, spoke well of every one—always sparing, often approving. Charlotte, who was not altogether of his opinion, remarked this temper in him, and jested with him about it—he who had always the sharpest thing to say on departed visitors, was this evening so gentle and tolerant.

With fervor and heartfelt conviction, Edward cried, "One has only to love a single creature with all one's heart, and the whole world at once looks lovely!"

Ottilie dropped her eyes on the ground, and Charlotte looked straight before her.

The Captain took up the word, and said, "It is the same with deep feelings of respect and reverence: we first learn to recognize what there is that is to be valued in the world, when we find occasion to entertain such sentiments toward a particular object."

Charlotte made an excuse to retire early to her room where she could give herself up to thinking over what had passed in the course of the evening between herself and the Captain.

When Edward sprang on shore, and, pushing off the boat, had himself committed his wife and his friend to the uncertain element, Charlotte found herself face to face with the man on whose account she had been already secretly suffering so bitterly, sitting in the twilight before her, and sweeping along the boat with the sculls in easy motion. She felt a depth of sadness, very rare with her, weighing on her spirits. The undulating movement of the boat, the splash of the oars, the faint breeze playing over the watery mirror, the sighing of the reeds, the long flight of the birds, the fitful twinkling of the first stars—there was something spectral about it all in the universal stillness. She fancied her friend was bearing her away to set her on some far-off shore, and leave her there alone; strange emotions were passing through her, and she could not give way to them and weep.

The Captain was describing to her the manner in which, in his opinion, the improvements should be continued. He praised the construction of the boat; it was so convenient, he said, because one person could so easily manage it with a pair of oars. She should herself learn how to do this; there was often a delicious feeling in floating along alone upon the water, one's own ferryman and steersman.

The parting which was impending sank on Charlotte's heart as he was speaking. Is he saying this on purpose? she thought

to herself. Does he know it yet? Does he suspect it or is it only accident? And is he unconsciously foretelling me my fate?

A weary, impatient heaviness took hold of her; she begged him to make for land as soon as possible and return with her to the castle.

It was the first time that the Captain had been upon the water, and, though generally he had acquainted himself with its depth, he did not know accurately the particular spots. Dusk was coming on; he directed his course to a place where he thought it would be easy to get on shore, and from which he knew the footpath which led to the castle was not far distant. Charlotte, however, repeated her wish to get to land quickly, and the place which he thought of being at a short distance, he gave it up, and exerting himself as much as he possibly could, made straight for the bank. Unhappily the water was shallow, and he ran aground some way off from it. From the rate at which he was going the boat was fixed fast, and all his efforts to move it were in vain. What was to be done? There was no alternative but to get into the water and carry his companion ashore.

It was done without difficulty or danger. He was strong enough not to totter with her, or give her any cause for anxiety; but in her agitation she had thrown her arms about his neck. He held her fast, and pressed her to himself—and at last laid her down upon a grassy bank, not without emotion and confusion * * * she still lay upon his neck * * * he caught her up once more in his arms, and pressed a warm kiss upon her lips. The next moment he was

at her feet: he took her hand, and held it to his mouth, and cried:

"Charlotte, will you forgive me?"

The kiss which he had ventured to give, and which she had all but returned to him, brought Charlotte to herself again—she pressed his hand—but she did not attempt to raise him up. She bent down over him, and laid her hand upon his shoulder and said:

"We cannot now prevent this moment from forming an epoch in our lives; but it depends on us to bear ourselves in a manner which shall be worthy of us. You must go away, my dear friend; and you are going. The Count has plans for you, to give you better prospects—I am glad, and I am sorry. I did not mean to speak of it till it was certain but this moment obliges me to tell you my secret * * * Since it does not depend on ourselves to alter our feelings, I can only forgive you, I can only forgive myself, if we have the courage to alter our situation." She raised him up, took his arm to support herself, and they walked back to the castle without speaking.

But now she was standing in her own room, where she had to feel and to know that she was Edward's wife. Her strength and the various discipline in which through life she had trained herself, came to her assistance in the conflict. Accustomed as she had always been to look steadily into herself and to control herself, she did not now find it difficult, with an earnest effort, to come to the resolution which she desired. She could almost smile when she remembered the strange visit of the night before. Suddenly

she was seized with a wonderful instinctive feeling, a thrill of fearful delight which changed into holy hope and longing. She knelt earnestly down, and repeated the oath which she had taken to Edward before the altar.

Friendship, affection, renunciation, floated in glad, happy images before her. She felt restored to health and to herself. A sweet weariness came over her. She lay down, and sank into a calm, quiet sleep.

