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Forget-me-not

Marjorie Bowen

(writing as Joseph Shearing)

caused amazement equal to the horror it inspired; the public sentiment aroused by this atrocity went far to provoke the sudden French Revolution of 1848. The author is responsible for everything in the novel save this central fact, and for the details of the life of the period, which are largely taken from contemporary newspapers.

[Charles Laure Hugues Thobald, duc de Choiseul-Praslin (29 June 1804-24 August 1847) was a French nobleman and politician, who

This novel is based on a fact-that of a crime so incredible that it

served as a member of the Chamber of Deputies in 1838-1842. Choiseul-Praslin's suicide, occurring while he faced trial for the murder of his wife, Fanny Sbastiani, caused a scandal which in turn contributed to the outbreak of the 1848 Revolution and the fall of the July Monarchy. In previous years, the Choiseul-Praslin household had been the scene of violent confrontations between the duke and his wife. Among others, Fanny de Choiseul-Praslin accused her husband of hiring a governess, Henriette Deluzy-Desportes (or Henriette de Lucy, Henriette de Luzy), in order to estrange her from her children. Deluzy-Desportes, whom she had fired six weeks before being killed but had not left the household, was also alleged

by Fanny to have been the duke's mistress (with whom, she suspected, the duke planned to elope). The duchess repeatedly

threatened to separate from her husband.--Wikipedia]

* * *



PROLOGUE

had no right to wear; this irritated her companion. As he opened the door of the musty, private parlour of the inn he reflected that many of her actions since he had eloped with her had irritated him; a bad

She took off her glove and glanced at the wedding ring which she

beainnina. He endeavoured to reassure himself by a full look at her beauty and elegance. Mary Showler accepted with pleasure this admiration that

was tinged by doubt and reluctance. Still displaying the slim hand with the gold band that he had given her that morning, she sat composedly at ease, ignoring her homely surroundings, the dark room with a dusty case of prize fish, a shelf with pewter tankards, a new engraving of the girlish Queen in her coronation robes.

gown of deep indigo blue glaces silk, so neatly buttoned to the slim figure. She was aware of his approval and smiled; her toilette had cost her all she possessed in the world. She had never worn such clothes

before, nothing but the plainest attire was permitted the teachers at

Miss Le Moine's Academy for Young Ladies.

considering him with furtive steadiness the awhile.

Young Morrison decided that Mary Showler was worth the trouble: a beauty, if ever there was one...a woman of taste, too; he liked her

"Well," she said, still smiling, "so far successful, Robert! Can we get any refreshment here? And when do you expect your sister?"

He did not like that; she should not have forced an explanation when

she ought to have understood the situation without a word. To gain time he rang the bell and ordered coffee, she, smiling always, But he was wealthy and the next-of-kin to a duke; Mary Showler made her smile soft and engaging as she poured the coffee and offered the cakes.

"Are you not fatigued, Robert? The train was so wearisome! When shall we proceed?"

"Well. I have to see to a few arrangements." He stared moodily into

his coffee cup. She considered all he did and said with an intense, secret interest which she did not for a second mistake for the repulsions and attractions of love (though he had for her, on

They had been travelling together since morning and the tedious intimacy had not increased her esteem for him; she realised that she would have to be very careful, very patient. He was pampered, wilful, bad tempered, an indulged sensualist, and worse than any of this, she feared, with a real sinking of the heart, that he was studied.

occasion, a strong physical appeal) she was anxious to know, to understand and to please him because he represented to her a unique chance of escaping an intolerable life and of achieving all she desired.

He was a well-built, rather clumsy young man with thick, closely curling fair hair and whiskers, blunt features and pale grey eyes. He

"I shall be back in half an hour--pray command what you wish."

She granted smiling leave; she had no cause to suspect his good faith: she was, indeed, guite sure of him, in the way a clever woman

rose abruptly, with an uneasy grin, and said:

feels sure of a stupid man whose passions she has skilfully roused and never satisfied.

As soon as she was alone she rose and looked in the dim flyblown

The wearisome travelling had not impaired her appearance; she had a gift of neatness. She was twenty-three and looked seventeen; delicately she took off the poult de sole bonnet that it had been such an extravagance for her to buy, and studied her head and face rising against that dingy background. This was the first time that she had been able to insist on, to emphasise her good looks; hitherto she had been always in eclipse, effaced, a nonentity.

mirror beside the window on which was a crisp pattern of frost.

forehead was rather high, her lashes too light and her slightly prominent eyes, too steady, too brilliant. But she knew very well how to remedy these defects, how to drop the curls on her brow, how to veil her eyes...

She tied the bonnet under her chin, arranged the black lace

She was satisfied with her scrutiny, with her fine small features, long neck, silky hair falling in ringlets of a delicate auburn brown. Only her

She tied the bonnet under her chin, arranged the black lace becomingly round the brim and returned to the table where a dirty copy of 'The Times' lay. She picked it up and read an account of the funeral of Napoleon I: the great Emperor's remains had just been received, with incredible pomp, in Paris.

received, with incredible pomp, in Paris.

Mary Showler was passionately Bonapartist and loathed the bourgeois King whose elevation had ruined her family. Her face became discontented, almost violent in expression; there was so much of which she was capable and she had been so completely frustrated. To soothe herself she opened her reticule and drew out

her lover's gift 'to amuse her on the journey,' 'Forget-me-not,' an elegant volume of prose, verse and fine engravings. Her glance caught an account of the miseries of governesses; she turned over the pages, she knew enough about that subject. Her gaze rested on the frontispiece--the young Queen again, a girl younger than herself,

with the same childlike features. Mary Showler shut up the book. As

this was wreathed with myosotis and the words 'Forget-me-not' in bright enamel; her lover had given it to her with the book and had seemed to congratulate himself on a pretty fancy. Her thanks had been as ardent as was now the scorn with which she thrust both these sentimental objects out of sight and returned to her newspaper, which she could no longer resist though it tormented her. She had the sheet on her knee when young Morrison returned with a cigar between his lips; she noted instantly that he did not remove this and that he had been drinking.

"I wish I were in Paris now." she said: "a grand moment for a

she returned it impatiently to her reticule a silver thimble rolled out:

sudden ill humour, "women have no need to be interested in such things."

That warned her; she sat rebuked, crumpled the paper up, cast it down; nothing must irritate or bore him—until she had him safe.

Bonapartist!" As he did not answer she continued with a rising accent of drama: "How I detest this Louis Philippe! I should like to

He laughed. "You, Mary! That's rather ambitious, my dear! I think the King of the French is too firmly fixed! Besides." he added with

pull him down!"

"Has your sister arrived?" she asked sweetly.

"No." He looked at her with a slight defiance. "Perhaps she won't come."

"Then," said Mary Showler, "what are we going to do? We can't stay bere together." She urned his silence. "Perhaps I could get a room

here together." She urged his silence. "Perhaps I could get a room somewhere in the village? But surely your sister will come? You said, Robert, that you could rely on her."

"And you thought, of course, that you could rely on me?" "Of course." Her voice was tender: she tried to soothe his obvious discontent; no doubt he was vexed by his sister's defection, and so

was she, but she concealed this: "Never mind--we can manage." Young Morrison caressed his tight, curly, blond whiskers.

She waited, in an attitude of graceful abnegation, for his childish temper to pass; she was not really uneasy for she had never quite believed in the staunch loyalty of Lady Haves that her brother had so

often sworn to. Was it likely that an aristocrat would welcome a Mary

"I suppose so." he said sulkily.

Showler as a sister-in-law? No, the poor orphan had relied on herself: though she had had no help at all in the affair she believed she had managed very well from the first moment she had had the luck to attract the attention of Robert Morrison--she, demure in the Bath streets with her posse of pupils, he, idling in his Tilbury with a

roving eye for a pretty female shape...secret meetings, a secret correspondence, a dramatic passion, a complete decorum, the man enmeshed until he proposed elopement, marriage...

She had relied on all that he had promised her, not because she had much respect for his honesty, but because she knew he was infatuated. Therefore she had left everything for him. They were to be married to-morrow at St. Marv's, Paddington, where, he said, he had

had the banns called -- oh, quite safely, no one knew him, no one would think of looking for him in such an out of the way place...There would be a night to put in; they could not get from Bath to London in

time for a marriage, but his favourite, his indulgent sister, Amy

Hayes, would meet her and chaperone her till the wedding morning;

afterwards, he had a really charming cottage ready for her at

Twickenham

common inn."

She longed to comment on his cigar; odious to smoke in front of her! but she dared not object to anything-yet.

"We'll have a little talk first. Marv." He spoke with clumsy abruptness.

No need, Mary Showler thought, to upset these convenient agreeable plans because Lady Hayes had proved cowardly or false. "Where were we to have stayed?" she asked pleasantly. "You said you had found rooms for us with an old servant. Cannot I go there? It is getting late and really I cannot remain much longer, dear, in this

then lost patience. "Damn it, you make it deuced awkward!"

"Do I?" She was meek, was sweet, but he suspected her, feared that she was intelligent. He knew that she was well educated, that might be ignored; but that shrewd flash in her gold eyes, that edge to her

words, that curl to her lip! He did not want a vixen, a damned blue stocking; she was going to be clever and difficult. He was profoundly irritated; she ought to have shown alarm, confusion, there should have been tears, supplications by now. That mood he could have

dealt with, but this poise, that erect head, that steady glance...equal to equal. All the brandy he had taken could not arm him against her. He cursed the extraordinary infatuation that had involved him with Mary Showler.

"Look here," he blurted out, "you don't really think that I am going to marry you?"

She did not lower her gaze. In a second she had taken in and tasted to the full the bitterness of her own lunatic mistake, and recovered

"Aren't you?" she whispered.

her serenity.

"Well--it stands to reason--confound it, you know who I am--"
"And you know who I am, penniless, defenceless--that makes it easy for you, Robert."

He took, with clumsy eagerness, this opening.

"If I do, it isn't because you told me. Your tale was all lies--"
"I told you there was a mystery, that I was quite alone--"

"Mystery!" He was glad to fasten this quarrel on her. "You said you were Mary Showler, your father an English doctor, and that your mother was a daughter of one of Bonaparte's marshals-ruined, of course--in exile, all the rest of it--"

"Stop!" She rose, checking his stupid triumph. "What has this to do

"Why all these falsehoods, then?"
"I suppose you expected some consideration for your damned delicacy--"

with our marriage?" He frowned at her coolness. "You don't intend to

marry me?"
"No "

"Why are you treating me like this? What do you want from me? What have you found out about me?"

These questions and the manner in which she delivered them revealed her as the powerful personality he had always suspected

her to be. Intensely annoyed, he replied:

"Your mother was never married, no need for you to be."

"Ah. so you found out that? Made enquiries?"

"I'm not a fool, my dear,"

"No. I have been the fool." She sat down and shaded her face with her hand: she was in a terrible situation and did not see how she could extricate herself. Her limbs trembled from shock and the effort

she made to maintain her control and for a moment rage at her own folly consumed her. She had not had much experience, but she had read, observed, deeply and she ought not to have been deceived like a girl from a convent. Vanity had misled her: it is so easy for a

woman to over-estimate the force of the passion she inspires.

As she sat there, her face hidden by her frivolous bonnet and her slim hand, she was calculating rapidly, desperately--but her attitude seemed one of complete, miserable defeat, and though she was not a person easily to inspire pity nor he one to feel it, he was touched by

a certain compassion for the woman whom he had so cleverly cauaht.

He put his cigar into his coffee cup and crossed over to her.

"Look here. Mary. I'm sorry if I spoke unkindly--you know I'm fond of you--I meant all I said--except the marriage--and you ought to have quessed."

"Ought I?" She dropped her hand, but did not raise her face, "Why. then, did you trouble to mention marriage to me?" This was the sort of answer he did not like: it was detestable for a woman to be logical.

"You may take it as a compliment, I suppose, my dear--I thought you wanted to at least keep up appearances--and you can't blame me for

She did not reply, and he continued, half ill-tempered, half conciliatory, to justify himself; she paid no heed to his arguments, but what did impress her was his tone. At Bath he had always treated her as a gentlewoman, now he definitely spoke to an inferior, a creature already declasse, of the demimonde, Anger at her own folly merged into unspeakable anger at his insolence, yet she knew that. in his own estimation, he was being generous.

playing your own game, for you told me a lot of nonsense about

vourself."

"The trouble?" She raised her head and looked at him. "Was it so difficult to tell a few lies?" "Oh. come now. I've been after you for weeks." Resentment at her coolness goaded him into adding: "You were supposed to be fond of me, weren't you? Seems to me that all you were thinking of was the

advantages you were hoping for--"

"Don't be sulky. Mary, and spoil everything. There isn't another woman I've ever met for whom. I'd take the trouble I've taken for vou."

She easily extricated herself from this. "I was prepared to be your wife, Robert--I don't know I'm prepared to be any man's mistress." She rose, unable any longer to control her violent wrath. "You offer me this vulgar--this bitter insult--then expect me to still be--fond of you?"

Young Morrison was impressed; she had, in that moment of stung

pride, the lure of the unattainable. She was really lovely, flushed with a fever of passion, and he wanted her; wanted to tame her, break her, leave her...but that last, not for a long while vet; she would make

a fine show before his friends. He took her wrists and began to woo

Mary Showler stood rigid, not listening, her head turned aside. She earned forty pounds a year, in eighteen months she had saved twenty pounds; it had all been spent on the clothes she wore. There were five shillings in her purse, she had nothing else in the world. Her sole relative was her grandfather, a fierce, bitter, penurious old man who had already told her that she could starve for all he cared. In

her, thickly, insistently; he was in earnest, as he had been in earnest

at Rath

a pittance?

She was roused from these bitter reflections by the young man dropping her hands and exclaiming violently:

leaving Miss Le Moine's establishment in such a manner she had lost her character; in what way besides teaching could she earn even

She looked vaguely at him.
"What am I supposed to answer? I did not hear what you said."

"Why don't you answer? What have you got to say?"

She knew that she ought to soothe, to flatter Robert Morrison even now, but she had not sufficient self-control to do this, and he for a moment almost lost his complacency before her cold hostility.

He recovered himself with a flare of temper.

"Very well, I'll leave you here. No doubt you'll find your way back to the paths of virtue without my help—"

At that she forced herself to say:

"I am very cold. And tired. I have had a great shock. You must forgive me if I am rather--stupid."

This confession of weakness and the sight of that charming head as she flung off her bonnet, restored his good humour. She was a prize and worth an effort, and, after all, she had taken it pretty well, no hysterics, nor reproaches, not a single tear; he had got off lightly. As he rang the bell he was congratulating himself that he knew how to manage a woman. His haughty orders to the waiter got lamp and fire hastily lit, wine and food on the table and the announcement that the best bedroom had been warmed and aired for "your honour if your honour is staying the night." "Yes, we'll stay," said Robert Morrison, "We have missed the train and my wife is tired." He ordered more brandy, and, as soon as it came, drank eagerly: warmth began to spread from the fire. Mary Showler drank a glass of sherry, took off her shawl and held her hands to the flames. She knew that she ought to refuse this man's company with horror, to fly from him at once, anywhere, but she remained in the easy chair by the fire, sipping another glass of sherry, eating bread, ham and macaroons, and thinking deeply; her childlike features did not betray the agonised bitterness of her thoughts. Protected by the company of the waiter, Robert Morrison made a good meal and emptied his glass every time it was replenished. Mary Showler stole a look now and then at his thick red neck with the dusting of blond hair, at his blunt, handsome features, at his heavy. robust body in the fashionable clothes; a brute, who had behaved to

her like a scoundrel, but she did not regard him wholly with repugnance. He was better company than Miss Le Moine or her pupils. Even silent, absorbed in his meal he pleased her more than did the affections of feminine gentility.

in smiling good humour and asked her if she had made up her mind?

"About what, Robert?"

"Don't put me off, there's a good creature--look here, who are you?"

"All I told you was true, except that my parents weren't married--my

grandfather was one of Napoleon's officers--"

When he had finished and the table was cleared, he approached her

"But not a marshal, eh? Never mind, what's your name?"

"Did you not remind me that I was nameless? I was christened Lucille. my mother was a Mademoiselle Clerv. My father. till he died.

gave me a good education. I took an English name for teaching, that

of an ancestress. Despite me, as you will," she added. "I have never been treated before as you have treated me."

He ignored that.

"Well. Mary Showler, or Lucille Clery. I think you are much too smart

and pretty to be a miserable governess and I mean to treat you very well—I'll give you an apartment in Paris and a handsome allowance. You can have a cabriolet and keep a maid—I shan't marry till I can help it—come, I really want you and you could do no better—"

help it--come, I really want you and you could do no better--"

He took hold of her, muttering some endearments, pulling her close.

His breath, tainted by tobacco and spirits, was on her face, and she

felt the full contact of his body, powerful, warm, full of strength and passion. This was not displeasing to her after a narrow, cloistered life, excluded from all touch of masculinity. She was conscious of a certain relief to her agony in this embrace of the man who had

certain relief to her agony in this embrace of the man who had caused it. At last her fatigue, her rage, her shame melted into tears; she was shaken by sobs in his arms and he was gratified. This was

muttered promises that were quite sincere; he meant to spend a lot of money on her. For a while she endured this, took comfort in this. But she was icy proud, strictly bred, not sensual, not in love with him; she stifled her tears as rage and humiliation surged uppermost in her heart, and wrenched away the thick fingers fondling her throat, her ears, her curls, her breasts. "I can't--I can't," she muttered, shuddering violently and turning away. "I won't be treated like this--" She added something in French that he sensed was an expression of hatred. Startled and disgusted, the voung man drew back: was she such a prize? Her features were distorted, and her vivid repugnance chilled and offended him. He. too, mustered some dignity. "As you please. I've never forced a woman. Good-bye, if you like. If vou change your mind I shall be upstairs." He left her, making an effort over the lurch in his gait. Mary Showler sat down before the opal globe of the lamp that cast a circle of light over the dirty cups, the stubbed out cigar. Through her humiliation she tried to see the advantages...What had he offered her? Paris, a carriage, a maid, a 'handsome allowance': no one else had ever

true feminine surrender: his caresses became quick, violent, he

carriage, a maid, a 'handsome allowance'; no one else had ever offered her anything at all. She liked Paris, Tortoni, the Maison d'or, the opera, the theatre, in the demimonde she might, surely, have some success, throw over, perhaps, Morrison and find some other man more clever, more influential...yet it was detestable to accept less than marriage to become an outcast at this fool's bidding!

less than marriage, to become an outcast at this fool's bidding!

But the alternative? To return to the slavery that was called teaching,

classed with the housekeeper, the lady's maid, keyed down to vapid, sub-acid feminine gentilities and futilities! Mary Showler wished to attach herself to men's destinies, to their passions, their splendours,

their vices.

thought...what luck some women had, what luck! She thrust her fingers into her fine ringlets; the heat of the lamp was on her flushed face, the smell of the paraffin in her nostrils. Fatique and grief began to overcome her anger, her shame. The man upstairs would be kind to her if she was submissive: he desired her if he did not love her. It was better to be degraded by a carnal passion than to be ignored; of what use was this chastity, this honour she had been told to rate so high?

She glanced up at the portrait of the young Queen--a silly vacant face with pale full eves and a baby mouth, too like her own, she

A woman must never give her body except as the final gift of a lifelong, a perfect love. Who was going to love Mary Showler like that? A bastard orphan, penniless, friendless...young Morrison's behaviour had taught her what she might expect from gentlemen; she could not

bear to think of any union with one who was not a gentleman. "It was

Aloud she asked herself: "What use?"

cruel to educate me better than my birth." The sense of her great loneliness overwhelmed her; no one to help, no one to care, many to scold, to mock, to condemn; she began to think with relief of the man

waiting upstairs, to wish for his brutal caresses that would at least stun thought. She rose, picked up her bonnet, her tartan scarf, her shawl, her reticule, went out into the brown varnished passage. A waiter, vawning, was coming out of the coffee-room opposite; he seemed surprised to see her. Through the open door behind him she saw the

bleak face of a clock; it was far later than she had thought, her trance-like musing must have been very long. Robert Morrison, she

reflected instantly, had not come back to urge her decision.

"Has my husband gone out?"

"No, Madam, he is upstairs—your room is that with the brass knocker at the head of the stairs—"

"I can find it. Is there a little closet or chamber that I could have to

mvself?"

"Oh yes, Madam, that at the side."

"Thank you." Her air of authority quelled his curiosity, but his dull eyes stared after her as if he guessed something of her sordid story.

Marv Showler went upstairs, passed the door with the brass knocker

and entered the one beside it, a cold room with white everywhere, walls, bed cover, curtains. She took off her shawl, shuddering, combed her hair, bathed her face and stood still a moment to gather her courage, staring at herself in a mirror that hung beneath a pink

china plaque showing John Wesley preaching, then went softly and raised the brass knocker. As there was no reply, she entered.

It was a large room; a fire was burning low on the hearth, a lamp, turned down, was on a table by the window; an unstrapped valise lay on the floor. She put her hand before her eves.

"Robert, I've come."

No reply; she advanced to the large bed from which the curtains were looped back; he was lying there, fully dressed, asleep.

Mary Showler crossed to the lamp and turned up the flame, returned to the lend and tried to wake the young man.

Mary Showler crossed to the lamp and turned up the flame, returned to the bed and tried to wake the young man.

His face was congested, he was snoring heavily; bottles and glasses were on the night table. She saw that he was not asleep, but drunk.

She bent over him with an expression of loathing that sharpened her features painfully; how ugly he was in his stupor! She marked every defect in his face. The thick hair and whiskers were straw colour on

Her desire for the sensational, the dramatic was frustrated; she had meant to fling herself into his arms with at least simulated passion...

He had not cared enough to keep sober to wait for her; disappointed at her delay, he had drunk himself into insensibility; first his love and then his lust had left her cheated, bereft. He was not able to receive the sacrifice she had, at such cost to her pride, come to make: she could not even forget her torments in his coarse embraces. The affair

had become worse than tragic--ridiculous.

defect in his face. The thick hair and whiskers were straw colour on the purplish skin, his mouth had fallen open and was twitching; to her he was vile, obscene.

"You miserable blackguard." she whispered. "sale bete--"

"You miserable blackguard," she whispered, "sale bete--"
She withdrew, hastened to the other room, panting, trembling, tied on

her bonnet, flung on scarf and shawl, snatched up her reticule, remembered...only five shillings...

She was back in his room again, swift and concentrated in her actions. His merino coat hung over a chair; she went through the

actions. This mentio coat hairy over a chair, sine well through the pockets—some guineas in a beaded purse. She took these and fled, hovered for a moment on the wide landing till the passage below was empty, then descended, escaped unobserved and was out in the raw damp of the December night.

"I think," said Lady Anfield, "that she would be most suitable."

"Madame Faustin seemed very impressed by her. It is so difficult to

The two ladies smiled with vague amiability at each other; they were not very interested in the subject they discussed but it was one of those rather tiresome services to a mutual friend that cannot be refused. Madame Clapisson Faustin, the wife of the French ambassador, had asked Mrs. Coombe Wade to find a governess for a family of her acquaintance and the Englishwoman believed there was an excellent person about to leave the employ of Lady Anfield; Madame Faustin had herself seen this young woman with her charges and had highly approved her appearance and behaviour.

But Mrs. Coombe Wade felt a certain responsibility that urged her to make further enquiries. "An exceptional person is required--there are five children and the mother can do nothing, social obligations, you know, and ill health.

then the establishment is really magnificent! One requires someone

"Mademoiselle Debelleyme has that--she is very good with servants. a wonderful gift for keeping order and discipline--with children, too-she really takes all the trouble off one's shoulders!"

"Yet she is leaving you?" "Well, the girls are almost too old--besides--"

find the right person!"

with authority--"

have a tutor."

As Lady Anfield left her sentence vague Mrs. Coombe Wade hinted:

"She did not stay long in her last place, either?"

"Oh, with the Brentwells? You see, those were boys and soon had to

"Isn't she rather good-looking?"

Lady Anfield appeared surprised, a trifle uneasy.

"No one has noticed it, I assure you she is very discreet and decorous--"

Determined to do her duty the other lady persisted.

person?"

Lady Anfield hastened to explain.

"Oh, she never presumes, she is most respectful and agreeable. I'm

"But this air of authority? Isn't that rather out of place in this sort of

sure—it isn't an air of authority either, quite—difficult to explain! She gets things done, without any fuss."

"Who is she?" asked Mrs. Coombe Wade directly.

"Well, really, one hardly troubles, does one? I mean I had excellent

credentials from the Brentwells and they had a strong

recommendation from Lady Tryon, and I believe before that she was in an Academy at Bedford..."

She smiled good-naturedly at her friend, hoping she would turn the tedious conversation, but Mrs. Coombe Wade, who did not wish to disoblige the French Ambassadress, was firm.

"I must know something, Peggy dear, they rely on me-I am to engage the young woman, you see."

"Well, she is a Parisienne--but there is a romantic mystery, yet

nothing to her discredit, you see"--Lady Anfield lowered her pleasant voice--"her grandfather was one of Napoleon's marechals--a Baron

much more refined and well bred than these people usually are--"
This was vague, but Mrs. Coombe Wade was satisfied.
"She sounds a jewel, Peggy--I suppose you have never found any fault with her?"
"Never. Her position is peculiar, she has no relatives--they are in exile in Italy, I believe, and that is rather an advantage--I think her name is assumed, that of an ancestor, but as no exception could be taken to her in any way, I did not object." And, anxious to end the matter, Lady Anfield added, "Would you like to see her yourself? She is leaving me at the end of the week."

of the Empire, I think, and, of course, he lost everything at the Restoration—her mother was Italian, or was it Corsican?—anyhow, of a noble family, but ruined: she has been brilliantly educated, and is

conclude everything."

