

MEN
AND
MEN

MEN AND MEN

A LOVE STORY

BY

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
SARAH LOVELL	I

CHAPTER II.

ODETTE FABIEN	26
-------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

HENRY'S PROPOSAL	38
----------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

ODETTE MAKES A SCENE	64
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

THE TRYST	81
---------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

THE MEN AND MEN	89
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE
FORTIER'S STUDIO	102

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RESTAURANT	120
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX.

A RISING WAVE	138
-------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X.

JEALOUSY	152
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

YOUTH AND OPPORTUNITY	163
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

THE DANCE	178
---------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

GOOD-BYES	195
---------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

THE POST-BOX	209
------------------------	-----

MEN AND MEN.

CHAPTER I.

SARAH LOVELL.

THERE seem to be men and men. It is sad that a woman may not pick and choose her man from the whole brotherhood of men, neatly set in line, under equal light and other conditions. Such, however, is her conceit, that if she but choose and be chosen early in life, she can perhaps live on forever without seeing that the masculine world is not describable as a man and men. She may fairly be called a fountain sealed. But woe to her if, missing her first choice, she find it in her heart to make

a second or a third. She may lose her most amusing superstitions. In any case, whatever be her luck, to her there will always be men and men.

In Paris, it is the air that is to blame for almost everything. It keeps whispering to one. It is full of little ghosts, forever unseen, that are at once restless and dreamy; and no matter where they seem to be pushing, nobody can withstand their sway for any length of time.

Miss Sarah Lovell of Philadelphia found herself very restless when she first went to Paris. She was restless and eager, yet felt not the slightest interest in the French city nor people. And although she had come all the way from America on purpose to see and learn of him on whom she had been told to fix her artistic faith, the famous painter Jean Paul Fortier, yet she did not go near him nor the studio in which he taught for nearly four weeks.

Four weeks is a long time for an idle person. Perhaps she was afraid of him. She seemed to be rather a shy woman, though having plenty of dignity. And maybe she stayed away, feeling that a man who had stirred up such a pretty little revolution in his world of painting might be one to revolutionize the dearer ways and beliefs of those who put themselves in his path. However that may be, she kept away from him for those four weeks.

It is not meant in this story to go into any discussion of the art of painting. To do that would be to touch what is a sore and tiresome topic to many people, perhaps even to Sarah by this time. So it is only because of the changes that were worked in herself, and because of her adventures, that one feels it worth while to go back to her life on the rue Gareau.

After the first few weeks, she could keep herself still enough in the little darkened parlour, shining with its

clumsy mahogany, its uneven waxed floor, and its pitiful old looking-glasses that were clouded at the outer edge like an old man's eyes, in that cramped and almost squalid rue Gareau. Half-way up Montmartre, just beyond the Mairie, and far beyond the haunts of the wall-cleaner, this ancient crooked street is too steep and uneven for carriages. Its tall and rock-away houses show long seams, being black in all the chinks like old silver.

Sarah and Mrs. Preston chose this place because it was high and cheap and quiet: far away from carriages. Feeling so sorry, too, for the anxious old woman who showed them the rooms. Not too far from the Place Clichy, where one might take omnibuses, they were also within easy reach of that studio in which Sarah would fain have learned to paint French pictures without letting herself become in the least a French artist, the well-known "Academy of the Rue Pigalle."

Sarah was a good-sized woman, as yet not over-developed in the way that seems unfortunate to the Anglo-Saxon, nor had she that machine-like look which the French find ugly. She was well-grown, no longer quite girlish; and her calm fair face needed only a touch of the pencil to make it motherly. That is why it seems so strange to think of her wandering up and down the ways and bye-ways of Paris with all the troubled and eager feelings of other idle folks.

She knew very well that it would not have been thought quite proper for her to walk so much and so far alone, and she was the last one to fall beneath conventions. But she had the handy power of rising above conventionality when it served her turn, and her flat calm eyebrows could be lifted much higher above her soft blue eyes than one often sees eyebrows raised, giving her a look more of suffering hauteur than of disdain.

What made her attractive to the crowd was her complexion. For she was fair, having the prettiest mottled pink imaginable in her flat oval cheeks. Her cheeks carelessly let this soft pink slip, as it were between its fingers, to tinge her velvety ear, under the haze of loose brown hair. And so people turned to look after her in the streets.

One would have been taken aback to learn that she was not very strong; such a large girl, with that fresh colour. But it was quite true that she was rather weakly. Then about twenty-four years old, she had had twinges of rheumatism when in America, it being partly a fear that the neuralgia, which lasted so long the winter before, might come back, which at last decided her to go to Paris with Mrs. Preston.

Mrs. Preston was her third cousin. She was little and old; somewhere beyond middle age, in a hard way, and Sarah had always called her Aunt Preston, feeling a settled kind of re-

spect for her, because of the admiring way in which the family had always spoken of her business talent, of her fearlessness in running about all over the round globe quite alone. Moreover, they spoke with awe of her great courage in being perfectly happy after having done so very wrong in leaving the bed and board of her lawful husband thirty years before. Thirty years before she had actually left him without giving a reason, or at least without giving a reason to her cousins. And Sarah never would have liked the idea of becoming intimate with her, had it not been pointed out that not only she had never taken up with anybody else, but that she had in time built a handsome and costly monument to the memory of her husband; after he was dead, of course. And it had all happened so very long ago.

The cousins were most of them better off than Sarah, who was left an orphan early, and they very likely hoped

that Aunt Preston would leave her a little pot of money, sometime. Having enough to live on, or to travel on in a second-class way, there was no reason why the old lady should not leave it to Sarah, other than that she had always said that she did not believe in maintaining people of no talent.

For nobody ever thought that Sarah had talent—though she could sew pretty well, and cook pretty well, and would doubtless have made a reasonably good housekeeper, had any handsome and clever young man offered her a house to keep.

“I can be happy unmarried,” she had said, patiently, when they urged that the bow-legged Mr. White had a handsome head of hair. “I sha’n’t fret if I never should be married at all, and I am going to take lessons in oil-painting.”

When her cousins May and Florry came home from school, she was not too much of a coward to tell herself

that it would be very awkward for her Aunt Mary, with whom she had been since leaving school herself, to have three marriageable girls all on show at once. So she did take lessons in oil-painting. Miss Johnson taught her. After which she was persuaded to go out sketching with a large party of women, led by young Wakestreet, who wore the same corduroys that he had worn in France.

There was a shine in that young man's eye, as he taught his paying class, that was at once self-conscious and humorous; and his red lips had a little full look which made Sarah blush when by accident her eyes crossed his face. She would not have looked at his face except by accident, saying to herself as she did so that his mouth might have been like that before he ever went to France. And he had certainly learned to paint there, in a fearless kind of way which made her tremble with wonder, even when she could not

see the picture. Besides which, he could point out on those corduroys the paint streak made by brushing against the palette of the great Jean Paul Fortier.

As Sarah could not look at Wakestreet, her eyes were downcast, and the pink in her cheeks blew this way and that, like cloud-shadows, as she asked him one day, a little breathlessly,—

“Do you think, Mr. Wakestreet, that one can really learn a better style of painting in Paris than one can learn in America, with—with our present advantages?”

Wakestreet bit his moustache—the middle of it—it being well waxed and brushed up at the corners.

“Of course,” he answered, slowly, beginning to scrape his palette. “Of course, it isn’t as it was ten years ago, in my time. Of course, we fellows have been through it for you, so to speak. We’ve brought home what we’ve learned; but then—well, yes, to

tell the truth, Miss Lovell, Paris is the only place to learn anything. We can't paint when we've been there perhaps. But we learn to see; at any rate, we learn *to see!*"

Sarah thought that she should like to learn to see. "Thank you," she said rather primly, trying, by way of looking frank, to raise her eyes. But unconsciously she took a step backwards, turning her large white neck.

Before that she had never cared to go to Europe. Aunt Preston asking her to go once or twice, she had said, "Thank you—thank you very much; but I think I should get too confused and tired to profit by it."

Each time that she had been asked to go she had said that. Always with a certain straightening of her gentle red lips, if lips they should be called; for it might be more descriptive to call them the soft red edges of her straight mouth.

"Well," would answer Aunt Preston

in her own peculiar way, "stay at home, then, and grow as owl-eyed and dumpy as you please!"

It was very hateful to Sarah to be called dumpy, knowing as she did that she was not in the least too stout. Though she had to have her clothes rather free because of the heart palpitations that she felt sometimes, she knew that her figure was quite trim enough, in a sensible way. She was always careful in seeing that the dress-maker cut and finished her gowns neatly, that the backs were graceful, that the sleeves were well set, and that the skirts fell evenly; and she was sure that she never looked in the least too stout, being merely plump, as one should be.

However, after watching the artists who came back from Paris while in the first bloom of their sense of superiority, and after listening carefully to young Wakestreet, Sarah came to believe that all artistic salvation depended on study-

ing for a while in Paris. So she packed up her painting tools and her unfinished slippers in Berlin wool ; eating humble pie to tell Aunt Preston that, after all, she should like very much to go with her on her next trip.

Mrs. Preston was really pleased, beginning to dream at once of an economical tour of Europe. But Sarah would hear of nothing of the kind, and must go straight to Paris. When her aunt wanted to go by Liverpool, to show her something of England, she weakened a little, it is true ; but she soon laid bare all the grave faults of that plan, pinning the old lady down to the fact that it must cost something more than going straight to Hâvre.

All their friends came down to the boat to see them off. " You'll fall in love with Monsieur Fortier," said young Wakestreet in parting ; " they all do ! "

Sailing straight for Hâvre, on the steamer they met Henry Snow, an old friend of Mrs. Preston. A rather young

friend, comparatively, but one she had known when he was a child, having travelled with his mother. She was alone when she first met him on the steamer, Sarah not getting her sea-legs until the next day.

“ You’re a pretty boy,” scolded the old lady, “ not to write to me since I saw you last! And not to send me word that you were going over this summer! ”

“ I forgot,” said Henry, blushing to the roots of his thinning hair.

He did not blush once in an age—a grasshopper’s age. For he seldom caught himself telling fibs. A Boston man, he had spent a good part of his time in making up answers to possible hard questions. Speaking always in reassuring tones, he was, as one could see, proud of his peculiar accent; for he never failed to pronounce his words rather mincingly, with just the slightest pursing of the lips.

“ However,” thought Mrs. Preston,

in memory of his mother, "it's her own fault, since she would marry the professor. Besides, he has a nice figure, and would be called handsome anywhere."

Then she added aloud, "Well, I think I may forgive you this time. It's a great piece of good luck that you met us, unless—unless your troubles are already ended. What use have you made of your winter in Boston?"

"I couldn't get away from Boston all winter," he said, shaking his head with a slight frown. "Mother has not been well, and Aunt Alice has had that trouble with her nerves again. Besides, you know, I was best man at my cousin's wedding. That sort of thing does take up so much time."

"I daresay. But how is it you're not engaged, in all this while, to some pretty Bostonian?"

Raising his eyebrows and twirling his moustache, Henry thought, "I suppose that at her age she couldn't be made

to feel the peculiar taste of her little way of putting things." So he asked, "Didn't we talk of that last summer? You know I told you then how I felt about it. And I don't see why I should change now. Indeed, after all I've seen of home this winter the more strongly I feel the evil effects of the constant intermarriage of the Boston people. As I said to my cousin; but it did no good, of course."

Mrs. Preston chuckled. "You were too cruel not to take my Rosalie last year. But, never mind! I've another chance for you. A girl of my own family, forsooth. And if you should happen to strike her in the right light—"

Henry smiled, deprecatingly. "Why are you so wild to get me settled?" he asked; adding, "Oh, well, I like to look them over. Where is she?"

Just then the luncheon bell rang, and Mrs. Preston stared well at Henry as he was going downstairs before her,

after she refused his arm. He was certainly a neat-built, handsome man, having a large straight nose, and complacent but searching brown eyes. One did not quite like to meet his eyes, though there was no reason why one should not look him straight in the mouth, unlike a gift horse or Mr. Wakestreet. There was no reason, but it was a thing that one never did, for his eyes held the attention in spite of one.

When he looked at Sarah her colour stopped wavering and stood stock-still. Perhaps the shock was good for her—like a sea bath. But she could not help thinking how dreadful it would be if she were to happen to scream.

He wore a heavy auburn moustache, and that was another reason why one did not see his mouth. But really, he was a handsome man, carrying himself with the ease and self-consciousness of a prince. One might have taken him for some kind of a prince, until one had

caught his alert, speculative American eye. Nothing could be less prince-like than that. But he was handsome, and Sarah was proud to walk up and down with the handsomest man on the ship. Therefore she walked a good deal with him, though she would have liked better to lie in a steamer-chair without stirring all day long. Had he but seemed willing to sit quietly beside her, she would have liked much better to do that.

As it was, Mr. Snow never sat still long, telling her that it was for her good to walk, too. So she rose and walked, dragging herself along as one does in dreams, when one's feet feel as if sand-bags were tied to them. She was so proud to have all the people see her walking with him, and happy with a sense of fulfilling her right and proper destiny, which she felt vaguely to be a state of trembling obedience and happy discomfort.

One night as she undressed she

went so far as to say to herself, "I—I have really enjoyed myself this evening, though I do not see quite why, I'm sure."

They had walked late that night, while Aunt Preston pretended to sleep in her wonderful patent chair. Sarah's feet trembled so towards the last, that she was thinking she must own very soon that she was tired. But for reasons that she did not quite care to make clear to herself, she felt that Mr. Snow would not like her to say that she was tired. Somehow, she could not say what she knew he would not like, though, being a moral woman, she might have been deeply shocked had she known that she was wishing to seem strong and lively, or anything else that she was not.

As they walked, Henry—Mrs. Preston called him Henry—explained the phosphorescent lights that were glinting on the broken black track of the ship. It was a dark close night, and though above and before them, to the

right and to the left, everything was of an even, sombre black, yet the fretted water in the wake of the steamer could be seen trailing out like the jetty ooziings of a burning lump of coal, until it, too, was covered by the filmy shades.

As they looked, Henry talked clearly and well in accounting for those phosphorescent lights, which were not unlike the flashes and sparkles on coals. But Sarah did not understand a word that he said. Following the meaning of his tones, however, she was able to say, "Oh!" and "To be sure!" in just the right places, until at length he paused and asked with undue anxiety,—

"May I smoke?"

Sarah smiled in the darkness at his seriousness. "Of course," she answered. "What made you think I don't like—?"

"Oh!" he said, with a faint shade of reproof in his voice, "it would be quite natural in you not to like it."

Sarah understood that he could have wished her to give him permission to smoke in a slightly reproachful tone. She bit her lip.

“My Aunt Alice is very cross to me about the tobacco,” he continued, “though of course I never smoke in the house, and I never smoke more than three cigarettes a day in any case; but she objects to the smell in my clothes.”

“Oh!” said Sarah, faintly, wondering whether she could ever gather herself together enough to lay down rules to anybody.

She was not without experience in love matters. Love had often, for short seasons, held the first place in her heart. But in these days her desires for other goods than love had become so strong that she now silently owned that love might be passed over. What she did want, with a feeling so set that it left her numb and dumb, was simply a nice large house and

garden of her own, servants, children of her own, and last, as well as least of all, the constant and dignified presence at the breakfast table of a handsome, busy person, who should like his food and the fit of his shirts, and carry an endlessly-inked fountain pen for the writing of cheques.

The rest of the voyage passed pleasantly. Mrs. Preston was cheerful, and, what might be thought more to the point in her case, absorbed. She had almost always been cheerful enough, but usually, of late years, she had a way of looking about her with frightful coolness and knowingness, to read the thoughts and note the doings of the company. During this voyage, however, she seemed absent-minded; perhaps lost in the past, for she had plenty of transatlantic trips to remember. And Sarah and Henry found themselves free to talk and to watch each other as much as ever they liked.

Henry had little to say. His remarks were apt to take the shape of questions, though in the first part of the voyage he had shown such a liking to hold forth. Instead of holding forth now, he asked Sarah where she had gone to school, what she had there studied, what kind of people she liked; and also, with discretion, he was able to find a way of asking her of what illnesses her father and mother had died. Once he led the conversation to the topic of insanity and consumption, remarking in a tone, which was not meant to be questioning, that it must be dreadful to have had any cases of such diseases in one's family. Quite frightful! And Sarah said that it must indeed be frightful. All these questions she was feeling to be quite right and natural since he asked them in the proper way, and it never occurred to her to smile, though quite seeing their drift.

In the very last part of the voyage,

when there were already pilots and custom-house officers, and such strange beings aboard, Henry said to her, "Well, I suppose from what you said the other day, that when we get to Paris you are going to become a pupil of this famous creature, Jean Paul—Fourmier—Fortier?"

"That is what I meant to do."

"Well, I should just like to suggest; but you'll think me rude?"

"Oh, no!" said Sarah.

"It isn't a thing that I have any right to say to you, and you won't be angry?"

"Certainly not," answered Sarah. "What is it?"

"Only this. That I don't doubt that the man Fortier may be a very good artist and all that. Some of my best friends have admired his pictures exceedingly, and, of course, they fetch enormous prices. But personally, I should think that one might be doing well to be careful of him, especially if

one were a lady. He was a peasant by birth. But it isn't that, of course. It is that he—ah—has been talked about; you know!"

CHAPTER II.

ODETTE FABIEN.

So they all went to Paris, and within a short time Mrs. Preston and Sarah were settled in the three furnished rooms on Montmartre, the rooms belonging to two poor old ladies, as ladies go, who had had a paper-sign out, beside the concierge's door, until it was dropping into yellow rags. The ladies were quite old, seeming also to be dreadfully poor, and they had most likely the one wish in such life as was left to them, to keep together their dear old clocks, candlesticks, and bits of mahogany, feeling, perhaps, that the pieces of furniture cared for each other, and would suffer in the evil but inevitable hour when the

auctioneer came to scatter them. So it was a great day for these good women when they let their sitting-room and the two best bedrooms, promising the service of their poor old hands and of their closet of a kitchen.

One of the sisters had been married, and it was she who did all the talking, who would walk back and forth half-a-dozen times between the table and the door, dishes in her hands and forever unended speeches in her mouth—in her loose little mouth, which was rather flabby about the edges, like the rest of her face; and like the lids of her eager black eyes. Her black eyes being the one feature that she had in common with her sister the old maid, she whose face was pure and clean-cut, shy, and drooping with something like burnt-out pride. Poor old woman! she knitted lace all day long, and was never heard to speak, leading the concierge to think that perhaps she “wasn’t right.”