CHAPTER XIII

Edward, on his part, was in a very different temper. So little he thought of sleeping that it did not once occur to him even to undress himself. A thousand times he kissed the transcript of the document, but it was the beginning of it, in Ottilie's childish, timid hand; the end he scarcely dared to kiss, for he thought it was his own hand which he saw. Oh, that it were another document! he whispered to himself; and, as it was, he felt it was the sweetest assurance that his highest wish would be fulfilled. Thus it remained in his hands, thus he continued to press it to his heart, although disfigured by a third name subscribed to it. The waning moon rose up over the wood. The warmth of the night drew Edward out into the free air. He wandered this way and that way; he was at once the most restless and the happiest of mortals. He strayed through the gardens—they seemed too narrow for him; he hurried out into the park, and it was too wide. He was drawn back toward the castle; he stood under Ottilie's window. He threw himself down on the steps of the terrace below. "Walls and bolts," he said to himself, "may still divide us, but our hearts are not divided. If she were here before me, into my arms she would fall, and I into hers; and what can one desire but that sweet certainty!" All was stillness round him; not a breath was moving;—so still it was, that he could hear the unresting creatures underground at their work, to whom day or night are

alike. He abandoned himself to his delicious dreams; at last he fell asleep, and did not wake till the sun with his royal beams was mounting up in the sky and scattering the early mists.

He found himself the first person awake on his domain. The laborers seemed to be staying away too long: they came; he thought they were too few, and the work set out for the day too slight for his desires. He inquired for more workmen; they were promised, and in the course of the day they came. But these, too, were not enough for him to carry his plans out as rapidly as he wished. To do the work gave him no pleasure any longer; it should all be done. And for whom? The paths should be gravelled that Ottilie might walk presently upon them; seats should be made at every spot and corner that Ottilie might rest on them. The new park house was hurried forward. It should be finished for Ottilie's birthday. In all he thought and all he did, there was no more moderation. The sense of loving and of being loved, urged him out into the unlimited. How changed was now to him the look of all the rooms, their furniture, and their decorations! He did not feel as if he was in his own house any more. Ottilie's presence absorbed everything. He was utterly lost in her; no other thought ever rose before him; no conscience disturbed him; every restraint which had been laid upon his nature burst loose. His whole being centered upon Ottilie. This impetuosity of passion did not escape the Captain, who longed, if he could, to prevent its evil consequences. All those plans which were now being hurried on with this immoderate speed, had been drawn out

and calculated for a long, quiet, easy execution. The sale of the farm had been completed; the first instalment had been paid. Charlotte, according to the arrangement, had taken possession of it. But the very first week after, she found it more than usually necessary to exercise patience and resolution, and to keep her eye on what was being done. In the present hasty style of proceeding, the money which had been set apart for the purpose would not go far.

Much had been begun, and much yet remained to be done. How could the Captain leave Charlotte in such a situation? They consulted together, and agreed that it would be better that they themselves should hurry on the works, and for this purpose employ money which could be made good again at the period fixed for the discharge of the second instalment of what was to be paid for the farm. It could be done almost without loss. They would have a freer hand. Everything would progress simultaneously. There were laborers enough at hand, and they could get more accomplished at once, and arrive swiftly and surely at their aim. Edward gladly gave his consent to a plan which so entirely coincided with his own views.

During this time Charlotte persisted with all her heart in what she had determined for herself, and her friend stood by her with a like purpose, manfully. This very circumstance, however, produced a greater intimacy between them. They spoke openly to each other of Edward's passion, and consulted what had better be done. Charlotte kept Ottilie more about herself, watching her

narrowly; and the more she understood her own heart, the deeper she was able to penetrate into the heart of the poor girl. She saw no help for it, except in sending her away.

It now appeared a happy thing to her that Luciana had gained such high honors at the school; for her great aunt, as soon as she heard of it, desired to take her entirely to herself, to keep her with her, and bring her out into the world. Ottilie could, therefore, return thither. The Captain would leave them well provided for, and everything would be as it had been a few months before; indeed, in many respects better. Her own position in Edward's affection, Charlotte thought, she could soon recover; and she settled it all, and laid it all out before herself so sensibly that she only strengthened herself more completely in her delusion, as if it were possible for them to return within their old limits—as if a bond which had been violently broken could again be joined together as before.

In the meantime Edward felt very deeply the hindrances which were thrown in his way. He soon observed that they were keeping him and Ottilie separate; that they made it difficult for him to speak with her alone, or even to approach her, except in the presence of others. And while he was angry about this, he was angry at many things besides. If he caught an opportunity for a few hasty words with Ottilie, it was not only to assure her of his love, but to complain of his wife and of the Captain. He never felt that with his own irrational haste he was on the way to exhaust the cash-box. He found bitter fault with them, because

in the execution of the work they were not keeping to the first agreement, and yet he had been himself a consenting party to the second; indeed, it was he who had occasioned it and made it necessary.

Hatred is a partisan, but love is even more so. Ottilie also estranged herself from Charlotte and the Captain. As Edward was complaining one day to Ottilie of the latter, saying that he was not treating him like a friend, or, under the circumstances, acting quite uprightly, she answered unthinkingly, "I have once or twice had a painful feeling that he was not quite honest with you. I heard him say once to Charlotte: 'If Edward would but spare us that eternal flute of his! He can make nothing of it, and it is too disagreeable to listen to him.' You may imagine how it hurt me, when I like accompanying you so much."

She had scarcely uttered the words when her conscience whispered to her that she had much better have been silent. However, the thing was said. Edward's features worked violently. Never had anything stung him more. He was touched on his tenderest point. It was his amusement; he followed it like a child. He never made the slightest pretensions; what gave him pleasure should be treated with forbearance by his friends. He never thought how intolerable it is for a third person to have his ears lacerated by an unsuccessful talent. He was indignant; he was hurt in a way which he could not forgive. He felt himself discharged from all obligations.