With relief Lady Anfield rang the bell and requested the footman to "send Mademoiselle Debelleyme at once."

It was a handsome, ornate room in which the two ladies discussed the governess, looking on to Belgrave Square. Lady Anfield and her friend were young matrons, dressed expensively and without taste.

"Oh ves. if you please--then she might wait on Madame Faustin and

and inquisitive to their amiable faces; their experience was even more limited than their understanding, but they were adepts in all the conventions of their class.

While they chattered vaguely the governess appeared.

Lives of busybody idleness had given an expression at once vacant

"Ah, Mademoiselle, won't you sit down? Mrs. Coombe Wade would like to speak to you—this is Mademoiselle Debelleyme. dear--"

note also that she had been mistaken in thinking the young woman good-looking--her features were insignificant, her hair was pulled back unbecomingly from a forehead that was too high, and pinned in an old-fashioned manner at the back of her head, her clumsy but neat dress of dark merino was buttoned in a pelerine up to her chin. and its heavy folds quite disquised any graces her figure might have possessed; yet she had that distinction, that dignity that an aristocrat would like to see in a dependant--surely, thought Mrs. Coombe Wade, anxiously, she was the very person for whom Madame Faustin was so eagerly searching? Such excellent testimonials, too, an exquisite flower painter, a good musician.

The governess seated herself and waited, with downcast eyes; her demeanour was perfect, respectful without being servile; her personality was completely effaced in her post; she was the governess in a rich gentleman's establishment and could never make the mistake of asserting that she was a human being. Mrs. Coombe Wade looked at her and approved; she was pleased to

and the other furtively yawned. Mademoiselle Debellevme bore the silence with equanimity, and listened, without a change of attitude, while Mrs. Coombe Wade stated her case.

There was a short pause while one lady scrutinised the governess

"I am looking for a governess for a friend of Madame Faustin. As you are leaving Lady Anfield and she very kindly recommends you and I

hear that you have other good testimonials I wondered if you might

be suitable." "What is the situation, please?" The governess, still keeping her lids

modestly down, spoke in a very low, but distinct voice.

"It is an historic name."

"Yes, indeed. The Duchess is a daughter of Marechal Frediani, you

know, the victor of Warsaw, and immensely rich. She keeps a very splendid establishment in the Rue St. Honore--the Duke is Chevalier d'honneur to the Duchesse D'Orleans and an intimate at Court--you

"With the Duchesse Montlosier du Boccage--vou know of her. of

"There are five children--two boys; there is an under-governess, two nurses, the children have their own maids--you: see, Mademoiselle, that an exceptional person is required!"

Gently the governess raised her head, and asked: "Why?"

understand that you would have a very envied post!"

"What would it be, precisely?"

course?"

conscious of something in mademoiselle's glance, revealed suddenly, that made her feel uneasy. Those eyes were such a peculiar colour, a clear gold, large, cold, yet compelling, as if a strong and frantic spirit stared from behind bars; but Mademoiselle Debelleyme looked down again and the vague impression passed.

Mrs. Coombe Wade was not a sensitive woman, but she was

But the lady was slightly ruffled as she replied:

"Well it is a considerable responsibility-five little children of that

"Well, it is a considerable responsibility--five little children of that rank--"

"There are, as always, the parents," remarked the governess, quietty.

a number of children--besides, she must be continually at the Tuileries--"
"Then I should have sole charge?"

"Oh ves! But the Duchess does nothing: she is often ill, she has lost

Mrs. Coombe Wade was a little taken aback by this direct question.

"I believe that the Duke directs the education of the children, I really

Bored by this conversation but still good-natured. Lady Anfield interposed:

"Why not wait on Madame Faustin. Mademoiselle, and find out what

accept this kind suggestion—I have almost engaged myself to teach music, French and painting at Miss Graham's Academy."

Mrs. Coombe Wade was disappointed; she did not want to have to search further for a governess for her friend, and she was really

"But, Lady Anfield," smiled the governess. "I don't think that I can

Mademoiselle Debelleyme.

"Madame du Boccage offers a hundred pounds a year and your own apartment and full service. I believe this is better than you have had

impressed by the correct, icy and respectful demeanour of

before."

"Lady Anfield was good enough to pay me sixty pounds; I have been guite satisfied."

"Surely you would like to return to Paris?"

don't know. Madame Faustin could tell vou."

vou wish to know?"

prefer exile." Both the ladies cherished a sentimental regard for Napoleon I, and thought this a very proper speech on the part of Mademoiselle Debelleyme, one, too, which gave her the dignity of a certain mystery. Mrs. Coombe Wade became more eager than ever to engage her services and began to press the advantages of this post in one of the most sumptuous establishments of France... "Surely," objected the governess, "Madame du Boccage could find someone in Paris whom she could interview personally? Is it not rather peculiar for her to entrust so delicate a mission even to the most intimate of friends?" Again Mrs. Coombe Wade was at a loss; reluctantly, vaguely, she admitted: "It is not very easy. I understand from Madame Faustin, to satisfy Madame du Boccage--she thought perhaps that a person used to English life--" Becoming further baffled by the upward flash of the governess' clear eyes, she added weakly:

"My family lost all with the Restoration," she remarked with an air of reserve. "I remain passionately attached to the memory of the Emperor--Paris under Bourbon rule has no attractions for me. I

The governess smiled.

"That Madame la Duchesse is difficult?" finished Mademoiselle gently.

"No." Mrs. Coombe Wade made a gallant recovery, "She is the most

charming, the most generous of women! But an exceptional person

"There have been six governesses in the last two years--so you see--

is required--" "Do you think I should suit Madame du Boccage?"

Madame Faustin, couldn't vou? A hundred a vear is quite exceptional, isn't it? It was so kind of Mrs. Coombe Wade to think of vou. wasn't it?" The governess was well trained to know when she was dismissed:

Lady Anfield rose, resolved to end the interview, "Oh, I'm sure!" she smiled. "I should think it over. Mademoiselle--and then you could see

she rose instantly. "I am deeply obliged, Lady Anfleld. If I might have till tomorrow? Just to think over my plans? Thank you. I am so grateful, Mrs. Coombe

Wade. I hope never to disappoint your kindness." Something in her carriage as she crossed the long room to the

heavy door roused again that vague feeling of uneasiness in the mind of Mrs. Coombe Wade--but she could not name even to herself what quality in mademoiselle provoked this, and Lady Anfield said

decisively:

"She really is a prize, dear, you must persuade her to accept." Mademoiselle Debelleyme had immediately decided to take the position offered in the establishment of Madame du Boccage; her

hesitation had been only assumed in order to increase her value. She longed to return to Paris where she had not been for eight years. and the post seemed one that was in every way more desirable than

anything that had come her way before. Not that she hoped to remain long in the Faubourg St. Honore; she never remained long anywhere;

despite her excellent credentials, her perfect behaviour, her talents. her unimpeachable character, no one wanted to keep her. A year Teaching at various Academies for Young Ladies, Clapham, Highgate, Bedford, a few months at each, then, under some perfectly reasonable excuse, her place had been filled by another. After that the Brentwells, two years with three little boys and dismissed to give way for a tutor; now Lady Anfield, who had suddenly and vaguely found her girls "too old for a governess." Nowhere did mademoiselle attach herself and she knew now exactly what her utmost endeavours and exertions could obtain for her, which was the position of an upper servant in a large house, a position which could only be maintained by complete abnegation, rigid self-discipline, tedious toil and an attitude of exact decorum and humility.

She knew why she had lost her various posts when some women remained with one family for a lifetime; she had a strange influence

with Lady Tryon's delicate little girl, then the child had been sent to Italy and mademoiselle had not been asked to accompany her.

was able to make herself obeyed by servants and, after a while, her influence, very subtle but powerful, permeated any household in which she stayed. She had been very careful, trained herself to complete effacement, been tactful, discreet, useful, patient; but the candour of the children's affection had always betrayed her, she became too important, she must go.

over children, roused their passionate attachment and loyalty, and the mothers, lazy and careless as they were, became jealous. She

Oh, nothing to complain of—she might have excellent credentials! Her employers, with the most kindly intentions, praised her warmly—but she left one place after another with the laments of her little charges

she left one place after another with the laments of her little charg in her ears as her sole reward.

Yet in much she had been lucky; the various oblique lies she had insinuated about her origin had gone down very well; Lucille Clery, Mary Showler, had easily become Lucille Debelleyme, she had even

lived down the folly of that elopement from Bath: Miss Le Moine's

distress that she had forgotten to even leave a message. Did Miss Le Moine believe this? She had regretted she could not receive Miss Showler again in her Academy, but she had not refused a handsome certificate of character

testimonial lay with others in her reticule. A telegram had summoned her to her grandfather's death-bed, she had fled in such haste and

Robert Morrison was dead, killed in the hunting field; the reading of that news in the papers had given Mademoiselle Debelleyme the only real pleasure she had known in five years.

She went up to her room in the gloomy Belgravia mansion, A dull. sunless apartment, shabbily furnished with cast-out articles from the other rooms, a hard bed, a tarnished mirror and faded curtains of an

ugly plum-coloured rep. The view was over backvards, basements and barred kitchen windows. The governess sat at the window and looked with loathing at this dismal prospect. She wondered how she existed from day to day, body and soul in invisible chains, her pride in fierce subjection, all her desires denied,

no prospect whatever for the future; completely isolated, disdaining to make friends with servants, disdained by those above servants. forced to hide all her character, half her gifts, all her attractions:

twenty-eight years old, immersed in resignation. "What is the use of existence on these terms? How do I find the strength to endure it?"

Yet she knew; it was because of some lunatic hope that one day, by

some miracle, something would occur to change her life into the extravagant, the fantastic, the passionate adventure she wished it to

be. She deluded herself from day to day, knowing that she was doing so, yet not daring to face reality. To one situated like herself escape could only come through men and no man had shown himself ready Robert Morrison was dead; her brief affair with him was dead; but not buried. It lay corrupting in her soul, poisoning even her dreams. For five years she had, by hard work and a watchful discretion.

maintained a position in aristocratic families, secured a bare if genteel living, but always ignored, a virtuous gentlewoman forbidden

to the libertine, a pauper forbidden to the marrying man.

to be her deliverer.

She had never again met as bold a rake as Robert Morrison. Once or twice she had observed a licentious glance pass over her when, summoned to the drawing-room during a reception, she had played

some young lady's accompaniment on the pianoforte, once or twice she had been insolently addressed in the street. On each occasion she had in her mind shudderingly rejected the advance. She did not demand an honourable love but Robert Morrison had taught her that she must have some gloss of elegancy over lust. She was eager to

sell herself, but the purchaser must be delicately behaved, respect her pride, her fastidiousness; she could not again live through an experience like that of that night in the inn outside Paddington.

Often after some bitter humiliation when her vanity, her ambition had refused to lie quiescent, she had reflected in despair: "I should be better off in a brothel."

But her difficulty lay in the fact that she did not really know what a brothel was, where to find one, nor how to gain admittance if she did. Did one discover the address of a house of ill fame, knock and say: "Madame, permit me to help entertain your clients?" Did one creep out after dark, pull some man by the coat and whisper: "Take me

somewhere where we shall be private?"

There might be a stepping stone there to liberty, independence on the stage or as the kept woman of a rich man, "but I have no

So she remained chaste, dainty, in person, habits, behaviour, but her thoughts ranged wide and the least of them would have profoundly shocked her employers.888 Her experience with Robert Morrison had given her a disgust of sex and she was too absorbed in herself to dream of an ideal lover; so. naturally cold, she did not suffer from her enforced chastity, but she

raged that she could not turn it to advantage before she was old...surely some man, somewhere, would for the sake of her lovely

Constantly in the company of children or smugly respectable women the governess could know little of the world save from an avid but

knowledge, no courage to face another Morrison--and worse."

limited reading and the sordid gossip of servants.

body, hidden under her ualy clothes, relieve her of her intolerable servitude? But where to find him? A cloud obscured the mournful pale blue above the ugly backs of the houses, a few drops of rain fell on the sooty sill of her window. She roused herself. She had the afternoon for her packing, her pupils were out with an aunt. She turned to her trunk, carefully folded her plain linen, her sombre dresses, her thick stockings and one or two rich and elaborate scraps of embroidery that she had worked herself.

She would go to Paris--a hundred pounds a year, a sumptuous mansion; worth trying, but how long could she placate Madame du Boccage who had had six governesses in two years? Here obviously was a difficult, tyrannical, tiresome, spoilt woman, probably a

peevish invalid--"but I might stay till I had found something else in Paris--Paris in the spring! Mon Dieu! There is life to be seen there--

even from afar!"

English employers--"Yes, darling, the peaches are rather bruised, you may offer one to mademoiselle -- " "Oh, the concert will be very dull, mademoiselle must take you--" "These gloves are badly cut and Bennetts won't take them back, would vou like Mademoiselle?" "No. dear. mademoiselle never has a headache. though it is my sweet child to think of it-she can very well go on reading to you"--or, most humiliating of all, "Mademoiselle, I think you

And surely in a ducal establishment she might hope to escape from some of the most degrading humiliations inflicted on her by her

governesses being most plainly attired." She dropped the lid of her trunk and stood reflecting on the faint possibilities offered by this new position--this new chance?--in Paris.

should not wear that lace collar and brooch, I always insist on my

And an ironic smile lifted her lip into an unpleasant expression. **** The governess' interview with Madame Faustin passed off very well.

The great lady found the young woman modest, dignified, as

agreeable as intelligent, and well bred. Mademoiselle Debelleyme left the French Embassy engaged as head governess in the establishment of Madame du Boccage, with three months' salary and her fare to Paris in her pocket.

There had been one little difficulty: the question of religion. The governess, bred a Roman Catholic, had become a Protestant to please her English employers, and Madame du Boccage was

devote; but Madame Faustin was not and thought that the governess could guietly return to her early faith without any reference to her

heretical lapse, and easily conform with Church observances sufficiently to satisfy her mistress; and the governess, who cared nothing for any creed, thought so too.

her final duties to her pupils, who were sullen and red-eved because of her departure, and took leave of Lady Anfield, who vaguely congratulated her on her "splendid good luck". In the wide bedchamber of the little girls the governess knelt at prayers: the night lamp cast a soft light over the heavy furniture, the prints of religious subjects on the walls, the toys neatly stacked on the shelves, the straight beds with the dimity covers sprigged with roses. The children's heads were bowed in their hands, their wellbrushed, pale yellow hair hung down over their white nightgowns which fell over their woollen shoes slipping off their pink heels. The governess knelt between them but her head was raised: she stared into the warm flickering shadows of the familiar room and she did not repeat the formula of the prayers even with her lips. The children loved her: that was her offence here. Probably it would always be her offence wherever she went. With children she was herself, vivid, amusing, possessed of a delicate understanding of childish minds, of the art of making the commonplace exciting, of banishing boredom, of soothing by firmness, by an exact order. She

She returned for the last time to the mansion in Belgravia: performed

knew that she could make any child love her and she could love any child for the same reason that a blind beggar loves his dog; the animal does not know that his master is less than other men, and children did not know that Lucille Debelleyme was below other women, "only the governess." She set herself deliberately, carefully, to charm them, to win their respect, their devotion, and they responded instantly. Sometimes, as they grew older they became tainted by the world's opinion and realised that their fascinating companion was only a penniless dependent in their father's house; but with the little children she was always sure of her victory.

In her upper room the governess lit the candle and finished her packing. On top of all her other clothes she carefully placed a blue silk dress, a tartan scarf, a gros de Naples mantle, a bonnet with a black lace fall; in the bottom of the trunk was a copy of 'Forget-menot' of 1840, and a silver thimble wreathed with pure blue flowers.

She began to undress. The evening was warm; she had half raised

the Holland blind and she could see the tiny lights in the windows of the backs of the houses across the yards. Above the ugly chimney-

The governess took off her clothes and drew the curtains. She had locked the door and felt that she had escaped from the pompous house, from the people in it, from the routine of the day; she was no longer the governess but a woman. She dominated her shabby surroundings as she stood naked on the square of drugget by the

The prayers over, the two girls embraced her with sobs, stammering over their good-byes. She soothed them gravely, tucked them in bed, staved till they slept, then left them in charge of the nurse, who did not

like her, and watched her departure with gratified malice.

stacks a few stars showed a melancholy, remote sparkle.

bed; she had taken the pins out of her hair and it fell in natural ringlets to her waist, a lovely shining colour and texture.

She arranged the mirror so that/she could see as much of her body as possible.

"This is I myself All that I have And I must hide it away be ashamed."

"This is I, myself. All that I have. And I must hide it away, be ashamed of it. No one knows what I am like."

Long, pale limbs, of firm line, a body in perfect harmony with the small classic-featured face, with hair fine as silk.

small classic-featured face, with hair fine as silk.

She admired her hands, her feet that she tended so carefully, the

thighs. In the curve of her back were two brown moles. Moving the mirror from place to place she gravely surveyed herself; she was not thinking of any possible lover, there was nothing voluptuous in her pose or her gestures; she contemplated her own beauty because it gratified her pride, her self-respect, increased her value in her own eyes. Only by the convention of society was she less than other women

smoothness of her skin, her full bosom, the slope of her waist and

The candle was guttering; she extinguished it and the dark completed her sense of deliverance. Her cold eyes gazed gratefully into the blackness as she sat on the edge of the bed, her body freed from ugly garments, her mind from the necessities of servitude. The steamboat left Harwich on a bright, windy morning.

Mademoiselle Debelleyme sat on deck: she had managed her affairs without haste or confusion, her purse was in her hand, her

carpet bag by her side, she had seen her trunk on board, knotted her veil round her bonnet, drawn her shawl round her shoulders and sat at ease and leisure. She was the only female travelling alone. She watched contemptuously the helpless disorder of such other women as there were. how they clamoured for the protection of father, husband, brother, making a parade of foolishness and helplessness, how they

lamented the distress of the voyage, and retired to the cabins immediately with smelling salts, eau-de-Cologne and toilet vinegar. Possessed of perfect health she was not disturbed by the motion of the ship and her spirits rose when England dropped out of sight on

the horizon. She disembarked easily, found her place in the Paris train and felt all

her excitement sink suddenly; even the unusual speed, the spinning

were dull and soon slept, the seat was uncomfortable, she felt imprisoned in this box. She ate some cake and an apple; her head began to ache, she took off her bonnet and closed her eves; half drowsy, she tried to plan for the future to the exasperating beat of the enaine. How long shall I stay in Paris? Surely something will arise. Anything would be preferable to returning to England. My grandfather, too, is living at St. Cloud, the miser! I believe he has money hidden away. surely he might do something for me! Would it be any use appealing to my father's people? No! No! They would never acknowledge me. I must remember I am a good Catholic now. Shall I possibly have a chance to go to the Opera, the theatre, a fine reception, a concert, the Tuileries? Of course not, stop dreaming, stop dreaming, Lucille Clery, you fool! Will some man want me as a wife or a mistress? How contrive, with complete decorum, to attract any one? And I won't be despised. I'm glad that Robert Morrison is dead, dead, dead, Was he drunk when he fell from his horse? No one will notice me, I don't look pretty in the hideous clothes I have to wear, I'm always effaced. Why was I given that genteel education? Shall I ever fall in love? All men have a look of Robert Morrison. I must recall all Madame Faustin told me of Madame du Boccage-devote. Mon Dieu! She was eighteen when she married; she has had nine children in fifteen years, four are dead--she is, then, thirtythree, not so much older than I. What a different life! What is it really like to have children? I should think it would be a sort of ecstasy to have your body used. Nine children. M. du Boccage is even younger than she--he was only seventeen when she saw him at a ball and vowed that no other

should be her husband--she had a dowry of two million, a great

past of the Norman orchards, the puffs of whirling smoke crossing the coach window could not distract her fatigue. Her companions

enough of these affectionate families, it's like being cold and looking at a fire through a window.

How easy, with all that money and power, to be happy!

But Madame du Boccage is difficult—no one has stayed with her.

name, she could pick and choose. Sweetly romantic, Madame Faustin said, and their devotion a byword in France, I've seen

what is the trouble? Shall I be able to overcome it?

To live in the Faubourg St. Honore! With one of the greatest families

of France! I must please her, if only for a while--

she was accosted by an elderly couple who introduced themselves as Monsieur and Madame Santerre. They had been sent by Madame du Boccage to look after the governess for the night, until she was sufficiently rested and composed after her travel to present herself in the Faubourg St. Honore.

The tired, disarraved young woman accepted this considerate

attention with due gratitude; but she would have liked this one evening in Paris to herself, at an inn, or even with her grandfather,

The governess could not escape from the trammels of decorum; she had scarcely begun to breathe the clear exciting air of Paris before

where she could be outspoken, at least.

But she was shepherded to the respectable home of the Santerres; they had both been in the service of Madame du Boccage and were full of tales of her bounty, sweetness, domestic virtues, modesty and piety, as well as of her riches and splendour.

Mademoiselle Debelleyme listened with an appreciative smile and downcast eyes.

"But it has not been easy to suit Madame with a governess?" she

"Ah, Mademoiselle understands that Madame is most careful, devoted as she is to her children she requires an exceptional person!"

The governess had heard that expression several times before; was she the exceptional person Madame du Boccage required?

suggested, quietly.

"There is a Mademoiselle Broc who has been in entire charge--but she had not the authority; she will remain, but under you--"

"Mon Dieu," thought the governess, "I shall have to placate this creature, too! How spiteful she will be at being displaced!"

During the modest supper the Santerres continued to praise the

establishment in the Faubourg St. Honore; through the welter of simple-minded adulation the governess contrived to extract one or two useful facts.

Madame du Boccage was a Corsican; on the death of her father she would inherit even greater wealth than she at present enjoyed. M. du Boccage had just come into the title and been elected a member of

the Chamber of Peers. He was an intimate friend of the Royal Princes, M. de Nemours, M. de Montpensier, M. de Joinville...but he was not so often at Court now as he was occupied in restoring the

famous Chateau of Javiaux du Boccage near Melun which he had recently inherited--but usually the family went for the summer to Locroi in Normandy where Madame had an estate, or to Dieppe for the bathing...

The governess thought: "No doubt I shall have left them by the holidays," nor was she interested in M. du Boccage. The fathers of her charges had never concerned her in the least; they had always

She was given a neat room high above the darkness and rumble of Paris. A crucifix was over the bed, a book of religious meditations on the table; the governess leaned eagerly from the window into the spring night.

She loved this city in which she had been born and educated, the old quays, the dark scented churches, the narrow streets of the Isle, the

remained strangers whom she had hardly seen. "I shall have to deal with the mistress, this other governess, the children, the servants—eh.

well, one does one's best!"

well from the outside, she was at home in this country, her own country, among the people and the places which had formed her obscure origin.

Kneeling before the open trunk, Mademoiselle Debelleyme took out her one silk gown which had been worn once and then hidden for five years. Out of date, but not so markedly; she could adjust it. Paris had

luxurious gardens in front of high palaces, the quarters where the fashionable shops and restaurants flourished. She knew Paris very

already excited her; she would not appear in the Faubourg St. Honore in the dowdy merino that pleased the English gentlewomen. Madame du Boccage was Parisienne, she would not expect a fright, she must be above the petty jealousy of frumps like Lady Anfield. Fingering the stiff silk made furtively by the Bath dressmaker, the governess' mind went back to her sordid elopement, and, curiously,

Fingering the stiff silk made furtively by the Bath dressmaker, the governess' mind went back to her sordid elopement, and, curiously, to the impetuous exclamation she had made to Robert Morrison. Reading of the funeral of the Emperor she had allowed her scorn of Louis Philippe to find expression, and had cried: "I wish I could pull

him down!"

She smiled bitterly at this recollection; what a fool to think she could have any hand in public affairs! Here she was, in Paris, not as the

thoroughly, from the outside; she had learnt from her grandfather a sentimental and selfish devotion to Napoleon I; it was true that her family had been ruined and scattered at the Restoration of the Bourbons. And if she hated the Legitimists she scomed more deeply the cadet branch of the Royal House which had cringed to the people, paraded liberal ideas and risen to a restricted power through the ruin of the rightful Kings.

Louis Philippe D'Orleans had fought the Royalists at Valmy, erased the Lilies from his escutcheon, and, Prince of the Blood, son of the

man who had voted for the death of his cousin, Louis XVI, effected the "bon bourgeois," the citizen monarch, and meanly named himself Louis Philippe as if he was a petty Prince of Italy or Germany. The governess would very willingly have seen him chased from Paris

Hon. Mrs. Morrison, who might have meddled in politics, not as a successful courtesan who might have pulled strings, but as a dependant in the household of one of the Orleans King's courtiers.

The governess knew contemporary politics as she knew Paris.

amid the uproar of yet another revolution; she had been pleased to observe in a print-seller's window as she drove from the station a caricature of the stout monarch, with his close whiskers and neat curly toupet as a huge pear!

She must think of her own affairs; she needed gloves, shoes, a veil. She must be up early to purchase these before she waited on

Madame du Boccage.

Weariness overcame her, she slid cautiously into the bed and slept beneath the dark outline of the cheap crucifix.