Henry Snow had rooms near the

Avenue de l'Opera. A rather long way off, but he was not poor enough to think of the cost of carriages. Not like Sarah, who begrudged the money for carriages so much that she was quite unhappy during the whole of a drive. She preferred to think that Henry came to see them in the Clichy-Odeon omnibuses, which would bring him straight and quickly as far as the Place Clichy, for whatever brought him seemed to bring him very often. He came three times a week, with sometimes an extra evening, and all the neighbourhood was soon gaily interested in the matter. The concierge smiled at his back, Mdme. Rigollot, the widowed sister, smiling at his face, and as she opened the parlour door reflecting in her poor old eyes the pleasure that Sarah was supposed to feel; while the old maid sister, knitting in the tiny bedroom, raised her thin large eyelids, and dropped her veiny hand into her pocket, where was sure to be a rosary.

It should be told that Sarah could speak French, as could, of course, Mrs. Preston. Mrs. Preston had lived in Paris for years at a time, and Sarah, although she never crossed the Atlantic before, had had a French nurse, in whose sole charge she was sometimes left for months together, so that, with the help of any number of "lessons" at school, she could speak French pretty well.

For that reason she was quickly let into an intimate place in the studio. It usually takes about two months to get treated as one belonging to the place, but since Sarah spoke French she could know the French girls at once, at the same disarming the English and Americans of their usual weapon against new-comers. With characteristically easy-going wisdom, therefore, they took her to themselves almost as if she had been an "ancienne" come back.

The people who struck her most at first were not all those whom she came

to know best in the end. For instance, there was a handsome English girl whom she fully expected to like; but they soon found that the qualities they had in common were not of the kind to draw them together. Then the *Massier*, Mlle. Maugeret, seemed interesting, just at first, and until Sarah saw that she was a hard-hearted, greedy old thing; after that having no more to do with her than she could help.

A Scotchwoman, Miss Dunlop, proved more sympathetic, and Sarah was from the very first amused by the pretty tricks and droll pranks of a plump little French girl called Odette. Henry had said, "I hear that the fellow Fortier is soft on one of his girls, though there are several who were fond of him." And on seeing Odette, Sarah thought at once that this might be the person whom M. Fortier liked. While the model was resting, she asked Miss Dunlop as they walked up and down the broad court-yard together.

“ Oh, no,” said Miss Dunlop, with a tinge of dread in her honest voice; “ it isn’t like that. He’s only just fond of her as we all are, you may be sure. The dear little scatter-brained thing! And you know she used to be his model.”

It seemed that Odette had been a model; that Odette’s mother was a poor, unhealthy, unsuccessful kind of woman, dying when the girl was fourteen or fifteen. During the last few years of her life Mdme. Fabien herself had been something of a model, whenever she could get a chance to sit for the head. Being lean and wretched, poor thing, she could not have thought of posing for the *ensemble*.

“ Odette is such a sweet, gentle little thing,” said Sarah, musingly, “ that I should think that even a great genius like Monsieur Fortier might—”

Miss Dunlop made a gesture of annoyance, her mouth giving such a twitch at the far corner that Sarah was

careful never to make any suggestions of the kind again.

“Odette is an illegitimate child,” went on Miss Dunlop, quietly. “Her father was some rather important personage, and he never did the least for the mother and daughter. They were living most of the time in great poverty anyhow and anywhere, until at last the mother died, and then Odette began to pose, for the head first, but soon for the *ensemble*. She is pretty and very strong, so she earned good wages. But it is well for her that her fortunes changed, since, of course, she shows every likelihood to grow so dreadfully stout by-and-by. She was almost too excitable and impressible to have—

“But she will always be the same little Odette,” continued Miss Dunlop. “At this very studio, she was posing when I first came, three years ago, and she must then have been about fifteen years old. That makes her now eighteen or nineteen, and, as Mlle. Maugeret

said, she is now an independent young lady; for about a year ago that man who was her father died, and though he had never seemed in life to remember that she existed, it appears that when he died he left her some money. A reasonable little income, with which she knows how to make herself quite comfortable and do what she likes—what she likes seeming to be to learn painting, though I never thought she cared much for pictures, and she certainly does not hurt herself working. She liked the atmosphere, as it were, and she must have an excuse for coming to one public studio, at least. The dear little silly thing!”

“Yes, she’s very sweet,” said Sarah. “But—but what a life to have led!”

Miss Dunlop caught her breath, anxiously.

“You must get used to these French,” she said; “they have their ways. One begins to understand them after a while.”

Odette was the pet of the studio. No one could help being fond of her, she was so ingenuous and young. The pretty down on her cheeks, the tender ways of the dark hair in joining her round neck, the babyishness of her eyelids, all reminding one of kittens and goslings and little young calves. One might almost say that her velvety brown eyes were more like the eyes of a calf, young enough to stand unsteadily, than they were like human eyes.

“With her matronly little figure, too,” thought Sarah, and blushed.

But Sarah liked Odette very much. It would have been absurd not to like her. Lucky are the weak, for it is the power of resistance that provokes attack. Besides, there was that about Odette which would have called forth the most backward motherliness. And any one could see at a glance how open-hearted and loving she was.

“If she would only let Monsieur Fortier alone!” sighed Mlle. Maugeret.

“I’m sure Monsieur Fortier is old enough to take care of himself,” protested Miss Dunlop, rather weakly.

“I daresay he understands her as well as we do,” said the English girl, who was incapable of double meanings.

Mlle. Maugeret shrugged her shoulders. “He might marry her, of course,” she said, spitefully; for she knew very well that the English girl did not mean that. “But wouldn’t it be rather a pity? A man in his position—for he has made himself a position—and they are only too glad now to get him everywhere; he should marry a more experienced, an older, a more intelligent person, even if she were almost without *dot*, since he makes such a lot of money.”

“Such a person as we have in our mind’s eye,” said gentle Miss Dunlop, wickedly.

“I should think you had!” snapped Mlle. Maugeret.

Monsieur Fortier, it seemed, came thrice a week to criticize the drawings, that being oftener than it was usual for honorary professors to visit their classes. But his own studio happened to be in the same building, and having undertaken to teach this crowd of young women drawing, he was one who would do his work as thoroughly as he might. Liking work, he also liked to teach. Besides which, where he differed from so many men, he rather liked a crowd of women, being fond of girls, even if they were only artist-girls. And the young men in the Latin Quarter had said that it was not the only way in which he resembled the great Solomon, though to be sure we know nothing of how Solomon would have treated artist-girls.

Laughing at their own wit, the Latin Quarter students owned that a great man must have his weak side. And then they all went home, and, taking comfort in their own weak-

nesses, tried harder than ever to paint pictures which should look as nearly as might be like the pictures by Jean Paul Fortier.

CHAPTER III.

HENRY'S PROPOSAL.

SARAH had been three days working in the studio when M. Fortier first came down to criticize. He must have been away, or poorly. For much as she had been looking forward to a sight of the great man, she could not before catch a glimpse of him, even though his studio was in the same building, some floors above the "Academy for Ladies," which was on the ground floor, taking in, by right of capture, the whole of the broad-flagged court: the court in which the girls, as they called themselves, walked up and down during the rests of the model; arm-in-arm, very

often, and wearing their large over-alls of brown holland.

Monsieur Fortier came thumping down the steep polished stairs, on his way to the girls' room, while Sarah and Miss Dunlop were out in the court walking together. He had to pass from the big front door of the building to the rickety little door beside it, and then it was that Sarah first saw him, and started at sight of such flaxen hair, in the heart of Paris, on the head of the Frenchest of Frenchmen. As he was going into the girls' studio she looked with raised eyelids at Miss Dunlop.

"Yes," said Miss Dunlop, "it is he."

"Why," cried Sarah, "nobody ever told me that he was so fair!"

"Oh—ah!" Miss Dunlop said, absently; "he is very blond, of course."

"I thought that really great men were never very, very fair or very, very dark," expostulated Sarah. "I thought—"

Miss Dunlop expressed boredom with

a turn of the palm. "I daresay," she answered. "I—ah—that is, what was I going to say just now?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"No matter. Do you think the model is posing yet?"

"Oh, no," said Sarah.

"Shall we just go and look?"

Sarah would have been less than a woman, then, not to have seen how little her companion was indifferent to M. Fortier. But the revelation caused her almost personal annoyance—annoyance that she could not explain to herself, though she said silently that it was a great pity to have that kind of feeling in a school, and that Miss Dunlop, at her age, ought to show more self-control. Who, indeed, was Miss Dunlop, the plain and talentless—Sarah almost said "old maid," but she did not quite say it—who was Miss Dunlop to aspire, or if she did not aspire, who was she to even feel anything of that kind? There was some-

thing sacred about such a really great man, Sarah felt; such a man being more than worthy of the best in all things. And even the prettiest girls of the class; oh, no, there was not one good enough for such a man as that! Great men, she thought, should somehow be prevented from prizing unduly such an unworthy trifle as beauty.

The model had not yet begun to pose. There was no one in the room as they peeped through the jar of the door besides M. Fortier, who was standing with his broad back to them, talking to Mlle. Maugeret. That lady saw the intruders with wary eye, and warned them away with her terrible brows. So that, turning, they again walked up and down the court with the others. For there were half-a-dozen others slowly marching up and down.

In this academy the ladies walked, played, and gossiped. They even drew and painted. But it was clearly under-

stood by most of them that the true interest of the place was purely human; the studio being a tiny bay in the bank of the river of life, where discontented edges of the water, swept in for a moment, could eddy and swirl, and maybe sigh, before yielding themselves to the good old flood.

“Of course,” owned Miss Dunlop, “none of our girls have really distinguished themselves yet. Nothing of ours has been really noticed in the Salon, though, to be sure, Mlle. Maugeret’s picture was on the line this year. But now, we’ve some clever people coming on, and it was a great step in advance to get hold of Monsieur Fortier.”

“I have come here on his account,” said Sarah.

Miss Dunlop glanced at her askance, continuing,—

“He was asked to criticize here before, I hear, but he always said he hadn’t time; and it was only last win-

ter that he first came, when he took a studio here, you know."

"I see," said Sarah.

But the word was not fairly out of her mouth when she did see M. Fortier himself.

Opening the door he looked about, saying in a rich, low-pitched voice, as if some one were ill, or there had been a great ceremony pending,—

"Ladies, I am rather in a hurry. If you will kindly come in and pose your model—"

In their clear sweep his dark blue eyes rested on Sarah. For one instant only, but she felt that she had been photographed, as if he were the guard taking her railway ticket.

Filing in, the girls took their places before the rickety easels, on the uneven mushroom forest of straw-headed stools; Sarah being rather at the back of the ring, for she had not known enough to come early on Monday morning and secure a place in front. From her high

back seat, however, she could now watch at ease the great artist, watch him whose name was used as a conversational climax by the young painters of America.

His clothes, she saw, were very new. Rather too steely a grey, perhaps, and they had the look of being a kind of apologetic superfluity, like the clothes of a model—a humorous necessity to be deplored by a gesture and forgotten. And then his face, too, though naturally proclaiming the man rather less than the clothes, had a look of being a mere temporary mask, put together in a pleasant spirit of concession to the general demand that men shall have faces.

It was a square blond face, blue-eyed, bearded, set on a short thick neck and a pair of heavy shoulders, warrantable to withstand any kind of usage and to hold in all weathers. For once having given him clothes and a face, it was thought, no doubt, that it would be truly economical in the end to

make his body of the very toughest materials, tempered and seasoned and put together in the most solid way. Sparing no pains, Jean Paul Fortier was given a tangible habitation as well as a name.

Not to speak of a pin, one could have heard a feather drop. There being no rule for silence, the girls usually kept up a little steady dribble of talk. But now, in the presence of the master, as Miss Dunlop tried to get him called, all lips were glued; all eyes were turned with painful fixedness from drawing to model, and from model to drawing, with now and then the sound of a shy scratch of charcoal, by way of realistic acting, from one or another who was feeling, with fluttering heart, that every touch in such blind moments would injure her drawing.

Sarah alone, until he was introduced to her, sat with folded hands. Watching him from her lucky seat in the background, she made up her mind that he

was not handsome. Rather a fine man, perhaps, though short for his breadth. He seemed to have that about him which filled people with fear, driving them to seek safety in numbers by classifying themselves. But he was not a truly handsome young man—not like Henry. If Henry Snow were only in his shoes! If one could but—

But Henry was not Jean Paul Fortier. Henry was one who stood in very strict need of seeking safety in classification; not the easiest task in the world for him, here in Paris. And Sarah felt something of the kind the next time she saw him, after first meeting M. Fortier.

It was that same evening, or the next, at about eight, when he came to make his regular call, and she and Mrs. Preston were sitting at the open window without a light, the better to watch the neighbours' windows and the lively street below. Across the way there were rich dull glows of light from open

windows; there was clatter of dishes, an air of brightness, mildness, and leisure throughout the whole street. And as Mdme. Rigollot closed the door softly behind Henry, Mrs. Preston pointed, without speaking, to a chair between herself and Sarah.

He sat down with the stiff elegance of a young man taking life about town at flood-tide, and his pleasant regard seemed to do honour to the humble street below; bidding it to go on in its modest, cheerful way, which was quite as it should be.

“Put on your things,” he said, after a little, “and come out for a drive.”

Mrs. Preston and Sarah looked at each other in the darkness, the elder woman sighing with what may have been impatience. She could tell by Sarah's voice that she spoke with straight irreproachable lips.

“We will all get on the omnibus, if you like,” she answered, “and ride up and down.”

Henry laughed softly, but they felt that he was approving of Sarah's ways.

"Well," he said, "I like an omnibus sometimes. It's cheap, and I like meeting the common people, to sit beside them. I always get out feeling as if I had done my duty towards society, made my yearly visit to my grandmother, or something of that kind."

Sarah looked puzzled, but Mrs. Preston smiled.

He had dropped his gold-headed stick while speaking, and now he stooped to pick it up with a luxurious sound of silk linings and stiff braces.

"This is a new departure," thought Mrs. Preston; "I wonder whether he'll go too far? But no, there's money enough for that. For that. If he only lets—"

When the ladies had put on their homely crochet shawl and their hen-back hats—those meek feather hats that were more or less in fashion at the time

—they all walked down the hill and over to the Place Clichy, which seemed to blaze out suddenly among the dusky streets, like the full yellow moon over the top of a hill.

There was a jangle and tangle of different omnibuses. One "Odeon" having just gone, another had just come from the wrong way, a third loomed up on the other side of the place, while the omnibuses of other lines were thumping and banging themselves in and out, everywhere. When the one they wanted came, crowding into a foothold, it was quite full of passengers, every one of whom seemed inclined to hold his seat. However, several did at last come down from the *imperiale*, and two from the inside.

"I can't go on top!" cried Mrs. Preston in dismay. "I never did such a thing! No, I can't do that!"

"There is room for us two inside," began Sarah.

"*Dépêchez, mesdames, dépêchez!*"

“ You and Henry go up ! Go ! ” said Mrs. Preston.

Sarah looked about her in bewilderment ; but Mrs. Preston was bustling away, and she herself was a prisoner between the narrow stairs and Henry’s arm. There was no help for it, so, turning, she went up the stairs as lightly as she could, though she had to try hard if she were to step up like a spry, muscular person. At the top, she felt her knees shake a little, but she walked quickly to the farther end of the *imperiale*, sitting down close to the arm of the long seat ; one hand on the arm, while the other clutched the edge of the seat beside her, under the folds of her gown.

As for Henry, he deliberately came to sit down so close beside her that she must have changed colour in a wonderful way, had any one been able to see it in the mingling darkness and gas-light. Having to take her hand from the seat, she then felt more abashed than

ever in a painless way; for somehow it gave her no pain that he should behave, for one moment, like a common type of man. Wondering whether he would have done such a thing in America, she put her free hand on top of her other hand, moving an impossible degree into the arm of the seat. But just then he made more room.

Quite forgetting himself, no doubt, he sat less stiffly erect than usual, to stretch out his feet as if to the cosy blaze of the domestic fire, turning to Sarah with a smile of content that called for sympathy. It called in vain for sympathy, because Sarah ceased to like him when he ceased to be severe, and now she would not look at him. She saw him plainly enough, however, out of the corner of her eye, and when he sat up firmly as the omnibus began to stir she turned her face to him.

The omnibus stirring, Sarah felt as if she were on a hill which suddenly showed a disposition to skip when there

was nothing to celebrate. She shivered, catching her breath in a way which showed that she had come within an inch of screaming, and Henry could see that she was clinging to the slender arm of the seat.

Naturally, she could not have helped a lover more had she been quite another kind of woman. But, of course, she did not think of that, or she would have kept back her fright somehow. To do her justice, she forget the presence of Henry for a moment, though, when he saw her fright, he did not hesitate to put his arm around her waist. After all, he quite knew what he was about, and what could he do but give her the full good of that pretence at shielding which is known to comfort the womanly heart?

Sarah bit her lip. "I daresay I am biting so hard that the blood will come," she thought.

But the blood did not come. She had to think of other things and to

bestir herself in getting rid of Henry's arm. So she turned with a wriggling movement that could not be helped, gently putting his hand on his own knee. "I—I'm not at all frightened," she said, quaveringly, "not in the least. I—I'm much obliged to you."

Henry laughed softly. The huge, swaying omnibus was plunging recklessly down a dark, narrow street.

"What a stroke of luck to get you here!" he said.

"What? I don't understand you," she faltered, catching her breath.

"No," he answered with approval, her behaviour being quite what he had planned for her. As he turned and took her soft hand—she must have dropped her gloves somewhere, or put them in her pocket—as he turned she could hear the rush of that silk lining.

"I shall never have my things lined with silk," she thought. "I'm sure Italian cloth is much—" but there was

her hand in his, and she must try to withdraw it, childishly. She gave a little jerk, but the hand was firmly held between his hard white palms.

“Wait a minute!” he said, in a voice which was truly solemn in its sense of propriety; “wait a minute. I perfectly understand your feeling, and naturally you—you do not allow—permit—you understand what I mean?”

Stopping to get breath, he took his upper hand from hers, pushing back his hat with a cramped gesture. Then he pulled the hat carefully back into its place.

“Just a moment,” he whispered, hurriedly—he had not whispered before—as she was again jerking weakly at her hand, like a half-hearted fish on the line. “Just a moment, if you please! You surely understand me. My—my intentions. You are just what I wanted—excuse me! I love you devotedly. I never met any one who seemed to me more *suita*—a—admir-

able, admirable. And I have grown so fond of you! You know very well I haven't had a chance lately to ask you to be my wife."

He bent low to look up into her face. "But you have understood?" he asked. "Do you say yes?"

"I—I don't know," said Sarah, faintly.

"No, not quite; of course not yet," he said, speaking confidentially, and showing that he thought it but right and modest of her to hesitate. "I thoroughly appreciate your feelings. But you have seen that—that I loved you. Of course you have known. It is almost as if I had spoken before, isn't it?"

"I—I can't tell," said Sarah.

"Well, my dear, naturally it would not be wise, or like you, to answer such a question, however foreseen, without due deliberation. You must consider, of course, and ask advice, and you may rely on me not to hurry you."

“Thank you,” said Sarah.