The necessity of being with Ottilie, of seeing her, whispering

to her, exchanging his confidence with her, increased with every day. He determined to write to her, and ask her to carry on a secret correspondence with him. The strip of paper on which he had, laconically enough, made his request, lay on his writing-table, and was swept off by a draught of wind as his valet entered to dress his hair. The latter was in the habit of trying the heat of the iron by picking up any scraps of paper which might be lying about. This time his hand fell on the billet; he twisted it up hastily, and it was burnt. Edward observing the mistake, snatched it out of his hand. After the man was gone, he sat himself down to write it over again. The second time it would not run so readily off his pen. It gave him a little uneasiness; he hesitated, but he got over it. He squeezed the paper into Ottilie's hand the first moment he was able to approach her. Ottilie answered him immediately. He put the note unread in his waistcoat pocket, which, being made short in the fashion of the time, was shallow, and did not hold it as it ought. It worked out, and fell without his observing it on the ground. Charlotte saw it, picked it up, and after giving a hasty glance at it, reached it to him.

"Here is something in your handwriting," she said, "which you may be sorry to lose."

He was confounded. Is she dissembling? he thought to himself. Does she know what is in the note, or is she deceived by the resemblance of the hand? He hoped, he believed the latter. He was warned—doubly warned; but those strange accidents, through which a higher intelligence seems to be speaking to us,

his passion was not able to interpret. Rather, as he went further and further on, he felt the restraint under which his friend and his wife seemed to be holding him the more intolerable. His pleasure in their society was gone. His heart was closed against them, and though he was obliged to endure their society, he could not succeed in re-discovering or in re-animating within his heart anything of his old affection for them. The silent reproaches which he was forced to make to himself about it were disagreeable to him. He tried to help himself with a kind of humor which, however, being without love, was also without its usual grace.

Over all such trials Charlotte found assistance to rise in her own inward feelings. She knew her own determination. Her own affection, fair and noble as it was, she would utterly renounce.

And sorely she longed to go to the assistance of the other two. Separation, she knew well, would not alone suffice to heal so deep a wound. She resolved that she would speak openly about it to Ottilie herself. But she could not do it. The recollection of her own weakness stood in her way. She thought she could talk generally to her about the sort of thing. But general expressions about "the sort of thing," fitted her own case equally well, and she could not bear to touch it. Every hint which she would give Ottilie recoiled on her own heart. She would warn, and she was obliged to feel that she might herself still be in need of warning.

She contented herself, therefore, with silently keeping the lovers more apart, and by this gained nothing. The slight hints

which frequently escaped her had no effect upon Ottilie; for Ottilie had been assured by Edward that Charlotte was devoted to the Captain, that Charlotte herself wished for a separation, and that he was at this moment considering the readiest means by which it could be brought about.

Ottilie, led by the sense of her own innocence along the road to the happiness for which she longed, lived only for Edward. Strengthened by her love for him in all good, more light and happy in her work for his sake, and more frank and open toward others, she found herself in a heaven upon earth.

So all together, each in his or her own fashion, reflecting or unreflecting, they continued on the routine of their lives. All seemed to go its ordinary way, as, in monstrous cases, when everything is at stake, men will still live on, as if it were all nothing.

CHAPTER XIV

In the meantime a letter came from the Count to the Captain —two, indeed—one which he might produce, holding out fair, excellent prospects in the distance; the other containing a distinct offer of an immediate situation, a place of high importance and responsibility at the Court, his rank as Major, a very considerable salary, and other advantages. A number of circumstances, however, made it desirable that for the moment he should not speak of it, and consequently he only informed his friends of his distant expectations, and concealed what was so nearly impending.

He went warmly on, at the same time, with his present occupation, and quietly made arrangements to insure the continuance of the works without interruption after his departure. He was now himself desirous that as much as possible should be finished off at once, and was ready to hasten things forward to prepare for Ottilie's birthday. And so, though without having come to any express understanding, the two friends worked side by side together. Edward was now well pleased that the cash-box was filled by their having taken up money. The whole affair went forward at fullest speed.

The Captain had done his best to oppose the plan of throwing the three ponds together into a single sheet of water. The lower embankment would have to be made much stronger, the two

intermediate embankments to be taken away, and altogether, in more than one sense, it seemed a very questionable proceeding. However, both these schemes had been already undertaken; the soil which was removed above being carried at once down to where it was wanted. And here there came opportunely on the scene a young architect, an old pupil of the Captain, who partly by introducing workmen who understood work of this nature, and partly by himself, whenever it was possible, contracting for the work itself, advanced things not a little, while at the same time they could feel more confidence in their being securely and lastingly executed. In secret this was a great pleasure to the Captain. He could now be confident that his absence would not be so severely felt. It was one of the points on which he was most resolute with himself, never to leave anything which he had taken in hand uncompleted, unless he could see his place satisfactorily supplied. And he could not but hold in small respect, persons who introduce confusion around themselves only to make their absence felt and are ready to disturb in wanton selfishness what they will not be at hand to restore.