The Hotel du Boccage was situated near the embassies of England

* * * * *

enclosed by high walls above which, to the right, rose the handsome edifice of the Elvsee Bourbon. Beyond the light foliage of the slight poplar trees, the Persian lilac and early roses. Mademoiselle Debelleyme saw the charming facade of an eighteenth century mansion of elegant white stone. The French windows of the rez de chaussee opened on to handsome

balconies of ornamental ironwork, the floor above and the mansard windows that cut the high roof of grev slates were alike surrounded with graceful swags of flowers and fruit. The new governess crossed the little sanded court beyond the garden and mounted the few

and Mecklenbourg and some of the finest mansions of the French aristocracy. A high gateway flanked by Doric pillars and two porters' lodges faced the street and opened into an enchanting little garden.

shallow marble steps that led to the door that broke the windows of the around floor. She was instantly admitted and conducted across an antechamber to the salon de reception. This was a magnificent apartment which looked on to the Champs Elysees and the Avenue Gabriel; there

was no sound nor sight suggestive of a great city; the house might

have been set in a great park.

The new governess was asked to wait: as soon as she was alone she looked about her eagerly. She was used to the heavy, expensive comfort of wealthy English homes, but this was different, this was magnificence, taste, elegance, this was, above everything, French.

She liked to think that her ancestors had enjoyed such luxury and that she had been debarred only by the accident of birth from just such surroundings. So pleased and excited was she that her whole

attitude and expression subtly and unconsciously changed. She drew herself more erect as her glance went from pale velvet carpets to

delicate brocade curtains, from tall mirrors wreathed in gilt lilies to porcelains smooth and lustrous as silk, from chairs in exquisite Crystal candelabra hung from the painted ceiling, flowers adorned jardinieres of Saxe and Sevres, the April sunshine dancing through the moving trees outside filled the room with light. The atmosphere was that of a palace; the taste, the decor of the Regency, that period so smoothly lovely on the surface, so completely rotten within, a period that would have suited Lucille Debelleyme exactly.

She looked at herself in the mirror above the ornate alabaster mantelpiece as she had looked at herself in the Paddington inn, and her room in the Belgravia mansion, with a keen scrutiny, with a jealous pride. She did not belong to the room, nor to the eighteenth century, yet she was not out of place, her five-year-old refurbished

tapestry to the drawn straw-coloured moire of the wall panels, which alternated with scenes of pastoral loves by François Boucher.

finery was still in perfect taste, her long curls framed a face that only required the right setting to be beautiful. She flung out her full skirts and thought: "Ah, no one will be able to prevent me from thinking I am the mistress here, no one can read my thoughts--"

Something startled her, fear like a cold breath dampened her rebellious pride; she saw a white, menacing face staring over her shoulder.

She spun round, then smiled at herself; the mirror was placed in the

corner and against the opposite wall was a marble statue that represented a Cupidon arming himself with bow and arrow and staring before him to mark the target for the shafts of Love. This figure displayed all the graces of the irresistible Clodion, but, even

on close scrutiny, the governess thought there was something sinister lurking in the contour of the fair marble face, a peculiar, disagreeable expression. But she never indulged fancies; she continued her eager observation of the gay and beautiful room that so delighted her. Her appraisal was professional: for nearly ten years

She observed therefore much besides the impressive luxury of the place. There was dust on everything, the hot-house flowers were withered, the alabaster needed cleaning, here and there a braid hung in a loop; a chair had been stained, and above the massive pelmets that sparkled with gold thread a few cobwebs could be discerned in the shadows. The new governess had noticed that the footman who had admitted her was not as smart as he should have been; and the porter in the lodge, a little too untidy, a little too good-

she had been making herself expert in the domestic side of life. turning her energies, denied all other outlet, into this narrow channel.

"All that money--and careless," reflected the governess. "I suppose they let everyone rob them. I wonder if I shall be able to get anything out of it?" A heavy sigh disturbed her; she turned as a low voice said:

natured--not that well-trained impersonal behaviour that should have

been demanded in such an establishment

Madame du Boccage had entered softly through the pale-rose velvet curtains at the end of the room; the governess dropped a curtsy and waited.

"You are Mademoiselle Debelleyme, the new governess?"

"Pray sit down. Mademoiselle. I trust you had a tolerable yoyage? And that the Santerres made you comfortable? They are good people."

"Yes, Madame, I am very grateful for your thoughtfulness."

And Mademoiselle Debellevme waited for the usual scrutiny to which she was subjected by new employers; with an air of fatigue and another sigh the Duchess had sunk on to a canape,

"I am twenty-eight, Madame."

"I know--but Madame Faustin told me that you were a very serious, grave person--much older than your years--I do not perceive that--"

"You are much younger than I thought." she remarked rather wistfully.

Madame du Boccage spoke gently, even benevolently, but the governess knew that she was disappointed, and knew why.

The young woman in the dark merino, with the pulled-back hair, who

had been interviewed by the wife of the French Ambassador had given a different impression from that made by the silk-clad lady with the long ringlets, now being examined. "I have made a mistake," thought the governess, and adroitly endeavoured to efface her error.

"It is the attire. Madame will understand that what passes in London will not do for Paris. Nor is the establishment of Lady Anfield on a level with that of Madame. I believed I should please by an

appearance comme il faut, but," added the governess, suddenly raising her clear eyes, "it is true that I have never been in a household like that of M. du Boccage and if I have done wrong I hope that Madame will overlook it. I will wear anything that Madame pleases."

that of the Duchess which wavered first.

"Oh no," she said with a touch of confusion. "I should never interfere in that way. Pray don't think so. It is only--one thought of a--different

The women's glances met and held each other for a second: it was

personality--but it is nothing, nothing at all! Your testimonials were excellent, excellent, Madame Faustin spoke of you so highly--"

She was silent and the governess dutifully waited again with lowered

fear that her rebellion, her scorn, her pride might, despite her control. show in her powerful gaze. But in that brief glance she had received an exact impression of her new mistress. Madame du Boccage was very dark, black hair, soft black eyes, amber complexion, too plump but handsome. There was something

imposing about her, but something also gentle; she seemed anxious to please but slightly troubled as to how to do so, and the governess had instantly noted the same slight disorder in the lady's dress as she had observed in the mansion. The robe of the Duchess was both fashionable and costly, but carelessly worn, her jewellery did not match, and the exquisite lace cap that rested on her glossy curls seemed to have been pinned in place by an indifferent hand.

eves: this had become a habit with her, not from modesty, but from

commonplace talk of a woman relegating her maternal duties to another and salving her conscience by elaborate instructions she will never trouble to see carried out. Several times she sighed, lost the

thread of her discourse, was a little incoherent. The answers of the governess were prompt and precise, mere mechanical acceptances of orders, or assurances of obedience; but suddenly she made an objection. "Mademoiselle Broc will tell you all that you wish to know. You will go

She began to speak again. Her voice, the warm, slightly husky voice of the South, was very pleasant, but she spoke vaguely, the usual

to her for everything."

"And not to you, Madame?"

The governess raised her eyes again; she was gaining confidence

from the obvious weakness and indecision of the other woman, a confidence increased by the sudden flush that coloured the handsome face of Madame de Boccage, by her stammering reply:

"And sole responsibility? It is a heavy task--I had hardly understood-" murmured the governess carefully feeling her way before this
unexpected situation.

"I do not interfere at all--vou understand--my attendance at Court--I

entertain a great deal--you will have sole charge--"

"I know. Several have failed at it! It is difficult indeed! I will not disguise that we have had a good deal of trouble to find the right person—I hope that you may be she--let us try. Mademoiselle. We

The governess thought: "Something is wrong here--what? And can I turn it to my advantage? The woman seems a fool. A tiresome, melancholy fool. She looks ten years older than she is--why does she sigh and flush? Mon Dieu, if I had what she has. I'd have Paris at my

feet."

And the governess averted her gaze test this should too plainly show in her eyes. "How I hate you for having everything while I have nothing nothing at all."

This interview that the indecisiveness and hesitations of the Duchess

were prolonging indefinitely, was cut abruptly short.

The door was opened brusquely, a man entered.

The Duchess instantly rose.

curtains.

can but try."

"This is Mademoiselle Debelleyme--Mademoiselle, M. du Boccage."

And she was gone, with startling swiftness, through the rose velvet

cold self-assurance. She curtsied to the man who had paused before her, nervously put aside her veil, flicked her handkerchief across her lips, then, as she grasped the personality of the stranger who was looking at her keenly, her courage really broke, she dropped. trembling and speechless, into a chair. For it seemed to her that she was staring at Robert Morrison.

The governess was, for once, at a loss; this sudden departure of her mistress, this sudden appearance of her master whom she had not troubled to reckon on at all, disturbed her well-trained control, her

the iourney?" The voice was courteous and kind, the tone one of a solicitous respect with which she was not familiar; she quickly thought of an excuse for female faintness that she had read of in one of Ladv

Blessington's languishing romances.

"You are ill. Mademoiselle? You have not, perhaps, recovered from

"The flowers. Monsieur--I am not used--the perfume of exotics is overpowering, is it not? And the air so warm--" The Duke snatched up one of the vases that stood near his hand. and exclaimed in deep vexation:

"They are not fresh and the water is stale--always the same! These little things--excuse me. Mademoiselle." He went to a window, flung it open and tossed out withering tuberoses, gardenias, camellias and stagnant water.

There was a sharpness in this unusual action that had the dramatic

quality of emotional expression; the young man was plainly angry. The governess stared at him, thinking in a panic:

Morrison--Mon Dieu, what cursed luck!" She could not immediately recover from the shock of this likeness between the living and the dead; it was inescapable, exasperating to find in M. du Boccage, of whom she had formed only a vaque. disinterested image, a replica of the man who had caused her to regard all his sex with abhorrence. The Frenchman had the same type of athletic figure as the Englishman, compact, powerful, graceful under his costly attire of a dandy, the same excessive blondness that had alternately attracted and repelled her in Robert Morrison. His thick straw-coloured hair curled into the toupet fashionable among all the courtiers of Louis Philippe, his grey eyes were shaded by lashes that appeared to have been powdered. The features were blunt, good, youthful, he appeared less than his years, much younger than his wife; his clothes and accessories were exquisite, from the light-grey and blue striped trousers strapped under his feet to the pearl-hued waistcoat and fine cambric stock. Having relieved his temper by casting the contents of the vase into the Champs Elysees, the Duke turned with an engaging smile that seemed to excuse his ill humour; his natural manner appeared to be soft, gentle, even gay, his voice was low and seductive. He approached the governess, who was shrinking into herself with loathing, and began to speak with that enchanting air of grand seigneur which was more welcome to her than fine wine to the palate, than rich perfume to the nostrils, than soft cushions to the

"I can't stay in the same house with anyone who looks like Robert

body.

But she resisted, still in a panic; she rose, breaking through his apologies, his excuses--he, not his wife, should have received her, it seemed, there had been a mistake--but what did that matter now?

"I regret, Monsieur--the position seems too difficult, I did not understand--I fear I could not undertake--"

"Mademoiselle, you would not leave me in this embarrassment--this cruel embarrassment?"

She must leave his presence, his house--

"The loss of a governess embarrasses Monsieur?"

Mademoiselle, the person for whom I am searching--"

"Do I?" She could afford to be bold as she intended to leave the Faubourg St. Honore for ever, so she looked at him steadily with dislike and irony. "But Monsieur knows nothing of me."

"I must confess it--I have been overwhelmed lately. You seem.

"I have excellent testimonials. I rely on the judgment of Madame Faustin and my own observation."

The observation of a few seconds?"

give confidence. I feel that my children will be safe in your hands."

"Monsieur obliges me by this condescension--but I still regret--"

"It is sufficient. Mademoiselle, you have a presence and manner that

"If, Mademoiselle, Madame du Boccage has said anything to discourage you, may I beg that you will listen to me before refusing to remain?"

She seated herself, but averted her face with unquenchable repugnance; only curiosity kept her there at all. What was the secret

of this extraordinary household?

ventured to look at him again and her shocked loathing lessened. He was like Robert Morrison, not in everything, he had not the Englishman's coarseness, arrogance or careless dress; he was essentially a French aristocrat, a courtier, and in all he did and said was the distinction, the allure of breed. Like the room of the house in which he sat he had an air of the ancien regime. What was he saving? She drew herself together to listen--Ah. banalities, trivialities, his children, his governesses, his servants, the disorders of his household, his wife's ill health. She was bewildered. He was not clever with words, he spoke in cliches and repeated himself. One sentence leapt from the others and fixed her distracted attention "I want you to take entire charge. Mademoiselle--expenses, nurses, maids, amusements--you will have the first floor entirely to yourself--"

As the Duke spoke she listened, however, more to his voice than to his words, for this had an irresistible charm for her; and presently she

"Entire charge? And the mother?"

"She will see the children for half an hour in the morning-otherwise you will manage absolutely alone."

Unlimited power! In such an establishment! I must not be a fool

again. I must forget he is like that miserable Englishman--at least I will find out more-"I regret, Monsieur, I could not accept a position that would be the means of separating mother and children. I could not live apart--with

the whole responsibility."

"I shall always be available. You can consult me whenever you wish. I

take the warmest interest in the education of my children."

Again the governess murmured:

"And the mother?"

"Neither her health nor her temperament permit her to interfere. She will be only too happy to leave everything to you."

Mademoiselle Debelleyme raised her eyebrows; it was now perfectly clear to her why there had been six governesses in three years at the Faubourg St. Honore. It was not in the least likely, she reflected rapidly, that she would be more fortunate than her predecessors. A

definite refusal was on her lips, but she hesitated because of the charm of M. du Boccage's voice.

She raised her eyes from the flowery wreaths on the Aubusson

carpet to where the Duke's hands grasped the gilt foliage of the chair back. Startled, she noted the extreme nervous tension in that grip on the frail woodwork, the power in the wrists and fingers. These were the hands, not of an idle gentleman, but a man of enormous strength.

She looked up into his face. His eyes, under the thick blond lashes, regarded her steadily, and she saw in their depths something of the expression she had so often tried to disquise in her own. For a

second two fellow spirits welcomed each other, then the glances fell apart; he was the Duke again and she the new governess in his household.

But she had made up her alert, adroit mind; this man with whom she would have to deal, to consult with every day, might be hatefully like Robert Morrison, but he was also possessed of exquisite manners,

great physical strength and capable (she was instinctively sure) of profound duplicity. This combination attracted her; she asked no

convenient unscrupulousness. She felt excited but preserved a melancholy resolute exterior.

"Well, Monsieur really wishes me to undertake this charge?"

"I have been asking you for the last half-hour. Mademoiselle, to do

so."

Madame."

more from any human being than decorative qualities and a

rose and her glance was at once an appeal and a challenge. "And Monsieur will remember that he persuaded me--and support me in case of--difficulties?"

"You may count on me, Mademoiselle."

"Monsieur realises there are objections--from my point of view?" She

She still appeared to reflect; as she slowly buttoned her tiny glove (how easily both her hands could have lain in one of the large palms of M. du Boccage!) she observed, casually, the white mask of the Cupidon that had startled her before. Certainly there was something sinister in that marble face, as if the malicious god tipped his barbs with poison.

Mademoiselle Broc, lean, vigorous, elderly, poured out bitter gossip as she showed the new governess over the floor reserved for the children and their staff; her eager spite flowed out like the steady rush of water falling from an upturned vase.

"Very well. Monsieur, I will stay. I will attempt to please Monsieur--and

The household was impossible, an inferno, Mademoiselle Debelleyme would find that out for herself--of course she would not

Debelleyme would find that out for herself--of course she would not be able to manage, not be able to stay, who could!

idle, insolent gossips, the servants did what they pleased, the robbery, the waste, was sinful!

Mademoiselle Broc named everyone in the sumptuous household and gave each one a bad character.

"And the Duke?" asked the new governess, quietly.

Mademoiselle Broc had nothing but praise for the Duke; he had been charming to her, kind, considerate, the children adored himbut what could he do? Whenever he tried to interfere Madame made a scene; sometimes it was clear that he was driven half distracted—

The Duchess was sick, hysterical, wildly jealous, unbalanced: Matilde, her maid from Normandy was a toady and a spy, the children were spoiled, the household out of hand, the nurses were

"Madame and Monsieur du Boccage do not agree, then? It is an unhappy marriage? Why?"

It was clear from the confused venom of Mademoiselle Broc's reply

that was why he was trying to take the children away from their mother because he was sure the little ones were being ruined by this perpetual disorder--whenever Madame came near them there was

trouble.

It was clear from the confused venom of Mademoiselle Broc's reply that she did not know; there was no definite scandal, merely a clash of temperaments, a disagreement over the education of the children-but what did it matter? The household, the displaced governess insisted was an inferno!

"Which you have helped to make, you old fool," thought Lucille Debelleyme. "I must, of course, find out the truth for myself but, unfortunately the truth is generally what one does not find out."

unfortunately, the truth is generally what one does not find out."

She was only half listening to the tirade of Mademoiselle Broc. her

Champs Elysees...a sharp difference from the little room with the drugget square, the hard bed, the cracked mirror, of Belgrave Square.

"I'll stay here," thought Lucille Debelleyme, "as long as human ingenuity can contrive it."

Mademoiselle Broc continued to assail her ears with a tumult of involved, petty and sordid complaints.

"Don't you think," rebuked the new governess with gentle authority, "that we should not gossip about our employers? And that we should always speak respectfully about Madame la Duchesse?"

attention was distracted by the comforts, the splendours of the apartments which were to be under her sole charge. With greedy pleasure she noted every luxury; two rooms for herself, furnished like the bedchamber and boudoir of a gentlewoman, a pianette, a harp, a desk, flowers, pictures, a lovely view on to the tree tops of the

"On the contrary," he replied with his ready, amiable smile, "I believe that she will do very well."

"Oh no! She is not in the least the sort of person I expected. Really,

"My dear Camille," said Madame du Boccage carefully, "I am sure

that Mademoiselle Debelleyme will not suit us."

Madame Faustin quite deceived me. She is too young for such a responsibility—and that cold, English type!"

"She is a Parisienne."

"Who is she, really?"

"Of a good family who was ruined at the Restoration, her

testimonials were sufficient. We will give her a trial at least."

D'Aumale and De Nemours, to the races on the Champ de Mars where the colours of Rothschild would compete with those of de Morny and de Pontalba. He looked very elegant in his correct English clothes; the Anglophilia now the height of the fashion suited him exactly, for he was of the type that his countrymen called "un lord brittanique."

His wife looked at him frowning.

"Believe me, Camille. she will not do--Mademoiselle Broc came to me immediately complaining of her--"

He waited patiently for his wife's answer to this, but he had an air of being detained; she had indeed intercepted him in the antechamber as he was about to leave to accompany the Royal Princes. M.M.

is prejudiced. All the trouble lies in these perpetual recriminations. Has Mademoiselle Debelleyme complained of anything?"
"No."

"Mademoiselle Broc has been displaced--it is conceivable that she

"Give her, then, at least a trial, my dear Fanny. Are you coming to the ball at the Tuileries to-night? M. Guizot would like a brilliant display to impress those ridiculous Arab chiefs."

"I am sorry. I am not well enough."

"A pity." M. du Boccage approached his wife and kissed her lightly on the brow with cold, firm lips; she watched him cross the sanded court and disappear under the delicate, waying shadow of the

courtyard and disappear under the delicate, waving shadow of the lilacs. The sunshine made his hair shine like pale metal under his jauntily adjusted top-hat.

Madame du Boccage sighed in a bewildered fashion; she was a

Lucille Debelleyme, having resolved to remain in the Faubourg St. Honore, now seriously considered how to do so; she used all the mingled prudence and audacity of a general planning a campaign and enjoyed the exercise of certain qualities she possessed that. hitherto, had had no scope. In a few days she had summed up the position of affairs as accurately as her sources of information would permit. What Mademoiselle Broc had said of the disorder in the household was true. Everything was badly, wastefully run: the servants gossiped, idled and divided themselves into cliques, there was an atmosphere of unrest: the frequent lavish entertainments at which Royalty were received were extravagant but neither well-run nor successful; the children, pretty and charming in themselves, were over-indulged in one direction, neglected in another and drawn into the intrigues of nurses and governesses. Madame's chaplain, the Abbe Galle, was very frequently on the scene and interfered too much in the household. Madame's reckless charities brought hordes of beggars about the place, many of whom imposed shamelessly on her easy bounty. Against all this put these facts: the Duke liked order for its own sake and he was anxious not to waste a sou, because he was absorbed

woman who would be found at a loss in every situation that life can

offer

title, but he had a mother, a brother and three sisters to provide for, and to maintain his position and revive the splendours of Javiaux du Boccage, built by the Marechal de Villars out of the spoils of war, his wife's huge fortune was necessary to him. He was, unusually so for

in the restoration of Javiaux du Boccage which he had begun on a lavish scale. He had come into a vast property and a magnificent

neither the Abbe Galle nor the paupers whom he brought in his train. Madame du Boccage was generous, impulsive, romantic, sentimental, tactless, uncontrolled; by the very strength of her affection for them she upset her children. She could not be with them for five minutes without introducing a distressing emotional tension or provoking a scene. She was really in ill health and took a good deal of opium. It was no wonder that she and her husband had their disagreements.

his rank, fond of his children, anxious for their good and passionately desirous of a household orderly, peaceful, cheerful in which they could nourish in perfect harmony; also he was Voltairean and liked

The governess wished that she could put her finger on that.

How far did these disagreements go?

But she was shut away from those apartments on the rez de chaussee where Monsieur and Madame du Boccage adjusted their differences. It had been a romantic love match, they had had nine children: not even scandal gave M. du Boccage a mistress. No doubt, despite the unhappy friction from petty matters that

disordered their household this couple, young and charming, were still secret, if intermittent, lovers.

"I shall have to be very careful," thought the new governess, "I expect she has the last word in all disputes -- the wife, the mother -- and the bulk of the money hers! Shall I attach myself to her? Champion her?

Become her confidante, help her torment him-the man so like

Robert Morrison? That would be the strongest position for me. She is a weak fool and I could soon get a hold on her--oust the Abbe, the

maid, the paupers--make myself indispensable. Of course he is infinitely more attractive, but to vex her in order to please him would It was the King's birthday, and Paris rejoiced in the warm May weather. There was much to rejoice at indeed, fifteen years of a peaceful monarchy under this citizen King, with his liberal ideas, who despised military force, who ruled by affection alone--not King of France, but King of the French.

In the morning, concerts were held under the high windows of the Tuileries, aubades for the King; from the Invalides cannons echoed round the new tomb of Napoleon I, saluting the heir of the House of Orleans who had espoused the cause of the Sovereign people in 1789. Among the crowd that pressed in the streets to enjoy the excitements of the fete du roi were many who could recall the execution of Louis XVII, the First Republic, the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire, the Restoration of the Bourbons, the death of Louis XVIII, the flight of Charles X. All these changes and tumults were now in the past; France rejoiced under the mild, wise rule of

be too dangerous. If she resolved that I was to go he would not be

able to resist."

The courtyard of the Tuileries was blocked by the carriages of the aristocracy, the ministry hastening to offer their congratulations to His Majesty.

Outside the gates a respectful crowd listened to the concert given by

Louis Philippe, all was prosperous, tolerant, secure.

Boccage, occupied by his elder children and the new governess,

Mademoiselle Debelleyme enjoyed the spectacle and her own part
in it sitting at ease in the handsome carriage with the magnificent

the Garde Nationale; among the equipages was that of M. du

in it, sitting at ease in the handsome carriage with the magnificent escutcheon on the gleaming panels and liveried servants on the box,

exertion of all her charm, all her art, she had won them), in the midst of the bustle of the animated crowd, in front of the palace. People noticed her: never before had she been so elegantly attired in such elegant surroundings. The acquaintances of M. du Boccage who stopped to salute the children glanced at her more than once, paying the tribute of curiosity to her distinction, her composure, her charming appearance. Under her aloft decorum Lucille Debelleyme was pulsing to a nameless enthusiasm: Paris, the spring, the edge of great events! To be part of it, even as a spectator, to be in touch with all this life and movement...she thought of one man among the many crowding in the antechambers of the King-the man who had, a few days ago, spoken to her so anxiously, so intimately, who every morning gave her her instructions with a kindness, a consideration, a courtesv which she had never received before, this grand seigneur, this friend of royalty, this blond athlete with the allure of a cavalier of Lancret-this eniama that she believed she would in a short time be able to solve. Amid loval acclamations the Royal Family appeared on the balcony of the palace. The King, that man of many adventures, the dashing voung victor of Valmy, the grave young school-teacher of Reicheneau, the ageing exile, now heavy with the painful bulk of disease, but still an imposing figure in the white trousers, tight coat, high braided collar, stiff epaulettes and azure riband--the Queen. spirited vet melancholy, still overwhelmed by the tragedy of the sudden death of her eldest son, and that group of young Princes and their wives who seemed to promise a flourishing succession to the House of Orleans.

As the King bowed, his cocked, feathered hat in his hand, a raven

in the company of these pretty, eager children (already, by the

people stopped talking, stopped moving, and watched the raven, which, an ugly shadow in the brightness of the scene, rose and flew three times above the balcony where the members of the House of Orleans were grouped.

The governess was not superstitious, but superstitions amused her; she narrowly watched the people who seemed to draw a breath, then let it out in a sigh--or a hiss? A sound of regret or of menace?