“Not by word or look. I so—so entirely understand your feeling that—that you should not answer at once.”

The heaving omnibus drew up on a great glittering boulevard, and they could feel the heavy tread of new passengers climbing to the *imperiale*. The seats behind them were soon quite filled with talkative folks, for many people had gone down since Henry and Sarah came up. Now, some one took the empty seat beside Henry, who had to move a little closer to Sarah. And then, though there had been people about all the time who might or might not understand English, even whispered English, the newcomers seemed to make themselves more felt. Henry and Sarah could not say another word.

“Hi!” called some one in the street below. “Hi! Look here, Jean!”

The man who had taken the seat

beside Henry rose, and leaned over the slender rail. "It's all right," he answered, in a voice which made Sarah start, "I'll see about it to-morrow."

He turned his head as he took his seat, and, seeing Sarah, smiled frankly—rather more frankly than one would have expected him to smile, as he raised his hat.

"Isn't it a pleasant night?" he said in a happy voice that seemed boyish.

"Oh! yes, Monsieur Fortier!" answered Sarah, feeling that his broad shoulders, clearly to be seen at night in his light grey coat, would take up a great deal of room, and that he must be made acquainted with Henry. So she sat up with a jerk to speak the magic words.

Monsieur Fortier bowed with such goodwill, that Henry was able to stare without bowing at all, though he raised his hat doggedly. Then, as of course no Frenchman could bear an awkward pause, however short, the first one to

speaker was Fortier, or Jean Paul Fortier as Sarah always called him in her thoughts.

“I am not going anywhere,” he informed them. “I often get on this omnibus just to ride across the river and back. And I can tell you, the river will be worth while to-night!”

“The river is an old friend of yours, I daresay?” asked Henry, who unbent prettily at the gentleness of the Frenchman.

“Oh, naturally. I have been fifteen years in Paris.”

“He will no doubt be good enough to tell us all about himself,” thought Henry, putting himself into proper position to hear comedy. No onlooker should be mistaken as to his own point of view.

“Fifteen years,” repeated Fortier. “In the Latin quarter, at least. And I don’t know how I’ve drifted over here where I don’t belong. Perhaps somebody invited me to a party and it

turned my head. I thought I might play respectable."

"How do you like it as far as you've gone?" asked Henry, out of the corner of his mouth.

"Ah—I? I like it. It is still new to me. I have as yet no dreary past in the paths of respectability. Whereas you, sir, for example—"

Sarah looked up in fright, but Henry only laughed gaily, seeming pleased with his new acquaintance.

"Thank you," he said, "my past looks after itself nicely. Do you smoke?"

"Thank you; Mademoiselle does not object?"

Shaking her head, Sarah smiled with unwonted openness. Henry took a cigar case out of his pocket, but, glancing quickly at Sarah, he stopped himself, put it back again, and found a case of cigarettes instead. A pretty, new silver case, as Sarah noticed. For he had had an oldish leather one on

ship-board. "I don't think he carried cigars then," she thought to herself.

In the avenue de l'Opéra, a boy selling papers or pamphlets, cried, "Marriage of Lord Gladstone!"

"What's that?" asked Henry.

Fortier laughed. "Only some nonsense," he said. "Those little frauds are only imitation supplements. But there are always strangers enough on the boulevards to make them pay."

"Oh, of course!" said Henry, a little teased to have behaved as one who did not know his Paris.

Meanwhile, they had left the glimmering avenue, exchanged some passengers at the rue de Rivoli, and were come into the dark, mysterious place du Carrousel. Sarah shivered. There were great wandering draughts there, and in the darkness it seemed like a wind-swept plateau. But the lumbering omnibus went crashing on towards the big electric light at the other side.

It was just under the ghastly electric light that they had to stop for a little, beside another omnibus, going the other way; and Sarah met the bright animal eyes of a young girl, who had a giddy bonnet on her head, and swollen little lips. She was with a Beaux-Arts student in a velvet jacket; and looking from Sarah to Henry, and from Henry to Fortier, she nudged the student beside her, her face breaking into a childish smile.

“*Mais voyons!*” Sarah heard her say; “it is he, Jean Paul Fortier!”

Fortier also heard her. He looked down from the clouds, raising his hat. While he lifted his own hat Henry moved uncomfortably in his seat.

“Well, Mlle. Suzanne,” called Fortier, “is that you? Getting on well?”

The omnibus was already stirring. In answer the young girl shrugged her shoulders, and looked with mock pitifulness at the youth beside her, laughing loudly. But the voice of a

French girl does not lend itself to laughter with charm. Fortier glanced uneasily at Sarah. But, however loud, the laugh was half-drowned by the sudden start and noise of the wheels, and Sarah and her friends were jerked through the dark archway, the broken laugh mingling behind them with the broken light.

Looking slily at Henry, Sarah thought that he was frowning a little, and she felt pleased. She was keenly vexed somehow that Jean Paul Fortier in his greatness and simplicity should be feeling humiliated, and before Henry, too, by the cracked voice of a compatriot, and she longed to think of something to say. It was Henry, however, who could not bear the awkward pause this time, and he soon spoke, after coughing slightly.

“ I wonder how your aunt is getting on, down there ? ” he said to Sarah, nodding downwards.

Sarah laughed, for the air of Paris

was beginning to work in her. "I hope Aunt Preston is happy," she answered. "I think she rather likes to be alone."

Henry turned to Fortier. "Miss Lovell's aunt is down there," he said a little pompously. "There was only one seat below."

Shrugging his shoulders, Fortier made a gesture which begged them to believe that of course he had understood all that, and a thousand things.

CHAPTER IV.

ODETTE MAKES A SCENE.

THE morning after Sarah and Henry met Fortier on top of the omnibus, this letter was brought in by the good Mme. Rigollot.

“MY DEAR MISS LOVELL,—How very unlucky we were to be interrupted last night! I had so much to say to you, though perhaps it is just as well that I should write, and that you should write in answer; so I have told the bearer to call for yours at three.

“I know that I promised not to hurry you for an answer. You must forgive me, and if you cannot give me your answer now, say so frankly; I shall entirely appreciate your feel-

ing. And I must confess that I am rather ashamed of this impatience, for which I cannot account. I can only assure you that it is not the outcome of any sentiment which you would consider unworthy. If I were superstitious—

“You may possibly know what my circumstances are. At any rate, Mrs. Preston does know. And I think I can offer you a home that you will find suitable. It is surely needless for me to repeat that I love you, and shall in due measure devote my life to you, if you be good enough to give me a happy answer.

“In that case I shall call this evening, trusting that you will have arranged to see me alone.

“Believe me,

“Yours devotedly,

“HENRY SNOW.”

“Well?” asked Mrs. Preston, as she passed it back to Sarah.

Sarah was unblushingly pale. Her hair was loosened at the back, and she had made a mistake in buttoning the thick row of buttons on her dress that morning. Her aunt smiled, thinking how that kind of thing would strike Henry, by-and-by. As flint strikes steel, perhaps. But she held her peace, looking Sarah calmly in the eyes.

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Sarah; “I don’t know. He promised to give me time, and now he won’t! What shall I do?”

“Well,” answered Mrs. Preston, “I suppose you mean to accept. In that case, why not do it, forthwith? Must one decide, and so on?”

“You don’t understand!” groaned Sarah.

“What don’t I understand?”

“Why,” answered Sarah, rather irrelevantly, “it is all your fault for making me go on top of that omnibus with him. You saw I didn’t want to go. I should think that you might have been a little more consid—”

She stopped and sighed. "Well," she began again, "what excuse can I give him?"

"Excuse for what?"

Sarah drew her high eyebrows together at the tips; it was her way of frowning.

"For putting him off a little, to gain time?"

Mrs. Preston did not answer at once. At length she said, "Well, you can't expect me to see why you should want to gain time if you don't tell me. I confess that you puzzle me, for I'd be willing enough to understand you silently if I only could. And as for Henry, I tell you frankly that I think you'd better take him while you can get him. You'll never do better. And, on the whole, I believe you will get on well together."

Sarah straightened her lips with the famous owl-like look in her eyes, looking down at her little old aunt. "He is just what I have always wanted," she said. And that was perhaps the

most confidential speech that she had ever made to any one in her life.

Mrs. Preston said nothing for some moments, from sheer surprise at what Sarah had told her, though she had known well enough all the time that Henry was just the husband that Sarah had always wanted. She was about to speak, when Mdme. Rigollot came in with the coffee, and tried to tell them the story of the son of the grocer next door; the youth having fallen into evil ways, though he had now come back to his father. The story was short, but complex in the telling, and when the old woman had gone Sarah threw back her head and stretched her large white arms wearily. "Oh, well, well, well!" she cried, "where's the paper and ink? We'll say yes to him and have it over!"

"Don't talk like that!" cried Mrs. Preston, softly. And the fine vertical lines that crossed and re-crossed her old lips trembled.

They had been having luncheon. Sarah now rose to find her paper and ink, and her answer to Henry's proposal of marriage was much more quickly written than an order to a dressmaker. By the time it was written she had some of her colour back, and then she put on her hat to go to the studio as usual.

"Hadn't you better stay at home this afternoon and rest?" asked Mrs. Preston.

"Oh, no, dear!" and Sarah's soft, red lips straightened in complacent surprise. "I must be sure to go to the studio this afternoon. The professor is coming. He didn't get round to see all the girls' drawings yesterday."

"Didn't he look at yours, yesterday?"

"He—yes. He looked at mine. But it is a great help to hear what he says of the other drawings, you know. One learns a great deal."

"Oh, well, go on, then! You're

lucky to get so much pleasure out of it."

M. Fortier came late. He was walking with two other men who did not leave him until he had fairly opened the door of the studio, and at first he seemed scarcely to remember why he had come, though Mlle. Maugeret was quick enough to remind him. "You know," she said, "there were four young ladies whose drawings you hadn't time to look at yesterday. You hurried away, you know."

"Yes, yes, I know," he answered; "four young ladies over there in the corner. But first let me see what you others have done since yesterday. You—well, Mlle. Maugeret, that isn't at all bad. You have been trying hard to get the proportions. Od—Mademoiselle Fabien might imitate you with advantage."

There was a little rustle, as several girls turned their heads in wonder. Nobody had ever called Odette "Made-

moiselle Fabien" before. Many did not even know of whom he spoke, though Sarah happened to know, as she took rather an interest in names.

He was walking from drawing to drawing, standing behind the girls, and their arms dropped limply as he came near. As he came near Sarah's eyelids twitched, and she interlaced her soft pink fingers in her lap, but she did not look at him. His eyebrows were puckered importantly, and he peered at her drawing over the top of her portfolio; for as she was sitting against the wall he could not get behind her. He did not look at her, and one could see that he had made up his mind not to smile.

"Oh!" said Sarah, suddenly remembering, "will you sit down?"

She had half risen, but he motioned to her to keep her seat.

"Did you get home all right last night?" he asked, "and sleep well?"

"Yes—oh yes," answered Sarah.

“I thought your drawings very interesting yesterday,” he said, though without looking at the drawing in question, for his eyes, still downcast, had travelled as far as her hands. “I remember thinking so, and I should like very much to see more of your works—pictures and things. I suppose you have a lot that you made in—in your own country.”

“Oh, thank you!” said Sarah. And then she wondered whether he asked everybody like that; glancing up at him to try to see, she found that he was looking down at her with the smile of a gentle *roué* on his lips, and the simplicity of a whole foundling hospital in his eyes. Thinking of the other girls who looked on, she was frightened. She felt a singing in her ears and a mist before her eyes.

“Well, good afternoon,” he said, breaking the little spell with a shock. “Remember I should like to see your work. Many of the ladies bring their

pictures to me, upstairs in my studio, you know. I am always very much flattered."

"Thank you," repeated Sarah.

He turned away. But before he had taken the seat offered him by the first of the girls whose work he had not seen the day before, Odette stopped him. To Sarah's awe, she actually tapped him on his broad back with her mahl-stick.

"Wait a minute," she said, with that pouting movement of her full little lips that Sarah admired and deprecated, "look, Monsieur Fortier. I was going to bring you my composition on Monday. May I? Thanks. And if Miss Lovell would like to take her pictures up to you, I can show her the way when I go. Can I not?"

Smiling he nodded, perhaps not noticing her peculiarly reproachful tone. There had been something showily injured in her look since he called her "Mademoiselle Fabien."

But he had not noticed it; so he nodded, saying, "Very well; be sure you bring her. And it's high time that you showed me that composition of which you speak, mademoiselle."

Odette hung her head, pouting. "Why—" she began, but stopped, for he was already at work on the other girl's drawing. She said nothing more, but sat there making a great show of her injury, while she idly scratched the legs of her easel with her stumpy bit of charcoal; for she always broke the charcoal sticks as soon as she touched them.

Fortier did not seem to see her, and Sarah wondered at her cool way of taking for granted that he would see her, nevertheless, out of the corner of his eye. It was so conceited. As if such a man as that ever thought twice of any young girl. Or any woman either!

However, it seemed that he had seen her out of the corner of his eye. When

he left the last drawing and was wiping the charcoal from his hands with his handkerchief—a large and common-looking white handkerchief, so unlike Henry's embroidery and hemstitch—he turned suddenly to Odette. Sarah trembled with amazement, but no one else in the room seemed to find anything remarkable in his behaviour when he took Odette's little velvety chin between his hands.

“Well, my deary,” he said, “and what is the matter now?”

“I sha'n't tell!” she answered, dropping her tender eyelids obstinately.

“If you drop your pretty eyes like that I shall kiss them,” remarked the great Jean Paul Fortier.

Sarah looked from right to left and from left to right in gaping astonishment. But all the girls were going on with their drawings, taking no more notice of the little scene than to perhaps glance at it with a passing smile of indulgence.

“It’s all very well for you to kiss me,” went on Odette, “but you would kiss anybody!”

“I?” he asked. “I kiss anybody? Why, how can you say such a thing? Did you ever see me kiss an ugly woman?”

“No,” owned Odette, “perhaps not; but it’s all the same to me whom you kiss. If you think I care, you’re very much mistaken. I only think you needn’t be so quick to throw off an old friend just because—bec—be—”

The tears had been gathering in her large eyes until they lost all outline and expression. Her full little lips grew fuller and redder. And when she came to the word “because” the tears overflowed and came rolling down, leaving little wet pink stripes on her soft cheeks. But still no one seemed surprised.

“Come, come, my mignonne!” he said, putting his arm around her shoulders and kissing her forehead,

“come, tell your poor old friend what’s the matter?”

“But he is rather young,” thought Sarah.

“You—you know very well what you s—said to me,” sobbed Odette, letting her childish head fall back on the shoulder of her poor old friend.

“But really, truly, I don’t know a bit what you mean!” he insisted, taking out that handkerchief and beginning to wipe her eyes for her.

“Yes—yes, you do! You—but stop! stop scratching my face! Your handkerchief is one mass of charcoal! What a sight my face must be!”

Sitting up savagely, she found her own handkerchief, and began to laugh as she mopped up her tears.

“Well,” he declared, putting his hands in his coat pockets, “I’m in a hurry. I promised to see a man, so tell me quick what I did that was naughty.”

Mlle. Maugeret, Miss Dunlop, and

others, smiled at his simplicity, though all were drawing, or pretending to draw, industriously. As for Odette, she answered promptly,—

“Why did you call me Mademoiselle—Mademoiselle Fabien?”

“Oh!” he asked, with childish slyness that made Mlle. Maugeret suddenly laugh out loud, “Oh! did I call you that?”

“Did you, indeed!” cried Odette, crossly, “you know very well you did!”

“Well, I meant no harm. But I thought you might—might like it better so, *now*. It’s your name. You’re a young lady now, you know. I thought you might wish it.”

“How could you be so horrid, Monsieur Fortier!” she said, under her breath, and turning her head away from him.

“My dear little Odette, I shall do anything whatever that you wish,” he answered; “so good-bye for to-day. Good-bye, *mesdames*!”

“Good afternoon, monsieur,” said the roomful of girls, not quite in chorus, while he stooped and kissed Odette’s cheek gently. Then he offered her his own cheek to kiss.

“Dear me!” thought Sarah, as the charcoal fell from her loosening fingers and broke on the floor. “Dear me, what a scene! That’s French, I suppose.”

It seemed that it was French. Merely French and merely Odette, as Miss Dunlop explained rather anxiously, for of course Sarah begged her to explain the scene as soon as the model rested. “Dear little thing,” said good kind Miss Dunlop in a conciliatory voice, “she is so excitable and tender-hearted. She never could help crying at every little thing. And then, of course, when a French girl cries, the person who happens to be nearest her begins to kiss and hug her as a matter of course. They are all so sentimental and sympathetic! They know how

to soothe each other, there being, I suppose, no such thing as a French person who would hate to be touched. And, you know, except for kissing on the mouth, they do not attach that importance to kissing that we—well, in fact, in a way, they're not so evil-minded as we are!"

"I see," said Sarah. But she was not quite convinced.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRYST.

NATURALLY, as Henry had asked to see Sarah alone, Mrs. Preston went early to her bedroom that night, after Sarah had written accepting the offer of marriage. Sarah at once lit both gas-jets flaringly and closed the shutters, instead of spending the pleasant hour or two after dinner in the dusk before the window, as usual. Then she dusted the polished table nervously, straightening and dusting the hard red plush chairs, until the room looked so shiny and stiff, that she laughed at it, and carefully pushed one or two chairs out of order. Scattering some wool-work on the table—a detective might have

marked that the knitting-needles were rusty—she tossed the crisp last newspaper temptingly on the sofa; perhaps, imagining that he would settle down so quickly as all that to the amusements of the contented.

At exactly the proper time, he came. Coming through the doorway, Sarah saw that behind him Mme. Rigollot wore an expression of solemn joy, as well as her ancient purple silk gown of the crinoline period, and her Sunday cap. There was no telling how she had come by her understanding of the ceremony in hand. But Sarah's eyes quickly flitted to Henry, who, against his custom, had left his hat and light overcoat outside.

“It must be the right thing to do,” thought Sarah. “I suppose it wouldn't be the fashion to wear gloves on such an occasion, or he'd have done it.”

“I have come!” he said, holding the tips of her fingers hesitatingly for a moment before he lifted them to his lips.

Then, and not until then, Sarah remembered that she was wearing the clothes that she had worn all day. It was the shining whiteness and blackness of Henry's garments that made her remember. "Oh," she thought, "how could I have done it? And why didn't Aunt Preston say something?"

Aloud she merely said, "I have been waiting for you."

They were standing almost under the flaring gas-jets.

"I have come to thank you," he said very gravely, and looking much handsomer than he had ever looked before. He seemed rather slender in his evening clothes; and to-night his eyes, instead of being hard and bright, looked large and a trifle hollow,—hollow with anxiety at the important step in life that he had taken, no doubt;—his almond-shaped face being white, like the face of a powdered woman, or perhaps like the face of a bridegroom; for bride-

grooms have white faces. Noticing his paleness, Sarah found her ease.