So they labored on, straining every nerve to make Ottilie's birthday splendid, without any open acknowledgment that this was what they were aiming at, or, indeed, without their directly acknowledging it to themselves. Charlotte, wholly free from jealousy as she was, could not think it right to keep it as a real festival. Ottilie's youth, the circumstances of her fortune, and her relationship to their family, were not at all such as made it fit that

she should appear as the queen of the day; and Edward would not have it talked about, because everything was to spring out, as it were, of itself, with a natural and delightful surprise.

They, therefore, came all of them to a sort of tacit understanding that on this day, without further circumstance, the new house in the park was to be opened, and they might take the occasion to invite the neighborhood and give a holiday to their own people. Edward's passion, however, knew no bounds. Longing as he did to give himself to Ottilie, his presents and his promises must be infinite. The birthday gifts which on the great occasion he was to offer to her seemed, as Charlotte had arranged them, far too insignificant. He spoke to his valet, who had the care of his wardrobe, and who consequently had extensive acquaintance among the tailors and mercers and fashionable milliners; and he, who not only understood himself what valuable presents were, but also the most graceful way in which they should be offered, immediately ordered an elegant box, covered with red morocco and studded with steel nails, to be filled with presents worthy of such a shell. Another thing, too, he suggested to Edward. Among the stores at the castle was a small show of fireworks which had never been let off. It would be easy to get some more, and have something really fine. Edward caught the idea, and his servant promised to see to its being executed. This matter was to remain a secret.

While this was going on, the Captain, as the day drew nearer, had been making arrangements for a body of police to be

present—a precaution which he always thought desirable when large numbers of men are to be brought together. And, indeed, against beggars, and against all other inconveniences by which the pleasure of a festival can be disturbed, he had made effectual provision.

Edward and his confidante, on the contrary, were mainly occupied with their fireworks. They were to be let off on the side of the middle water in front of the great ash-tree. The party were to be collected on the opposite side, under the planes, that at a sufficient distance from the scene, in ease and safety, they might see them to the best effect, with the reflections on the water, the water-rockets, and floating-lights, and all the other designs.

Under some other pretext, Edward had the ground underneath the plane-trees cleared of bushes and grass and moss. And now first could be seen the beauty of their forms, together with their full height and spread, right up from the earth. He was delighted with them. It was just this very time of the year that he had planted them. How long ago could it have been? he asked himself. As soon as he got home he turned over the old diary books, which his father, especially when in the country, was very careful in keeping. He might not find an entry of this particular planting, but another important domestic matter, which Edward well remembered, and which had occurred on the same day, would surely be mentioned. He turned over a few volumes. The circumstances he was looking for was there. How amazed, how overjoyed he was, when he discovered the strangest coincidence!

The day and the year on which he had planted those trees, was the very day, the very year, when Ottilie was born.

CHAPTER XV

THE long-wished-for morning dawned at last on Edward; and very soon a number of guests arrived. They had sent out a large number of invitations, and many who had missed the laying of the foundation-stone, which was reported to have been so charming, were the more careful not to be absent on the second festivity.

Before dinner the carpenter's people appeared, with music, in the court of the castle. They bore an immense garland of flowers, composed of a number of single wreaths, winding in and out, one above the other; saluting the company, they made request, according to custom, for silk handkerchiefs and ribands, at the hands of the fair sex, with which to dress themselves out. When the castle party went into the dining-hall, they marched off singing and shouting, and after amusing themselves a while in the village, and coaxing many a riband out of the women there, old and young, they came at last, with crowds behind them and crowds expecting them, out upon the height where the park-house was now standing. After dinner, Charlotte rather held back her guests. She did not wish that there should be any solemn or formal procession, and they found their way in little parties, broken up, as they pleased, without rule or order, to the scene of action. Charlotte staid behind with Ottilie, and did not improve matters by doing so. For Ottilie being really the last that

appeared, it seemed as if the trumpets and the clarionets had only been waiting for her, and as if the gaieties had been ordered to commence directly on her arrival.

To take off the rough appearance of the house, it had been hung with green boughs and flowers. They had dressed it out in an architectural fashion, according to a design of the Captain's; only that, without his knowledge, Edward had desired the Architect to work in the date upon the cornice in flowers, and this was necessarily permitted to remain. The Captain had arrived on the scene just in time to prevent Ottilie's name from figuring in splendor on the gable. The beginning, which had been made for this, he contrived to turn skilfully to some other use, and to get rid of such of the letters as had been already finished.

The garland was set up, and was to be seen far and wide about the country. The flags and the ribands fluttered gaily in the air; and a short oration was, the greater part of it, dispersed by the wind. The solemnity was at an end. There was now to be a dance on the smooth lawn in front of the building, which had been inclosed with boughs and branches. A gaily-dressed working mason took Edward up to a smart-looking girl of the village, and called himself upon Ottilie, who stood out with him. These two couples speedily found others to follow them, and Edward contrived pretty soon to change partners, catching Ottilie, and making the round with her. The younger part of the company joined merrily in the dance with the people, while the elder among them stood and looked on.