The band finished playing a melody from "La Barcarolle" the last success of M. Auber from the Opera Comique, and someone, somewhere, raised a cry for the hymn of the people, "La Marseillaise," the fearful song of 1793--a slight hesitation and it was played. The governess of M. du Boccage watched the people intently; were they as satisfied, as peaceful as they appeared? Did they not secretly long to try again the fortune of a bloody revolution--to see the heads of those who called themselves their masters drop

rose and fluttered above the busbies of the Garde Nationale, hesitated, then circled round the Orleans flag in the midst of the

Mademoiselle Debelleyme was conscious of a sudden tension in the crowd: she knew that the bird was believed to foretell misfortune. The

soldiers

into the basket of the guillotine?

of the relations they had displaced.

The playing of the song of the people was short; there was a clamour for repetition, but the soldiers ignored this and broke into the sweet strains of an aria from Richard en Palestine—the King left the balcony

The delicate nostrils of the governess expanded; she recalled her inherited hatred of the Bourbons which mingled with her rebellion as an outcast against any settled state of society; gladly would she have seen that family bowing from the balcony of the Tuileries sent the way

"Is it not all charming and agreeable, my darlings?" smiled the governess to the two excited little girls by her side. "Now you may each have some sugared almonds and we will drive along the river before going home."

Lucille Debelleyme had been a fortnight in the Faubourg St. Honore and had sized up all the conflicting characters with whom she had to

This resolution cost her a sigh, a pang of regret. M. du Boccage was so much more interesting than his wife, disliked and despised by the governess--but it was obvious that the final decision would lie with the mistress, not with the master of the establishment; better toady to the Duchess than leave; better cringe to a woman who could defend, protect her, than rely on a man who at the first murmur would be

deal. She decided that it would be only possible for her to remain in this very desirable post if she could gain the confidence of the Duchess, who regarded her, she knew, with an increasing hostility.

forced to abandon her.

but the raven continued to hover over the flag of Orleans.

Madame du Boccage returned late from a soiree given by the Duchesse D'Orleans; she was sitting wearily in her chamber, idly regarding herself in the mirror on her dressing-table while Matilde took off the superb parure of diamonds that had been her father's wedding gift to Isabella Rosa Frediani—(Fanny to her husband).

The Duchess was startled.

"Mademoiselle! Is anything the matter with the children?"

when a discreet tap announced the governess.

"Madame, they are all in perfect health and asleep in the charge of

The governess crossed the rich carpet and stood respectfully before her mistress.

The noble brunette beauty of Madame du Boccage was finely set off by her crimson robe de parade, her glittering jewels, the display of her smooth shoulders and arms, the garland of purple roses that took the place of the matron's cap on her shining black hair. All the light in the room was on her dressing-table and all this was centred on the

splendid Corsican; the slender figure of the governess in her prunecoloured silk remained effaced in the warm shadows beyond this

"I should have told you if I had had cause for complaint.

"That--no! But satisfaction is another thing, is it not? I am very

"I have had no opportunity of talking to you. Madame, I very much

wish to know if you are satisfied with my services?"

the nurses--"

"Well. then, Mademoiselle?"

circle of illumination

Mademoiselle."

"More?"

The Duchess said, quietly:

desirous of pleasing you, Madame."

"You appear to be an excellent instructress."
"I would wish to be something more."

"The care of five children includes so much besides instructing them.

Only the mother can realise how much! If I might consult you often,

A slight spasm passed over the watchful face of the Duchess; her eyes were dimmed by tears. Touche! thought the governess, but Madame du Boccage replied evenly:

"You see M. du Boccage every day, do you not? And take your instructions from him, as was arranged? You understood from the first that my health was feeble, my social duties pressing."

Madame? Put before you my little plans and suggestions? Interest

you in the affairs, the pleasures of the children?"

Matilde, arranging the big brilliant drops for throat and ears in the velvet case, knocked over a satin box and glanced malevolently over it as she picked it up at the governess, who thought instantly: "The

"Madame is too generous, so sympathetic; the Abbe Galle, the poor are so full of her praises! Just a little of the time given to piety taken

for the children would make all the difference to my task--"

maid knows everything--but I shall never find it out from her--she hates me and is loyal--but surely I can oust a peasant?"

"No doubt," sighed the Duchess putting a hand to her forehead as if

it ached, "your task is hard. I feared that you would find it too much--"
"It is not. I have never been so happy anywhere. But I should like the approval of Madame."

approval of Madame."

As the other woman did not reply the governess continued more boldly, yet always with insinuating sweetness.

"I am in all at the service of Madame."

The Duchess raised soft, candid, troubled eyes to study the other woman; the clear, cold glance of the governess said: "I know your household is divided. I am willing to be your ally against your

And the gaze of the Duchess replied: "I believe you to be sly and false. I will not give you my confidence. And I do not intrigue with my inferiors."

Slipping her broad sapphire bracelets from her fine wrists. Madame

"I have had no reason to reprove you. Mademoiselle--you say you are happy. Well, let us try how affairs work--a little longer? And now

The governess understood instantly that not only was her alliance refused but that the Duchess did not intend to retain her services

husband. Between us we can circumvent him at every turn."

du Boccage smiled:

forgive me. I am so sleepy."

secret of this marriage?

indefinitely. The maid's face darkened with triumph which helped to inflame the burst of rage and hate in the heart of Lucille Debelleyme as she withdrew respectfully, apologising for her intrusion.

At the door her glance went round the extravagant room opulent with every luxury, and rested on the magnificent bed raised on gilt steps, flounced with embroidered satin, hung with curtains of Brussels lace

that the flying figures of gilt puttini attached to a massive baldaquin; she glanced at the two sumptuous pillows side by side; what was the

"Good night, Mademoiselle," came the husky voice of the Duchess, hastening her dismissal, reproving her hesitation.

This so goaded the exasperated mood of the governess that she had, like a quick dart in her mind, a wild wicked thought...if that heavy baldaquin could fall in the night, crushing the woman who slept beneath...

pleasant than this.

Already she was at home in her elegant apartments, already she had introduced order, serenity, discipline into her little world and secured the grateful allegiance of the children; already amid the confusion of the mismanaged household her department ran smoothly, without

friction or dispute.

The governess moved slowly down the corridor, repulsed, defeated, her alliance refused, before her the prospect of another departure, another period of servitude in a place that was sure to be far less

And must all this be given up because that other woman did not like her, would not trust her?

Faint with rage Lucille Debelleyme leant against the wall of the corridor

corridor.

"She has everything, youth, beauty, wealth, rank, a charming husband, delicious children--a powerful father, hosts of friends--I

have just myself, possess nothing, have no one to help me. Possess nothing? I have also beauty, youth--perhaps more wit. Dare I match myself against her?"

The next day the domestic storms that always muttered below the

The next day the domestic storms that always muttered below the horizon in the Hotel du Boccage broke into the open. There had been an entertainment at which the Duc de Nemours had been present and everything had gone awry; the service, the food, the

music, the lights. The Duke had spoken sharply to the Major Domo, he to the housekeeper, she to the cook, the house had rung with

ne to the nousekeeper, she to the cook, the nouse had rung with recriminations. The Duchess, with reddened eyes, had shut herself into her apartments; everyone shifted responsibility on to someone

Mademoiselle Lucille Debelleyme was a good gambler, she knew when to play for high stakes. Twenty-four hours after this fracas, some time before her usual daily consultation with the Duke was due, she knocked at the door of his apartments, which, to the right of the entrance chamber, were separated from those of the Duchess by a narrow corridor.

else and blamed some invisible daemon for creating this devilish

disorder

intruder.

He had risen from a light green bureau, charmingly painted with flowers. The room was done up in the gayest manner of the

M. du Boccage himself opened to her, and seemed, she thought, relieved to see her, as if he had expected some more unwelcome

Regency, and seemed, even more than the other apartments of the hotel, an expression of his personality, virile, passionate, but carefully masked by an affectation of careless elegance that touched the appearance, but the appearance only, of effeminacy.

The governess in spotless severe muslin, stood in a bar of sunshine.

The governess, in spotless, severe muslin, stood in a bar of sunshine that fell through the pale silk curtains and made an indiscreet gleam in her long curls. What she was about to do was the result of desperation on her part and she was mentally fumbling her way in a situation that she only half understood, but her air was serene, melancholy and resolute.

"You are in some difficulty. Mademoiselle?" asked the Duke pleasantly but with the apprehensive air of a man who has too many people coming to him with difficulties. He stood by his desk; under his hand was a portfolio of white, gilded parchment on which lay a letter evidently just taken from the envelope.

"Your department is the only one in the house that is well run--"

She had hoped that he would say something like that; instantly she took her advantage.

"I am in no difficulty whatever. Monsieur," said the governess. "I hope

I give satisfaction in my duties?"

"Yes."

"That is the point I wished to raise. Madame du Boccage is overburdened with duties—the poor, the church, her poor health, it is marvellous she does what she does—I feel already for her a devotion, a respect!—I would wish to help her—never have I had a mistress so considerate."

The Duke regarded her steadily from under his thick fair lashes, the smile on his sensual mouth was expressionless, but the governess

was encouraged.

"Pray be seated. Mademoiselle, and tell me what you mean."

She gracefully sank into the light chair behind her, she had the

delicious sensation of being perfectly understood without the help of words.

"Would it be any assistance to Madame du Boccage if I was, without

troubling her at all, to undertake the management of the household?"
"You could do it. Mademoiselle?"

He regarded her thoughtfully; she still was not quite sure of him, not quite free from a fear that he might deeply resent her effrontery, yet

quite free from a fear that he might deeply resent her effrontery, ye she felt, somehow, secure.

"No, Mademoiselle, you do not presume. I am, on the contrary, grateful for your offer."

He closed the portfolio and carelessly flung it into a drawer of his bureau; the governess marked which drawer. Henri, the valet de chambre, entered from an inner door to ask if his master was going to the hunt that day? Mademoiselle noted, behind his shoulder, an elegant bedchamber; M. du Boccage was not, then, so uxorious that he must always sleep beneath the baldaquin supported by amorini, draped with lace curtains where his wife took her repose.

While he spoke to his servant, the governess, whose eyes were never idle, noticed an engraving of a portrait hanging near the window of a soldier in armour, wearing a huge dust-blond peruke knotted with a black ribbon, who bore an unmistakable likeness to M. du Boccage: the same firm, blunt features, the same full, smiling.

She saw him look down at and flick over the letter on the desk. She sensed that this letter was important to him and was very anxious to know what it was; she rose as if in agitation, and approached the

"If Monsieur thinks I have presumed--" she contrived to read the first line of the letter and notice the feminine handwriting--"My dear

Camille, Limplore you--": he had then a mistress?

desk

sensual mouth, beautifully formed, the same sweet expression, in the eyes that look which Mademoiselle Lucille interpreted as a profound duplicity, and, grasping a baton strewn with fleur de lis, the same powerful hand, indicating a brutal, almost vulgar strength.

The Duke noted the young woman's glance, and, as the servant left, he said:

"An ancestor of mine, Charles O'Brien, Vicomte de Clare--an Irish

"It is a fascinating personality, Monsieur."

"You think so? He had a bad reputation--for cruelty, I believe, but in those days, bah!"

exile."

He broke off; she knew that he expressed himself ill on serious matters, had few words and found it an effort to use more than the light, idle sentences at which he was an adept, therefore she waited, patiently, respectfully.

"Eh, well. Mademoiselle," he brought out at length, "you have perceived the disorders in my household. I confess that they torment me, for I like a peaceful life. You appear to have energy, discretion—a gift of management—let us try what you can do—"

The governess cast down her eyes to hide her triumph. "Monsieur will support me?"

"Naturally--if I have given you authority, I shall support you."

In a fortnight it was done; by tact, by firmness, by the use of her gift of authority that was often resented, never resisted, by sheer talent for organisation and the experience that had come from long, ironic

observation of where other women went wrong, the governess had transformed the establishment of M. du Boccage. Some servants had been dismissed, some reformed, the place of Mademoiselle Broc had been taken by a stolid, effaced, hard-working Swiss, Mademoiselle Heller; the Major Domo, who had taken ill to the

domination of the governess, had gone and in his place was an Italian, excellently trained, keenly anxious to please the woman to whom he owed his splendid post.

M. du Boccage could lead, at ease, that life of voluptuous idleness, of charming social amusement, of domestic felicity with his lovely children that he so enjoyed.
And Madame du Boccage had ample leisure in which to administer

her charities, attend her Masses, confer with the Abbe Galle, nurse

There was no more dust on the pelmets, no more faded flowers in the vases, no longer did the sound of quarrels come from the kitchens; the accounts went down, the entertainments were smoothly successful, the equipages, the lackeys smarter than before; the whole establishment had that air of easy finish that hitherto it had

lacked

her languishing body.

But the trouble in her dark eyes, the cloud on her broad brow did not lessen; she was often shut for hours in her splendid apartments alone with Matilde, her maid.

And when she showed herself among her now perfectly run

household her suffering appearance evoked the pity of her servants to whom she was no longer of much importance, but merely an

invalid who had relegated all her duties to a dependant.

Mademoiselle Lucille was not wholly occupied in her labours; now that she had surrounded herself with reliable underlings she had a

great deal of leisure. This was devoted to the children.

There were visits to the grandfather, the magnificent Marechal Comte Frediani del Marco, to the grandmother, the blind Dowager Madame du Boccage who lived with her son. Comte Edouard.

Montlosier du Boccage a position of wealth and splendour.

And it was not difficult for a clever young woman to find constant amusements for five lively children, the eldest of whom was only twelve, when she had so many resources and unlimited money at her

disposal. The little Marquis, Philippe Joseph, was as delighted as his eldest sisters, Isabelle, Cesarine, to visit General Tom Thumb again and again at the Theatre du Vaudeville, or to drive in the Bois in the hopes of seeing him in his azure carriage drawn by the six

recently betrothed to the exquisite Mademoiselle Schickler; to the pretty, blonde married aunts, all of whom had made brilliant marriages when the Revolution of July brought the House of

white ponies. Even the two younger children, Gaston, Laure, enjoyed the fairy pantomime, La Biche au bois, at the Porte St. Martin and they all looked forward to the opening of the Hippodrome, which they were driven to see being built at the barriere de L'Etoile, and delighted in the concerts. marionette shows and diversions

Mademoiselle Lucille never failed to find. There were brief visits to Tortoni's, to the restaurant Royale, for an ice, a shop, in the company of the dandies, and the society men and women; and Mademoiselle

was always so gay, kind, loving and charming that the happy children did not notice that they were seeing scarcely anything of their mother.

* * * * *

M. Gavaudan Clery welcomed his granddaughter with grim sarcasm to his small house at St. Cloud. He told her frankly that he was surprised that such a fine lady as she had become should trouble to

surprised that such a fine lady as she had become should trouble to visit a poor wretch like himself.

isit a poor wretch like himself. When one has only a single relative in the world, one likes to keer

"When one has only a single relative in the world, one likes to keep an eye on him," replied Lucille, coolly. "How do I know, mon vieux bonhomme, that you have not a neat little fortune hidden away?"

Boccage. "Besides." she added. "I must not make myself too much a slave--I must insist on a holiday now and then--a whole day, I said, to visit relations." "You try to make yourself indispensable?"

She seated herself at the table and helped herself to a portion of his meagre meal; this poverty struck her after the luxury of the Hotel du

"Naturally. Never have I been so well paid, so well treated--had so much power." "Take care you are not too clever," warned the old man sourly. "These people are of the great world. It is very strange that they

should have let a nobody like you assume such a position." "I am very careful. I work underground. I guarrel with no one. M. du Boccage is pleased with the order that I have brought about."

"And Madame du Boccage?"

"She is devoted to the poor and the priests. And always ill. I see very little of her."

"Is she happy with her husband?"

"I wish I knew," said Lucille sincerely. For all her art, she had not been able to penetrate the secrets of the rez de chaussee where

husband and wife resided, or break down the loyalty of Matilde, the Norman maid, who was the confidante of her mistress, "He always

speaks of her with warm respect--they have the appearance of the utmost felicity--but she is a tiresome woman--"

"Is there another--a mistress?"

locked. "At any rate, he is very discreet. So what does it matter?" "I thought." sneered M. de Clerv. "that you might be enamoured of him vourself." "Bah, I am not that sort of fool! I play for respect, decorum, I make myself useful. He could easily find a pretty woman for a mistress, he

could not so easily find a woman to do what I do for him. In this case

"I don't think so," replied Lucille, thoughtfully, remembering the letter beginning--"My dear Camille"; she had not yet had an opportunity to see if the Duke kept the drawer, into which he had thrown that letter.

Lucille's clear eves gave a formidable flash.

"You play the game of an adventuress."

virtue pays!"

"And if I do? Good God! have I not been trained to be an adventuress? If there is no place for me in society, must I not make one?"

"You fly too high," objected the old man. "Take care you do not lose

your head."

"That I shall never do." She smiled coolly. "Tell me. Grandfather, what do you know of these Montlosier Boccage?" "Nothing that will help you much. I saw them married in '30. By the

Bishop of Beauvais it was, in the chapel of the Luxembourg--a fine

sum of money it must have cost! You never saw such a display! She was a beautiful woman---eyes, hair like jet, the figure of a goddess!"

"That has gone--she has had nine children."

a glass of milk, hesitating--bah!"

"He has changed." smiled Lucille.

"One understands. Poor devil, married at seventeen, by his old miser of a father who nearly went mad with joy when the great heiress took a fancy to him. Nine children, fifteen years of cooing in a dove's nest at thirty-two! The fool, who can't have the spirit of a louse, must feel himself a little ridiculous!"

"I believe he does--but we don't know how he employs his leisure."

"So much the worse for her. He looked like a girl--a stripling, pale as

"Jealous, you think?"

"What do you suppose? That is why I said-you had better be careful-

"No doubt she does! A Corsican!"

"I have been. She is really very wealthy, is she not?"

"Two million now and eventually the Frediani fortune and the estate in Corsica! Her old fox of a father! I remember him at Austerlitz. But he soon changed over to the Bourbons. Now if I had done that, things might have been different with me--but no, I must be loyal to the

might have been different with me--but no, I must be loyal to the Emperor!"

"M. Frediani is a very imposing, handsome man, devoted to his

grandchildren."

"Eh. maybe! I remember when he was ordered to guell the revolt in

"Eh, maybe! I remember when he was ordered to quell the revolt in Poland and sent the message--'All is quiet in Warsaw,' and so it

Poland and sent the message--'All is quiet in Warsaw,' and so was, for he had massacred the lot of 'em!"

small-featured fine faces, one so wrinkled, one so smooth, had the same expression of heartless amusement; but M. Clery soon returned to his ill humour.

Lucille joined in her grandfather's laughter: for a moment the two

Take care what lies you tell him. he'd find you out at once."

"And doesn't M. du Boccage want to know who you are?"

"He has not asked. I have an answer ready if he should."

"I know. Well, you can't be any help to me, and I believe I can contrive very well by myself."

The old soldier turned his dim. malicious glance on the neat shape.

the lovely face, the elegant curls of his granddaughter. She was spending every sou of her salary on clothes and was finely, if simply, dressed; never before had she had such an air of self-assurance, of modest, but serene confidence.

"A pity," he sneered, "that you were born the wrong side of the sheets! You might have yourself been the mistress of a house in the Faubourg St. Honore!"

"A pity," he sneered, "that you were born the wrong side of the sheets! You might have yourself been the mistress of a house in the Faubourg St. Honore!"

He chuckled to see her irritation. She decided that she would not come to see the wicked old rogue again as she restored her equanimity by gazing out of the window at the noble beauty of the trees in the Park of St. Cloud.

equanimity by gazing out of the window at the noble beauty of the trees in the Park of St. Cloud.

But she felt tolerably satisfied when she returned to the Hotel du Boccage; she felt that she had analysed and controlled to her own advantage the world in which she had found herself: what more could

cleverness do?

Boccage and I have decided—the elder boy will have a tutor—go perhaps to school—the girls—I will see to myself. We go to Javiaux du Boccage soon—or perhaps to Locroi. I will pay your salary for the year—I will give you—yet another excellent testimonial."

"I am to leave, Madame?"

"If you please."

When Mademoiselle Debelleyme reached her charming little apartment, she found the Duchess waiting for her in the spring

Madame du Boccage, who seemed very nervous, began to speak at

"Mademoiselle, I must regret--a sudden change of plan--M. du

twilight and her sense of security was rudely shaken.

once

"At once?"

"If you please."

"May I ask why?"

"I have given you my reasons."

"They are scarcely sufficient, Madame," replied the governess, quietly, "for a sudden dismissal. An insulting dismissal. My character is my sole possession."

"I have said that I will give you an excellent testimonial."

"Even that will hardly coyer my sudden departure from your house."

"It must." The Duchess rose; both her dignity and the emotion it

"May I know the cause of my offence? I have tried hard to please."

"Too hard. Mademoiselle!" murmured Madame du Boccage. "You are a good instructress, a fine manager, but your personality, no doubt in itself admirable, is not one I care to have placed in power-

"Ah! But I have acted under the instructions of M. du Boccage."

"I know. You are blameless. He admits his mistake. He hopes you

cloaked were formidable. "If you have no other place ready, no

relatives in Paris, you may lodge with the Santerres."

such full power--over my children."

will leave--to-morrow "

situation which must end."

And she was gone.

governess recoil against the wall and pull at her fingers in a display of passion such as she seldom allowed herself.

"I have the right to know; Madame, the reason for this sudden decision."

"Oh, Mademoiselle!" cried the Duchess in generous scorn, "you are no fool. You know perfectly well that you have created an intolerable

There was an unescapable finality about these words that made the

Mademoiselle Debelleyme packed the neat fine clothes, the pretty trifles into which she had put her last sou, filled with a rage that made

trities into which she had put her last sou, filled with a rage that made her feel physically sick.

Rage chiefly against the man; she had exerted herself to serve, to

intolerable wife. His image fused with that of Robert Morrison, that other man who had betrayed her, and such loathing shook her that she had to lean on the edge of the trunk, her cold hands pressed to her smarting eyes.

The servants, even those who owed their places to her, now avoided her; all her power, so painfully acquired by hard work, tact and charm, had gone in a few hours; she was merely a governess who had been dismissed.

Only the children remained loyal. Their wild distress was her one triumph. but Madame du Boccage had taken them and

please him, she had really toiled to carry out his wishes, he had professed himself grateful and then he had abandoned her, with contemptible weakness, to the stupid, senseless spite of his

The Duke, of course, was out of the track of the storm; he had gone to the Tuileries.

"The coward, the miserable, false coward," she sobbed, kneeling by the trunk. Only pride, only a fear of collapsing before the spiteful grins of the people who had flattered her vesterday, not her to her feet

Mademoiselle Heller to her own apartments; the governess was left

alone to make the preparations for her departure.

of the people who had flattered her yesterday, got her to her feet.

She then noticed, on the table where the Duchess had left it the evening before, the envelope containing the testimonial Madame du Boccage had written.

Boccage had written.

The force of the governess' anguish was suddenly stayed; she recognised the writing. It was that of the letter beginning--'My dear Camille' that she had seen the Duke toss into his desk.

So! his wife wrote to him?

the beginning of a protest, a complaint--or a supplication--"Ah, no wonder she is jealous of every woman who comes near him! They quarrel: they are, perhaps, separated--but how come that he. the miserable coward, allows her to dominate?" She wished, with an almost frantic passion, that she could read the letters shut in the

pretty green desk--letters from wife to husband, living in the same

What terms were they on, then? The one line she had read had been

She caught herself up. The secrets of the Hotel du Boccage were no longer of any consequence to her; she was leaving--with, as the Duchess had so ironically remarked--"another excellent testimonial." All her talents, her efforts, her charms, her intelligence had been, as

usual, of no avail. "Who." she asked herself, furiously, "am I? Lucille Clery? Mary Showler? Lucille Debellevme? Nameless--Oh. God! Can I do nothing against this intolerable fate?"

It seemed that perhaps she might. A well-known step interrupted her.

and the Duke entered. Never had she seen him so animated. "You are leaving, Mademoiselle? What is this?"

"You did not know. Monsieur? Madame dismissed me last night."

"I did not know."

She saw that he was as shaken by wrath as she was herself and a deep joy displaced her rage; but she continued her packing.

house--

"Monsieur, pardon me. I have so little time---" "You are not actually going?"

"What else? I have been dismissed."

"It is a mistake. Surely you did not think that I had sanctioned this?"

She read in these words a nervous challenge, and instantly she lied:
"I believed you knew nothing about it. And I thought it best to leave

"Why?"

"Since I do not please Madame, I cannot stay."

before you knew."

"She is a sick woman. She does not know what she says--a Corsican, impulsive! I ask you to stay." He looked pale as he added:

"I am master here--this is my establishment."

He paced about the pretty boudoir with the formidable grace of a panther preparing for the spring. The governess had a glimpse of the man whom she had always suspected him to be and she thrilled with

pleasure because she was instantly lifted up in her own esteem, she was no longer a helpless creature contemptuously cast out of a

dependant's place, but a woman who had caused trouble, who hadfound a champion, who was, above all, being treated as an equal by this great gentleman. She pressed her advantage.

"I could not stay. Even a poor servant (I have never been able to

"Do not speak of yourself like that," he said, harshly. "A woman of your education, gifts, presence--"

"I have never, Monsieur, found that these advantages have helped me--" Sincerity gave a sharp edge to her words; a sleepless night,

desperate, hunted creature at bay and ready to bite; but a wild hope filled her that in this powerful man she had really found a protector.