“You look pale,” she said, smiling. “You are quite white. Why should you look pale to-night? I should think—”

“Do I?” he asked. “Oh, well—I don’t know. Perhaps happiness makes some people pale. It is not every day that a man goes to claim his wife.”

Sarah shivered.

“I have another question to ask you,” he went on, “now that you have promised to give yourself to me. Will you answer it truly?”

He was still holding her hand. She moved a step away, and looked at him blankly without answering.

“Do you love me?” he asked.

Sarah’s flat eyebrows rose to an impossible height, with an effect of dumb and high-minded patience. Henry, seeing that, winked his tired eyelids nervously; but his fine white hands were still steady.

“I think you are very handsome,” she said, slowly. “I should be so proud of you.”

He smiled piteously, as a sick child smiles at a too heavy toy. Lifting her hand, which he still held, he pressed the back of it against his cheek for a moment.

“Do you love anybody else?” he asked in a low voice.

Sarah's eyes suddenly made a rapid tour of the room; then they met his steadily.

“No, I do not,” she answered, quietly and almost solemnly.

Henry looked away in thought for a moment; then he laughed lightly. “Oh,” he said, “in that case, you do love me, of course. I might have known how you would take it! You are so proud and reserved, and you have yourself under such rigid control! It's hard to realize what a wonderful being you are!”

“I will do whatever I can to please

you," said Sarah. "I am very negligent and forgetful; but in the main I think I should never lose sight of my duty."

"You are an ang—a saint!"

"Don't say that!" she exclaimed, avoiding his eyes by a turn of her large white neck. "Don't say that! If you know how I—how little I see my way to making you happy!"

He laughed softly. "It isn't necessary that you should see the way," he said. "It is enough that you are in the way of making me happy. But oh, d—dearest, how lucky I was to meet you! How near I came to missing you! If I had taken that other steamer—and you the one woman in the world!"

Sarah gripped anxiously at the polished edge of the table. She looked down, patting the rug with the toe of her shoe. Then his hands began to tremble.

"Oh," he said, "I feel that a man might drop dead if—if too much joy

were to come all at once. It seems to smother the heart. If I dared to touch you—”

It was the touch of his moustache more than that of his lips that made her turn cold and shiver with horror. Such is the human heart sometimes. She almost raised her hand to wipe off that kiss on her cheek, so very near her mouth; feeling a wild longing to run somewhere and wash her face. But she only tried to lift her face out of reach, and she did not run away.

Henry, seeing her moved, thought that he understood perfectly well, and allowed his eyes to soften; only for a moment, being quick enough to see her fright. But he smiled in correcting himself.

“I shall have hard work not to love you too much,” he said, “I am a little afraid of myself; but, believe me, I know what is your due, and I shall try to keep your respect.”

Sarah was silent. That momentary

look in his eyes had shaken the very foundations of her world—her world in which human nature was to enter by special invitation only. “Oh, my God!” she thought, prayerfully, “I didn’t—I never foresaw this!”

He had thrown himself on the sofa, and sat trying to look and to breathe naturally.

“Shall we call Aunt Preston now?” asked Sarah.

“Oh, yes—to be sure! we ought!” he answered, eagerly.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MEN AND MEN.

JEAN PAUL FORTIER had at last been captured for the evening by the particular *café* beloved of the Americans. There was scheming and debate enough beforehand to bring about the capture, it being not so easy to work up the courage of Jackson the rich—the only rich man to the point of asking Monsieur Fortier to dinner. Nevertheless, the invitation and the dinner both came to pass, and were considered to have been highly successful. Everybody felt that Jackson had been always rather underrated, and that perhaps it would have been worth while to listen to what he said, sometimes; Jackson being a Texan, a

strapping fine young fellow too, who certainly did not look clever. He liked very well to spend his money on other people when it could be done without the slightest mental exertion, but as state dinners require laborious thought and worry if anything does, he would have much preferred to give everybody all round a substantial present in cash, on the understanding that all should meet in the *café* for the evening, after having each secured the humanizing effect of a really good dinner privately.

However, some pleasant things may not be, so he gave it—he gave the dinner, and gave it as well as he could, providing lavishly all the delicacies that in Texas are supposed to be the chief end and delight of the French. There were frogs' legs and stuffed snails, boudins, caviare, wine so old that the waiters could handle it without any fear of knocking the dust off, and there was that cheese which Jackson had selected on its merits of smelling worse and

looking nastier than anything he had ever seen in his life before. He began to feel the inward glow of the amateur of dinner-giving, the sweet words *connaisseur* and *gourmet* floating through his mind in a golden haze.

Now it was all over, and they had brought their great man, their *Maître des Modernes*, over to their own dear *café*, placing him in a position of honour behind the narrow marble table, with his back to the wall—the wall of glistening imitation marble relieved by mirrors—while they all did him homage in a semicircle of chairs. The cigars were an innovation, but they added much to the solemnity of the occasion; the students feeling vaguely that they tended to remove any air of boyishness that might cling to the coterie.

Hodge, the talker, coughed. The time had now come to speak of pictures and the Salon, and maybe of “Art.” He knew just what he meant to say, and some of the others felt that when the

time came they might state their own views—very quietly and in a way to show a certain mature deliberation—a man at twenty-five or six having had a fair experience of life. And had they not all seen at least three Salons?

“I hear, monsieur,” said Hodge, “that you are going to paint a *plein-air* St. Anthony for next year?”

Fortier smiled.

“No,” he answered, “I’m afraid not. I’ve never been quite in sympathy with that particular saint somehow.”

Hodge tried again.

“They say that your last Salon—the blue trees and washerwoman—is going to Denver. Is that so?”

“I hoped it would be true,” answered Fortier. “A man from Denver asked me the price of it.”

“I want to see more of the best pictures go to America,” said Jackson, trying to look like a responsible, law-abiding citizen, “for I’ve no hesitation in saying that the things you see in the

galleries over there are something awful. The taste of those fellows is so hopeless that they have to buy a few old masters to balance. But I think that personal influence would do something. If there were only more encouragement some of the good men might go over there themselves—Frenchmen, I mean.”

“I should like to go to America,” said Fortier, musingly. “And I wish I could speak English. It seems to me that the grand trouble with us French is that we travel so little. As a rule only our outlaws travel, and we sit at home starving until we eat up our own hearts.”

Some of the young men glanced at each other slyly, but with indulgence. For what can one expect of these Frenchies outside of painting?

Jackson, however, was not one who could admire and yet qualify his admiration.

“Oh, why don't you come to Ame-

rica?" he cried. "You ought to come over this summer. Why, there's a steamer from Hâvre the day after tomorrow. Just pack up a few things and—"

Fortier sat up straighter and smiled.

"Thank you," he said; "it will not be possible for me to hurry like that until after I have been to America. I think that four or five miles down the Seine will be trip enough for me. Will you come with me on Sunday?"

"Will—oh yes, thank you," said Jackson, "I'll go."

"I know of a little place where they make such good milk-soup. There's nothing I like so much as milk-soup. But"—Fortier looked up at Jackson doubtfully—"but I'm afraid you wouldn't care for such things. I'll bring a *pâté* and a bottle for you."

"Oh, no, not for me!" cried Jackson; and then he blushed—in as far as a blush could show in his thick brown skin.

A horrible suspicion had crossed his mind that perhaps it had caused Fortier as cruel suffering to eat that cheese as it had caused the rest of them, for some became almost ill while eating on so bravely. If Fortier—but no; there was one thing, Fortier would have refused the cheese had he not liked it. Of course!

Just then the front door opened and a stranger came in—a “society man.” But though Fortier sat half-facing the door, he was playing with his coffee, and it was not until the glass door shut jarringly behind the new comer that he looked up and knew him for Henry Snow.

“*Tiens!*” called Fortier, “come in, come in. How did you find your way over here?”

Henry smiled brightly.

“How do you do?” he said. “I never expected to meet any one when I came in. I have been at the Odéon, but it was too tiresome, so I came out.

What do you get to drink at this place?"

Fortier introduced him to the men by a word or two, room being given on the wall-seat beside Fortier, whence Henry, though genial in speech, was careful to avoid meeting the eyes of the others. They were none of them fellows whom one would be likely to meet anywhere, and an onlooker might have noticed that at this introduction among them of the worldly element the eyes of these blameless but insignificant young men became dull, while their colour fell. Their craving intelligence was turning upon itself, or, as Fortier would have said, they began to eat up their own hearts. So great is the power of a face.

As for Jackson, without knowing it, he began to look as serious and mature as he so much wished to look. Calling up the waiter, he asked Henry what he would have.

"Oh, I don't know," answered

Henry, "what shall I say? Of course there's no real whisky in this place. If you'll forgive me, Fortier,"—everybody started to hear him say "Fortier"—"if you'll forgive me, I must say that a town where you can't seem to get decent whisky, is a howling wilderness, call it Paris or what you will. I suppose I shall have to drink another absinthe."

Fortier stared at the little terraced bottle of cognac beside his coffee in mild surprise. "Don't you like absinthe?" he asked. "Well, anyhow, it is not good to drink absinthe after dinner. One should properly drink it but once a day, and that about half an hour before dining. Like that, I find it an excellent habit. My grandfather always said so, too, and he was a doctor."

Henry looked up at him inquiringly. Fortier, knowing Americans so well, understood.

"Oh, yes," he said, in answer to the

unspoken question, "I am a peasant, of course. My grandfather studied medicine, and became the doctor in his native village; but he would have been much too proud to marry into the middle-class, even though he dressed and dined *en bourgeois* all his life. As it was, my grandmother never gave up her cap, and my father, in his turn, chose the blouse. He loved the good old ways as his mother did, and was always a little hard on the grandfather and me. Actually, he grumbles to this day because I don't take off my hat while his marquis passes by. I've always been such an ass. Though, now I think of it, I'll do it for him next time I go home. The good old marquis! he's got more little vices in a quiet way down there in the country than anybody I ever heard of. Talk about Paris!"

"What marquis would that be?" asked Henry with awakening interest.

"De Villerouge."

“ Ville—Villerouge ? ” said Henry, thoughtfully. “ Oh, yes—I think I’ve seen him. Crazy little legs, hasn’t he ? How does he contrive to stand on them ? ”

Fortier deplored his ignorance with the national gesture.

“ You don’t know him, perhaps,” asked Henry, with careful gentleness, looking, before the words were out of his mouth, so repentant, so distressed at having asked a question which might humiliate a poor fellow, that Fortier’s chest began to heave. He grew red in the face, which he hid for a moment on the cold marble table. But he did not laugh aloud, and the Americans stared at him stupidly.

“ Oh, forgive me ! ” he gasped. “ It was the waiter over there—he made a little joke that you didn’t catch ! ”

“ Oh ! ” said Jackson, innocently, turning his head. “ What was he saying ? Something about the Odéon actresses, wasn’t it ? ”

“Yes,” answered Fortier with brazen hardihood.

“Jolly lot,” said Jackson, turning to Henry. “Was Mlle. Rixey playing to-night?”

“Yes, but she’s too lean and jiggery. I don’t like her.”

“You admire Mdme. Pouffant, perhaps?” asked Fortier.

“No,” answered Henry, in whose mouth a coarse word became piquant because of his mincing accent. “No, she makes me sick. They all do, that talk. I always liked a woman to shut up. So I only go to the theatre to look at the girls who have no parts.”

“Yes,” said Fortier, “I know. Lots of men feel like that. But I must say I can’t understand it. How could one bear with them if they did not talk? What should make their loathsome ideas tolerable if not their droll ways of putting them? If not their charming simplicity of expression! And then they usually have such a pretty feeling

for composition—in words. Surely they should all be made academicians!”

The men smiled slightly, deprecatingly, one after the other. A sheep may smile at a bell-wether.

“All right,” said Henry, “though I don’t know what you mean in the least. But one has only got to look at you to believe that it’s all intended for a compliment to the sex. You—”

“Oh, no,” interrupted Jackson, “you’re wrong there. Look at it rather as the impotent railing of a hopeless slave!”

“Yes, truly,” laughed Fortier, “my chains gall me! Had I but been quiet and submissive like you Americans, I too might have been allowed to run around loose.”

CHAPTER VII.

FORTIER'S STUDIO.

SARAH knelt by her bed praying for a long time that night—after Henry had gone. At last she rose and stood by the open window, to stare into the murky shades of the street below, and into the milky moonlit sky. The sky was quite light, and the stars could scarcely be seen, for the low moon, wherever it was, put them out in shining so broadly on this part of the sky. Sarah had no candle, for light enough came in at the window to show her the way about the room. By-and-by she turned and undressed, looking at herself, her large arms and fine neck approvingly in the long dim glass of

the wardrobe. But an unbidden thought made her shiver.

“I mustn't be a coward,” she said to herself. “I might have known how it would be, all along. Besides, it will be nothing to what some of the very best women have to bear. Surely I have as much patience as the rest—”

Going back to the window for just another moment, she saw that the moonlight was now touching the tops of the tall houses over the way.

“What strange natures these French men and women have!” said a still small voice.

“If Jean Paul Fortier had been in Henry's place to-night, meeting his *fiancée*, I wonder how he would have behaved?” asked Sarah of the mirror. “But what nonsense of Miss Dunlop! Of course that dear little Odette is in love with him. *She* is very different from *us*. I dare say a girl like that doesn't dream of keeping her mind in check; and—what—what thoughts she

must have! She must simply—but men might not attach so much importance to that. A man couldn't help being fond of her, and overlooking things. Some men. For, of course, there are *men and men*. Jean Paul Fortier, for instance: I should think he would be willing to marry her. For to a really great man, like him, I suppose there isn't so much difference between one woman and another. Nobody can deny that Odette is a grown woman, if she does behave like a baby."

Putting on her nightgown, she brushed her hair. She looked well in her nightgown. Also she looked well with her hair flowing. And she seemed a fine subject for martyrdom or other passive state of greatness, standing there in the even dusk.

Next morning she went to the studio as usual. In starting she met Mdme. Rigollot in the narrow passage of the apartment—a dark passage;

but the door of the glittering kitchen was open behind the old lady, who was coming forward with trembling hands. Even though her flabby face was in shadow, Sarah could see that it was working with joy.

“I'm so glad!” she said, putting her shapeless hands on Sarah's shoulders. “Oh, I'm so glad!”

There were tears in her eyes, and her joyful voice was choking. Sarah wondered how she could have known anything about her engagement so soon.

“Thank you,” she said, “you are very kind. How did you know—?”

“Oh, mademoiselle! how could I help it? I've sometimes been so afraid he wouldn't, and besides, I only listened at the keyhole a minute! How lucky I am to understand a little English!”

Sarah could do nothing but stare.

“You were born under a lucky star,” said Mdme. Rigollot. “Oh, how happy you must be! Your cup is

full. The beautiful monsieur, so rich, so kind, so young—”

“ Ah, thank you ! ” said Sarah, trying to edge through the door. But with a kind of sob of pure joy the old woman caught her in her long arms, to hug her almost fiercely.

“ It is beautiful, so beautiful, to think that there can be such happiness in the world,” she cried, as Sarah made her escape. “ So rich, so handsome, so young, so— ”

At the studio everything was as the day before, and Sarah quickly fell into her place and her work. As the model was an interesting one, there was little talking among the girls. Odette herself was subdued, and her face looked like that of a baby playing grandmother. She puckered up her mouth and squinted her eyes, generally going through all the motions of careful study. But as soon as the model was told to rest, and had put on her shabby boots—Sarah hated those naked girls worst

when they put on their boots; when the model came down from the stand to look at the drawings, Odette tapped her mahl-stick on the floor to call attention to the important thoughts that were boiling within her.

“Never in your life,” she said to the company, “did you see such a tall man as I saw this morning. American, I should say, and tall—why, tall as a church steeple! He—”

She sprang suddenly to her feet. “Oh, dear me!” she cried. “This is the hour that I promised to take Miss Lovell up to Fortier’s studio! A little more and I should have forgotten it entirely. Come, Miss Lovell, where are you? There? Why didn’t you remind me? Did you forget to bring your studies?”

“No,” said Sarah, her colour beginning to waver. She had forgotten nothing, and had, indeed, been suffering from impatience.

“Well, come on, then. Here’s my

portfolio; where's yours? What should I have done had we forgotten to go? He used to be so wickedly cross when I was late!"

"When you were late?" asked Sarah, opening the door.

"Yes, mademoiselle," answered Odette, looking askance at Sarah's hat, for she had put on her hat to go upstairs to make her first visit to Monsieur Fortier's studio. Odette had a hat, in these the days of her prosperity, but she almost always forgot to put it on, even in the street. To her it was a strange revelation that one might put on a hat simply to go to another room in the same building.

"Yes," repeated Odette after a moment, in mounting the stairs slowly—for she was lazy, and Sarah was tired—"yes, he used to be awfully cross sometimes. When I posed for him, you know, when I was a model. You know I was a model? Yes, he used to look so fierce when I was late, and

take me by the shoulders as if he'd like to beat me. But he never did."

"Didn't he?" answered Sarah, smiling.

"No, not quite. Not like Monsieur de Beuzec, who slapped me frightfully once, for leaving the gas turned on all night. Of course it made great expense. But he hurt me dreadfully, and I was so angry that I never went near the place again. Not even to get my money, for he owed me fifteen francs more than the gas was worth. I think I had a perfect right to stay away, even if it did spoil his picture. Don't you, mademoiselle?"

"Ah, certainly," said Sarah, with wide, pale eyes.

They had come to a door, at which Odette knocked.

"Entr-rr-ez!" called Fortier, in an absent-minded voice, which showed that they were interrupting him at his work. Odette looked doubtfully at Sarah.

“You must excuse me, mademoiselle,” said she, “there may be a model or something. I’ll just go in first to make sure that things are all right. He’s capable of leaving almost anything about, you know!”

Opening the door a crack, she slipped in noislessly. But the door falling ajar again after she had closed it—she was such a clumsy little thing—Sarah could hear through the curtains which fell about a yard behind the door, that she went up to Fortier and stood behind him until he turned in his chair.

“Well, Odette,” he said, “well?”

“You know, monsieur, that you said you would look at that English girl’s drawings.

“Oh?” asked Fortier.

“So I’ve brought her up. You told me to, you know, and she’s just outside.”

“Ah, well,” he said resignedly, “it doesn’t matter! Bring her in. And

—and that will do,” he added to the model, for he lifted his voice, “that will do, you can rest. But stay—let me see—you might just put on your shirt.”

“He must put on his trousers, too, monsieur,” said Odette, firmly.

“Must he?” asked Fortier, wonderingly. “Well, very well, trousers too, François. I suppose—it’s late—you may as well clear out for the morning.”