Then, before they broke up and walked about, an order was given that they should all collect again at sunset under the plane-trees. Edward was the first upon the spot, ordering everything, and making his arrangements with his valet, who was to be on the other side, in company with the firework-maker, managing his exhibition of the spectacle.

The Captain was far from satisfied at some of the preparations which he saw made; and he endeavored to get a word with Edward about the crush of spectators which was to be expected. But the latter, somewhat hastily, begged that he might be allowed to manage this part of the day's amusements himself.

The upper end of the embankment having been recently raised, was still far from compact. It had been staked, but there was no grass upon it, and the earth was uneven and insecure. The crowd pressed on, however, in great numbers. The sun went down, and the castle party was served with refreshments under the plane-trees, to pass the time till it should have become sufficiently dark. The place was approved of beyond measure, and they looked forward to a frequent enjoyment of the view over so lovely a sheet of water, on future occasions.

A calm evening, a perfect absence of wind, promised everything in favor of the spectacle, when suddenly loud and violent shrieks were heard. Large masses of the earth had given way on the edge of the embankment, and a number of people were precipitated into the water. The pressure from the throng had gone on increasing till at last it had become more than the

newly laid soil would bear, and the bank had fallen in. Everybody wanted to obtain the best place, and now there was no getting either backward or forward.

People ran this and that way, more to see what was going on than to render assistance. What could be done when no one could reach the place?

The Captain, with a few determined persons, hurried down and drove the crowd off the embankment back upon the shore, in order that those who were really of service might have free room to move. One way or another they contrived to seize hold of such as were sinking; and with or without assistance all who had been in the water were got out safe upon the bank, with the exception of one boy, whose struggles in his fright, instead of bringing him nearer to the embankment, had only carried him further from it. His strength seemed to be failing—now only a hand was seen above the surface, and now a foot. By an unlucky chance the boat was on the opposite shore filled with fireworks—it was a long business to unload it, and help was slow in coming. The Captain's resolution was taken; he flung off his coat; all eyes were directed toward him, and his sturdy vigorous figure gave every one hope and confidence: but a cry of surprise rose out of the crowd as they saw him fling himself into the water—every eye watched him as the strong swimmer swiftly reached the boy, and bore him, although to appearance dead, to the embankment.

Now came up the boat. The Captain stepped in and examined whether there were any still missing, or whether they were all

safe. The surgeon was speedily on the spot, and took charge of the inanimate boy. Charlotte joined them, and entreated the Captain to go now and take care of himself, to hurry back to the castle and change his clothes. He would not go, however, till persons on whose sense he could rely, who had been close to the spot at the time of the accident, and who had assisted in saving those who had fallen in, assured him that all were safe.

Charlotte saw him on his way to the house, and then she remembered that the wine and the tea, and everything else which he could want, had been locked up, for fear any of the servants should take advantage of the disorder of the holiday, as on such occasions they are too apt to do. She hurried through the scattered groups of her company, which were loitering about the plane-trees. Edward was there, talking to every one—beseeching every one to stay. He would give the signal directly, and the fireworks should begin. Charlotte went up to him, and entreated him to put off an amusement which was no longer in place, and which at the present moment no one could enjoy. She reminded him of what ought to be done for the boy who had been saved, and for his preserver.

"The surgeon will do whatever is right, no doubt," replied Edward. "He is provided with everything which he can want, and we should only be in the way if we crowded about him with our anxieties."

Charlotte persisted in her opinion, and made a sign to Ottilie, who at once prepared to retire with her. Edward seized her hand,

and cried, "We will not end this day in a lazaretto. She is too good for a sister of mercy. Without us, I should think, the half-dead may wake, and the living dry themselves."

Charlotte did not answer, but went. Some followed her—others followed these: in the end, no one wished to be the last, and all followed. Edward and Ottilie found themselves alone under the plane-trees. He insisted that stay he would, earnestly, passionately, as she entreated him to go back with her to the castle. "No, Ottilie!" he cried; "the extraordinary is not brought to pass in the smooth common way—the wonderful accident of this evening brings us more speedily together. You are mine—I have often said it to you, and sworn it to you. We will not say it and swear it any more—we will make it BE."

The boat came over from the other side. The valet was in it—he asked, with some embarrassment, what his master wished to have done with the fireworks?

"Let them off!" Edward cried to him: "let them off! It was only for you that they were provided, Ottilie, and you shall be the only one to see them! Let me sit beside you, and enjoy them with you." Tenderly, timidly, he sat down at her side, without touching her.

Rockets went hissing up—cannon thundered—Roman candles shot out their blazing balls—squibs flashed and darted—wheels spun round, first singly, then in pairs, then all at once, faster and faster, one after the other, and more and more together. Edward, whose bosom was on fire, watched the blazing spectacle

with eyes gleaming with delight; but Ottilie, with her delicate and nervous feelings, in all this noise and fitful blazing and flashing, found more to distress her than to please. She leant shrinking against Edward, and he, as she drew to him and clung to him, felt the delightful sense that she belonged entirely to him.