He stood close to her and said:

strong emotion had exhausted her, she had lost much of her smooth, assured calm. There was something in her then of the woman who had recoiled from the drunken sleep of Robert Morrison, the

"There could be no mistake in what Madame said--"

"I beg you to remain, Mademoiselle. Think of this as a mistake--"

"Leave that to me."

The large clear eves of the governess, brilliant with a cold sparkle.

turned on him a steady look; how far would he stand by her, how far dare she go?

"I can only stay if madame asks me to do so---"

"Very well-she will ask you. Already she repents her error."

"Forgive me if I can scarcely believe that, Monsieur. The hostility of

Madame has been too manifest—she has it in her power to make my position odious--I am merely a dependant, Madame has everything--forgive me, but the struggle is too unequal, I must retire from it—" And she continued to put her water-colour sketches, her sheets of music.

her few books, into the trunk. She feared that she was pushing him too far, but it was difficult for her to resist the exquisite pleasure of hearing someone beg her for a favour, she who had always had to do everything in response to commands; not since Robert Morrison's

confident courtship had she heard anyone ask her for anything.

"Where are you going, Mademoiselle?"

"Do you want to go?"

Using the truth with fine effect, she replied:

"No-I am very fond of the children, I like elegance, luxury--but there is something more than these I value--your consideration, your

"I do not know. I have a relative with whom I can stay. No doubt I shall

find another place."

He appeared profoundly moved.

"I have only behaved as you deserve, Mademoiselle."

She looked at him directly, her hand on her bosom; her natural

courtesy. You have treated me as an equal. Perhaps you can

scarcely realise what that means to me."

aptitude for extravagant passion, sweeping drama, that she usually kept so carefully controlled, pointed her words, her gesture.

"You have behaved as no one has behaved to me before, Monsieur.

I am not so spiritless, so crushed that I cannot appreciate that. I will not deny that I had hoped to stay in your household--to show my gratitude---"

"Stay, Mademoiselle, stay--I really entreat you."
"I cannot. I have too much to gain. It would seem self-interest on my

"I cannot. I have too much to gain. It would seem self-interest on my part. And I fear that I have said too much, have appealed to your pity. It is true that I am penniless, friendless, in a most unfortunate position, but I never meant to let you know that. I was wrong to

indulge in the happiness I found here."

She spoke without conscious falsity; there was something in him that drew the truth out of her, and in this case truth served her very well:

clear about was whether he wished her to remain for her own sake, or merely to exert his authority against his wife.

His hesitation ended in an impulsive action that swept away all doubt. He took her cold, trembling hand in his massive grasp, and said:

"If you stay I will see that you are happy; can you trust my promise?"

she was then certain that he wished her to stay. What she was not

"If you think it worth while to make me a promise--"
"I do."

They were close together and he was still holding her hand. His air was not that of a lover, but of a friend, which she valued more. She sensed that here was not a brief, careless intrigue, but something strong, lasting: the man admired her, relied on her, she had too,

appealed to his chivalry, his protective instinct, most subtly flattered a nature afraid of the charge of effeminacy, bitterly fearful of domination.

"I cannot refuse," she said; she gently withdrew her hand, partly because she wished to preserve among her weapons an

irreproachable decorum, partly because his contact disturbed her. He was the first man since Robert Morrison who had physically attracted her--not that she meant to let that trouble her--she had, she thought, all her emotions well in hand.

He sighed with relief.
"That is settled, then, and you will come with us to Javiaux du

Boccage?"

"Wherever you wish, Monsieur, whatever you wish."

gratitude of the pariah whose one good quality lies in a fanatic loyalty to a saviour.

"Continue as you are doing, all goes very well, the children are happy--for the first time! Come to me with everything, you

understand? One must be patient, a little sly, when one seems to concede most one must be most tenacious. You understand?"

This was said with passionate sincerity: she felt the almost ferocious

light lashes; they were to be allies, to confer, to plot, to contrive together. She had not been mistaken--they were akin in spirit and each, from the first, had known it; he offered his hand, she took it--a pact.

M. du Boccage left the governess to empty her trunk, to replace on easels, in portfolios and on shelves her books, her dainty drawings

She did--not so much his words as the look from behind the thick

of flowers, her exquisitely copied music scores. She relaxed into great ease of spirit.

"He will now tell his wife she must ask me to stay! What a triumph! Never have I been so important before! It is a most extraordinary thing that a man in his position should support a governess of six weeks' acquaintance against his wife—I must find out all his

circumstances--I must--more than ever--be very careful."

Madame du Boccage berself brought her children up to their usua

Madame du Boccage herself brought her children up to their usual lessons; she appeared no more suffering, no more languid than usual. Whatever had passed between her and her husband, she

maintained a dignified, almost a casual air, as she said:
"We have. after all. decided that you had better remain for the

caressed little Laure After this brief episode the household of the Faubourg St. Honore swung again into the smooth rhythm it had taken on since the ascendancy of Mademoiselle Debellevme: only perhaps the Duchess remained for even longer periods in her apartments, went

present. Mademoiselle. Philippe is young for a tutor--if you would

"I am happy to be of some service to Madame." And the governess. secretly so secure, permitted herself so clear a glance of cold triumph that the other woman turned aside and hid her face as she

care--"

even more seldom into society and the Duke stayed a little longer every evening with his children in the charming boudoir of the governess, sometimes lingering even after the children had gone to bed. They discovered so many tastes in common: music. painting. letters, topical events interested them both; he was a fine dilettante in many arts, he had a great sense of grandeur and was passionately interested in the costly restoration of Javiaux du Boccage. Mademoiselle Debelleyme was able to understand, to appreciate, to offer enthusiastic sympathy, an intelligent admiration heightened by gratitude, by a hint of awe. Warmed by the first genuine companionship of her life she genuinely sparkled; all the woman she might have been under happier circumstances showed in these

interviews, but she never forgot her tact, her arts, her subordinate position, the need of delicate, spirited flattery. It was no wonder that M. du Boccage prolonged his visits to the nursery floor of his great house.

She resolved that, at all costs, she must read the letters in the green desk. As long as she did not know the exact relations between

hope to remain in this extraordinary, this enchanting, but, I fear, this precarious position." Her eagerly awaited, anxiously sought opportunity arrived: M. and Madame du Boccage were both out, the children driving with Mademoiselle Heller, she herself had affected a slight indisposition and would read in her room. It was the valet de chambre's day off; the other servants would not be likely to spy on her and the hateful Matilde would be enclosed in the apartments of her mistress. But as a last precaution the governess took a book that the Duke had lent her; if caught, she would say that she had come to change this first handsome volume describing the chateaux of France, for the second that would doubtless be of an even more absorbing interest. With the lightest possible of steps, and a watchful eve, the governess crossed the entrance hall, the antechamber, the narrow corridor of the rez de chaussee that separated the apartments of the Duke and the Duchess, and entered, after an unanswered knock, the delightful

husband and wife she was working in a half light. As long as Madame du Boccage had any hold on the Duke she might, in any chance moment of nuptial reconciliation, triumph, and the governess fall—if this fertile woman produced, for instance, another child, what

"Best to know just where I stand, how far I may go, how long I may

might she not exact?

the drawer was not locked--

secrets completely at her mercy.

Adroit, quick, listening for a possible interruption, with her delicate

little room in which stood the green desk. Cautiously she opened the inner door, the bed-chamber was empty; well, then, time to do it--if

It was not, nor was the gilt and white vellum portfolio that was bulging with letters; Mademoiselle Debelleyme stood with another woman's

pages, they breathed passion, rage, lealousy, despair, all the torments of an absorbing love, they were full of every manner of lament, reproach, promise, supplication, and yet all showed a touching dignity, an inexhaustible tenderness. They were the letters of a romantic, pure, noble woman profoundly in love, profoundly tactless, blundering through innocence and excess of feeling, frantically alternating, pleading for, and insisting on, a return of an affection she had hopelessly lost. The governess read with joy these terrible cries of a soul in torment; not a throb of compassion softened her triumph as she rapidly put together the sequence of events in the tragedy of Madame du Boccage. Her husband, married as a boy, had tired, after twelve years and nine children, of the pious sweetness, the clinging passion; the exacting jealousy of his wife. She had tried to utterly hold, dominate, absorb him, to preserve forever the first fervours of the honeymoon: incapable of coquetry, of subterfuge, of any art, enervated by her continual child-bearing, of an impulsive emotional nature, she had resorted to the fatal expedient of reproaches, tears, scenes and the

fingers flicking over page after page, the governess pried, with cold,

There were dozens of letters, they went over years, they covered

hostile curiosity, into the soul of Fanny du Boccage.

man, for three years he had passed the nights in his own rooms, while she anguished, tormented, sleepless, had passed hers in writing these frantic, melodramatic, despairing letters, some of which were half incoherent in a delirium, of misery, desire and insomnia.

The governess winced for a second at some of the lines—drew back

as if she had been scorched.

piteous stupidity of espionage And the result had been a separation. For three years the unhappy woman had been the widow of a living

"Mon Dieu, how fearful to love a man like that—and lose him."

Eagerly searching the more recent letters she found bitter references to herself—"this light young person who is without religion"—"this impertinent nobody to whom you have dared to give the charge of my

children"--"the scandal of the domination of this governess in my establishment"--"ah, she may be capable, clever, an excellent

teacher, but she has neither principles, heart nor tenderness, she is too light to be guided only by a young man in your position—it is a scandal and soon, for all my care, will have the appearance of one"—

The governess dared linger no longer; she hurried the letters back, under the false smiling gaze of M. de Clare, imposing in his panoply of war, and fled guietly to her own room.

She was much agitated and it took her a little while to realise the importance of her discovery.

The whole hopeless tone of the letters had shown her that the Duke not only neglected his wife, but treated her with heartless indifference, refused to accede to any of her supplications, endeavoured to separate her entirely from her children, ignored her advances, her promises, her entreaties, and only kept up an outward semblance of harmony because he could neither afford a public scandal nor to forego the Frediani millions. The wretched woman, beaten to her knees by his neglect, imploring in vain for a little

semblance of harmony because he could neither afford a public scandal nor to forego the Frediani millions. The wretched woman, beaten to her knees by his neglect, imploring in vain for a little kindness, had, however, behind her, the Church, her powerful father, public opinion, all his relatives and the Royal family, all of whom found her an ideal spouse and mother.

She was, as she had the incredible tactlessness to remind him again and again, his wife before God and man, and had lost her health, her beauty, her ease in giving him heirs to keep his honours flourishing.

part? He protects me, wishes me to stay, he never makes love to me, but in some way I must be necessary to him. Well, now I need no longer be afraid of her, she is powerless, poor wretch."

The governess had no pity whatever for the foolish woman who, through sheer clumsiness, had made her life so intolerable a burden; she merely despised such lunatic methods, scenes, tears, reproaches, espionage. Yes, she or Matilde spied on all his movements, she was certain of that. Some of the passionate phrases in the letters, some of the wild expressions of love with which they all ended, hung in the mind of the governess--"All the happiness that I have ever known has been through you"--"Ah, my

"He must hate her," thought the governess. "What a fool she is—she must have maddened him with scenes till he never goes near her except in public, and then she bombards him with these letters! Does he read them? What a life! It is indeed an inferno. And my

The man knows how to make love, evidently, thought the governess; his value was immensely increased in her estimation by the other woman's hopeless passion and his cold, clever resistance. She was filled with excitement.

beloved, so many memories, so sweet, so dear, so many hopes, is it possible that all is ended?"—"Always I shall love you, never can I forget the past—how good you were to me. God bless you always.

God help your poor Fanny!"

The household in the Faubourg St. Honore appeared to run as usual but to the governess nothing would ever be the same; for at last she

but to the governess nothing would ever be the same; for at last she understood the situation in which she found herself. With that cold, intellectual understanding that is entirely devoid of sympathy, she

intellectual understanding that is entirely devoid of sympathy, she could divine all the feelings, foresee all the probable actions of Madame du Boccage, of her relatives, her world, and at the same

time absolutely comprehend the point of view of M. du Boccage, whose behaviour, through his wife's loyalty still completely secret,

would, were it known, find, the governess was sure, no possible supporter. Mademoiselle Debellevme was well aware that if all the circumstances of these continuous guarrels, the long separation there had been between husband and wife, were made public, the woman would appear as a saint and a martyr, the man as a heartless brute. But the governess was passionately sincere in her loyal adherence to the Duke; not only was she strongly moved in his favour by his persistent and uncommon kindness towards herself, but she was deeply grateful to him for becoming her protector and keeping her in a post which she would have lost without his help. From the first she had hated the Duchess who had not disquised her candid dislike for the new governess. All her temperament, all her ideas, her training were against this romantic, sentimental, clumsy woman who was weak enough to be jealous, stupid enough to spy, insane enough to make scenes and reproaches, to pour out her most secret torments in page after page of melodramatic lamentation: the woman who, in brief, had had everything and lost it all, as the governess judged, entirely through her own fault. It was not likely that Lucille Debelleyme with her hard, bitter experience, should feel any sympathy for the wealthy aristocrat who had been pampered all her life, and had created out of her own thoughts and weaknesses, so the governess believed, the miseries in which she now writhed. Did not that poor fool, his wife, see that he had had enough of enclosed, domestic bliss, that he required some liberty. some independence, that the youth of seventeen, gentle, sweet and easy going, whom she had married, was not the same as the vigorous developed man of over thirty? He was now in the full flower of his prime, while she, as with incredible tactlessness she noted again and again in her letters to him, had already lost that dazzling southern beauty which had at first attracted him. The governess looked at her own face in the pretty little mirror that hung above the pianette in her boudoir. A few weeks of luxurious

beauty that Lady Anfield had not noticed and that had even escaped the searching glance of the French Ambassadress. Lucille Debelleyme was now a charming, a lovely woman; she took a great deal of care with her appearance and no longer obscured any of her good points with clumsy dressing. Her hair fell in fashionable curls, her dresses were well cut to show off her slender, vet voluptuous figure. Though she was careful not to depart in a single particular from the decorum enjoined by her position, she had not the air, either in her dress or her appearance, of a dependant; indeed, after she had read the unhappy letters of Madame du Boccage she had rather the air of the mistress, both of the situation and the establishment. She pursued her agreeable duties with an added zest, she put even more enthusiasm into tending the children, in whose company she really delighted, she was even more resolutely firm and yet gracious with her servants, she received M, du Boccage with a vet franker delight in his company, and on the rare occasions when she saw the languishing Duchess she greeted her with a curtsy which had more than a hint of mockery, and it became one of her chief pleasures to reconstruct in her mind the scenes which, no doubt, took place

living and ease of mind had improved to an astonishing degree the

almost daily in the rez de chaussee, of which she would be the main cause, the Duchess clamouring for her dismissal, the Duke coldly refusina it... But Lucille Debellevme, bitterly schooled, by long misfortune, did not lose her head; though she sometimes permitted herself the most enticing dreams, her sternest enemy could have found no fault with her outward behaviour.

introduce, subtly and delicately, a personal note, an intimate air into the hitherto impersonal conversations that she had with the Duke almost every evening when he came to consult with her about the education of his children.

She directly asked him when the family were going to Javiaux du Boccage or to Locroi in Normandy?

He seemed slightly confused at the question, but said "that he did not know."

The governess then put forward a definite point of view.

The governess, however, for all her discretion and tact, believed that now the foundations were so solid beneath her, she might risk stretching out a hand for further advantages, and she ventured to

"It is a matter to which I should go to Madame but I dislike to trouble her as she is so ill! I fear she has been suffering more greatly these last few days. The heat is increasing in Paris. Ah well...what I have to say...Perhaps I have not sufficient of your confidence?"

He encouraged these pretty broken words with a deepening of his amiable smile

The governess continued smoothly:
"My salary is more than I have ever received before. It is certainly

"My salary is more than I have ever received before. It is certainly sufficient for my services but, for the sake of the children, you are aware, Monsieur, that I take them out a great deal, to concerts, to

entertainments, for drives? I have never" (her large clear eyes gave him a bold, flattering look which was in contradiction to the quiet

respect of her words) "been in such an establishment as yours before. I am not in every way equipped. If I am to remain much longer in Paris I shall require new dresses; for the country also I shall require

"You may have," he interrupted pleasantly, negligently, "all you wish."

"I shall not trespass on your easiness," she replied, "I was only about to ask that I might have a few items from Mademoiselle Rose.

different clothes..."

Madame's dressmaker "

"Why should you wish to go there?" he remarked with a flight irritation. "Choose your own establishment, Mademoiselle, and send the account to me."

"Impossible." she objected. "Monsieur must understand the delicacy

of my position. What I require is for Madame's service and must go on to her account."

"As you please," he agreed indifferently, and she wondered if he was clever enough to understand the meaning behind her words, which was 'though she could not accept the least present from him

name.'

She said no more on the subject, she showed him a charming little pastel drawn by his eldest daughter but her brilliant smile was not all for pleasure in the child's work; she was thinking of the lively scene Madame du Boccage would make when she saw gowns, hoppets.

personally, he might give her what he would under cover of his wife's

Madame du Boccage would make when she saw gowns, bonnets, gloves, parasols for the governess added on to her account with Mademoiselle Rose, the most fashionable, the most expensive dressmaker in Paris.

Mademoiselle Debelleyme found, as she expected to find, that she had not a single ally among the magnificent train of relatives, friends and acquaintances of the house of du Boccage, who came and went

the great sweetness of her manner, her tactful avoidance of all possible cause of complaint she had warded off, she thought, any open protest, though of course she could not be aware of what was said privately to M. du Boccage?

But nothing appeared to ruffle his serenity, he was gay and amiable; daily, under one excuse or another, he detached himself more and more from his wife and led with zest and pleasure an indolent, amusing, fashionable life, that of a courtier, a man of wealth and taste, but rather in contradiction with these qualities, he showed an increasing interest in his children; he was the most indulgent, the most charming of fathers.

Even Lucille Debelleyme sometimes wondered why the growing affection for his children did not inspire him with some tenderness for their mother. "But," thought the governess, "she's driven him hard, bit and spur together, the fool."

in the splendid salons of the Faubourg St. Honore; indeed, as her ascendancy obviously increased, so did their hostility. Her sense of character assured her that the Duchess, proud and sensitive, had not complained, but she was perfectly well aware that her own position was extraordinary and must be adversely commented upon, yet by

There was one only of the great personages who surrounded the maison du Boccage that the governess had been able to ingratiate herself with and that was the old blind Dowager Duchess, widow of the late Duke Felix.

Her eldest son was not her first child and the Duchess, nearly seventy and long since completely blind with cataract, lived, in that modest facilities improved on her by a lifetime spect with a micro

modest fashion imposed on her by a lifetime spent with a miser husband, in an apartment in the Faubourg St. Germain. Mademoiselle Debelleyme often took the children to visit their grandmother and had contrived to give the impression of a weak.

Old Madame du Boccage adored her son and Mademoiselle Debellevme mingled a few discreet praises of the Duke with her continuous stream of gratitude for the benefits conferred on her by her residence in the sumptuous establishment of the Faubourg St. Honore The old lady was moved, was won, for the governess was careful not to say a single word against the Duchess but praised her continually for her piety, her charity, and lamented her increasing ill health. It rather amused Mademoiselle Debelleyme to dress herself in some fine creation from the clever hands of Mademoiselle Rose, to make herself look as beautiful, as dignified as possible, then to conduct the children to their grandmother and, seating herself on a stool before the old lady's hooded chair, pose as a poor plain creature, who could expect nothing in this life but must look for her reward in heaven. She could keep it up for half an hour very well and the old lady was touched by the tales of this young person who had been helped through many trials by the aid of religion. Knowing that she was in complete confidence with her son and likely to repeat anything of interest to him, Lucille Debelleyme thought it well to tell Madame du Boccage the story of Robert Morrison, carefully coloured, of course, to suit her audience. The chance was given her by the Dowager asking her once:

timid, depressed creature who was, for the first time, enjoying a little

liberty, a few pleasures.

"How it was that she had not married a good fellow in her own rank of life, who would have relieved her from the state of dependency?"

In a low voice the governess replied: "That she had had several

offers but none of them from men whose person she could admire.

whose character she could respect."

"Have you never, then, my poor child, been in love?"

"Once," sighed the governess, "and it was nearly my undoing. Oh, Madame. I was so young at the time. I had no mother to advise me. I

was an instructress in Bath. I worked too hard, my superiors were

"They tell me you are very pretty," interrupted Madame du Boccage.

Forgetting for a moment that she was with a blind person.

harsh. I have always been homely."

"my son always speaks of you as most charming."

Mademoiselle Debelleyme lowered her eyes to hide her fierce pleasure, but her voice was unchanged as she continued:

"Ah, that, Madame, is mere polite condescension on the part of Monsieur du Boccage! I have few charms but I had indeed then the bloom of youth and attracted the attention of a young man who

protested that he felt for me an honourable affection. He was in a good position and I must confess, not only did he win my heart, but I was attracted by the thought of leaving an odious servitude."

perhaps, indeed, she was so. She could not think of Robert Morrison with equanimity even now, and the kind old lady patted her hand, where it rested on the arm of the hooded chair. She asked with sympathy:

"And what went wrong, my dear? Why did not he marry you, I am

She stopped as if overcome with the bitterness of her recollection,

sure you would be a good wife for any man."

"He did not think so, Madame. I discovered, thank God in time, that his intentions were not honourable. He wanted me but did not wish to

marry me. He promised me, Madame, independence, riches, an

offered to unfortunate creatures like myself." "And of course you refused?" commented the old Duchess tenderly. "You had the courage, my dear? It must have been difficult. especially if you liked the wretch." Lucille Debellevme sighed:

apartment in Paris, a carriage, my own maid, all the lures usually

The Dowager Madame du Boccage deeply sympathised with this pathetic tale. "I know," she declared, "something of the perils, the vicissitudes to which young ladies in the forlorn position of yourself are exposed!

"I more than liked him, but I hope you know me well enough, Madame, to believe that I did refuse him! It was a shock from which I

have even now scarcely recovered."

But you will have no trials like that in this establishment," she said, "my daughter-in-law does not encourage rakes or libertines. Hers is the warmest, the kindest of hearts and if you are in any trouble go to her at once. I hope after all, my dear, that you will find a good husband. You are so fond of children and so wonderful with them that it would be a pity if you were not to have any of your own." Mademoiselle Debelleyme now took up a subject which she had

already insinuated several times with the Dowager Madame du Boccage. "She wished above all to go to the Opera before the season was over and the children were too young and Madame du

Boccage never went...it was of course not to be thought of for her to join a party without her mistress though she had had several offers.

She was a passionate lover of music, she wanted to hear I Puritani

which was to be given next Thursday...Mademoiselle Schickler, the betrothed of Comte Edouard, had been so kind as to make it The Dowager Madame du Boccage was accompanying her son herself, she could not see any reason in the world why the obliging, the simple young governess should not be one of the party; she did not know that the refused offers to which Lucille Debelleyme referred had come from the Duke himself...the governess had rejected such reckless generosity with smiling, cold dignity. She did not wish to

compromise herself by such a public flaunting of her supremacy in the household of the Faubourg St. Honore, but she did want to go to the Opera, she did want to show herself beautifully turned out to all her enemies. She thought: "How lucky it is that the old Dowager is blind, if she had her sight she would never give her consent."

possible for her to go with these two charming young people, to sit behind the heiress in the box as attendant shadow, completely

effaced if only she might hear the music!"

Schickler a little doubtful when the suggestion was made to take the new governess to the Opera, but old Madame du Boccage insisted that it would be the harshest unkindness to refuse a timid request put forward by a poor young person who had had so few pleasures in her life, who would sit quietly at the back of the box, and be no trouble to anyone. "If Fanny was not in such continual ill health she

would take her herself," declared the kind old woman, "and I am very pleased to be able to offer such an estimable young woman this little

The Comte Edouard was a little surprised and Mademoiselle

kindness."

Count Edouard and his betrothed exchanged glances. There had not yet exactly been any gossip or scandal attached to Mademoiselle Debelleyme but everyone thought there very soon might be. If Madame du Boccare had not appeared so perfectly satisfied there

Madame du Boccage had not appeared so perfectly satisfied there would surely have been already. The position was certainly a curious one but as everything appeared so smiling and peaceful in the

establishment in the Faubourg St. Honore there was no cause for

homely young creature pleading for a little diversion? **** Step by step the governess had won: she felt like a general who takes the enemy's outposts in a slow, steady progress. She was going to the Opera, going to sit in the Du Boccage box in company

with the Dowager, in full decorum, but also in full splendour, everyone would have to look at her, and no one would be able to say anything

any comment, and why trouble the old lady's simple conception of a

against her. Fanny du Boccage would rage, no doubt, be wounded to the guick, but she would be powerless, and the Duke, the man who had befriended her, the man who seemed to admire and need her, though he never said so, would see her as she could look. She had the advantage of the Duchess' account with Mademoiselle Rose. She was secure of her gown, there remained only her jewels.

She had nothing whatever suitable, only a few garnets, a cameo, a tortoiseshell chain, and while she appeared to absorb herself in her lessons and her games with the children she was thinking deeply. wondering by what subtle or daring move she could secure a parure to wear on Thursday. She decided to try her one friend: the Duke knew she was going to accompany his mother to the Opera, he said

that he himself might go, he wished to hear I Puritani again. It was a pity that Madame, his wife, was too unwell to attend this gala performance. The doctors had said she must forego all social duties M. du Boccage asked the governess, with a Frenchman's delicate

for the present until she had cured her insomnia. consideration in such matters, if she had a suitable gown for this

uncommon occasion?

presumptuous of me to wish to go. My love for music has led me into a false position." He gave her a look which shook her superb self-assurance a little. "You shall have the iewels, there will be no difficulty about that."