When they first brought her in, Sarah was a little awed by the size of this studio, it being the largest and most expensive one in the building. It was high and bare-looking and rather clean, having no doubt been swept the night before, for the flowing tracks of the broom were clearly outlined in places. Here and there, though in quite an orderly state, was an abundance of materials, stretchers, canvases, brushes, frames. And there had even been an attempt at furnishing in a social way, or with a social view. Begin-

ning with a dilapidated divan—the divan more sure to be found in a Parisian studio than an easel—there were two chairs, and one large arm-chair; near the arm-chair being a bit of old oak carving in the shape of a chest. The chest would have looked better on the other side of the room, which was so long and bare. But it had been placed beside the arm-chair; in front of it being a handsome Turkish rug. The rug was of no use beside the chest, but there it was, looking in any case very small and lonely on the broad, ill-swept floor.

“Why didn’t you tell me to help you?” asked Odette, glancing around the room. “What made you think of having the floor swept? Are you going to turn over a new leaf?”

“The concierge did it,” answered Fortier, looking a little shamefaced.

“And that pastel of roses that you did on the floor is gone!” cried Odette, sorrowfully.

Fortier smiled. "You don't like it, do you?" he asked. "But I thought that mademoiselle might forgive my pictures if she found my house clean."

"That's so," said Odette, "she will."

"Well, she's kinder than you are, then. I couldn't make you forgive my little green woman that I painted at Nemours, though when I showed it to you the floor was as dirty as you please. You know that's true: but then you, Odette, your soul is your own!"

Odette laughed. "Well, monsieur, do you think the soul of mademoiselle is not her own? Shall I bid you take care?"

Fortier shrugged his shoulders. "It's no use, Odette. But how good of you to come, mademoiselle; I scarcely dared hope. As you see, I was at work on my drawing—a study that I'm making to help me in painting my big picture at Bretigny this fall."

Sarah stared reverently at the drawing. "How long have you been working on it?" she asked, in an awed voice.

"Yesterday and to-day. But it's in no state to be looked at—don't know what's the matter with me! Didn't you bring something, some drawings or sketches, to show to me?"

Sarah was brave, and brought out her portfolio calmly, though her blushes belied the calmness of her fingers. While she was showing her drawings there came a knock at the door.

"Just run and see who's there, Od—oh! I beg your pardon! I—"

But Odette had gone, and with a happy face. They could hear her talking in a soft but authoritative voice with some one at the door. When she came back she said, "It was that Mr. King and his English friend. I told them that you were engaged; but King said he hoped you'd be kind enough

to accept a present of game that he's going to send up. He left this photograph of his picture for the Salon, saying that he'd call again to-morrow, and if you can't receive him then, he will call again on Monday."

Fortier did not smile. His eyes narrowed, and he drew in his cheeks in a peculiar way, more as if an insult had been offered him than like one receiving the adulation of admirers. "When young Galloway comes to show his landscape I'll get him to write to Mr. King in English," he said.

"Have you managed to get rid of the sentimental Dane yet? The one who wanted an old brush of yours for a souvenir?" asked Odette.

Fortier's straight and heavy, but light-coloured eyebrows lowered. He glanced at her with annoyance, refusing to answer.

Presently he said, apologetically, "I've such a lot of work on hand

that I cannot receive many visitors. I can only permit myself the luxury of seeing my oldest friends and the ladies."

Somehow, and strangely for her, Sarah had begun to feel quite at ease with Fortier and Odette. "How nice it would be," she said, gaily, "to have two claims on your time, being at once a lady and one of your old friends!"

Fortier bowed. "Like Odette?" he asked, gravely.

"Like Odette," assented Sarah, quickly.

Meanwhile Sarah was tying up her portfolio. As she tucked it under her arm there was another knock at the door.

"Sacr—," began Fortier; but he stopped himself in time, biting his yellow moustache. Odette ran to the door again before any one could stop her.

"I don't see how you do get on

when I'm not here," she called with her hand on the curtain.

In a moment she brought a card to Fortier—a gentleman's card, at which he stared for a moment, running his fingers over his close-cut, stubble-like hair, down to his pointed beard. "Let me see," he said, "who's this, Odette? Is it the Swedish poet or the Polish Nihilist? Can't you remember, child? Try!"

Odette lifted her soft eyes to the ceiling. "Never, never," she said. "I never heard the name before."

"Perhaps mademoiselle will know. What should you think S—n—o—w would—"

"Oh! I know!" interrupted Odette. "Snuff! It's Polish. I used to know a man named 'Snouffski!' Horrid man!"

Sarah turned pale.

"Yes," said Fortier, "it would evidently be 'Snouff'—Mr. Henri—with a *y*—Snouff!"

“Henry!” cried Sarah, looking instinctively about for a means of escape, but the four broad walls seemed very smooth and solid. “Henry! Why, you know, the other night, monsieur! On the omnibus, you know!”

“Oh, no!” cried Fortier.

“What’s he doing here?” asked Sarah, with wide eyes.

“Ah! I only know how greatly I am honoured. But stay, I may have said something the other night. I’ve met him since—to be sure. Of course.”

Sarah turned, half inquiringly, half in despair, to meet Jean Paul Fortier’s dark blue eyes, full and unprepared. And did he dare to *laugh* at her—to laugh at Henry Snow? Did he—

She became white, except for a pale pink spot on the bottom of each cheek. It meant a great deal to her that any one in the world should laugh, or even smile, if no further than the eyes, at her young man. But there was no

time to think, for Odette, already half-way to the door, said, looking over her plump shoulder,—

“Monsieur will see the gentleman.”

“Ah! ah! yes, of course, of course. Ask him to come in. I—”

As Henry Snow, in his shining morning suit, his eyes slightly dazed by the sudden light, appeared between the heavy grey curtains which Odette drew aside, he seemed to Sarah to have a halo—a halo of mocking blue eyes, with something stern and righteous underneath the mockery.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RESTAURANT.

HENRY turned pale at sight of Sarah. His slight frown may have been due to the sudden glare of light, but his inquiring eyes scarcely left her face until she had had a chance to say, "I have been showing my drawings, you see. I forgot to tell you the good news last night—that Monsieur Fortier had offered to look at them."

Henry bowed his head graciously at Fortier; in a way distinctly to acknowledge a personal favour; and the Frenchman looked at him steadily, as much as to say, "She is yours, then?"

Meanwhile, as if to personify Conscientiousness, Sarah straightened her

lips, raising her eyebrows until they were quite lost in the shadow of her hat.

“Henry,” she said, with rather more gravity than the matter seemed to need, “allow me. I want to present you to Mademoiselle Fabien.”

Odette blushed brightly, though perhaps at being called Mdlle. Fabien. Henry bowed, and then looked her over with a certain careless friendliness, as if she were a pretty little pony. He was somehow standing between her and the others, most likely because Sarah and Fortier had moved a little aside. Sarah and Fortier heard him say to Odette, with lofty sweetness,—

“And are you also an artist?”

“No,” answered Odette, “I am a model.”

That was all that Sarah heard, for Fortier claimed her attention. “Sit down a moment,” he said, for they had neared the divan; “I was about to tell

you that I thought your drawings very painstaking and very interesting in a way. But you should search for another class of truths—bigger truths. For in all constructive work—and possibly in every work—there is nothing more demoralizing than a too narrow devotion to truth, there being so many of us who cannot overlook small truths; and unless one can overlook or thrust aside small truths, it seems impossible, considering what we are, and what our eyes are, to get anything like a vivid impression of the larger truths before us.”

“I understand that,” said Sarah.

“Well,” he continued, “and that is why it is the custom in Paris to say to beginners, ‘Keep three words in your mind, quite constantly as you work. They are, movement, proportion, character,’ those being the qualities usually thought the most important. But whatever qualities you do choose to strive for, never think of *how* you

work. Keep your short list of qualities in sight, and the style and details of your drawing will take care of themselves."

"I will write down those—qualities," said Sarah, feeling for her notebook.

Fortier opened his hands with a French gesture. "Oh, for pity's sake, don't!" he said. "If you take advice in the notebook spirit, you'll surely come to grief. I only want to add that the path of excellence in painting, or excellence in anything, seems to me so very plain, that the only wonder is that the world does not find it oftener. People have always, even in the darkest of artistic ages, painted well, acted well, written well, whenever they were really carried away by the desire to record the whole of a task, and were forced to make the record quickly—before the flush of admiration faded. For I think that the hardest things to do are to admire—or love—sincerely, and to love steadfastly. Given the

power to do that, what more is there needful for excellence? You who would learn to paint pictures with a charm to them, be sincere in the choice of the qualities that you really like. Then be steadfast in your liking until you have painted that one picture. *En voila!* You come to me for advice. I have told you all that I know, or think that I know. I wish you joy of it."

They were sitting, half facing each other, on the edge of the divan. Sarah had dropped her elbows on her knees, bowing her head a little, for the tears had come into her eyes. But with a sudden thought she sat up and let him see the tears. He smiled gently. She was not so dull as he had thought.

"I take that kind of thing seriously, myself," he said. "But there is no necessity. Most people do not. It is a question of temperament."

Sarah bit her lip quickly. She wondered whether it were possible that she

had of what the French call "temperament." And then, without any warning, something made her and Fortier to avoid each other's eyes, like Adam and Eve, perhaps. Rising hurriedly, they faced Henry and Odette, quadrille fashion, and Henry wondered why Fortier stared so hard at his necktie.

"I'm afraid I haven't much to show you," said Fortier. "This is my new studio, and the moss hasn't grown yet. There is the drawing I'm making—that's nothing. And there is a head of Odette somewhere, and an *academie*—"

Odette, a little behind Henry, looked at Fortier, frowned, and shook her dark head violently. Had it been for Henry to teach her the much-admired virtue of shame? What apple had he given her to taste?

"Oh, to be sure! Of course!" exclaimed Fortier, who was always forgetting that some people find nakedness strange. "There is the head of

Odette, and I have six or eight studies of a hay-cock that you might find interesting; and then the little landscape I painted at Rouen. Over there behind the broken easel, Odette."

Henry's polite smile crystallized. "I'm so much obliged," he murmured.

Watching him, Sarah was troubled. Why was he so sweetly polite to Monsieur Fortier? It was not his way to be so with men. And it surely was not possible that he could see and like the passion and honesty either of Fortier himself, or of the confused sketches that he had to show: any more than it was possible that just because Jean Paul Fortier was so successful and famous—

"Awfully natural, that little fat hay-cock," said Henry, nodding at the favoured sketch.

Fortier looked up anxiously. "Do you like that one?" he asked, earnestly. "Why, the peaked one seemed to me much truer, I thought—"

“ Oh, monsieur, do you remember what swarms of ants got into the lunch-basket the day you made that sketch ? ” cried Odette, giving a little hop at the exciting memory.

Henry looked down at her out of the corner of his eye, but he did not relax his set smile of geniality, and he even glanced sideways at Sarah, as if to warn her that indulgence was the order of the day. Blushing, she made an embarrassed step aside, and out of the range of his sight.

“ We are taking up your time, Monsieur Fortier,” said Henry, claiming Sarah by ever so slight a wave of the head. “ We must really be going. And I want you to come and lunch with me, Sarah.”

“ Oh, thank you ! But Aunt Preston—”

“ I have seen Mrs. Preston, and I have told her that you would lunch with me.”

“ Oh ! ” said Sarah.

Now it happened that there was only one good restaurant in the neighbourhood; rather a large, barn-like place, with a much higher ceiling than one would expect to see in that part of Paris. But though the high ceiling needed whitening sadly, and though the cheaply-papered walls were cracked and old, yet the little tables were as clean and shining as tables can be; the glasses were brilliant, the fresh white napkins were done in fans. Moreover, the *dame de comptoir* was a dignified person, the waiters were all intelligent and neat, and, best of all, the cookery was worth coming to eat; so that the late growth of the smart folk of the quarter had made the house almost too famous for the comfort of its frequenters. To-day there seemed to be but one free table, though that was in rather a pleasant spot, in a kind of curtained alcove at the back, and beside a large window.

Sarah, of course, had to squeeze in between the red plush seat at the back

and the marble table. Once there, she had the usual gain of a full sight of the large room outside and of the street door. Watching the street door, the snatches of colour as women and children passed by, the lithe black and white shapes of the waiters going in and out, she almost forgot why they had come. She almost forgot, but Henry was all the happier for that, as he was enabled to arrange the little luncheon without asking her what she would like. He so much liked ordering meals, and he fancied that he knew intuitively what other people wished for. So he chose oysters and saumure for Sarah, *fricassée* of chicken, salad, and then peaches with sugar and cream. His heart warmed to her at the thought of feeding her, and he would have liked her to sit on a soft cushion, and sew a fine seam. But the red plush cushion was very hard, there was no seam to sew, and strawberries were out of season.

Half listening, Sarah was dimly happy that she was to eat neither Frenchy "messes" nor beefsteak Chateaubriand and fried potatoes, the food of the American in Paris. "What a blessing that Henry likes to look out for such things," she said to herself, never thinking what it would perhaps be to keep house for such a man ; for, in truth, she scarcely realized that she would have to actually live with him by-and-by, would eat thousands of meals with him, would touch, even handle, those elegant coats, deliver lectures to the washer-woman on the subject of those shining shirts, and even come to know how it was that his moustache was made to stick up so vigorously. She often dimly wondered about the moustache, for it would have been hard for her to understand how one of the superior sex could condescend to curling-tongs. So that was a mystery to her, as was also the look of stiff neatness of his clothes about the waist—a look that women

know how to get only by the use of strips of steel or whalebone. It was strange, and she wondered; but she never once aspired to a positive know-
of the facts.

The oysters were hardly on the table, when the glass front door, which Sarah alone saw over Henry's shoulder, opened, and in came Odette with M. Fortier. They lounged in as if they had the habit of going there, and of going together. But though they seemed so much at home, they looked about vainly for a table, all the tables being quite full in the front room; no because there were so many people, was that the tables were few—a great reason why the place was so pleasant.

“This way, m'sieur—madame!” called the waiter, who had brought the oysters; clapping his napkin under his arm, and hastily clearing the other end of the table at which sat Sarah and Henry.

Sarah said nothing. She had been

thinking ever since she left the studio that Henry would very likely have something to say by-and-by about Odette and the social position which Odette must fill. She was dreading it, and wondering whether he would ask her to drop her acquaintance with the pretty little creature in as far as possible. So now, for several reasons, she turned all kinds of colours, though she might have turned black for aught that Henry knew. He was slowly filling her plate with oysters, which he chose scientifically, by some rule known to himself, and he was quite surprised when M. Fortier said,—

“Hullo! How lucky! We were still thinking of you.”

Henry half rose, smiling gravely, and making his chair to clatter politely. He turned a little pale, and then he went back to the oysters.

“They’re not bad to-day,” he said, looking at Fortier, with a side nod at the plate he was handing to Sarah.

“ Oh ! ” asked Fortier. “ Then we’ll have some, too. Odette is so fond of them. But how nice to find you here ! I lunch here every day.”

“ Oh ! ” said Henry, with faint emphasis, “ I did not know it ! ”

“ Why—yes,” said Fortier, wonderingly ; “ it is the only place of the kind in the neighbourhood.”

Odette had taken off her baggy little silk gloves, and straightened her foolish-looking hat.

“ This is a great place for salad,” she said. “ They get the most beautiful little hard white lettuces that I have ever seen, and romaine, too ; but one shouldn’t dress it one’s self. For salads, there isn’t the equal in Paris of that white-haired waiter over there. He was years ago at the Café Anglais, and why he ever left, I can’t think.”

“ Did you frequent the Café Anglais many years ago ? ” asked Henry, with a smile.

Odette raised her pretty eyebrows

until she almost looked like Sarah ; though her eyebrows were always keen little marks, not soft uncertain patches like Sarah's.

“ I should think I did go to the Café Anglais ! ” she said. “ I used to go in the early morning with a basket : and the waiters—sometimes that old fellow—gave me scraps from the day before.”

“ Good for him ! ” said Fortier.

“ Do you think he remembers you ? ” asked Henry, with unconscious anxiety.

“ He doesn't seem to,” answered Odette, a little gloomily. “ The first time I came here to lunch with monsieur, I smiled, but—”

Henry's face resumed its natural lines, freed from care. Fortier had to drop his eyes to hide a certain twinkle ; a twinkle which Sarah, unfortunately for her, had seen.

“ Why didn't you tell me, Odette ? ” he asked. “ Didn't you ever remind him ? ”

“ N—no,” said Odette. “ I was—I often thought I would—only, you see, I

have always been dressed for a lady. I thought to myself how he would look at my hat in a kind of way! And then, it might make him sad to see me. He wouldn't realize how happy I am. And I should have to tell him of mother's death, and that would make him sad; for he loved my mother. They were playmates over there on Montmartre, when they were little children."

Fortier and Odette were slow over their luncheon. After Sarah had put her napkin on the table and had buttoned her gloves, she thought that Henry would be quick enough to start. Feeling that he surely must, with his ideas and nature, disapprove most strongly of poor little Odette, she thought that he would be rather eager to go as soon as would agree with the comfortable taking of his luncheon. She had been looking forward to the negative pleasure of the small yieldings and patience and self-sacrifice that were to come in her way without any doubt, and she was

quite ready to begin by sacrificing the pleasant and amusing companionship of Odette, seeing that Henry had found it out. She did not worry about Odette's doings herself.

However, Henry did not or would not see that she was making ready to go, and sat on stolidly, knowing very well as he did that Sarah was incapable of rising first, as it was her place to do. Odette, not Sarah, rose at last, and then, as by an understanding, they all went out together and sat down at one of the small tables on the side-walk, under the broad canvas awning, to take coffee. The places outside being also rather crowded, they had to take an outside table, close to the passers-by and to the carriages resting beside the curb stone.

There was an iron seat—one of those free settees—just on the outer edge of the side-walk. A washerwoman dropped her bundle there for a moment. Two little boys climbed over it length-

wise in the course of their progress down the street; and then a poor old creature—a man, once, he might have been—came to sit there, staring forlornly at the tables under the awning with their cups of coffee, milky glasses of absinthe, and dainty brandy decanters. Parisian wrecks are never jolly, as English drunkards often remain to the last. And the worst thing about this Parisian wreck was that he belonged so thoroughly to his type. Himself a painful sight, he had the quality of reminding one of other painful sights, seen in other moments of sensitive idleness.

They all noticed the man at once. Henry put his hand in his pocket for money, and then stared at the table helplessly, for he did not know how to offer it. Fortier's face took a grey tone, and he turned his eyes in another direction. But Sarah felt that she was following his thoughts as much as if he had put them into words.

Standing just behind them, pouring out coffee for some one, was a waiter ; his left hand was hanging by his side ; and Odette, by a stealthy movement, touched his hand. As he turned and bent his head she slipped a piece of money under his thumb.

“ For *le vieux* out there,” she whispered. “ But don’t say who— ”

“ No, madame,” murmured the waiter.

Turning in her seat, Odette saw that her companions were watching her, and she rubbed one little fat hand rather awkwardly over the other, with something in her movement characteristic of persons of humble caste ; her tender eyes moistened.