The night had scarcely reassumed its rights, when the moon rose and lighted their path as they walked back. A figure, with his hat in his hand, stepped across their way, and begged an alms of them—in the general holiday he said that he had been forgotten. The moon shone upon his face, and Edward recognized the features of the importunate beggar; but, happy as he then was, it was impossible for him to be angry with any one. He could not recollect that, especially for that particular day, begging had been forbidden under the heaviest penalties—he thrust his hand into his pocket, took the first coin which he found, and gave the fellow a piece of gold. His own happiness was so unbounded that he would have liked to share it with every one.

In the meantime all had gone well at the castle. The skill of the surgeon, everything which was required being ready at hand, Charlotte's assistance—all had worked together, and the boy was brought to life again. The guests dispersed, wishing to catch a glimpse or two of what was to be seen of the fireworks from the distance; and, after a scene of such confusion, were glad to get back to their own quiet homes.

The Captain also, after having rapidly changed his dress, had taken an active part in what required to be done. It was now

all quiet again, and he found himself alone with Charlotte—gently and affectionately he now told her that his time for leaving them approached. She had gone through so much that evening, that this discovery made but a slight impression upon her—she had seen how her friend could sacrifice himself; how he had saved another, and had himself been saved. These strange incidents seemed to foretell an important future to her—but not an unhappy one.

Edward, who now entered with Ottilie, was informed at once of the impending departure of the Captain. He suspected that Charlotte had known longer how near it was; but he was far too much occupied with himself, and with his own plans, to take it amiss, or care about it.

On the contrary, he listened attentively, and with signs of pleasure, to the account of the excellent and honorable position in which the Captain was to be placed. The course of the future was hurried impetuously forward by his own secret wishes. Already he saw the Captain married to Charlotte, and himself married to Ottilie. It would have been the richest present which any one could have made him, on the occasion of the day's festival!

But how surprised was Ottilie, when, on going to her room, she found upon her table the beautiful box! Instantly she opened it; inside, all the things were so nicely packed and arranged that she did not venture to take them out; she scarcely even ventured to lift them. There were muslin, cambric, silk, shawls and lace, all rivalling one another in delicacy, beauty, and costliness—nor

were ornaments forgotten. The intention had been, as she saw well, to furnish her with more than one complete suit of clothes but it was all so costly, so little like what she had been accustomed to, that she scarcely dared, even in thought, to believe it could be really for her.

CHAPTER XVI

The next morning the Captain had disappeared, having left a grateful, feeling letter addressed to his friends upon his table.

He and Charlotte had already taken a half leave of each other the evening before—she felt that the parting was for ever, and she resigned herself to it; for in the Count's second letter, which the Captain had at last shown to her, there was a hint of a prospect of an advantageous marriage, and, although he had paid no attention to it at all, she accepted it for as good as certain, and gave him up firmly and fully.

Now, therefore, she thought that she had a right to require of others the same control over themselves which she had exercised herself: it had not been impossible to her, and it ought not to be impossible to them. With this feeling she began the conversation with her husband; and she entered upon it the more openly and easily, from a sense that the question must now, once for all, be decisively set at rest.

"Our friend has left us," she said; "we are now once more together as we were—and it depends upon ourselves whether we choose to return altogether into our old position."

Edward, who heard nothing except what flattered his own passion, believed that Charlotte, in these words, was alluding to her previous widowed state, and, in a roundabout way, was making a suggestion for a separation; so that he answered, with

a laugh, "Why not? all we want is to come to an understanding." But he found himself sorely enough undeceived, as Charlotte continued, "And we have now a choice of opportunities for placing Ottilie in another situation. Two openings have offered themselves for her, either of which will do very well. Either she can return to the school, as my daughter has left it and is with her great-aunt; or she can be received into a desirable family, where, as the companion of an only child, she will enjoy all the advantages of a solid education."

Edward, with a tolerably successful effort at commanding himself, replied, "Ottilie has been so much spoilt, by living so long with us here, that she will scarcely like to leave us now."

"We have all of us been too much spoilt," said Charlotte; "and yourself not least. This is an epoch which requires us seriously to bethink ourselves. It is a solemn warning to us to consider what is really for the good of all the members of our little circle—and we ourselves must not be afraid of making sacrifices."

"At any rate I cannot see that it is right that Ottilie should be made a sacrifice," replied Edward; "and that would be the case if we were now to allow her to be sent away among strangers. The Captain's good genius has sought him out here—we can feel easy, we can feel happy, at seeing him leave us; but who can tell what may be before Ottilie? There is no occasion for haste."

"What is before us is sufficiently clear," Charlotte answered, with some emotion; and as she was determined to have it all out at once, she went on: "You love Ottilie; every day you are becoming

more attached to her. A reciprocal feeling is rising on her side as well, and feeding itself in the same way. Why should we not acknowledge in words what every hour makes obvious? and are we not to have the common prudence to ask ourselves in what it is to end?"

"We may not be able to find an answer on the moment," replied Edward, collecting himself; "but so much may be said, that if we cannot exactly tell what will come of it, we may resign ourselves to wait and see what the future may tell us about it."