"Through Monsieur's kindness I have a robe de style from Mademoiselle Rose but I have no iewels. I hope I shall not look ridiculous." smiled the governess. "It was perhaps a

"I could not accept." she began with a proud reserve. "I offer you nothing," he interrupted, "you may take a parure for the one evening," and with that smiling negligence she so admired in

him, he added: "It will be no obligation to you and a pleasure to me. I hope you will enjoy the music, Mademoiselle." On the Wednesday afternoon Henri, the Duke's valet de chambre, delivered a large case at the apartments of the governess. She

opened it and discovered, set out on white velvet, a superb set of emeralds. Her heart beat with an excitement which made it difficult for her to maintain a very necessary calm. Ambition, that she had hitherto discarded as foolish and dangerous, again rose in her heart.

She began to believe that she had underestimated her own attraction, her own power, had been too cautious, too slow; she

resolved in that moment to move more boldly, to strike more deliberately for her own advantage.

* * * * *

The splendid heavy antique coach of the Dowager Duchess du

follow later: the Duchess had not been visible all day. Lucille

Boccage arrived at the Faubourg St. Honore for the governess, who waited alone in the antechamber. The Duke, if he came at all, would

smooth and smiling. The mantle that enveloped her was dark, decorous, a dull violet velvet, a loose hood of fine black lace covered her long fair curls: without any artificial aid her complexion was dazzling, her features were exquisite in their exact, firm outline. She saw the Comte Edouard look at her uneasily, and Mademoiselle Schickler, the spoilt heiress, with a little grimace of disdain. The governess was not abashed, tonight she was neither to be patronised nor ignored. A well-known step caused her to turn her head; M. du Boccage came from the salon de reception, Lucille Debellevme, a little frightened. cast off her dull-coloured cloak. It was impossible to consider the woman revealed as a governess, as a dependant, as anything but a beautiful woman. Lucille Debelleyme exactly suited the mode and she had further the exquisite art of making the mode exactly suit her, and set off her fragile charm; woman and dress appeared one, the

Debelleyme knew that the whole atmosphere of the house was filled with apprehension, tension, excitement, but she was herself suave.

beautiful woman. Lucille Debelleyme exactly suited the mode and she had further the exquisite art of making the mode exactly suit her, and set off her fragile charm; woman and dress appeared one, the smooth pale shoulders were barely distinguishable from the smooth pale satin of the bodice; her long hair might have been woven of the same material as the filmy lace shawl that drooped over her arms. All this delicate beauty was emphasised by the emeralds, which like drops of green fire glittered round her throat and small wrists.

The young Comte gave his brother a startled, reproachful glance; Mademoiselle Schickler flushed with irritation. This sudden beauty on the part of a servant seemed to her a piece of effrontery that she did not know how to deal with; she fidgeted with her gloves. The old blind woman stood benevolent, smiling, leaning on the arm of her

younger son, while the elder M. du Boccage remained inside the folding doors, his hat in his hand, looking at the governess with his

It was Lucille Debelleyme's moment, and she knew how best to turn it into one of complete triumph. With a graceful movement she swept over the black and white tiles to Madame du Boccage, dropped a low curtsy and, kissing the old lady's hand, murmured in a voice that seemed to tremble with emotion:

"How can I thank you, dear Madame, for such an evening of undeserved pleasure!" There was no obvious mock modesty about

expressionless smile on his sensual lips and his dark eves almost

completely veiled by the thick, fair lashes.

the old lady placed her hand on the smooth ringlets of the governess and murmured in a gratified tone:

"I am very glad, my poor child, to be able to give you this little entertainment."

The coldness of the Comte Edouard and his betrothed increased but

this action, which appeared simple, dignified, touching.

As Mademoiselle Debelleyme again fastened her cloak over her illicit beauty to which she knew everyone who saw her tonight would feel she had no right, she gave a sly glance at her one friend; his subtle smile increased, she thought his lips formed the word "brava."

"I congratulate you. Mademoiselle." remarked the Comte Edouard.

"Thank you, Monsieur," replied the governess with humility, "they are indeed beautiful and it gives me great enjoyment to wear them."

drily. "on your magnificent parure of emeralds."

Coming forward, swinging his gloves, the Duke said to his brother with the utmost ease:

"I lent them to Mademoiselle for to-night. I bought them two years ago

her--I put them aside and forgot them. Tonight they have served some purpose." Mademoiselle Schickler, who was a great heiress and thought in terms of money, permitted herself the vulgarity of saving: "They must be worth a great deal." The elder M. du Boccage replied with the lightest, coldest courtesy: "They are certainly worth something now--when Mademoiselle Debelleyme wears them, one discerns in them an unexpected beauty." The Opera was all that Mademoiselle Debellevme had dreamed it might be. Amid that brilliant crowd she felt the triumph of a beautiful woman who feels she is in her proper surrounding. Her will was strong enough to enable her to forget she was there on sufferance, an intruder, an outsider, that never again might she taste such a

in London. Fanny did not like them--I thought to have them reset for

woman with teels are in the proper surfocting. Her will was strong enough to enable her to forget she was there on sufferance, an intruder, an outsider, that never again might she taste such a moment. She enjoyed herself, therefore, without any thought of the morrow.

She, naturally (but without servility) took her place at the back of the

She, naturally (but without servility) took her place at the back of the loge, with the two men of the party, but it was also natural that the old Duchess, who had procured for her this rare entertainment, should offer her a seat in front. This was not refused and Lucille Debelleyme sat beside the rich, sulky heiress, Marie Schickler, in one of the finest boxes of the Opera, and had the intense gratification of

finest boxes of the Opera, and had the intense gratification of knowing that she had entirely eclipsed the mediocre dark charms of her companion, who formed indeed a perfect foil to her radiant fairness. She was stared at immoderately, lorgnettes and glasses were perpetually turned in her direction. It seemed to her that she

could feel against her ears the murmur of curiosity, of hostility, which

and in her appearance of virtue. Who could say anything while the venerated blind Dowager sat beside her and spoke to her so kindly, while that spotless virgin, Mademoiselle Schickler, with however ill a will, was forced to endure her company?

The governess took pleasure in the knowledge that all the malicious gossips were really wrong—she was as virtuous, as pure as she appeared to be. Not a single word to which the most rigid prude

could object had ever passed between her and M. du Boccage.

She smiled to herself as she reflected how bewildered many of those

was passing from lip to lip as she was noted, named and commented upon. She enjoyed this, it was amusing to provoke a scandal and to know that she was impregnable both in her real virtue

who stared at her with such inquisitiveness must be, Their first impulse would of course be to proclaim her as the mistress of her employer but at the same time they must be rather confused that he allowed her to sit beside his mother, still kept her for the instructing of his young children. She felt her position inviolate, far stronger than if she was really involved in a vulgar and therefore brief intrigue.

If all these people only knew how intensely cold she was, how she

had learnt her lesson; if they could be but aware of that episode with Robert Morrison which had told her to be so ironically careful in all her dealings with men. Yet there was a certain sting in her transitory triumph also; she had once dreamed it differently. She was not sitting there as the Honourable Mrs. Morrison, wife of a wealthy English aristocrat, possibly (as she had once imagined) an English duchess, moving elegantly in the highest circles of Paris, mingling in politics,

intriguing with men of affairs; nor was she there as a successful courtesan with her following of lovers, her maids and her apartment and her carriage, with all the extreme luxuries of her profession, which she had once, for a few hours only, thought the infatuated

Englishman might give her...No. she was there, after all, as a

Mademoiselle Schickler and the brusque courtesy of the Comte Edouard. M. Le Due du Boccage also behaved admirably, covering all possible embarrassment with his correct elegance that the fashion of the moment called "English coldness" and was

He stood next to the governess and kept his attention on the stage; in the persistent dazzle of the gas globes she could, whenever she

dependant in a false position. Neither wife nor mistress, but a

Her behaviour was perfect, she addressed herself exclusively to the Dowager Madame du Boccage, ignoring the genteel rudeness of

servant dressed up for a party.

considered so admirable

chose to look up, see his face clearly. He smiled in unmoved idle good-humour, amiable, expressionless; his hand lay on the red velvet edge of the box close to her still fingers holding the programme.

She dared not look up at him for long; but a downcast, demure pose suited well with a scrutiny of his hand, the useless strength of which was so in contrast to his delicate linen, the velvet cuff, the dark-blue sparkle of the sapphire stud.

Although they did not touch each other, even by the tips of their

a current of violent, exciting, powerful feeling passing between them.

So strong was this, that, despite her exquisite self-control, she was shaken by a bitter surge of rebellion at the thought of the insurmountable barriers between herself and this man.

fingers, nor look at each other at all, the governess was conscious of

The emotions of this curious evening were not over at the fall of the

It was late and all the household (she had believed) was asleep; but the Duchess, always restless, tortured by jealousy and insomnia, had waited for her return. The unhappy woman, in a storm of feeling, brusquely entered the pretty apartment of the governess; her quilted chamber-gown was untidily gathered round her full uncorseted figure, her eyelids were wrinkled and stained either from tears or lack of sleep, and her hair fell in a tangle on her shoulders as if she had continually pushed impatient fingers through it in a desperate gesture to relieve an aching head.

curtain, nor with the return of Lucille Debelleyme to the Faubourg St. Honore, nor with her grateful and charming farewells of the Dowager Madame du Boccage, with her timid thanks to M. Du Boccage and her modest retiring to her apartment, to take off the borrowed

emeralds and put them in their case.

am so late, I had no idea how the time went—"

The Duchess, with trembling dignity, cut short these false protestations, the value of which she knew perfectly well.

Lucille Debelleyme immediately understood and mastered the situation; she stood by her bed, illuminated by the soft light of a lamp with an opal globe, and in her pale satin gown, herself colourless from excitement and emotion, appeared unearthly as a shadow.

"Ah. Madame. you are ill! if I can do something for you! I am sorry I

"Where have you been. Mademoiselle, in that attire? And what are those jewels you have in your hand? I am informed that you have been to the Opera, wearing emeralds that my husband gave you."

"I thought they came from you," smiled the governess, opening wide

her brilliant eyes. "Were they not some cast-off jewels of your own, Madame, that you did not care to wear until they were reset? It was

time, and I daresay for the last time, a performance at the Opera, I believed that you allowed this kindness. Am I mistaken?" The Duchess sat down heavily, with the weary sigh of a woman overwhelmed by emotion. "Do not seek to deceive and bewilder me, you know that what you have done is outrageous, and you must also know that I was not aware of it." Erect, slim, resolute, holding before her like a shield the case of iewels, the governess replied with coldness: "You must speak to M. du Boccage. Madame, it was he who gave me to understand that I had your permission."

great kindness in the Dowager Madame du Boccage to offer me one of the seats in her box to-night, when I was to hear for the first

Folding her hands over her disordered garments the other woman exclaimed:

"You have no self-respect, you have no idea of decorum or dignity." How is it possible for me to entrust my children to you?"

"In everything, Madame, I obey the orders of M. du Boccage." "Do not keep repeating that name, please. You must be well aware--

" but the forsaken wife, distraught as she was, caught herself up; the

interview was approaching a dangerous point where she would not be able to handle it at all. Rising, with her air of frank dignity, she added: "It is not a matter for discussion, Mademoiselle. It is a matter for a reprimand. I cannot believe you were under a misconception to-

night. Shrewd as you are it must have been clear to you that your

action was--impossible."

were suddenly face to face.

"Forgive me, Madame, I cannot be left like this, the position is intolerable."

"To me, also," replied the Duchess recoiling, and making a forbidding gesture with her shaking hand as if she waved some venomous creature aside. "Believe me. Mademoiselle, to me, also."

She passed down the passage to the rez de chaussee and began heavily to descend the ornate stairs with the scrolled, gilt bannister.

Afraid of saying too much she left the room with an agitated movement, allowing the door to fall heavily to behind her; the governess sprang after her, caught the handle even as the latch slipped into place, and went out into the corridor so swiftly that they

"I have been spied on," thought Lucille Debelleyme. "Matilde, no doubt. Everything in this house is watched and noted. I had better do a little of that myself."

The dim night-lamps set on the painted walls illuminated the expanse of the shadowed stairway, and there the governess lingered in the obscurity watching the slow descent of Madame du Boccage. It was not perhaps prudent to spy on her mistress, but she had heard a familiar step in the hall below and longed to hear at least a few words between husband and wife; her painful curiosity was eased. As soon as the Duke saw the heavy figure descending so laboriously to the

"Well, Madame, where have you been at this time of night? Why are you not in your own apartment?"

The answer came in a voice made harsh by anguish:

rez de chaussee he demanded imperiously:

"How is it possible you found the courage to do what you did to-

He broke in, his tone usually so soft and gentle, was rough. "These incriminations are useless, dare to say she is my mistress!"

"I do not say so. Camille, and I do not think so in the full force of the word. You would not so affront your children: besides. I know you

have other diversions, it is not she who fills your life, but she has the air of doing so, it is of that I complain! She takes my place, she tries to dominate in everything."

With intense bitterness he interrupted:

night?--this young person..."

"You to talk of domination!" and he flung from her; his wife, half moaning, followed him, the doors of the antechamber that led to their apartments closed on them, the governess heard no more. She

hovered a moment in the silence, then went lightly to her pleasant room, her comfortable bed.

She was excited, exhausted; the drama in which she had so

profitably involved herself became every day more interesting.

Debelleyme: "What would a good woman do under my

As she lay, warm and drowsy in her bed, it did occur to Lucille

circumstances? Is there such a thing as a good woman?" came the

quick reflection. She would not leave the Faubourg St. Honore. She

would not say to herself: "I cannot be the cause of this terrible

dissension between husband and wife, I cannot be a further

instrument of torment to a woman already half mad with

unhappiness, I cannot steal these children from their mother, this

husband from his wife, I cannot remain here making my pleasure and

She supposed so, there must be these ideal beings somewhere, women who were not absorbed in their own profit, who believed in God; women who, thought Lucille Debelleyme with a sneer, were afraid of God, who would argue: "This is wrong, I am wicked; I am,

perhaps, condoning a crime, nothing but evil can come out of this situation and for my share in it the Father will surely punish me."

She wondered, as she lay there, whether there existed any woman

my profit out of the miseries of another."

who would do this

Lucille Debelleyme had no such fear, she did not believe in God, she thought she had her own human destiny well in hand. She felt no pity for the woman whose place she was gradually, and with such cleverness usurping.

"I have had nothing out of life, nothing at all, my duty to myself is to get all I can. I will not yield, as long as this man supports me I will get the last drop of pleasure, of power, of profit out of this extraordinary good luck."

She fell smilingly asleep, the music of the Opera in her ears, the little lights of the Opera before her eyes, and mingled with them hundreds of curious, hostile but powerless glances, whose impudent malice

she had so much enjoyed; while through all her dreams darted the cold rays of the only jewels she had ever worn, the icy sparkle of the emeralds given her by M. du Boccage.

But it appeared that the governess had been a little too self-confident in her triumph at the Opera; the next day when the Duke inspected

his children's lessons he informed her casually but definitely that he

As he unfolded his scheme to the governess she understood that they had gone too far, that it was necessary to give way, to concede all along the line. Probably the outraged wife had spoken of a separation, of appealing to her father, even to the Court, and her husband had found it necessary to dissimulate, to placate her, even perhaps to pretend a reconciliation.

"Madame wishes to undertake the education of the children herself, it is perhaps her right, I will not disguise that she has taken very hardly the experiment I made in handing over so much authority to you, though it was to spare her ill health, her excitable temperament.

had changed his plans, he would go to Javiaux du Boccage to supervise the restorations there and she would go with the Duchess

and the children to Locroi in Normandy.

Well, now let us try another way, you will go to Locroi, she will have full charge, you will stand aside, work under her, do as she bids you, and when I return from Javiaux du Boccage I will judge the result."

As usual he had the air of saying what he did not mean, as usual the governess looked to his smiling glance for his true intentions.

"It is an excellent idea," she agreed amiably. "Madame is obviously suffering; it would be well to avoid all that could give her nervous excitement. In the peace of the country no doubt she will recover her equanimity. I will resign everything to her hands."

equanimity. I will resign everything to her hands."

"You help me immensely, Mademoiselle. Perhaps you will wait on Madame and unfold to her this plan yourself?"

She agreed at once and in the same breath thanked him for her entertainment of the night before and handed him back the case of emeralds. She knew that the Duchess was quite incapable of conducting the children's education, that the experiment was bound

advance, defeated on all points.

She sought out Madame du Boccage, endured with a smile the icy insolence of Matilde, her worst enemy in a household where all were hostile to her, who spied on her and hated her bitterly. What did the governess care? M. du Boccage was playing a subtle game which she understood and would assist without the need of instructions.

She was admitted into the presence of the Duchess, whose haggard appearance showed the miserable night she had passed; the governess did not hesitate to apologise for her behaviour of the night

to end in disaster, that the Duke intended that it should do so. What did she care as long as she was allowed to remain in her place? She was perfectly ready to take even an apologetic attitude towards her mistress; what did it matter? The wretched woman was. in

"Madame would have the generosity to believe that it was entirely a mistake. Old Madame du Boccage was kind, I should not have accepted but I was tempted--Ah, Madame, if you knew how little I have ever enjoyed you would realise how difficult I found it to refuse, how I perhaps lost my head: now I see that I was wrong. I have come

The Duchess flushed; this made her own behaviour of the night before, already in her own generous judgment contemptible, appear detestable.

"Say no more, Mademoiselle. All is over, think no more about it. I hope, if I can a little regain my health, to go to the Opera myself one

night and I can then offer you a seat in my box."

The governess curtsied in silent gratitude.

before

to ask your pardon."

stammered: "I have to complain of the fact that you take my children away from me and I am never allowed to see them, that you are in their company day and night." She could no longer command her words: the governess coolly took up the broken sentence. "Why do you suppose that I have performed any such project! I was afraid that for the moment your health does not permit you to undertake the heavy task of educating all these little ones--Monsieur le Duc has always said so, so he says to the children, that and nothing else. For a little while I tried to take your place. I fear with poor success. Now if you feel equal to having your family around you there is nothing for me but to efface myself. Monsieur told me to do so even now." "Did he?" asked the unhappy mother with a gleam of ingenuous hope in her eves.

"But that, after all," sighed Madame du Boccage, "is a mere detail, a matter of nervous irritation. I have more than that to complain of. Mademoiselle," and in a voice harsh with suppressed sobs she

"He did, indeed, Madame; he said we were all to go to Locroi while he goes to Javiaux du Boccage, and that I was to leave you in full control. Did I not." added the governess with a smile. "from the first. Madame, ask you to interfere more, to show a deeper interest in our little world above the rez de chaussee?"

The Duchess hesitated; she was plainly baffled as to what sincerity

there might be in these declarations, as she had been baffled as to the degree of sincerity in the protestations made to her by her

husband, brought about, she feared, solely by the growing scandal in Paris, by some remarks dropped by her father, by some comments

made by members of the royal family, by fear of a legal separation, of losing the children, of losing her money, by his dread of a scandal...which would mean that he would have to give up all that accepted what she could get in the way of concession, and in her heart trembled the hope that all her prayers to God, all her supplications to the man who had once been her lover and was still her husband, might at last have been answered, and that there might be some sincerity in this sudden offer of reconciliation. She accepted therefore with dignity, with ingenuous candour, the project

of these peaceful holidays to be spent in Locroi.

Fanny du Boccage sighed; only one thing would have pleased her, would really have eased her implacable anguish, and that would have been the dismissal of Lucille Debelleyme. But this was impossible for her to obtain as she was bitterly aware, so she

made life agreeable to him.

.

might return home.

Boccage with her little family and their governess installed themselves in the chateau of Locroi. They did not, however, inhabit the recently restored Gothic building in the midst of a large wooded park, but used a small pleasure house in Italian style, built in the elegant taste of the mid-eighteenth century, near a vast, magnificent orangery.

This charming house of pale rose-coloured bricks and amber-hued marble, with Corinthian columns and balustrades wreathed by clematis vines and convolvulus, stood on the banks of a stream

which hurried beneath the graceful tresses of golden willows. This was Fanny du Boccage's own property, one of her marriage gifts to her husband; she returned to it with the same pleasure that a child

It was a wonderful summer. Day after day of unclouded sunshine sent a haze of gold over the lovely Norman meadows, and Madame du

As soon as she was among her own people, the peasantry who

atmosphere of the Faubourg St. Honore, full of lying, quarrelling, incriminations and scandals, she was able to forget a great part of her misery, to indulge in the dreams that her present reconciliation with her husband might be permanent, and when he returned from Javiaux du Boccage they might renew amid these Norman fields the joys of their honeymoon, which had been spent at Locroi.

adored her, the poor who came in crowds to implore her charity, the priest who came to offer his blessing, her burden seemed to fall from the spirit of the tormented woman. No longer enclosed by the evil

her domination, did so also; in the enchanting little house by the orangery Madame du Boccage had once more full charge of her children. It was, at first, difficult to detach them from their governess who was so well able to amuse them; they were all estranged from their mother who had always been ill. suffering, emotional, who had

always embarrassed the candid, amiable selfishness of childhood

Mademoiselle Debelleyme obeyed the instructions of her master and effaced herself: Mademoiselle Heller, who was completely under

by her exaction of passionate affection, by her demonstration of jealous love, by her impulsive hysterical temper.

The Duke sent his written commands to Mademoiselle Debelleyme, emphasising his wish that all authority should be with the Duchess; as she had promised she effaced herself, and the children reluctantly resigned themselves to the constant companionship and tuition of

their mother; but Mademoiselle Debelleyme was always in the background.

The governess, who thus found so much leisure on her hands, enjoyed her stay in this lovely place.

She had a fine young horse and would ride through the leafy park

imagining herself mistress of the place, that she was returning to the Gothic chateau with a train of servants waiting to welcome her, that

statesmen came to consult her judgment, great artists clamoured to paint her face, famous sculptors wished to model her delicate hand, her lovely foot, the fashionable dressmakers named materials and fashion; after her, the newspapers eagerly chronicled her doings. In brief she was, in every possible sphere of life, not only celebrated but dominant...The sunlight, the magnificent blue shadow of the cedars against the pale azure of the sky, the perfume of the orange flowers covering the hundreds of dark green trees in the orangery, the murmur of the stream beneath the yellow droop of willows; all these were delightful accompaniment to her daydreams: but Lucille Debelleyme had them well in hand.

At the end of the summer M. du Boccage appeared at Locroi; no communication for several months had passed between him and the governess but she was completely at ease, she believed she had exactly followed out his instructions, the plans that had been

she was about to leave for Paris where she lived in a fashionable circle where she would soon be entertaining some of the royal princes, the King himself, that she was a high and important figure in politics who knew and led most of the notable men of the time. Great

governess but she was completely at ease, she believed she had exactly followed out his instructions, the plans that had been arranged with silent understanding between them and that had worked out exactly as they had both wished.

The Duchess, nervous, exhausted and, despite her good intentions, her kind heart, tactless in all her relations with others, had made a complete failure of her attempt to take charge of and educate her children; an emotional confusion reigned in the charming little Italian house.

Within a few hours of the arrival of M. du Boccage the timid, half apprehensive joy with which his wife had greeted him was dispersed by his cold reproof:

"I have given you what you wished for, complete authority over the

that are obviously too heavy for you."

Stung by what seemed to her a cruel injustice and half suspecting, candid as she was, that she had been the victim of a plot, the impulsive Corsican replied angrily;

"I have not been free. I have not had sole charge."

household, over the children, but you have proved yourself incapable.

Well. my dear Fanny, resign yourself to relinquishing these burdens

"Ah!" interrupted her husband quickly, "did not then Mademoiselle Debelleyme do as I bid her and efface herself utterly?"

"She has always been there." she replied hotly, "watching me, spying

on me; as long as this woman remains near me..."

"You blame the governesses, do you?" interrupted the Duke, with the air of a man who pays little attention to what is said to him because his decision is already taken. "I admit that they may be in the wrong. Mademoiselle Heller shall go. In the autumn we will have a tutor for Philippe Joseph..."

"And Mademoiselle Debelleyme?"

"I have no complaint against Mademoiselle Debelleyme," he

"I have no complaint against Mademoiselle Debelleyme," he answered steadily, "she will stay."

Foreseeing one of those terrible scenes he so dreaded, to which he

never became used, and from which he had so thankfully escaped during the last few months, the Duke added hastily, with a raised voice, forcing his authority:

"Madame, I will have no dispute, no argument; I am only here to sell a few horses, to arrange for the transportation of the orange trees to Javiaux du Boccage. I intend that we shall all go there these last few

"I refuse," stammered the Duchess in a faint voice. "If you will not part from this woman you must part from me."

And the Duke replied quietly. "Very well. Madame, make your own

days of summer and for some of the autumn before we start for

Paris "

still poor, to remain here. I, the children and the governess will proceed to Javiaux du Boccage."