“ Poor things ! ” she said, apologetically, “ It’s so sad, so sad ! These unfortunates— ”

“ Those chaps are not always so unfortunate,” suggested Henry, comfortingly.

“ It’s sure that they are not fortunate ! ” said Jean Paul Fortier.

CHAPTER IX.

A RISING WAVE.

THIS is how it happened. Somebody came into the studio in great excitement, with a story of wonderful trinkets for sale at one of the booths of a fair that was in full swing down the boulevard. And as the noon-hour had just come, the girls, instead of eating their luncheon, at once rushed off in a body to see for themselves what was going on. They all wanted to go, but some one had to stay behind. The *massier* having gone off with the keys, there was no way of locking the door. And the one who cared least for fairs and trinkets proved to be Sarah.

The day was warm. Sarah had a

book, and when the others were out of sight she sat down to read with the door ajar, looking, but not feeling, lonely ; for the quiet room seemed large now. The thick group of rickety three-legged easels, the straw-headed stools of every height, the slender mahl-sticks thrown this way and that, made the room look rather like a marsh of dry canes after the passage of a family of elephants. Sarah said to herself that it was disgraceful, but she seemed not unhappy as she looked about ; perhaps because she really felt more at home in an untidy room. In any case she liked the quietness, and, settling herself peacefully on one of the lowest stools, buried her eyes in the book.

The book was a little hard to read, but it was all about painting, and she felt it her duty to study it out carefully. However jolting in style they may be, it is always easier to read those books than to think about painting for one's self. So she planted her elbows seriously on her

knees, and running her fingers through her loose brown hair, tried to coax her poor eddying mind to float each heavy word as it came.

Outside, through the crack of the door—for the huge window was as dull as if painted—the broad sunlight looked sweet and comforting. Having had no luncheon yet, as she always went home for hers, she began soon to feel that the girls were staying a very long time. It was not thoughtful on their part. The French girls, surely, need not let the fortnightly fair make them forget everything. And one of them might as well as not have come back very soon to take her place. Odette might have come. Odette knew very well that she did not bring her luncheon, and that she might be growing hungry as well as lonely there in the stuffy room. For with so many artists and models always passing in and out she did not like the idea of walking in the court all alone; less than ever at just this hour.

Listening to all the footsteps that came into the court, she hoped that they would turn towards the studio. By-and-by some steps did turn that way, and then she shut the learned book with a slap, which showed that she would not open it again that day, whether the footsteps were to put an end to her waiting or not.

Those were not Odette's footsteps. A man was coming. Had some one been sent by Mrs. Preston to see why she was late? Was it Henry? And no one about!

It was not Henry who opened the door; it was M. Fortier. He only opened the door half-way, his eyes wandering in and around the lonely room, to settle on Sarah like two blue butterflies, if there be such dark blue butterflies.

"Oh!" said Sarah, as if she need excuse herself.

"All alone?" he asked, again looking about curiously.

“Yes,” said Sarah; “they’re all gone to the fair,”

Fortier laughed.

“I knew it,” he said; “I saw them out there, so I thought I’d run in and have a look at the drawings with no one watching me.”

“Do you mind being watched?” asked Sarah. “Why, I shouldn’t have thought—”

“I feel like such an ass,” he answered.

“Oh!”

They laughed, and then were silent for a moment. But he did not offer to look at the drawings, and Sarah began to wonder whether he would come in at all or not. He came in, however, leaving the door a little ajar, as he had found it. He came in and sat down on a high stool facing Sarah, and he tossed his brown felt hat on top of an easel, giving the poor old easel a most rakish air.

“*Ce n’est pas un moulin!*” he said,

laughing again at Sarah's questioning look.

"I don't understand?" she asked.

"Nor I. But it's a pity you should be indoors this beautiful weather."

He hesitated, as if wondering whether he could ask her to come out and walk; but he did not ask her, and said suddenly,—

"I caught a glimpse of your friend Mr. Snow last night, though he didn't see me. He was looking at some papers on the boulevard des Italiens."

"I'm sure I don't know how he amuses himself," said Sarah in the tone that a mother or perhaps a less anxious aunt might use. "I don't think he has any friends in Paris just now."

"He is an old friend of yours?" ventured Fortier.

He ought to have known that Sarah and Henry were engaged, though he had a kind of right to make believe that he did not know, as he had never been told.

Sarah blushed like a rose.

“No,” she said, “we have not known each other very long, but we are engaged to be married.”

Fortier dropped his eyes guiltily.

Many unmarried people can never hear some words, of which “engaged” is one, without wincing; not if they live to be a hundred years old.

“I didn’t know,” he said, “I thought perhaps—”

“We have only been engaged a few weeks,” exclaimed Sarah, as if she owed him an excuse.

He frowned slightly, or began to frown, and Sarah’s heart stood still, for what might not a man of no class and of terrible courage say if he only happened to think of it! She felt that this man was a kind of lion, or at least that he was what one could wish lions to be. So she watched his eyes and his coming frown as one would have watched the lawless eyes of a lion. She could not have helped it. But the frown

faded before it was fairly formed, like figures in purling water that seem now about to become letters and now to melt away. The frown was gone, and in a moment she felt that he was looking over her head, was perhaps thinking of other things : and ten to one, as she said to herself, he had forgotten to which woman he was talking.

When he was gone she walked to the door and peeped after him sily. Then she went back and sat down on the stool on which he had sat, feeling guilty and wicked. But as she was not at once punished by a thunderbolt from the sky she went further and touched the easel on which he had hung his hat, looking at it foolishly, as if it were possible that a stray hair had been left behind. A silly thing to do, as she knew well enough that men's hairs are not always tumbling about, as women's hairs and hairpins tumble—as they do tumble ! How easily lovers who have a weakness for mementoes must

be able to comfort themselves with hairpins! Though it is hoped that they would not keep good tortoise-shell hairpins.

“I feel as if I should never, never see him again,” said Sarah to herself.

The stool on which she was sitting was tall, taller than a common office stool, and she rested her feet on the high rounds. All of a sudden, without any warning to herself, the tears began to flow from her eyes, and more in shame than in grief, she hid her face in her hands, bowing low over her knees. Bowed like that over her knees, she seemed able to shut out the presence of the room with the sight of it, and she began to say to herself that it was very pleasant and warm out there in the sun where he walked. He was cheerfully and sleepily taking the petting of the kind old sun, who knows very well what folks are worth fondling.

He was in fact on the boulevard, just outside the porte-cochère. Pulling the

brim of his soft brown hat over his eyes, he tucked his cane under his arm and began to search in his pockets. Out of his pockets he took the things for a cigarette and a copy of the *Figaro*, hard-pressed and small. Tucking it under his arm along with the cane, he carefully rolled and stuck the cigarette, after which he dived into various pockets for the matches.

“*Eh bien!*” he thought, “what have I done with them? I’ll have to go back and ask the concierge for one.”

But the concierge was not to be found. There was a faint smell of cooking, and no doubt the good woman was getting the mid-day meal ready somewhere.

He stepped into the tidy little room, but there were no matches on the shining dark marble mantle-piece, none in the homely work-basket, for Fortier was just man enough to think that matches might be found in a woman’s work-basket. There seemed to him to be a little of everything there.

“ I’ll just step into the girls’ studio and get one,” he said to himself, “ and then I might offer her a cigarette and see what she’ll do. If I see her again for a minute I may be better able to judge whether it was only an accident when she looked up at me that way. I might start to go away, and then turn back and say something. Say that I think of leaving Paris. I might say, ‘ Well, good-bye, if I don’t see you again,’ and then, if she looked really sorry or anything, I might just—”

He found Sarah sitting on that high stool, the one on which he had sat. This time he closed the door behind him, for he saw at once that she had been crying. Without stopping to think what he had come for, or what he was going to say, he went straight to her, and put his hands on her shoulders.

“ It’s all your own fault ! ” he said in a quick, angry voice of which he was scarcely conscious. “ You did it yourself, and you deserve to cry ! I’d like

to see you punished as much as you deserve!"

"Oh, I couldn't help it!" said Sarah, with a sob.

"Nonsense!" he growled, giving her a little shake.

"Oh, you mustn't talk to me like that," said Sarah, her face white and scared. But fear seemed to have the effect of loosening her tongue. "I couldn't help it. It was better than being an old maid, in everybody's way, without any home or anything. For what do I care about dabbling away with paint and things? And I had only seen you that one day, and I couldn't believe my eyes. It was all too sudden. And then he came to me that very day—I had been expecting to say 'yes' to him and his money—and I had to answer at once."

"I'd like to strangle you!" said Fortier. "And so you let him kiss you! Him!"

"No, he never has," she answered,

trying to shake his hands off her shoulders.

She felt as if his two hands were his two trained tigers, who still might have wills of their own.

His eyes made a 'quick tour of the room, with its opaque windows and its closed doors.

“ He never kissed your lips ? ”

“ No, not my lips,” she answered quickly, feeling her mind driven like a light cloud before a sudden gale.

“ Then I shall ! ” said Jean Paul Fortier.

CHAPTER X.

JEALOUSY.

IT is very hard to tell of the doings of folks when they knowingly go against their own natures. It is so hard to do them justice at such times; for how is one to be believed when one tells of the most inconsistent actions done by the most consistent of men and women? Of lies told by the truthful? of unkindness in the hearts of the kind; and gentle?

So it is a pity to have told all at once of Sarah Lovell, a pattern of virtue in many ways, that she, for no matter how few moments, let the wrong man make love to her; or that she quietly owned to herself that she had

fallen in love with one man, and a man of strange ways, maybe, when she was already promised in marriage to another person.

Goodness, as she named it, had always come to her of itself uncalled. So now that it seemed to have gone from her, she did not know how to call it back, or where to find it. When she saw, in the flesh or in her mind, Henry's neatly-clad, manly body and straight nose, her heart hardened, as to the cheap regularity of a second-rate statue. One could not feel with him or for him. He who had chiselled him had, in trying to better the shape of man, cut out a null statue whose only end seemed that of showing the unattractiveness of perfection. The sculptor had made a shape that was untrue to the model that it called to mind, and had called it Truth.

She found it impossible to keep either the image of Henry, or the list of his rights, in her thoughts, being

quite helpless in that she had little will and little imagination. Without knowing it, she was apt to feel that he had no spiritual rights who could not take them. "If he were any one else! any one!" she kept saying to herself, "I should be able to feel where I stand; but only just Henry—"

There was one person whose possible rights she could and did remember. Odette was never out of her thoughts. "It would kill her," decided Sarah silently, though she did not put into even silent words what she meant by "it."

On the day of the fair Odette and some others had come in to find Sarah and Fortier still talking, though they had not had time to say much; not, in any case, time to repeat their own sayings. There was nothing strange in the situation; it was so natural that Fortier should have dropped in. But what was strange was that Sarah should have red eyes,

dishevelled hair, and a guilty mien. It was strange that Fortier should look stolid and defiant. And all the girls dropped their eyes in mute understanding, not even feeling it necessary to glance at each other.

At the time Odette walked straight past and into the dressing-room, and Sarah indulged in a weak hope that she had seen nothing. Late in the afternoon, however, when work was over for the day, Sarah saw her hurry up to Fortier's studio with the flush over her face that had been darkening during the afternoon.

"I will not come back to-morrow, or ever again," said Sarah to herself; but during the night she thought better of the matter, saying to herself that she should go and "nobly live down" what she had done. She had been taken unawares. Nothing of the kind had ever happened in her life before. Now that she was forewarned of herself, it need never happen again. "Oh,

no! no! no!" she whispered to her pillow.

So she was in her seat at the studio next morning, as usual. Everybody looked at her so calmly that she fondly hoped that nothing was thought of yesterday, and she marked with pleasure that Odette's cheek was as round and blooming as ever. She took courage, but was very careful not to meet Odette's eyes. And when the model rested, both of them, Odette and Sarah, rose and walked out together into the court as if by pre-arrangement.

"Anybody can see us here," said Sarah.

Odette made an indifferent gesture. "Get your hat, then," she said, "and come on to the boulevard."

When Sarah had pinned on her hat—a wide straw hat, trimmed with India muslin—they went out to the middle footwalk of the double boulevard, and sat down on an empty seat under

the sparse-leaved, dusty trees. Work-stained artisans, frippery Italian models, a soldier in dingy, stiff red and blue—the usual folk of that part of Paris—passed up and down in the filtered glare of sunshine; for the sky was covered by thin, flaky white clouds, through which the sunlight fell all the more blindingly. It was nearly luncheon-time, and here and there a lively little schoolboy with pale face and strong brown legs would run across the boulevard, stretching his babyish neck to dart deer-like glances at the coming carriages.

Odette clasped her small fat hands in her lap and stared at them. “I am very sad,” she said at length.

Sarah looked down at her. She could see the downy outline of her own cheek as she saw Odette, for she was dreadfully afraid, and dare not move even her head. Nothing could have made her speak.

“I am very, very sad,” repeated

Odette. But as Sarah said nothing to that, she added, "and grieved."

Sarah drew in a long breath. But that may have passed for a sigh of sympathy or repentance.

Odette sat with her hands clasped so tightly that they were mottled dark pink and greeny-white. She was working herself up; and a tear soon stole from her downcast eye.

"I'm sure," she began, in an ill-used tone which grew at each word more stirred, "I'm sure I never would have believed it of you, if I hadn't seen with my own eyes; and he, he cannot deceive me! I always know when he's been going with anybody else. I know! But I wouldn't have believed that you could be a false friend and a—"

"Don't," whispered Sarah. "Oh, don't say another word. I'll talk in a minute."

Odette gave a little sob.

Sarah felt as if there were a terrible

weight on her breast, and she could not forget that the passers-by were looking at them, looking first at Odette and then at her. But at length she brought herself to say,—

“Come! I will tell you, but not here. I can't talk here in the street; everybody is looking. Come home with me, and there I can talk and think—perhaps.”

She tried to take the little fat hand, but Odette pulled it away with a gesture which might have been noticed a quarter of a mile off. A big boy, lugging an empty hamper, saw the gesture and stopped to see what was going on.

“No,” said Odette, quite loud enough to satisfy the boy, “no, you don't really feel the least sympathy. You English are all, every one, a set of icy-hearted—why, mademoiselle, you know that I love him as well as if I had told you a thousand times. You knew it from the first. You know I adore

him, that I am his abject slave, that I shall die of grief if you take him away from me. You know I shall die. And yet, you deliberately flirt with him, make a rendezvous in the studio, have a scene, and I know very well he kissed you. You cruel, wicked, wick—”

Odette's oratory ended in sobs. Sarah sat as rigid as a statue, seeing nothing but the boy with the hamper. Her mind was so fixed on him, that she could neither think nor speak, until he, tired of waiting for her answer to Odette's charges, turned indifferently away.

“Odette,” she said at last, “you wrong me. I am—no, I am not really false. I am engaged to be married to Henry Snow, and I thought you all knew it! I did not make a rendezvous with Monsieur Fortier; he came in by accident, and found me crying about something. And if there was any scene I can't help it, and I don't care. I will go away this minute, and never see or

“speak to him again. Will that satisfy you?”

“No,” said Odette, who was still sullen, though evidently relieved. “But I suppose that it’s the best that a person of no feeling or sympathy can offer to do.”

She paused. Sarah felt that Odette wanted to be petted and fondled. Her soft wavy hair was made to be stroked. But just now Sarah could not bring herself to touch her.

“You are very kind, and I ought to have known it,” went on Odette. “But I don’t want you to go away. It’s cowardly to run away from danger, you know, mademoiselle, and—and it would only make him wild after you.”

“I will do whatever you say,” said Sarah.

“Oh, will you?” answered Odette, raising her face for the first time. Sarah marked that her eyeballs were bloodshot, and her scarlet lips swollen, and shuddered. “Thank you, made-

moiselle. You have good points, you English. I will tell you what to do. But I shall have to have time—to think. I will tell you little by little.”

CHAPTER XI.

YOUTH AND OPPORTUNITY.

JACKSON had been boring himself. All day on Saturday, all Saturday evening, and now all Sunday morning, he had been lonely and bored. For though there were people enough about, he found all those with whom he could come in contact either tiresome or silly, and usually both silly and tiresome. Everybody whom Jackson liked seemed to have left Paris.

It occurred to him after luncheon that he might happen to meet some old friend at the races; one never can tell who will turn up at races. So to the races he went, or nearly to them. For when within sight of the course, his

courage failing him a little, he was content to stand with his hands on a wire fence, and stare at the crowd from a quarter of a mile away. Having always hated races, he noticed with a sigh how very uncomfortable and hot the crowd looked, the dusty black crowd, with its wriggling edges, and its unsteady spots of gleaming colour.

“I sha’n’t go over there yet,” he said to himself. “I’ll just walk over to those shady trees yonder and cool off.”

It was a sultry day, and the sky looked as if its hot white light were glaring through a canopy of fleecy wool-work. As it had rained the night before, the dust did not rise high, only spurting up spitefully on the foot that disturbed it. The smell of raging dust came from over in the field where the crowd was, and mingled with the smell of horses and tobacco and humanity.

On the other hand, it was a smell of greenery and fresh moisture that came

from the wood of thick low-growth and scattered trees.

“If I go into the crowd I shall only fall in with that creature Snow, or some such d—— stick-in-the-mud,” said Jackson to himself.

So he turned to the other side, bowing his head low in entering the greenwood. Not from a conscious intention to be polite to the trees whose home he invaded, but merely to save his hat from the meddlesome fingers of their children, the saplings. It will be seen, however, that they gave him credit for the politeness, just the same, and returned it by civilly furthering his interests.

Keeping her descendants well at arms' length was a stout grandmother tree, who was as short and dignified as some queens. No doubt being herself the tree-queen, for her house was very tidy—common trees are so disorderly—and her carpet was thicker and softer than that of any palace with walls.

Here Jackson threw himself down, putting the broad trunk of the tree between himself and the road. The leaves of the low hanging branches that surrounded him were as thick and green as leaves can hang, and it would not have been easy to find him as he lay on his back in the crisp leaves, his head and shoulders pitched forward a little by the trunk behind him. Dropping his arms by his sides, his fingers worked lazily down into the damp layers of the leaves of years gone by.

One or two young and thoughtless birds came within three feet of him before they saw him; he could hear them telling their mothers about it afterwards, in anxious and apologetic whispers.

One of these birds seemed to him to be something different from the birds that he had seen before in France. Hoping that it would come again, or that another like it would come, he lay quite still, scarcely daring to breathe.

“What a proper, well-bred being!” thought the old tree, who had always held that humanity must be a failure because it could not keep still.

When Jackson first heard some one coming into the edge of the wood, he was annoyed. “It’ll be some fat old man who can’t go without his afternoon nap,” he thought. “Or a tramp with his luncheon and dog.”

But the step was light, the step of a small foot, a little wanting in firmness, as if it wore a high-heeled shoe.