"No great wisdom is required to prophesy here," answered Charlotte; "and, at any rate, we ought to feel that you and I are past the age when people may walk blindly where they should not or ought not to go. There is no one else to take care of us—we must be our own friends, our own managers. No one expects us to commit ourselves in an outrage upon decency: no one expects that we are going to expose ourselves to censure or to ridicule."

"How can you so mistake me?" said Edward, unable to reply to his wife's clear, open words. "Can you find it a fault in me, if I am anxious about Ottilie's happiness? I do not mean future happiness—no one can count on that—but what is present, palpable, and immediate. Consider, don't deceive yourself; consider frankly Ottilie's case, torn away from us, and sent to live among strangers. I, at least, am not cruel enough to propose such a change for her!"

Charlotte saw too clearly into her husband's intentions, through this disguise. For the first time she felt how far he had

estranged himself from her. Her voice shook a little. "Will Ottilie be happy if she divides us?" she asked. "If she deprives me of a husband, and his children of a father!"

"Our children, I should have thought, were sufficiently provided for," said Edward, with a cold smile; adding, rather more kindly, "but why at once expect the very worst?"

"The very worst is too sure to follow this passion of yours," returned Charlotte; "do not refuse good advice while there is yet time; do not throw away the means which I propose to save us. In troubled cases those must work and help who see the clearest—this time it is I. Dear, dearest Edward! listen to me—can you propose to me that now at once I shall renounce my happiness! renounce my fairest rights! renounce you!"

"Who says that?" replied Edward, with some embarrassment.

"You, yourself," answered Charlotte; "in determining to keep Ottilie here, are you not acknowledging everything which must arise out of it? I will urge nothing on you—but if you cannot conquer yourself, at least you will not be able much longer to deceive yourself."

Edward felt how right she was. It is fearful to hear spoken out, in words, what the heart has gone on long permitting to itself in secret. To escape only for a moment, Edward answered, "It is not yet clear to me what you want."

"My intention," she replied, "was to talk over with you these two proposals—each of them has its advantages. The school would be best suited to her, as she now is; but the other situation

is larger, and wider, and promises more, when I think what she may become." She then detailed to her husband circumstantially what would lie before Ottilie in each position, and concluded with the words, "For my own part I should prefer the lady's house to the school, for more reasons than one; but particularly because I should not like the affection, the love indeed, of the young man there, which Ottilie has gained, to increase."

Edward appeared to approve; but it was only to find some means of delay. Charlotte, who desired to commit him to a definite step, seized the opportunity, as Edward made no immediate opposition, to settle Ottilie's departure, for which she had already privately made all preparations, for the next day.

Edward shuddered—he thought he was betrayed. His wife's affectionate speech he fancied was an artfully contrived trick to separate him for ever from his happiness. He appeared to leave the thing entirely to her; but in his heart his resolution was already taken. To gain time to breathe, to put off the immediate intolerable misery of Ottilie's being sent away, he determined to leave his house. He told Charlotte he was going; but he had blinded her to his real reason, by telling her that he would not be present at Ottilie's departure; indeed, that, from that moment, he would see her no more. Charlotte, who believed that she had gained her point, approved most cordially. He ordered his horse, gave his valet the necessary directions what to pack up, and where he should follow him; and then, on the point of departure, he sat down and wrote:

"EDWARD TO CHARLOTTE

"The misfortune, my love, which has befallen us, may or may not admit of remedy; only this I feel, that if I am not at once to be driven to despair, I must find some means of delay for myself, and for all of us. In making myself the sacrifice, I have a right to make a request. I am leaving my home, and I return to it only under happier and more peaceful auspices. While I am away, you keep possession of it—*but with Ottilie*. I choose to know that she is with you, and not among strangers. Take care of her; treat her as you have treated her—only more lovingly, more kindly, more tenderly! I promise that I will not attempt any secret intercourse with her. Leave me, as long a time as you please, without knowing anything about you. I will not allow myself to be anxious—nor need you be uneasy about me: only, with all my heart and soul, I beseech you, make no attempt to send Ottilie away, or to introduce her into any other situation. Beyond the circle of the castle and the park, placed in the hands of strangers, she belongs to me, and I will take possession of her! If you have any regard for my affection, for my wishes, for my sufferings, you will leave me alone to my madness; and if any hope of recovery from it should ever hereafter offer itself to me, I will not resist."

Thus last sentence ran off his pen—not out of his heart. Even when he saw it upon the paper, he began bitterly to weep. That he, under any circumstances, should renounce the happiness—

even the wretchedness—of loving Ottilie! He only now began to feel what he was doing—he was going away without knowing what was to be the result. At any rate he was not to see her again *now*—with what certainty could he promise himself that he would ever see her again? But the letter was written—the horses were at the door; every moment he was afraid he might see Ottilie somewhere, and then his whole purpose would go to the winds. He collected himself—he remembered that, at any rate, he would be able to return at any moment he pleased; and that by his absence he would have advanced nearer to his wishes: on the other side, he pictured Ottilie to himself forced to leave the house if he stayed. He sealed the letter, ran down the steps, and sprang upon his horse.