Such was the meeting with her husband to which Madame du Boccage had looked forward with such hope through all the summer

months, such was the end of her piteous attempt to regain her utterly

decision. No doubt it will do you good, as I can see that your health is

lost domination over her family. She was more than ever isolated, more than ever miserable. The little red morocco diary to which she confided her desperate thoughts had more pages covered with a corroding, an unresigned passion, the cries of an atrocious suffering that even a deep religious sense could scarcely subdue.

them into play and succeeded admirably in his intentions.

One glance of satisfaction, one only passed between him and the blonde governess. The Duchess, whose terrible disappointment brought on an attack of fever kent to her word and refused to leave

The Duke had coldly triumphed, conceived his plans carefully, put

brought on an attack of fever, kept to her word and refused to leave Locroi.

For the sake of appearances the youngest child and his nurse were left with her, the others went to Javiaux du Boccage on a heautiful

For the sake of appearances the youngest child and his nurse were left with her, the others went to Javiaux du Boccage on a beautiful mellow day at the end of September.

The children, delighted to be again with their beloved father, to be once more under the guidance of their adored governess, filled the

Lucille Debelleyme on that bright morning looked back, from the wagonette, at the little house on the edge of the stream, at the last saffron-coloured roses, the trails of scarlet and amber-coloured creeper climbing round the slender pillars of the open balcony, with the silk curtains behind the shutters fluttering in the warm breeze.

hour of departure with cries of joy, and shouts of laughter.

she found it ironic that the small house should enclose so much misery as Mademoiselle Debelleyme knew overwhelmed the woman who hid herself there.

looked towards the green forest, the limpid water running at the bottom of the lawn beneath the willows. It was a charming scene and

more splendid than anything she had seen before, that for the first time Lucille Debelleyme allowed her ambition a little rein. Nothing could be too large, too extravagant, too luxurious for her taste, and this huge palace set in a colossal park, greatly increased in her estimation the master of such magnificence, increased also her joy

But it was when she arrived at Javiaux du Boccage, which was far

and pride in his friendship, and his championship--dangerously increased her hopes.

This sumptuous chateau, which Lucille Debelleyme surveyed with enthusiastic approval, had been built in a mood of reckless

enthusiastic approval, had been built, in a mood of reckless splendour too grandiose to last, from the combined spoils of a successful soldier and a successful statesman.

The mighty building with an immense facade of white stone rose from the sloping banks of a small river; the governess learnt with delight that half a dozen villages had been razed to the ground to form the park, that it had cost five or six millions to build Javiaux du Boccage, and had occupied, for several decades, thousands of

and vanished so completely-the age of Louis XIV. The forecourt and the court of honour separated the Castle from the park, colossal sculptures adorned the wide terraces and supported the huge pillars crowned by trophies that guarded the gates, iron wrought to the delicacy of leaves. There were at least five hundred rooms, some painted by Le Brun, by Mignard, adorned by tapestry from designs by Boucer, the youth of Bacchus, the Chariots of the Sun, battles of Titans--Javiaux du Boccage had been built on a scale that could only have been continued by a succession of fortunate millionaires. The first splendour was dimmed, in part effaced; it had been through the Revolution of 1789, it had been neglected by the old miser who

workmen. Nothing lacked of that impression of reckless luxury that was the stamp of that glorious world which had endured so briefly

was the father of the present Duke. The chapel, the guard house, the terraces, the gardens, the fountains, the grottos, the canals, the state apartments were all in urgent need of restoration. When Mademoiselle Debellevme saw the hundreds of workmen

employed in this labour, when she saw the architects, the painters and the sculptors who M. du Boccage had lavishly engaged in the task of reviving the glories of this incredible chateau, she understood the vital need he had of all his wife's millions.

It was the miserable woman abandoned in Normandy to the torments

of her devouring jealousy who owned all the money her husband was lavishly spending on his beloved heritage. Mademoiselle

Debelleyme sympathised profoundly with his situation, deeply admired the skill with which he was extricating himself from an

intolerable position, gradually separating himself, his children. completely from his wife, yet avoiding all scandal, all open complaint, control of her huge and necessary fortune. In this superb place, walking through the great rooms, along the enormous terraces, the governess, though so cautious, though so sure of herself, though, till now, with her emotions her aspirations well in hand, allowed herself to look steadily into the future, to consider her situation coolly, or, as she believed, coolly. But in truth the fact that she was alone with M du Boccage in this intoxicating environment had gone a little to her head; what might she not make of a destiny which seemed so suddenly, so unexpectedly brilliant? This man, who never uttered a word of a love to her, who treated her alway with respect, who saw her for the most part in company with his children, yet who continued to seek her out every day, more and more frequently--what might now be made of him? Freed from the restraint imposed by the presence of his wife, he consulted the governess on every point. Her judgment, her taste, her enthusiasm were frequently called upon to decide this and that in the restoration of Javiaux du Boccage...however prudent she might be,

all the inconveniences of a legal separation, while still maintaining full

restoration of Javiaux du Boccage...however prudent she might be, however cold-blooded, she could not but begin to feel that she was necessary to this man, that she was acquiring over him a subtle but powerful domination.

If he did not love her now, he might come to do so. She recalled

If he did not love her now, he might come to do so. She recalled Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Genlis, women who had maintained a perfect decorum in positions like her own, yet contrived to oust the mistress or the wife in possession, to completely obsess with their intelligence, their personalities, the men who had at first

to oust the mistress or the wife in possession, to completely obsess with their intelligence, their personalities, the men who had at first employed them as humble dependents.

Mostly the governess dwelt on the case of Madame de Genlis; a model governess, a paragon of virtue, intelligent, with liberal ideas, who had entered unobtrusively into the establishment of Monsieur

absorbed father and children alike. Had she been his mistress, or merely his platonic friend, his Egeria? No one knew to this day, she had been so clever. Scandal had raged, of course, but had not dared to rear its head against the implacable armour of her propriety, and she had reigned supreme. It was Madame D'Orleans who had crept away, abandoned, robbed of children as well as husband, to die of a broken heart in solitude, and now Lucille Debelleyme ventured to speculate: "Perhaps I can do that, perhaps I could play that part, I am dealing with a woman who plays into my hands, by her inexperience, by her folly, by her ill health, by her very virtues. My God! how he winced to see the paupers ruining his lovely grounds at Locroi, how he turned aside when he saw the priest in the anteroom! She is so stupid she does not even know how to hide the virtues that irritate

D'Orleans, the father of the present king, and before very long had. still under the cloak of complete respectability, utterly eclipsed his wife until she was a melancholy stranger in her own house, and had

as well as I would see that all was done with perfect decorum: there would be no scandal, he would not have to affront her father, to give up her fortune, leave his place at Court, to face a Separation from the children he adored. Can I do it?" She believed she could: though of course some risk must attend any enterprise so ambitious.

him, she has lost him...lost him, and why should I not catch his heart on the rebound? I believe we understand each other very well, that he

But nine months of power had given Mademoiselle Debelleyme a good deal of self-assurance, her native audacity came to the surface. She resolved to strain every nerve in a tenacious battle with

the Duchess, in an attempt to make permanent a strange

ascendancy she did not quite understand herself (she could not tell for all her skill if the man really loved her in any sense of the word)

over M. du Boccage.

From the peace of her retreat in Normandy, Madame du Boccage wrote to her husband, absorbed in the grandeur of Javiaux du Boccage, and the governess found opportunities to read some of

these pathetic letters.

Left to herself, some resignation had fallen on the tormented spirit of the neglected wife and she wrote tenderly, entreating her husband for a small return of his love and confidence, promising with almost

servile humility complete obedience if he would only smile on her

again...

She reminded him that she had never cared for the way of life that belonged naturally to her position in society and her vast wealth. All she had wanted was happiness in her own home, among her beloved children.

In one letter that the governess' cruel eyes had spied upon the wife

had written: "Into this marriage I have put everything, all my hopes of any happiness."

"Lay all your eggs in one basket and you will break them," was the mental comment of the governess.

A few days before the proposed departure for Paris (the winter was drawing in) Madame du Boccage arrived suddenly at the Chateau Javiaux du Boccage, although her husband had tried to dissuade her when she had first hinted at her intention, saying that it was foolish in

when she had first hinted at her intention, saying that it was foolish in her state of health to take such a long and tiresome journey.

But full of good resolutions and not despairing even now of complete

reconciliation with her husband, the impetuous Corsican arrived close behind the message announcing her arrival.

marble in the clear, cold, early winter sunshine; there even seemed to be a resemblance between them, for the pretty girl was blonde like her father. It was the dark, heavy woman descending from the carriage who appeared to be the alien; she recognised this with a sense of fearful desolation, it was she who was the intruder, it was she who was not wanted. Her husband's face was overcast, the greeting of the governess icy and that of the child distracted. She, this tiresome hysterical invalid, had come to spoil their fun. She realised this so keenly that she was unable to put into practice her good resolutions, she became at once peevish, reproachful, and for the first time since she had handed her fortune over to her husband's care, she, so indifferent about money, found occasion to reproach him for the lavish sum he was spending on a useless monument of wanton splendour such as Javiaux du Boccage. There followed one of those violent guarrels which had taken place frequently enough in the rez de chassee in the Faubourg St. Honore

The carriage drew up before the vast steps on which stood her husband and behind him the governess, holding by the hand little lsabelle. It looked like a family group by Winterhalter; man, woman and child, elegant, precise, stood against the great expanse of

Duke, exasperated by this intolerable interference in his labours, broke openly into one of his rare but frightful rages.

He snatched his wife's blue silk parasol from the chair where she

but always behind closed doors, with lowered voices; but here the

He snatched his wife's blue silk parasol from the chair where she had thrown it and snapped the ivory handle in his powerful hands to prevent himself from touching her, and when she, with bitter dignity,

reproached him for his appalling ill manners he was goaded into further violence and smashed a gleaming Sevres vase which stood on a stand of onyx.

on a stand or onyx.

Madame du Boccade became really alarmed herself: she knew she

She ran from the room uncaring as to who might see her and in the barren, hateful splendour of the large salon, darkened by heavy statues, gods and goddesses sprawling from the blue foliage of tapestries, she gave vent to an excess of despair, all the more bitter as it followed on her hopes of a few hours ago.

A plasterers, knife had been left on the window sill by one of the men who was restoring the elaborate stucco round the deep frames. The frantic woman snatched this up with a melodramatic gesture so detestable to her husband, who had followed her and saw with profound disguist her intention. The scene was made worse for him

could have avoided provoking her husband's rages if she had sufficient self-command, and this fury came with devastating effect from a man usually amiable, sweet, even indolent in his manner.

from her, defeating her easily with the least exertion of his enormous strength, he hated her for the worst of her sins, that of making them both ridiculous.

She fell back, crying hysterically, and Matilde, the busy spy, came running in. This heightened his fury, his humiliation, he was scarcely able to restrain himself. He saw that in the struggle to gain

by her ludicrous likeness, in her heavy clothes, in her frantic, yet majestic despair, to some blousy, tragedy queen of the Theatre Francais in the bloody climax of the last act. As he pulled the knife

possession of the knife he had cut himself; he stared at the blood dripping down his pale waistcoat and tight light trousers.

Breathing hard, M. du Boccage went to the large room on the ground floor which he had given as a salon to Mademoiselle Debelleyme.

Stammering, he told her the story of that gash in his palm and, while, without comment, she fetched her liniment and her bandages, he stared with horror at the red wound. As she tended him, she thought that never had she got so far into his confidence, never had he

his hand that he had come to her but for consolation in those wounds to his pride, his dignity, his self-esteem.

He sat down shuddering and placed his hand on the table; she bent over it and gently wound round and across it long strips of soft lint. She recalled when she had seen that hand, in its velvet cuff, and sapphire stud, resting on the edge of the box at the Opera. For a

while he did not speak; a man ill able to express himself, he was usually silent in moments of strong emotion but at length he brought

out:

"Yes. Monsieur."

revealed to her so plainly his miserable relations with his wife. She knew that the cut was nothing: it was not for comfort for a scratch on

"Mademoiselle, you have understood how I am situated?"

She raised her head from her bandaging, paused in the quick movement of her fine fingers and looked directly into his eyes. She had never seen them so wide open nor understood so well their expression.

"What is your impression of my life?" he asked as if he would rather that she and not he might put what was between them into words.

"You live in an inferno."

"It is quite true! There is no one to help me, ho one to understand. She is considered a saint, a martyr and I have to put up with it. Is it my fault that I married when I was a child and knew nothing? Is it my

my fault that I married when I was a child and knew nothing? Is it my fault that I have changed from loving her, admiring her? That I have come to regard her with hatred?"

Lucille Debelleyme drank in eagerly these harsh words which were vibrant with a passion so long repressed; she knew that she was his

of view, it was not only self-interest that made her his champion.

"She will not let me go," whispered the Duke as if he spoke to himself; his free hand beat lightly on the table, "she will not let go! She clings and clings and I wake in the night and feel her clinging when I am alone. She is like a vampire that bites into one's very entrails. I have read of such beasts. Mon Dieu, I do not know what I may be driven to if she will not let me go! Her cries, her reproaches, her scenes, her priest, her maids! She even sets her porters to follow me and pays beggars to report my movements to her. Yet to all the world she is a model wife and mother, a pure, virtuous woman. To hell with all such virtue, I say! I would sooner have married a harlot

than this exacting piety, this jealous lunatic goodness that will not let

He had spoken the truth, words he could never retract nor she ever

me go."

first confidante. To whom indeed could he speak in these terms of his innocent, his admired wife? The governess understood his point

forget.

Lucille Debelleyme listened with joy mingled with fear, to this terrible confession wrenched from the man before her. Gone was his usual gaiety, his suave amiability and correct manners; she noted the drops of sweat on his forehead, the way he beat his hand again and again on the table. He went on breathlessly:

"You have heard much of her sufferings, I suppose—have you ever

thought of mine, what this life means to me? I will not give way.—I have been considered weak, but I will not give way. I will neither become her lover nor her slave. I will not lose my children, the money, my position, make myself a laughing stock. She would have all the proposition of her father. If he was the proposition of her father.

sympathy--I will not listen to the reproaches of her father..." He checked himself with a terrible effort, pulled his handkerchief from his waistcoat and wiped his trembling lips.

hers. "You do not say a word of what I have not already suspected."

"So I guessed, a woman of your intelligence would have understood from the first. But I never said anything, did I? I should not be telling you all this now."

"We are past such conventions."

"Go on, Monsieur," said Lucille lightly holding his bandaged hand in

His bandaged hand turned over on the table and clasped her fingers.

"You will stand by me, you will help me? Without you I cannot do it."

"Help you? How?"

"It must be done by subterfuge, one must keep one's patience, one's temper, one must wear down this intolerable opposition, one must force her to let go."

He was silent, overpowered by an excess of emotion.

"That is the only way," breathed Lucille, bending close to him, "to be

"That is the only way," breathed Lucille, bending close to him, "to be wary, to be careful, to feel one's way. Monsieur, if you could only bring yourself to be a little kind to her, even perhaps to give her all she asks."

"I cannot." The truth seemed drawn from him against his own volition

and hung on the air between them. "It is a physical repugnance, the last time I slept with her, the scent of her hair on the pillows..." He turned away.

Lucille Debelleyme remembered the handsome bed with the Brussels lace curtains amidst the amorini upholding the huge baldaquin. She was filled, vicariously, with distaste for Madame du

body as the soul sprang back in disgust.

"I know you cannot do it; whatever you decide I am your ally and will help you."

He had so little command of himself that as he wiped the sweat from his forehead he confessed:

"I should not have spoken to you. I should not have involved you in this. I was overcome, I came to speak to you because I was afraid I might strike her."

"If you had I could have condoned it. To me. Monsieur, there are worse things than a blow."

To me also. Sometimes I think I do not belong to this period, to this century. Sometimes. Mademoiselle Debellevme, when I escape to

Boccage, ill, half-dazed with opium, thickened by continuous childbearing; how well she could understand his repugnance, born of personal, physical aversion. No doubt he had recoiled from the bed and the woman who clamoured so piteously for his love, with the same violence as she had flung away from Robert Morrison. That to her was unforgivable, this attempt to force the relationship of the

honour! There are worse things than adultery."

"I also think so."

His breast was heaving as he stared at her straightly and demanded:

these houses, parks that belonged to my ancestors, I think of the days when no man allowed himself to be so hellishly dominated by a woman, when one got free even at the cost of what they would call now crime. Many a man has killed his wife for adultery and been thought none the worse for it because he was saving his honour...his

"You do not think the worse of me for this--because I cannot love my

understanding, should have come my way when in the eyes of almost everyone I appear a heartless, a mean brute!" "Not to me. Monsieur. Lunderstand. I-sympathise."

wife? You perhaps understand? That you, of all people, capable of

and retreated from him again. Through the tall uncurtained window of the half unfurnished room a shaft of gold from the western sun fell into this apartment, at once bleak and sumptuous. "I understand Madame du Boccage also." she added: she too

allowed her emotions a little range, forgot her old conventional manners, her traditional humility. "I can understand what it might be to love, and hopelessly, some man, a man like yourself. Monsieur Le

She walked round and round the table, approached where he sat

Duc. Oh! I am fastidious and squeamish, I could be devoted and loval and passionate, but I should not make these scenes: I have the strength to control myself." He rose and held on the back of the chair with his sound hand in an attitude like the one in which she had first seen him in the Faubourg St. Honore, and stared at her, and these two, neither of whom

increasing excitement. "You know what is said of us?" he asked abruptly. "You are aware how we are slandered?"

believed in God, neither of whom felt the lack of that belief, both hedonist, epicurean and passionate, looked at each other with

"As well aware. Monsieur, as I am aware that there is no foundation for that slander." She spoke with the force of her real pride, rejoicing almost savagely in the consciousness of her immaculate, technical innocence.

"I do not care, I have nothing to lose. Your friendship has been the only thing I have had that has been worth anything, that and the affection of your children, the protection of your household."

"My mother told me you had once been deceived in a man. I from the first knew the kind of a woman you are. I have not...I would not..." he hesitated, struggling with his words, phrases did not come readily to his lips even at a moment of emotion, "I would not insult you. Mademoiselle, by taking a vulgar advantage of your position, but nevertheless you mean a great deal to me..."

"You are prepared to endure this, Mademoiselle, for my sake? I will in every possible way protect you, but there is much I cannot do.

there is a great deal I cannot save you from."

vou till vou tell me to."

she flung herself on her knees on the marble floor beside him, took the hand that hung by his side and pressed her lips to it.

"All I have is yours," she whispered, "my gratitude, my devotion, my loyalty!"

She rose and was gone, and he, who had been so outraged by the melodramatic passion of his wife, found this display gracious.

Then, with a sudden excess of feeling which she could not control,

Custom reasserted itself, and every day life dropped into it usual routine, but now between Madame du Boccage and the governess it

touching and infinitely soothing to his stung pride.

was open warfare, waged with that tenacity which only those whose passion is fully roused have the strength to maintain. Not one spark

Lucille Debelleyme did not put a very high value on that passion; she knew the world would call it a pure wifely affection, a mere insistence on sacred vows taken before God; but, looked at clearly, what was it? A physical desire for a man whose character she could not admire if she was the virtuous woman she pretended to be, a man whose actions she must, as a good mother, despise, a man she should, if she were sincere in her pious protestations, condemn as an atheist, a libertine, a heartless rake.

Lucille Debelleyme thought she could read Fanny du Boccage well enough, her physical desires tormented her, it was impossible for her to live in peace near her husband and not have him as her lover. If he would once more share the bed beneath the mighty baldaquin he might indulge in any improprieties, any frivolities, and continue his reckless expense on Javiaux du Boccage with no word of reproach from his reatisfied wife.

of pity did Lucille Debelleyme feel for the woman whom she now regarded as a rival. Did she not employ her servant to spy upon her husband?—did she not listen eagerly to tales that anyone brought to her of him? And what if not rejected love was the root of all her

miseries and anguish?

reckless expense on Javiaux du Boccage with no word of reproach from his satisfied wife.

"She is no better than I," thought the governess with contempt, "she has not been able to make anyone, except toadies and spies and beggars and priests love her, and even the children have turned to me; she is in my way and she must go, even if it means destroying her utterly."

The Du Boccage household returned to the Faubourg St. Honore

course throughout the gaieties of a Parisian winter.

M. du Boccage did not renew his confidences with the governess:

and life in the elegant mansion pursued, on the surface, its usual

understood and there was no need for further words.

The Duchess appeared vanquished, her long illness kept her in her apartments, the installation of nurses, the visits of doctors helped to pass over the winter with some outward decorum; and also allowed ample leisure for the governess and M. du Boccage to pursue their companionship, their friendship, the indulgence of their common tastes.

That was a memorable season for Lucille Debelleyme, she felt

when they met again after that interview at Javiaux du Boccage he had resumed his usual manner and she was mistress of hers, all was

longingly from afar. She took a lively interest in all that was happening around her, herself a product of a new century she felt at one with all the manifestations of progress, She enjoyed it all, from the grand review at the Champs de Mars in honour of the Envoy of the Emperor of Morocco, to the ceremonious openings of two new railway stations, that from Paris to Tours and that ambitious line to

the North. She was present at the marvellous experiment of the

herself in the forefront of those great events she had often regarded

invention of M. Le Docteur Payerne when a submarine was sent under the Seine where it remained with its crew for two hours, she watched the Viceroy of Egypt's arrival at the Palais Elysee, heard from M. du Boccage an account of the brilliant reception given by Madame de Recamier in honour of Chateaubriand, she attended with the children the fete in the Champs Elysees given for the benefit

of the Spanish refugees, she took the eldest boy, the Marquis Philippe Joseph, to see the great steeplechase at Croix de Berny, she was present at the fashionable parade at the Madeleine when the monstrous new organ by Cavaille was inaugurated, she listened

the monstrous new organ by Cavaille was inaugurated, she listened with malice to the accounts of two attempts against the life of the King, one at Fontainebleau, one at the Tuileries, she watched the

She was present in the Opera-Comique when Berlioz gave the first performance of La Damnation de Faust; she listened keenly to all the talk, the whispers of the salon, the hints in the press (that new power becoming every month more formidable), sometimes she even caught a word or a phrase in the streets which proved to her that the present dynasty was not so firm as it might seem, nor the King and his numerous family as beloved as they might appear, and the governess. like a butterfly flitting ahead of flames that could not

Due de Nemours, reviewing his troops and she read in the journals of the elaborate preparations for the marriage of the Due de

Montpensier with a princess of Spain.

at the thought of yet another Revolution.

She knew herself on the edge of an abyss but she knew herself also at the bottom of a cliff, an uneasy position, she might either climb or fall—but she was happy.

She believed that she was making M. du Boccage happy also

overtake her, nor even scorch her wings, trembled with anticipation

She believed that she was making M. du Boccage happy also.

By patient dissimulation, by laborious subterfuge he had almost entirely disentangled himself from his wife. His leisure, his

companionship, his interests were more and more for the children

and the governess, he went less frequently to Court, joined more seldom those amusements which formerly he had found so delightful, as if there was no keener pleasure for him than to be entertained by Lucille Debelleyme on the first floor of his mansion in the Faubourg St. Honore.

They based their mutual security on the pride and reserve of Madame du Boccage. Scandal might murmur, bitter remarks might be dropped, hostile glances given, but as long as the wife did not complain no one else could do so.

situation could not last, there must be a climax and she hardly dared to speculate as to what that might be.

She felt secure as far as M. du Boccage's wife was concerned, but she did not feel so secure in regard to his possible passion for herself. It was true that they appeared to understand each other perfectly; after his outburst at Javiaux du Boccage when she had

dressed his wounded hand (an incident to which he never referred) she was certain she possessed his entire confidence, but what

Yet Lucille Debellevme knew that this provoking and piguant

would he risk for her sake if the Duchess was driven to make open complaint, if she should call in her father, her family?

Would M. du Boccage sacrifice everything or anything for the sake of Lucille Debelleyme?

He came upon her one day when she was sewing; her thimble dropped off and he picked it up, remarking on the bright design of forget-me-nots, so gracefully entwined on the silver.

"It was given to me by someone whom I shall certainly never forget."

"A lover, Mademoiselle?"
"I have never had a lover, but-a man who might have been one had I

Turning the tiny thimble round thoughtfully on his palm the Duke asked:

been fortunate."

Aubusson carpet.

"Have you never thought of marrying. Mademoiselle?"

Dropping her hands in her lap she studied the pale wreath on the

"Why should anything occur to cause such an unhappy event?"

"One never knows. Monsieur, but I was saying I think I should not have the heart to seek another place. I believe if I had to leave you, I should marry."

"You have, then, someone in mind?" and the sharp jealousy in his tone caused her instantly to invent a suitor.

"While I can be of any service in your establishment I should never think of marrying, but if something should occur so that I have to

leave "

pursue me, and one day, friendless, unprotected as I am--" she ventured to look at him, there was no mistaking the expression on his face.

"You do not care for this tiresome fellow?"

"There is a man who has long wanted to marry me, a retired officer in a good position. I have refused him many times but he continues to

The Duke picked up one of his daughter's pencil sketches of rabbits and carrots and tore it across, murmuring that it was poor and childish, then returning to the subject that really interested him he exclaimed:

"I might be forced to marry someone for whom I did not care."

"Do you often see this man?"

"Never, Monsieur," replied the governess turning on him bright

candid eyes. "He is not in Paris. Sometimes he writes to me."

"You must never marry," whispered the Duke, looking away, "at least

not a man you do not respect."

"You know," she smiled, "passion and understanding."

She took the thimble wreathed with forget-me-nots and replaced it again on her small finger.