“It’ll be just my luck if she’s horribly ugly. *Rendezvous*, I don’t doubt, and *he* will be along presently.”

The steps approached his own tree—the canopy being so thick, and its carpet so clean, anybody would naturally choose it—and stopped for an instant at the edge of the low growth.

“*Ah, mon Dieu,*” said a voice that was not only feminine, but young, “*ah, mais comme il fait bon ici!*”

She was tired evidently and over-

heated, having no doubt come from the races; and as a matter of course Jackson began to speculate as to her share of beauty, though he dare not move an eyelid. His quietness would have been indeed a lesson to mice; and there, unseen, he was lying within a yard of her, for she, too, threw herself down on the leaves. She, too, had her back to the tree, and, being quite on the opposite side, was not at all likely to see him, unless she first heard him, while as for Jackson, he could not see so much as a corner of her gown.

He could hear her all the better for that, however. He heard her loosen her hat, throw it down somewhere, pick it up again to use as a fan, stretching her arms to sigh long and blissfully. To him she was already beautiful.

“Oh, what on earth can a fellow do?” he groaned, inwardly. “She’ll be so mighty proper and savage, and I can’t speak to her. What were we

ever made for, anyway? Here, we can't so much as say how-d'y-do to a fellow-creature! And yet—"

His neighbour had settled herself as if she meant to stay. From her long-drawn sigh of peace she must have taken some very comfortable position.

"Nothing like these French girls for beauty!" thought Jackson, with rising enthusiasm. "Those Italians they brag so much about have no delicacy, sensibility; and I'd exactly as lief kiss a cat, as one of our own Americans. I would, really!"

Of course, it was very hard to keep so still; but he had the favour of fortune—unless the unaided efforts of the benevolent old tree did everything—for in ten or fifteen minutes his patience was rewarded. His neighbour, presumably fair, had fallen asleep.

"She breathes just like a baby," he thought. "How sweet and young she must be! I expect I might just creep around now, and have a look."

Moving a little, with unavoidable rustle of leaves, he marked that the breathing on the other side was as measured and calm as before. So, rising boldly, he walked softly to the other side of the tree.

“Oh, I knew it!” he thought. “I knew she was like a rose. I could have sworn it. And oh! isn’t there some excuse under heaven that I can make up? Oh, why didn’t I go to college and learn something?”

As she turned a little in her sleep his heart stood still. It was Odette, though he did not know that, never having seen or heard of her. But it being not, in the case of Odette, necessary to have heard of her before to see that she was pretty, his susceptible heart quivered when her pouting lips moved slightly. He stood with his lip between his teeth looking down at her, until a happy thought struck him. Finding with difficulty in his pocket an old bit of pencil, he proceeded to write

on a cigarette-paper; the cigarette-papers being where he could find them quickly, mechanically.

“*Vous êtes belle comme les anges!*” wrote Jackson. He wished to write something less blunt, but could not express it in French.

“I’ll just pin it there to that white thing around her neck,” he said to himself, studying the frilled muslin *fichu* which left so much of her soft throat bare. “I’ll pin it where she’ll find it the very first thing when she wakes. If I only had a pin!”

There could be no doubt that pins were very near; and Jackson remembered seeing some woman find them in the lower edge of her bodice. Surely it could do no harm to just softly take out one pin, since, of course, there was no help for it. She would never know, neither would anybody else. So, dropping on one knee beside her, he looked for the pin and found it, pinning the cigarette paper in its place without further hesitation.

She wore a dark blue cotton gown, covered with fine white dots. When Jackson took the pin out of the edge of her bodice, he noticed that the garment was lined with light grey, and, somehow, this grey material and the binding of the bodice reminded him of his mother—a tall and sallow woman—and of the home dressmaking, away back there in Texas.

As he was pinning the paper to the muslin she stirred, and his hands became rigid. She sighed, and the sigh left her tender lips parted. Stretching out one little pink hand drowsily, she let it fall limply, and where she happened to let it fall was just across Jackson's wrist. But she did not waken.

“I never saw anything so sweet in my life,” he thought, as the plump little wrist lay across his own. “Why worry? Do young French girls usually walk out alone in public parks? Why should I have thought her so blasted conventional?”

Meanwhile his arm was a prisoner under her limp hand. She stirred again, rolling her head uneasily on its root pillow; and her head would have fallen—perhaps would somehow have been hurt—had not the careful Jackson quickly come to the rescue with his other hand, making himself indeed a prisoner, so that he could not even brush away a spider that was coming much too near; until, suddenly, the young head rolled off the ball of his palm, and lay on his arm.

Her lips began to move again; she was going to talk in her sleep.

“Tired!” she said in French, in the thick murmur of sleepers, and Jackson bent low to be sure to hear. “I’m too tired—pose any more! Oh, well—pose once more!”

“Model!” thought Jackson.

She was quiet for full two minutes, and then gave another long sigh. “No,” she murmured, “’t isn’t morning yet!”

“No,” whispered Jackson; “oh, no, not yet!”

There was a long pause. Odette turned a little towards him, nestling her head more comfortably inside his elbow.

“Give me a kiss!” she commanded.

Here Jackson showed a quickness of judgment which he, unfortunately, had never applied to his painting. He pressed his lips to her eye—the farther eye, so that both were covered.

Quivering from head to foot, she began to waken.

“Oh, mamma,” she said, “I forgot to tell you—”

Jackson started as if he had been struck, freeing her eyes. But his arm was still under her head, and as soon as they opened she looked up at him with her calf-like eyes; the brown eyes that he had prophesied as grey.

It was because she opened her eyes so suddenly, and without starting, that he did not take his arm away. She

did not start or flush, though looking steadily up into his face. She showed neither anger nor pleasure at first, only a slow-gathering disappointment, which became bitter. He realized, suddenly, that her whole face was filling with grief, as only a French face can fill.

“Oh,” she said, as the first tears rolled; “O—oh! I thought it was mamma, my little mamma!”

She sat up suddenly, looking out towards the road, and Jackson sprang to his feet. He, too, looked towards the road; but there was a certain amount of fear and guilt in his look.

“Your mother!” he gasped. “Is your mother coming?”

For the first time Odette glanced at him reproachfully, and he felt himself cringing under her look. Then with a convulsive moment she buried her face in her hands. Without knowing what he did, he fell on his knees beside her.

“Oh, no,” she sobbed, “mamma will

not come. It matters little enough what one does. She will not come."

The repentant Jackson strained his cheeks to keep his eyes as they should be. She was not looking at him, and he touched a corner of her blue cotton gown timidly, curiously, with one finger.

"Is your mother—" he began, but he durst not finish the sentence.

Odette looked up at him, her face blotched red and white, like a heap of dewy roses, by the pressure of her hands.

"Mamma is dead," she said.

They sat quite a long while in silence—Jackson on his knees. At last Odette wiped her eyes and rose to her feet. Even then Jackson's head was not much below hers, he was such a big fellow. Quite unconsciously, he was holding a bit of her gown between his thumb and finger. So childlike are the big sometimes.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" he said.

“ Truly, I’m so sorry! Just say you’ll excuse me—and forget all about it, you know.”

Odette touched his shoulder with the tips of her fingers.

“ Rise!” she said, and Jackson the sentimental rose to his feet a knight.

“ Only let me help you out of the wood,” he said. Let me carry your hat—no, that parasol, just a little way. Only to show you aren’t angry, you must let me carry the parasol!”

CHAPTER XII.

THE DANCE.

THAT Miss Dunlop seemed to have more money than the other girls, though she dressed plainly, even poorly, and at first one would hardly have guessed that she was well off.

She was now about to blossom into an independent artist, after studying painting for years and years. She had worked, most of the time, in the academy of the rue Pigalle, and though, in her own words, she had never yet distinguished herself, she had, it seemed, at last made up her mind that she had experienced that change of heart, or whatever it is which is supposed to mark the difference between

the art-student and the artist. To balance her self-given position, she began to cultivate a knowing expression of face, giving her opinions in all artistic matters with a kind of jaunty reserve. And now she had taken a large, handsome studio for herself within a stone's throw of the rue Pigalle.

There was a suite of rooms along with the studio. Miss Dunlop and her mother and her younger sister, who could sing a little, were a long time working over the rooms, modernizing, decorating, and furnishing them. They would have the walls tinted in shades that the workmen could hardly mix; they would have strange bits of woodwork put up, which sent the men home at night with headaches and dry palates. And it all took a very long time. After it was finished, even, the good ladies did not rest, but passed whole days in the auction-halls of the Hôtel Druot, buying van-loads

of things, as the busybodies said. So it was understood by all that the final effect was to be something quite overpowering, and all the friends and models were wild to have the first peep.

But Miss Dunlop was firm. She let nobody go in until she believed her furnishing to be quite at an end, and then she asked everybody at once,—all the friends, at least—giving a little dance for her house-warming.

She asked all the girls in the studio, and a dozen or so from other studios, bidding each one to bring a gentleman; M. Fortier and the other two professors being almost the only gentlemen whom she invited herself.

The French girls nearly all brought kinsmen: papas and uncles and brothers, though one did come with a very suspicious-looking cousin. As to Odette, everybody looked forward to forgiving her a great deal. She brought a man who could not possibly

have been a member of her family, had she belonged to a family. She brought one who was to her a foreigner—if only an American—and she called his name Zhaksohn. An honest-sounding name. Besides which, he was a magnificent great creature with an honest face. He seemed a little out of place to some of the men, but many of the girls began to hope that he would ask them to dance.

The other two “professors” came, but Fortier was not there. Sarah had quite made up her mind that she did not wish to see him; but that could not make her forget that he might come. It did not keep her from glancing guiltily at the door when she thought that no one was looking at her. Besides which, she was more surprised than any one else at seeing Odette, not with him, but with the strange American. Into her gentle heart there crept a wicked hope, which she did not quite name.

Naturally, she had brought Henry Snow. He was looking remarkably well; his were the best clothes in the room, and he seemed more at home than did the hostesses. The hostesses loved him at once, and felt that they could depend on him. The evening could not possibly be a failure while he went about like that, speaking to the lonely, and suggesting topics of conversation to the groups. Sarah was proud of him, thinking to herself that without him the gathering would have looked much less like a real ball than it did.

The rooms were rather prettily decorated. In each corner of the large studio was a kind of alcove, made of Turkey red calico curtains looped back near the bottom, and in each of the alcoves was a tempting little white table where one or another of the Dunlops had charge of tea and coffee and cakes. A little supper was in the dining-room, and there were armchairs

and divans and a shaded lamp in the drawing-room for those who sought solitude or *tête-à-têtes*.

Nobody sought solitude or *tête-à-têtes*—not at first; though the whole company wandered through the rooms, the very first thing, to see the wonderful carved chest in the dining-room, the silver vessel from Arabia or somewhere, the really extraordinary old oak chimney-piece which reduced the little drawing-room to a mere closet, and the funny little bronze figure which had cost so much money.

It was during the art-rag craze, and faded scraps of "Liberty" silk and Turkish towels were hung and draped in the most unexpected places. But it was all amusing of its kind, and quite in the fashion. The arrangements of colour were in the very height of the British hot-green and terra-cotta rage tempered by one or two bits of the sparrow's-egg-blue that was just coming into favour.

Sarah neither enjoyed nor deprecated such things. She noted them all passively, even with a dim intention of copying them some day, should Henry give her the signal. And she was rather curious to know what he thought of them. Henry, however, though he looked at everything with nodding approval, yet rose superior to it all. And Miss Dunlop wondered whether it was because some of the things were a little cheap-looking, or because he knew of later fashions.

Good Mrs. Dunlop was a large and bland-faced woman. At once judging Sarah to be the young lady who would care least for dancing, she took her under her own wing, making room for her in the scarlet alcove; the arrangement being still picturesque, as Sarah's dress was black. Her dress was black and her face and neck and her large arms were quite as white as Mrs. Dunlop's valuable lace. Mrs. Dunlop wore masses of the lace on her gown of grey silk.

“ I saw you at church last Sunday,” said Mrs. Dunlop.

“ Oh ? ” asked Sarah.

“ Yes ; I have often noticed you there. I am always there myself. In fact, I have as a rule nothing to do but to help in the church work, in these days. And it’s very interesting, really ! For example, we’ve just raised funds for having some of the English Sunday-school books translated into French, for distribution among the poor, you know ; and the first book was brought out ten days ago. I have already given away fifty copies, and to-day my washerwoman said it was really ‘ *étonnant*. ’ She’d never read anything like it in her life, poor thing. ‘ Oh, madame,’ she said, ‘ if my poor sister Madeleine had only read books like this in her childhood, she’d be very miserable now with her ill-gotten riches. ’ For her sister, now a middle-aged person, actually has a *château* and gardens, and keeps a phaeton. Isn’t it dreadful ! ”

“I don't understand,” said Sarah.

“Why, she led an evil life, you know, and she positively had the face to save money, and invest it, and so on, like anybody else; and there she is in her *château*.”

“Oh!” said Sarah, with straight lips.

Sarah was not at all pleased when Odette brought up Mr. Jackson and introduced him to her. She had not quite thought that Odette would go so far as that—so far as to bring up her friends and introduce them without asking. But no doubt Odette had a large feeling that compatriots would necessarily be overjoyed to meet each other, and of course there was nothing to be done. There was no help for it, and so Sarah not only smiled at Jackson, but she answered his questions agreeably, and then danced with him. She had never liked dancing. She had always refused to dance at home; but to-night she felt that Henry would

expect her to dance. Dimly, she felt that any backwardness that she might show would be a kind of link in the chain of evidence of her physical inferiority ; and so she danced.

Jackson had his own particular way of dancing. Perhaps it was Texan. Certainly it was not Sarah's way, and, had he not been stronger than ordinary men, and able to carry about skippingly a rather large woman like her, there might have been trouble. As it was, they both soon tired of the sport and backed into a corner beside Miss Rosa Dunlop's tea-table. Miss Rosa being away dancing, Sarah poured out a cup of coffee for Jackson, who drank it off thirstily. "What awful small cups they have in this country," he said, with the sigh of a harvester. Then, taking out his handkerchief, he was about to mop from his broad brow the sweat that had earned the coffee ; but, hesitating, he very likely said to himself that it might not be thought a

nice thing to do. From his height he looked over the heads of the twirling couples, and could see no other man mopping his forehead, so he put the handkerchief back in his pocket.

“The room wouldn’t hold many more, would it?” asked Sarah, nodding at the crowd.

“Well, no,” said Jackson rather dreamily; “but it’s a pretty sight, though the girls don’t average as fine as at the Chat Noir. Oh, I beg your pardon Miss—Miss Walker, Wallace. Oh, I’m awful sorry! ’Pon my word I hope you’ll excuse me!”

Sarah laughed. “Oh,” she said, “what harm have you done? The Chat Noir, did you say? How I envy you! I’d give anything to get a peep at those wild places!”

“Would you?” asked Jackson, looking down at her with sudden interest. “Well, you could, you know. Wear a mask, don’t you see? And I’ll take you. You just go with me, and no-

body 'll speak to you much. If any one tries to carry you off I'll get up on his collar and dance—if you don't mind my speaking so!"

"Thank you," said Sarah, "I don't think I can manage to go, but it must be fun for you who can go."

"Oh, I like those dances. Only I guess you would call them a little free and easy. Not much like this party, for instance."

"Dear me!" said Sarah.

Just then there was a stir near the door. One or two ladies who happened to be standing there looked hastily over their shoulders, and moved towards the tea-tables. Standing near Sarah and Jackson was a waiter from a restaurant, on duty for the evening. He pricked up his ears like a terrier, and swishing a napkin under his arm, went forward to the door with long strides.

"*Eh bien!*" called a gruff, but jocose voice from the antechamber.

The music had wavered and stopped,

and the dancing couples, still clinging to each other, dropped on their heels and turned to stare. Mrs. Dunlop in her corner rose shakily, and several gentlemen moved with cat-like steps to the door, framing it in a rather theatrical way, or like the lines of hotel-runners at a railway station.

There was low talking outside. A slight sound of scuffling, a smothered exclamation; then a coarse laugh, as the *portière* was flung back; and into the room, with the slender arms of the waiter outside still clinging to him, swung one of those great red-faced, bandy-legged cabmen that seem as much a part of Paris as the Seine.

One could have heard a pin drop; one heard, as if it had been the crack of a pistol, the rap of the butt of the cabman's whip, which he dropped to the floor like a musket. There was a stirring sound as everybody drew breath.

"*Eh bien! Allons donc!*" repeated the cabman in a tone of daring.

“See here, my friend,” said a Frenchman in an unnaturally quiet voice, “just come outside for a moment.”

The cabman shook his red face. “You won’t catch me that way,” he said. “I guess I’ve been waiting out in the cold for my fare about long enough. So—”

“Well—well, old fellow,” said the gentleman soothingly, “you shall have twice your fare. Just step outside—”

“Think you’ll get me out as easy as that, do you? I’ll let you know I’m just as good as you are. My grandfather gave parties that cost mor’n this, and if he had behaved square to my grandmother—what did you say? Do you think I like sitting out in the cold while there’s frolicking going on upstairs? Do you think that? Why, I tell you, I’m a good fellow, and I like a little dance as well as anybody. I know how to talk proper to the ladies; I won’t say nothing out of the way!”

“Come, come—really!” Two gentlemen had their hands on his sleeves; but it seemed a pity not to give moral suasion a fair trial.

“Look!” said one, “anybody can see you’re a splendid fellow. But then, you see, we’re all old friends in here, and never met you before; and you know you’d enjoy a quiet glass over in the cabaret much better. Be honest!”

“Come,” added another; and the cabman began to weaken. He looked down, and kicked one heel against his toe.

“Only one dance—” he began.

“At your age, *vieux copain*? Why, I dare say you’ve a dozen boys and girls at home who would care more for dancing! Come! There’s a *brasserie* just opposite!”

The cabman pushed back his glazed white hat. The white hat, drab clothes, and the red face and scarlet waistcoat, shone brightly between the

two groups of black-and-white gentlemen. The *portière* behind them was peacock blue.

“Well, friends,” said the man, as he turned with a reel, “when any of you drop in at a party that I’m running, he’ll be better treated. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!”

He was gone, and the room was filled with the sound of low laughter and sudden chatter.

“Not bad that, for an amateur,” said Jackson.

“What do you mean?” asked Sarah, suddenly dropping her hands from his arm. She had seized his arm frantically during the scene, and had almost forgotten to let it go.

Jackson laughed. “Wait and see!” he said, with his eyes still on the door. But as Sarah sat down in the chair behind the tea-table he hurried away to join a group of men. Left alone, she thought of her cup of tea which she had not finished, and of putting more

hot water into it. But before she had had time to drink it all, there was another sensation at the door.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” said the Frenchman who had gone out with the cabman, “our friend who so much wished to join us ended by quite winning me over. And I have consented to his return, since he seemed quite willing to adopt the usual dress—”

There was smothered laughter throughout the room, and then a hush, as all eyes were fixed on the *portière*. It was soon lifted, and with a low bow Jean Paul Fortier entered the room.