As he rode past the hotel, he saw the beggar to whom he had given so much money the night before, sitting under the trees; the man was busy enjoying his dinner, and, as Edward passed, stood up, and made him the humblest obeisance. That figure had appeared to him yesterday, when Ottilie was on his arm; now it only served as a bitter reminiscence of the happiest hour of his life. His grief redoubled. The feeling of what he was leaving behind was intolerable. He looked again at the beggar. "Happy wretch!" he cried, "you can still feed upon the alms of yesterday—and I cannot any more on the happiness of yesterday!"

CHAPTER XVII

Ottilie heard some one ride away, and went to the window in time just to catch a sight of Edward's back. It was strange, she thought, that he should have left the house without seeing her, without having even wished her good morning. She grew uncomfortable, and her anxiety did not diminish when Charlotte took her out for a long walk, and talked of various other things; but not once, and apparently on purpose, mentioning her husband. When they returned she found the table laid with only two covers. It is unpleasant to miss even the most trifling thing to which we have been accustomed. In serious things such a loss becomes miserably painful. Edward and the Captain were not there. The first time, for a long while, Charlotte sat at the head of the table herself—and it seemed to Ottilie as if she was deposed. The two ladies sat opposite each other; Charlotte talked, without the least embarrassment, of the Captain and his appointment, and of the little hope there was of seeing him again for a long time. The only comfort Ottilie could find for herself was in the idea that Edward had ridden after his friend, to accompany him a part of his journey.

On rising from table, however, they saw Edward's traveling carriage under the window. Charlotte, a little as if she was put out, asked who had had it brought round there. She was told it was the valet, who had some things there to pack up. It required all

Ottilie Is self-command to conceal her wonder and her distress.

The valet came in, and asked if they would be so good as to let him have a drinking cup of his master's, a pair of silver spoons, and a number of other things, which seemed to Ottilie to imply that he was gone some distance, and would be away for a long time.

Charlotte gave him a very cold, dry answer. She did not know what he meant—he had everything belonging to his master under his own care. What the man wanted was to speak a word to Ottilie, and on some pretence or other to get her out of the room; he made some clever excuse, and persisted in his request so far that Ottilie asked if she should go to look for the things for him? But Charlotte quietly said that she had better not. The valet had to depart, and the carriage rolled away.

It was a dreadful moment for Ottilie. She understood nothing —comprehended nothing. She could only feel that Edward had been parted from her for a long time. Charlotte felt for her situation, and left her to herself.

We will not attempt to describe what she went through, or how she wept. She suffered infinitely. She prayed that God would help her only over this one day. The day passed, and the night, and when she came to herself again she felt herself a changed being.

She had not grown composed. She was not resigned, but after having lost what she had lost, she was still alive, and there was still something for her to fear. Her anxiety, after returning to consciousness, was at once lest, now that the gentlemen were

gone, she might be sent away too. She never guessed at Edward's threats, which had secured her remaining with her aunt. Yet Charlotte's manner served partially to reassure her. The latter exerted herself to find employment for the poor girl, and hardly ever,—never, if she could help it,—left her out of her sight; and although she knew well how little words can do against the power of passion, yet she knew, too, the sure though slow influence of thought and reflection, and therefore missed no opportunity of inducing Ottilie to talk with her on every variety of subject.

It was no little comfort to Ottilie when one day Charlotte took an opportunity of making (she did it on purpose) the wise observation, "How keenly grateful people were to us when we were able by stilling and calming them to help them out of the entanglements of passion! Let us set cheerfully to work," she said, "at what the men have left incomplete: we shall be preparing the most charming surprise for them when they return to us, and our temperate proceedings will have carried through and executed what their impatient natures would have spoilt."

"Speaking of temperance, my dear aunt, I cannot help saying how I am struck with the intemperance of men, particularly in respect of wine. It has often pained and distressed me, when I have observed how, for hours together, clearness of understanding, judgment, considerateness, and whatever is most amiable about them, will be utterly gone, and instead of the good which they might have done if they had been themselves, most disagreeable things sometimes threaten. How often may not

wrong, rash determinations have arisen entirely from that one cause!"

Charlotte assented, but she did not go on with the subject. She saw only too clearly that it was Edward of whom Ottilie was thinking. It was not exactly habitual with him, but he allowed himself much more frequently than was at all desirable to stimulate his enjoyment and his power of talking and acting by such indulgence. If what Charlotte had just said had set Ottilie thinking again about men, and particularly about Edward, she was all the more struck and startled when her aunt began to speak of the impending marriage of the Captain as of a thing quite settled and acknowledged. This gave a totally different aspect to affairs from what Edward had previously led her to entertain. It made her watch every expression of Charlotte's, every hint, every action, every step. Ottilie had become jealous, sharp-eyed, and suspicious, without knowing it.

Meanwhile, Charlotte with her clear glance looked through the whole circumstances of their situation, and made arrangements which would provide, among other advantages, full employment for Ottilie. She contracted her household, not parsimoniously, but into narrower dimensions; and, indeed, in one point of view, these moral aberrations might be taken for a not unfortunate accident. For in the style in which they had been going on, they had fallen imperceptibly into extravagance; and from a want of seasonable reflection, from the rate at which they had been living, and from the variety of schemes into which they

had been launching out, their fine fortune, which had been in excellent condition, had been shaken, if not seriously injured.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.