Jackson's laugh rang out loudly. There was a murmur, a pause, and then some one began to clap; then another. And then the room seemed to bid fair to collapse with the clapping.

“Did it well, didn't he?” asked some one at Sarah's elbow.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOOD-BYES.

“ My dear Sarah,” said Henry, as they walked up the crooked ways of Montmartre in the darkness, on their way home from the dance ; “ my dear girl, all this is very well for once in a way. I wouldn’t have you quite ignorant either of the world or of other classes of people. It is part of a liberal education to understand all classes. It broadens one’s views to come in contact with them just a little, in a quiet way, now and then. But after this evening I think we can say that we are quite satisfied with our experience, for the present. Can we not ? ”

“ I suppose so,” said Sarah, tremulously.

“ We’ve gone far enough,” went on Henry. “ We have become as intimate with them as we can very well be without compromising ourselves, and now I have decided that it is time to stop. We will quietly drop all these acquaintances, without hurting their feelings. And you had better make arrangements for leaving the studio to-morrow.”

“ Oh ! ” said Sarah.

“ Yes, to-morrow. And, my dearest, let us be married at once, as soon as the necessary preparations can be made. For, my dear, much as I respect and honour you, I confess that I dread the influence of these people over you—the silly old Mrs. Dunlop and her vulgar daughters; the fellow Jackson; the man Fortier, whom I take to be a determined, dangerous peasant; and the cocotte Fabien.”

“ Odette ! ” cried Sarah, trembling from head to foot. She stood stock-still, quaking like a superstitious dog.

“Why, Sarah, my dear girl, what’s the matter?”

Henry clasped her nerveless shoulders with one arm, and with the other hand pressed her cold cheek against his own. His own cheek was warm and firm.

“Oh, I know what it was,” he said, after a moment. “I know. But my dear, dear girl, you must forgive me. I shouldn’t have said it; but the word slipped out—and—and I thought you realized all the time what she was.”

“Don’t,” said Sarah.

“Forgive me,” said Henry, “I’m a brute!”

They walked on for quite a way without speaking. At the house he kissed her hand as the night door swung open for her. “You will make those arrangements to-morrow?” he asked.

“Yes,” answered Sarah in a tired voice.

“How sleepy you are, dear,” said Henry.

Nevertheless, she made no arrangements on the morrow. She slept late and was listless; and besides, she felt that it would be too soon after the dance to say good-bye to all the girls at once. Neither would it do to let her going seem to have been thought of so quickly after the merry-making. So she waited for a day or two, quietly at home, and then went down to the studio to break the news that she was going to pack up her things and leave them all. She thought that she might add something about the nearness of her wedding, but was not sure whether she should or not. So she ended by making up her mind to give them all to understand that she should drop in again in a day or two. It would very likely be easier to tell of the wedding after she had seen Henry again.

At the studio everybody seemed very sorry and even hurt. Mlle. Maugeret,

who doubtless had her little perquisites, seemed shaken by the news, and her thin fingers twitched. Miss Dunlop was lost in amazement at first; and then she began to talk, trying to make it clear that Sarah need not and should not go, after all. The tall English girl turned on Sarah, her large grey eyes full of blame, as if she were a sailor about to desert the half-manned ship. They all seemed very sorry indeed, and the tears were soon rolling down Odette's peach-like cheeks.

“ I think you're v—very c—cruel and heartless ! ” said Odette.

Sarah sat down on the low stool beside her. “ Come now,” she said, winding her arm about Odette's warm, round waist. Her waist was so short that there was just room for an arm around it and no more; and one felt the babyish warmth of her body through her clothes, and even a little way off. “ Come ! ” said Sarah again, touching the moist young forehead with

her lips ; “ you know I wouldn't go of my own wish, and you know I shall never forget you, you dear, good little thing ! And now I want you to do something for me.”

“ What ? ” asked Odette, looking up eagerly through her tears.

“ Go upstairs with me to say good-bye to Monsieur Fortier.”

“ Oh, yes,” cried Odette, springing to her feet ; “ That'll be grand. Come on, come on ! ”

She did not take the trouble to wipe the tears off her face as she ran upstairs ; perhaps she rather counted on keeping them *en evidence* ; in any case there they were when she faced Fortier with Sarah.

“ Mademoiselle is going away—going to leave us ! Oh, Monsieur Fortier, can't you persuade her—”

Fortier looked cross. He did not offer his hand, but began to fumble in his coat pocket for a cigarette.

“ Oh, monsieur, I'm sure that mademoiselle need not go before the end of

the term. She hadn't thought of such a thing two days ago, I know. Can't you—"

His eyes were fixed on the cigarette that he was rolling. "Odette," he said, with something in the ring of his voice which made the women stand on tiptoe, "Odette, go downstairs and leave us alone a minute, will you, please?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," said Odette, turning square about. Sarah looked after her blankly as she skipped away and ran downstairs as lightly as if her heart had been light. And one would not have thought that her heart could be light, just then.

Sarah and Fortier stood staring at the floor, feeling that there was nothing whatever to say, though they both understood that this was likely to be the last time that they met each other.

"Is it on account of the *gentleman-doll* that you go?" he asked, turning his eyes away.

He turned his eyes away, and Sarah

had no chance to punish him with her own eyes. Of course she did not answer, but she said to herself, "What a peasant he is, to be sure! A common peasant!" It was a comfort to say that to herself, though she did not find that the thought had any effect in stilling her heart or in steadying her voice.

"Well?" he asked in the same ugly tone; "well, are you going to be married, then? Will you be married to him or to me?"

"Be quiet!" she said faintly.

"Oh!" he declared doggedly, "do as you like. But it's a pity. You don't love him and you do love me. You could make me happy, happy enough to put up with marriage—American marriage. But in your folly you prefer to make him wretched; for he will be wretched when you make bad coffee and forget to sew on his buttons."

Sarah turned an even white, and looked up in utter amazement.

“Yes,” he went on, “you are, as a matter of fact, deceiving him about everything. You know you dare not tell him that you love me. And you know that you do love me. And you belong to me, and when you go to him you will be worse than a common adulteress. But that isn’t all ; he thinks you’re a model housekeeper sort of person, and you know you are not. Only last week there was a little ripped seam in the back of your dress for three days in succession.”

Sarah looked up again with murky eyes ; she met Fortier’s icy blue eyes this time. But instead of being able to shame him, she found herself suddenly taken aback with a wish to hide herself, as if she felt herself unclean, and she quite forgot that from her own point of view it was he who should be blamed for behaving in this most unheard-of way.

“Yes,” he said, “and you know very well that it is not in your power

to change yourself permanently, and that you will make the gentleman-doll perfectly miserable. As if that counted for much in the history of the spheres!"

He laughed bitterly, and went on, "You are deceiving him grossly; for example, he thinks you are a very fine, healthy, powerful woman. You know that what he wants is a breeder. And you are so large and rosy that he thinks you're just what he's been looking for. But you know perfectly well that you're really very delicate; that you find it an effort to lift even one of those wretched easels downstairs; you know that you have the kind of physique that goes to pieces in case of strain, so that the doll stands a good chance of an invalid on his hands for a good part of his life. And yet you shut your lips and let him walk over the precipice. Moreover—"

"Don't!" said Sarah. She was shivering pitifully, leaning against the

table. "Don't! I don't see why I let you say such things to me. I am forget—forgetting myself. I—I believe that I am a lady!"

"Yes," he said, "that's what I love least in you. To be a lady, I understand, is to have mastered the art of killing your man with a sandbag instead of a club; you leave no wound. And you learn to deceive the world and yourself on the principle of rebound. That's what it is to be a lady!"

Of course, Sarah might have gone away, but she was paralyzed somehow. He had been facing her grimly; now he turned, pacing up and down the room, until he began to laugh again, nervously.

"Come, come," he said, "don't stand there like a knot on a log. If you will marry me, give me your hand. Otherwise, run away home and marry the nice gentleman. I dare say he has silk stockings on. And I—the idea of a fellow with a picture to paint, fuming

like this, because he can't have the particular woman he wants; and in Paris, of all places! It's too idiotic! So run away home and buy your wedding finery. He will expect real lace."

Sarah stood up straight in her wrath, and she seemed six inches taller. "I'm going," she said, glancing over her shoulder at the door; "but—but—I am trying to nerve myself to say something that you ought to hear. I do not like to say it, but circumstances have made it my duty. There is no one else to speak to you, and I feel it right after—after we have been so familiar with each other. I must tell you—"

"Well?" asked Fortier.

"I must tell you what you know yourself—that you ought to marry Odette."

His hard, drawn face began to relax.

"What's that you say?"

"You ought to marry Odette."

“Marry Odette? Odette!

“Yes.”

He stared at her, and then laughed.

“Yes,” repeated Sarah, faintly.

He laughed again; rather insolently, she thought.

“Why marry Odette, for heaven’s sake?”

Sarah blushed. “You know why,” she said. “Besides, you know she loves you.”

He shrugged his shoulders in the national way.

“Nonsense!” he said. “Nonsense! What you say about her loving me only shows how little you understand us French. Besides, as to marrying little Odette—the idea! Why not marry all the models I’ve employed? And then the washerwoman, and so on—say some two hundred? Why, do I look like Solomon?”

“Good-bye,” said Sarah. “I have said what I have to say.”

“So you want me to marry my

models! "Well, that's better than marrying a doll! You're off now to meet your gentleman-doll, aren't you?"

"I hear you," said Sarah. "Good-bye."

Walking after her to the door, he opened it with downcast eyes. His blonde face had taken greenish tones in its pallor. But his lips did not tremble as he said, "You are not good enough for me."

And he did not once look up.

Sarah looked askance at her own hand, as if she were afraid that it would offer itself to him.

"Good-bye," she said again, as her hand touched the baluster. Her eyes were swimming.

She paused; but he did not look up. So she passed down the slippery polished stairs.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE POST-BOX.

AT the foot of the stairs Odette was waiting. "I'm going to walk part way with you," she declared.

"Oh, yes," said Sarah, absently, "do!"

Outside it was drizzling doggedly, and the figures of men and carriages here and there down the long, melting boulevard were like grey insignificant ghosts. Sarah and Odette had no umbrella, and, as usual, Odette had forgotten her hat.

"Why did you buy that dress?" asked Odette. "The colour will run."

"Will it?"

"Yes. You'll never be able to wear it again, if it once gets really wet."

“What shall I do?” asked Sarah, vaguely. She did not care much for the dress, but she was anxious to hide her preoccupation. “Where’s a carriage?”

“Oh, don’t take a carriage! You’re always so extravagant, you English. Come, let’s go to the café over there and have something to drink. I want to talk to you.”

“Not to the café—*alone*?”

“Why not? Oh, it’s a very respectable place, quite solemn; and besides, no one will be there at this time of day.”

“Oh—very well, where you like!” answered Sarah, with a sigh.

The café was indeed empty. Two of the waiters were playing billiards on the billiard side. The *dame de comptoir* smiled so encouragingly at Sarah that her eyeglasses fell off, while a stout young waiter ran eagerly to take the order.

They sat down at a table beside the

low plate-glass window which ran the length of the room. It was not possible to see through the window, it being encrusted on the outside with fine drops; so they looked at each other, Odette giving Sarah to understand, by a gesture, that she was the entertainer.

“What will you have, mademoiselle?” she asked.

Sarah smiled. “Do you think I could get a really strong cup of tea?”

“Why not? Waiter, a cup of tea for madame, double allowance in the pot. And for me, an absinthe.”

“Oh, but Odette!” exclaimed Sarah involuntarily.

“I beg your pardon!” cried Odette. “I forgot that absinthe wasn’t—waiter, never mind the absinthe. Just make me an American grog, if you please.”

Sarah moved her shoulders a little nervously inside her gown, but she said nothing more. As they waited, she tapped the marble table with her rosy finger-tips.

“ I have been waiting for a chance to tell you ever since the other evening,” said Odette.

“ Ah ? ”

“ Dear mademoiselle, you have shown yourself so kind and forgiving ! I am sure you have a tender heart ! And I think you will feel glad with me when I tell you. When I tell you I am so happy ! I am so very happy, because he does love me. He must love me very, very truly, for he is willing to marry me.”

Sarah looked up aghast.

“ What do you mean ? ” she asked.

“ Monsieur Fortier ! ”

Odette laughed softly and hesitated. She seldom laughed, but when she did she looked more like a naughty baby than ever.

“ Monsieur Fortier ? ” she repeated, “ oh dear no ! No, thank you ! What would one marry him for, for pity’s sake ? The idea of my having made such a fuss about that old badger ! Wasn’t I silly ? ”

Sarah was deathly pale, but Odette was not one to notice that.

“I suppose you laughed at me in your sleeve when I accused you of kissing him,” went on Odette. “But I assure you I was perfectly sincere in my jealousy, and I was thinking of him almost constantly at that time. But that was before I had seen Charles. My beautiful Charles! Is he not magnificent?”

Sarah never thought of smiling.

“Odette,” she said icily, “I thought you said you loved M. Fortier.”

“Ah, but my dear mademoiselle, that was three weeks ago—almost. I really wasn’t acquainted with Charles then—my dear Charles! Surely old Jean Paul is a good soul, but after Charles! Beside Charles! What is the comparison?”

Sarah sat up haughtily and did not speak, though Odette paused expectantly.

“Charles is noble—adorable! Think

how splendid he looked at that dance. I saw you talking to him for ever so long, and I wasn't very jealous at all, only proud of him; he made all the other men in the room look such little monkeys, especially old Fortier, and I thought how you'd envy me when you knew! Because, of course, he's a real gentleman too! Not like Monsieur Fortier, who is only a common peasant by birth, as everybody knows, and very rough in his ways sometimes. Charles is a perfect gentleman, and has always been rich. Yes, he is rich—so rich that I can't think. Why, he'd marry me just the same if I hadn't a penny of *dot*, I feel sure he would!"

Sarah smiled bitterly.

"I don't doubt he's very kind," she said. "Mr. Jackson, I presume."

"Yes, of course. Your compatriot. So no doubt we'll all meet in America when you and Mr. Snow are married."

"No doubt," said Sarah, with a sigh.

“And I shall not be ungrateful to him,” went on Odette, “for he is very kind, and I always thought I should prefer marriage. I shall be as true to him—as true as the stars, even if I live to be a thousand years old! I’ll never even think of anybody else!”

Sarah blushed vividly.

“Here is the tea at last,” she said, biting her lip.

After the tea and the “American grog” were served the street began to lighten and the mist-like rain to clear away before the sun. The drops on the window ran down like tears.

“It’s going to be a fine day after all,” said Sarah, straightening herself up in her gown.

“Yes, the sun is lovely,” said Odette, “but I like a fine rain like that, it makes one feel so fresh.”

Her babyish eyelids drooped under the sunlight, and she brushed back a little damp tendril of hair, for she had come in bareheaded, and at first her

fluffy, dark hair had been full of powder-like drops ; disappearing to leave a mass of fine, snaky curls.

“ You’re as pretty as a peach, and a good, dear little thing ! ” said Sarah suddenly, as they rose to go.

When she reached the room on the rue Gareau she ran straight to get her writing-case, without stopping to take off her hat. Mrs. Preston looked up in surprise from her sewing.

“ You look a little damp and drabbled, Sarah. Aren’t you going to change your clothes ? ”

“ Oh, ah ! ” said Sarah, “ I’m in such a hurry to write this little note.”

The little note was not so quickly off her hands, but this is what it was :—

“ MY DEAR HENRY,—I do not dare ask you to forgive me for what I am about to say ; it would be rather impertinent to hope to be forgiven, but this is what it is. You know how much I always admired you, and how lucky I have thought myself to have been

chosen by you. Indeed, in my greediness, I have half-unconsciously deceived you, giving you the impression that I was a careful and precise person, and many other things that I was not.

“ You do not really love me, Henry. You only think that I would make a suitable wife, and you would soon be very discontented with me, when you began to find out my true character.

“ If you could have seen my mind like a map, you would always have disliked me. This is absolutely true, and there is but one way out of it, is there ?

“ Good-bye, and thank you for all your great kindness. You need not write or see me again unless you wish. I know what reproaches I deserve, and I almost hope that you will punish me. I deserve anything, but believe me,

“ Yours sincerely,

“ SARAH LOVELL.”

When it was all written she turned her portfolio a little aslant as she

addressed the envelope with a wild fear that dim-sighted Mrs. Preston would see. Then she hurried on her damp gloves again and ran downstairs.

The nearest post-box was not very near, and at the first street corner a passing funeral kept her waiting some time on the muddy cobble-stones. Then, in front of the Mairie, there was a wedding-party blocking the way with smart carriages. And when she did at last reach the little red box at the tobacconist's she hesitated.

Once the letter almost left her fingers as she poked it in the slot. Had a passing puppy startled her just then, the letter might have dropped, and then one would have had a different impression of her character. It would be so pleasant to tell that she dropped the letter then and not afterwards. But unfortunately Sarah behaved as so many of us behave when we are quite sure that no one is taking notes with a view to publication or otherwise.

Still, but for a circumstance, she

might have dropped the letter. It happened that some one else came to post a letter at just that moment; a young French soldier. He stood waiting for her to post her letter, and she met his questioning blue eyes.

He may not have been a very interesting young man, but there was something about his eyes or his ugly Parisian nose or his pointed beard which reminded Sarah of Fortier. Perhaps the bare thought that a pair of eyes which looked, however little, like the eyes of Fortier, that they could stare at her with questioning indifference, gave her a shock of some kind, for she jerked back the letter with a kind of resentment and put it in her pocket.

Then she went home again with a dignified step, and, as soon as she had shut herself in her own room, took out the letter, and, unfolding one of her best handkerchiefs, wrapped it up to keep it tidy. In fact, she looked the envelope over anxiously, with a horror of any dust or spot.

Taking off all her damp clothes, she had a bath, and then dressed herself anew with all her nicest things and with great care, as carefully as some women dress themselves every day. Almost instinctively she looked at the back of her new blue cashmere gown to see if there were any ripped seams. But the dress was quite new, and nothing at all was the matter with it ; so putting it on, as well as her prim black Sunday hat and a pair of new gloves, she crept rather stealthily downstairs.

Fortier was still in his studio. She felt as if that letter were burning through her pocket as he took her hand and led her in.

“ Ah, Sarah, my good wife ! ” he said, “ now we shall begin to live ! ”

His way of beginning to live was to kick over the nearest easel, and the picture that happened to be on it. It may have been one of his pupils' pictures. Who knows ?

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By-and-by, when Sarah came downstairs her face looked fuller, and the rich colour in her cheeks was firmer, as if she had just come from the country. Walking straight to the nearest post-box, she dropped into it the letter to Henry, this time without the slightest hesitation.

THE END.