"For the moment I need not think of this marriage, I did not mean to

She noticed he was careful to avoid the use of the word love, but she

"Respect," she exclaimed contemptuously, "surely that is the last

rejected the word he did use.

thing necessary in marriage!"

tell you, it is only my last refuge."

But the governess was used to taking risks.

* * * * *

"What, then, would you have?" he asked quickly.

"While I live there is surely no need for you to think of it."

Very indifferently the governess remarked:

"You perhaps forget that I am only a dependant in this establishment.

that I am not honoured with the confidence of Madame..."

He bit his lip, turned away, then left her impulsively; she thoughtfully continued her sewing and wondered whether she had done right or wrong to invent this pressing suitor. It was amusing, it was delicious to provoke the jealousy of M. du Boccage, was it not also perhaps risky?

Now and then during that winter and spring the governess ventured

She never dared to stay longer than gave her time to read a few lines, but these were sufficient to prove to her that the relations between husband and wife were even worse than they had been, and that the Duchess, with the recklessness of a woman who has lost all hope, was still battling vainly to be rid of herself—the governess.

Some sentences stirred the curiosity of Lucille Debelleyme. Madame du Boccage vehemently reproached her husband, in several of these distracted letters, with the little apartments in houses she was told he had hired in various parts of the city, "and do not try to persuade me that they are for yourself alone."

She reproved him for going out late at night and hiring public vehicles when he had so many carriages of his own at his disposal.

to creep to the little private apartment of the Duke, pull open the drawer in the pale-green painted desk and read the letters which were now too numerous to be contained in the vellum portfolio and

were flung carelessly loose.

Paris."

"How minutely she must spy on him," thought the governess, "to find out all his movements like that! What an incredible fool she is to flaunt her knowledge in his face!"

Then Lucille Debelleyme herself began to wonder as to where M. du

"Do not tell me that it is for the club, for the Court, or to see your mother or sisters that you leave me," she wrote, "for it has occurred when the Court is at the Chateau D'Eu. when your family are not in

Boccage spent the time he did not devote to her and the children.

He came to see her almost every evening, it was true, but always left at a respectable hour, usually soon after the children were in bed;

hand, began to know something of the prickings of jealousy with which she had so coldly tormented the other woman; whom did M. du Boccage meet at the secret rooms which his wife had discovered he hired? Other women, of course; he had not lived like a monk, a man of that physique, for six years. She knew about these things but she did not greatly care to have them brought home to her and she was rather

that he did not go to his wife was abundantly clear and, rather to her own dismay, the governess, who thought she had herself so well in

mistresses of M. du Boccage. Was she about to fall in love with him herself or rather was she going to allow him to assert a sway over her senses? That would be intolerable, that would spoil everything. If she could not keep her

head in that direction she was surely lost, unless she thought again of

Madame de Genlis and Madame de Maintenon

alarmed by the distaste with which she considered even the casual

How much had they loved the men on whose backs they had climbed to power? The governess boldly asked herself: "Could I become his mistress, keep my position here, look after his children, defy his wife? I believe it would be very difficult. I believe if we became lost in passion it would be impossible."

She could not put those other unknown women out of her mind, she

was tortured with the thought that one of them might suddenly retain a hold on him. satisfy more than a transient need.

She was tempted to make some advances to him, yet hesitated.

She knew he regarded her as immaculate, was not that her chief

hold on him? He respected her, admired her honour, her dignity and her purity, he had heard the story she had told his mother solely in

order that it might reach his ears. But every time he came to see her

more seductive, and the slightly hesitating voice in which he conversed with her more enchanting.

Everything about him, his costly clothes, his fine perfume, even that thick blond hair that at first she found so repulsive because it reminded her of Robert Morrison, the powerful hands which were

she found his visit more pleasant, his presence more alluring, his contact more dangerous, the glances veiled by the thick fair lashes

senses.

When with locked door, with drawn curtains, in the rosy light of the opal-shaded lamp, she stood in a thin robe of lace or silk, which would go on the account of Madame du Boccage, and looked at

herself in the mirror, pride in her pale luminous beauty was not so impersonal as it had been. She began to wish that M. du Boccage

almost vulgarly strong, everything attracted her, and excited her keen

could see her like this, she began to regret that she had taken such care to impress him with her purity.

The governess, watching on the stairs or visiting with the children in

The governess, watching of the statis of wishing with the clinicient in the neighbourhood, saw many of the society figures who were received in the Faubourg St. Honore: Victor Hugo, the renowned novelist, recently elected a member of the Chamber of Peers, General Cubieres and President Teste who were presently to be

General Cubieres and President leste who were presently to be involved in those appalling charges of corruption which would shake France, and she noted on several occasions a grim and sinister figure which impressed her unpleasantly, that of the old Due Pasquier, Chancellor of he Chamber of Peers, cold and cruel,

bowed with age, nearly blind with cataract, but possessed of a formidable presence before which even Lucille Debelleyme quailed. He was believed to have no interest in life beyond the prestige of the peerage of France, his face was rigid with all the hauteur of those

why this aversion was like a presentiment of ill fortune. An aura of evil, she thought, surrounded the old man, with his eves ringed by white circles, his thick grey whiskers, his shaking hands, his implacable strength. The propriety of the Faubourg St. Honore could not satisfy her avid

ancient nobles who had mounted the bloody steps of the guillotine. Mademoiselle Debelleyme hated the Due Pasquier and wondered

deal she had never experienced and she was haunted by the lines of the Duchess' letter about the secret rendezvous to which her husband went so frequently. Where did he go? What did he do? What kind of women did he

curiosity: there was so much she did not know, there was a great

meet? How did he entertain them? What gifts did he give them? In brief, what life was this that flowed beneath he even existence? What alitter, what darkness which she might never hope to know? On some of the light spring evenings of the first mild days the governess, when the children were in bed (when he left he early) crept out of the house wearing her simplest clothes, the thick, ugly dresses that had been so approved of in Belgrave Square, and, pulling a veil over her dark bonnet, hired a cab and drove to any chance address, any street that came into her mind, an old church on the island of the city, an ancient house she had heard of in Quartier St. Antoine. She would often drive over the Pont Neuf where stood

the last remaining shop like a temple with a black gateway, but mostly she went to the poorer quarters where she could not possibly go in the daytime with her charges, and gazed from the window of her carriage at this other Paris of which she knew so little.

She noticed the public writer, with his soft hat and long torn coat. shivering before his table in the open air of the Rue St Jacques; she

Rue St. Denis, and she drove once, on an evening when her spirit seemed restless, to the prison of the Quartier Popincourt and looked, with she know not what kind of interest, at those sombre walls, pierced by tiny windows. Several times she dismissed her cab at the corner of a street where a flickering gas-lamp gleamed down some dark alley, and started out, light footed, apprehensive vet audacious, her clear cold eves beneath the cotton veil scanning the shabby house on which were stuck placards "lodgings for the night." glancing down the open doors in the cellars where drunken men quarrrelled, listening, as she hastened past, to the muttered conversations of men, huddled together with their hands in their pockets, their caps over their eyes, in broken doorways. She watched the rag-sellers, the sick children

watched the charlatan in tartan trousers selling bankrupt stock in the

sucking dirty crusts, the sore-eyed cats in the gutter, smelt the reek of foul cooking that came from these obscure windows and blackened doors. She watched the hawkers trying to sell their nostrums, their elixirs for happiness; she listened to the wail of violins and mandolins outside drinking houses, she saw the homeless

without shawls, with clothes torn over breasts not yet fully grown,

stumbling down the autters, the refuse round their skirts, their faces flushed and haggard, their eyes confused, their breath heavy with alcohol.

prostitutes, many of them no more than children. Without bonnets,

Satisfying she scarcely knew what avid need, the governess, from behind her veil, drank in all these scenes, stamping them on her

memory. This also was life, as real a life as sparkled at the Cafe de Paris in the elegant apartment Demidoff where the next morning she

would pause in her ride with the children and sit for a moment or so

at the tables under the elegant trees in the Boulevard des Italiens; yes, this was life and she might easily have been a part of it. It was mere chance that she was not one of those bedraggled women It excited her, the ugliness, the filth, the suffering, the confused medley that poverty, disease and crime made of life. Her cool fastidiousness regarded without wincing the drunkard vomiting outside the cabaret, the half-naked child, covered with ulcers, searching for rotting fruit among the garbage pails, the hag stumbling into the disreputable pharmacy which administered to the victims of

vice, to buy rouge with which to daub the cheeks of the consumptive

dving of vice and consumption.

street-walker.

She listened to the shrieks of women in child-birth coming from behind the rags that blocked the windows of tenements, she heard the oaths of the police as they struggled with thief or suspect, she heard the tired voice of some priest praying above a death-bed, she heard a man in a grocer's shop beg a biscuit box for his child's coffin, and the thin song of a demented woman pacing before the

great gates of a vast burial ground.

She saw the exhausted beasts being driven by the blows of sticks into the slaughter house and the trails of blood that flowed sluggishly over the cobbles, she saw a pigeon fluttering alive on a butcher's stall and a sewer rat devouring the entrails of a decaying dog.

Once her light hovering step brought her to the Seine the dark bulk

Once her light, hovering step brought her to the Seine, the dark bulk of the Hotel-Dieu, the squat edifice of the Morgue. The few gaslamps on the quays were dully reflected in the sluggish river where long, dark barges rocked at their chains.

The governess did not dare enter the building where the unknown

dead drawn from the filthy water lay corrupting on their marble pillows, but, as she hesitated, staring, fascinated by this ultimate horror, a dark procession formed out of the river mists about her.

horror, a dark procession formed out of the river mists about her. Some men in uniform, were carrying a dripping body, half covered by

manufacturer: the lolling head was exposed, the face was that of a young boy, the outline gentle and refined, the expression one of insane despair. As the governess stared at this group which turned towards the

Morgue, an old woman lurched up out of the fog and thrust a bunch of

a sack on which was stamped the name of a sweetmeat

dead roses under her nostrils; so, thought Lucille Debelleyme, that drowned child might stink in the nostrils of his Creator. She paid a few sous to the shivering woman and when she had gone, dropped the dusty roses, that seemed rotten with tears, into the river. As soon as these nocturnal expeditions began to be observed and her excuses of paying a visit to the poor, to a relative, would no

longer serve, she gave up what had become a dangerous diversion. but she had seen enough, she had satisfied a restless, brutal curiosity. ****

The King walked up and down one of the galleries of the Tuileries, a bundle of newspapers under his arm: disease had thickened his once graceful figure to a stoutness that was daily turned to ridicule by

the venom of the caricaturists. In the not undignified person of Louis Philippe, the careful benevolence of the professional democrat was tempered by hereditary pride, indolence and obstinacy; as, affecting to found his monarchy on the love of his people, he had never dared to use force, he had been obliged to support his power by strategy

and all the ramifications of political corruption. Never had a Bourbon

lived through so many vicissitudes nor a King of France been through so many sordid experiences.

His civilian dress, ostentatiously devoid of any touch of grandeur, his air of easy, unceremonious good humour, showed the citizen King

dare, on that of the ancien regime, and he knew, despite his elaborate devices to gain popularity, that he was as despised and resented as any of these tyrants whose lilies he had erased with such servility from his escutcheon.

The long gallery of the palace was dull with a neglected splendour; the modest habits of the liberal monarch went ill with this background designed for the flourish of, at least, outward glories. The King, with his bundle of newspapers, approached a group of centlemen who

appealing for the sufferance of his dear countrymen, but he remained a royal Prince, surrounded by an aristocracy modelled, as far as he

"Everyone is talking of your extraordinary governess, M. du Boccage."

"I was aware of that, but I was not aware it had reached the ears of Your Maiestv."

"Ah, I hear everything; the newspapers take care of that," replied Louis Philippe with a grimace. "We have a new power here"--he touched the packet under is arm--"these rogues are dangerous."

were talking casually of the Chinese Industrial Exhibition in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Laurent: Louis Philippe detached one of these from the

others, and, with his air of gentle candour, remarked:

that this lady retains her place in my establishment."

The Duke, smiling, amiable as usual, did not appear in the least discomposed. The King regarded him shrewdly.

"You are going too far, I do not know whether you are very simple or

"You are going too far, I do not know whether you are very simple or very cunning, that is scarcely my business, but, my dear fellow, you must understand this is a game you cannot play."

"The situation has entirely been misunderstood; it is my wife's wish

your children, received by all your friends?" asked the King sharply, "wearing the clothes, even the jewels, she does? Oh, I admit she is a remarkable young person, but she is also a nobody."

"My wife has not complained."

"She is very loyal and greatly beloved."

"There is no need for her to complain: the situation. Sire, is neither mysterious nor painful—as for these gutter rags..."

"You have a treasure of a wife."

"No one knows that better than I do. Sire. Unfortunately Fanny's health does not permit her to undertake any of her duties. As for the

"With so much domination, so much power, going everywhere with

power that Mademoiselle Debelleyme seems to allocate to herself, it is my wife's wish she should assume it, and her clothes go to my wife's account."

"Very clever...very clever," exclaimed the King impatiently, "but, I pray you, stop in time."

you, stop in time."

With emphasis he added:

"I have seen it done in my own home. It is quite true that I and all my brothers and sisters, adored Madame Genlis, made of her almost a goddess, she was everything to us, my mother the merest shadow. Let me, however, tell you this—I have been through much, as you know, prison, exile, poverty—but I have no sadder, more poignant know, prison, that to finy poor mether, extragged from us, from her

know, prison, exile, poverty--but I have no sadder, more poignant recollection than that of my poor mother, estranged from us, from her husband, by this woman, dying, alien from all who should have loved her--of a broken heart. I am an old man now, M. du Boccade. I have a

little experience, if not much authority. Look to your affairs."

M. du Boccage did not take this pathetic appeal in good part. especially as it followed on one or two galling remarks dropped by M de Nemours "Your Maiesty is mistaken in supposing that anyone--that any woman can dominate me " "Yet this has the air of an infatuation. Of course everyone thinks that

vour rank. I cannot afford--" "Mademoiselle Debelleyme is not my mistress, she is a woman of the highest character."

she is your mistress. My dear Du Boccage, you do not suppose I would interfere in your intimate affairs? But scandal--with a man of

To this the troubled King replied, almost in the words the had been used by Madame du Boccage: "She has the appearance of being so and that is the main thing.

Listen to me." he added with impressive earnestness. "I cannot, I will not have a scandal among my friends, among the nobility. You have some idea how affairs are in France, the feeling of the people against us, the difficulty of maintaining this role of liberalism, the

hatred there is for the aristocracy, for the Chamber of Peers, the avidity with which every scrap of scandal is leaped on, and, mon Dieu! Teste--Cubieres-that's deadly, that is sufficient! You," he

added with that emphatic and persuasive dignity he knew so well how to employ, "are widely known, an intimate of my son, one of the firmest supporters of my House, I have richly rewarded all that you

and your father have done for me, you are Chevalier d'honneur to the

Duchesse D'Orleans: if I may not command, I entreat--do not allow slander the least ground, put an end to these insinuations in the press, make up your differences with your wife and dismiss this governess."

"It is sufficient that everybody is gossiping, whispering, hinting--and there is some ground for suspicion. When, the other day, Madame de Brancas said to your wife: 'Is it not true that your husband adores you?' the poor woman could not command herself--she lost countenance and nearly broke into tears." The Duke's smile twitched into a grin. "Fanny is hysterical. And these recriminations of women! Who, Sire, put Madame de Brancas on to probe my wife's feelings? Forgive me if I find it strange that my most trivial domestic affairs interest Your Majesty." He had flushed violently: the King regarded him shrewdly, wondering what was the truth about this man whom he had, until lately, regarded as an indolent, good-natured, elegant creature sunk in connubial bliss, leading the most blameless life of any member of the aristocracy. "It does interest me. M. du Boccage. It amazes me. too. Frankly.

"Sire. I have no differences with my wife and she does not desire me

to dismiss this governess."

"It does interest me, M. du Boccage. It amazes me, too. Frankly, what do you hope? It is her money, the Frediani money that you spend on Javiaux du Boccage. Foolishly, as I think, for no one of your rank will ever be able to live on that scale again."

The Duke did not answer; he had not sufficient skill with words to be able to disguise his deep anger; he was a man who most bitterly resented the least interference, yet seemed destined to have

perpetually to endure it. He gave the King an uneasy impression of something savage at bay.

"No more words. Monsieur," sighed Louis Philippe. "You must understand me. Let the young woman go while you can do so without

an open fracas, give her a pension, what you will, send her to

England, to Italy, anywhere. I give you good advice." "Sire--I have been spied on--by servants." "Who is not spied on--by servants? You should have been equal to

circumventing the baseness of--what? Despair, perhaps, M. du Boccage?"

The King turned on his heel and walked away down the gallery; the Duke drew further into the window recess, dragged out his frail

cambric handkerchief and, under pretence of wiping his lips, tore it

with his strong, even teeth.

half way

sleep.

fears as to the future.

The King's warning, the murmurs of his brother the Comte Edouard, his sisters, his friends, caused the Duke to offer large concessions with the readiness of a man who does not intend to give an inch. He forced himself to go through a form of reconciliation with his wife, and took her to Dieppe for her health, as he said, but really to escape the espionage of Paris, leaving the governess in the Faubourg St. Honore with the children. But at the end of the week Mademoiselle Debelleyme joined them...it was really a pity to separate mother and little ones, and the sea air had not proved as

beneficial for the Duchess as had been hoped; she pined in the hired villa in Dieppe and had to continue the frictions of opium on head and chest that had so long been her only means of securing

the part of her husband at which his monitors rejoiced. Their apartments in the Villa Violette were as separate as those in the Faubourg St. Honore, he never spoke to her except in public; his nervous, desperate desire to avoid a scene had made him recently cease that evening visit of courtesy to say good night that had been his last link with one time tenderness.

She had now no chance to break through his frozen amiability, his

deliberate civility, and the frantic letters she wrote in her lonely bedroom redoubled in clumsy invocations of the past and anguished

The truth was that she alone knew the extent of that concession on

The villa was gloomy, the weather bad. The pale light of the sea invaded the tall rooms with the uncomfortable Empire furniture, the stiff draperies of a chill ocean-blue colour, the austere tea-table set with cumbrous silver and china where the governess, in her neat

and Cesarine and Laure played with a grey kitten on the floor by Mademoiselle Debelleyme.

Into this scene the Duchess entered and sank, breathing heavily, on to the sofa facing the window. Her bonnet was unfastened, she was unbecomingly flushed, her hair was untidy; she appeared coarse and unattractive beside the governess. She held several small parcels on her lap, and in an unsteady voice implored the children to come and look at what she had bought for them; none of them responded, and the Duke, who had risen at his wife's entry but taken no further notice

striped silk gown, presided. The Duke played backgammon with lsabelle by the hearth, the boy whispered over a book with plates of coloured shells by the high window that looked on to the calm sea,

The mother rose and came forward, holding out a little doll dressed as a fishwife; Cesarine had sprung up, but the heavy emotion of

"Oh, fie," cried the governess to the little ones at her feet. "Go at once. Mademoiselles, and see what Madame your mother has been

of her, continued his game, standing.

good enough to bring you--"
"We want to play with Mimi--"

Madame du Boccage gave her an air of menace. The child was frightened at the greedy advance of the dark heavy woman, she threw herself into the arms of Mademoiselle Debelleyme and hid her face.

face.

"Ah, that now!" exclaimed Madame du Boccage; above the golden head of Cesarine she saw the brilliant steady eyes of her enemy

looking at her with scom, with triumph, though the governess was murmuring: "Go to your mother, darling, she las brought you a pretty present--"

"Mother! Mother! What is it?"

"I will trouble none of you! I am a stranger here--my position is intolerable! I am going to make an end of it!"

She rushed out, slamming the door. The Duke did not move, but Isabelle, overturning the gueridon on which the game rested, clung to her father, screaming out for him to "Stop mother!" Cesarine clasped the governess tighter and began to sob loudly.

The Duchess stumbled to the door with a cry that roused the boys from their absorption in their book: Philippe Joseph cried out:

For a moment the Duke was immobile; he and the governess looked at each other over the children's heads, a long, intense glance of complete understanding. The little girls continued to sob, the boys to urge. Mademoiselle Debelleyme held Cesarine tight by her slender body as the Duke moved slowly across the window, behind him the

pale glimmer of the sea. Then with a shrug he turned and reluctantly

left the high, pale room.

When the Duchess found herself on the beach she was ashamed of her outburst. Her husband found her in a bazaar buying Chinese curiosities and informed her brusquely that they were returning the next day to Paris...this visit to Dieppe could not be called a success.

With a look, a gesture of despair, the unhappy woman locked herself in her room with Matilde.

The Duke returned to Mademoiselle Debelleyme, who was amusing the distracted children in the high, sombre parlour, lit by the cold light

reflected from a colourless sky and grey sea.

Sending the children out with the nurse, he turned to the young woman and demanded:

To these commonplace phrases Lucille Debelleyme replied with one of those looks which was their mutual language:

"I have often feared it, I had a strange uneasiness when I saw her bedroom...You know, if in one of her passions she threw herself.

"How long do you think this can go on? She will come to some harm, she should be where she can be looked after, day and night."

He bit his forefinger:
"Why, so it is, yet I had never thought of it-I will look to the supports."

"And then," continued the governess lightly approaching him "if she was to one day find a cord, a bottle of laudanum or arsenic--you had some at Javiaux du Boccage for the rats in the vaults--or--her opium-

heavy as she is, on that bed--the baldaguin seems so ill balanced..."

-the doctor measures it out, I know--but if one day he should leave it behind by chance...Oh, Monsieur, we really should be careful."

There was an awful blankness in his stare as he replied dully:

"Yes, we must be careful." Then in a low tone of repressed fury: "But would it not be better if she did make an end it?--This is intolerable.

would it not be better if she did make an end it?--Ihis is intolerable, insupportable."

The governess did not answer; she was invaded by a sense of horror. She detested this lofty, pale room, the depressing pallor of the misty sea beyond the high windows, an atmosphere that was filled at once with boredom, nervous tension and the dread of violence.

She knelt down before the empty hearth and began to pick up the tric-trac pieces. This was the second time she had been at his feet;

"Yes, yes, we must certainly return to Paris-and I will see about the baldaquin-"

* * *

he made no effort to raise her. When she stood up, the game in her hand, he was still staring at the sea; she touched his arm, for he had the look of someone in a trance. He started and exclaimed:

her the youngest children and the nurses, while the Duke, making his gesture towards a peaceful settlement of his domestic affairs, sent the elder boy to the care of a tutor in the College Bourbon.

It was the Duchess who relieved the tension of this situation. As soon as she had recovered sufficiently she retired to Locroi, taking with

At the beginning of spring Marechal Frediani sent an invitation from Corsica for his daughter and his grandchildren to visit him. The Duchess refused to return from Normandy, but M. du Boccage declared he was weary of Paris and longed for a holiday, he had the pleasantest recollections of the Mediterranean, he would himself

take little Isabelle, now of an age to appreciate the beauties of the South, and, as a matter of course, the governess would accompany them.

The Duchess, advised by a cold letter from her husband of this project, offered no objection. Whether her consent was forced from her by resignation or despair her husband neither knew nor cared.

"You see," he remarked to the governess, "patience gains the day. I have conceded nothing, but now she has conceded all. She has the good sense to learn that I am not to be moved by scenes and lamentations."

good sense to learn that I am not to be moved by scenes and lamentations."

He sighed with satisfaction at the thought of the success of his long.

that she had lost for ever all domination over him and that she would allow him in the future the liberty he had for several years demanded. He appeared almost gay at the thought that this intolerable tyranny had at length come to an end, more than ever he was the cavalier preparing for the Embarkation for Cytherea.

The governess regarded him curiously; she wondered, with secret apprehension, if he was, after all, despite all his subtle ties and patient intriques, really a stupid man?

and patient manoeuvres which had ended in his wife's unexpected permission for this voyage to Italy. He appeared to believe that this tempestuous, tenacious, exasperating woman had at length realised

He remarked her hesitation with some irritation.

"Do you not care. Mademoiselle, for the thought of this escape to the South? Are you not also a little weary of Paris?—of the Faubourg St. Honore?"

"I am thinking, Monsieur," replied the governess with her cold brilliant

smile, "that it will be like standing naked in the Palais Royal and expecting people not to stare at us."

"Do you think that it will cause a further scandal? Ah, very well, but one should pay no heed to the gossips, all that can be said has been

one should pay no heed to the gossips, all that can be said has been said. And the purity of our intentions—"

She decided that such banality must be really irony. She hesitated a moment but a moment only, what, after all, had she to lose? Her all was centred in this man, his protection, his friendship. It did indeed

matter to her very little what the world might say as long as she preserved his interest.

To travel with him on the borders of the Mediterranean, in Italy, free

of passionate lovalty veiled by implacable decorum, she said: "I shall be pleased. Monsieur to accompany you and Isabelle to Corsica." This Italian interlude was the entering of another sphere for Lucille Debelleyme. If she had hoped to escape all hostility, all espionage she was soon proved to have been mistaken; the glances, the

comments she had to endure even on the vovage showed that, and

from spies and the overwhelming presence of the sick, jealous woman--a dangerous pleasure, perhaps, but she had never allowed cowardice to interfere with her design Without changing her manner

when she reached the great palace in Corsica owned by the father of Madame du Boccage, the icy courtesies and ironic glances of the old Marechal informed her that she was still under the supervision of an enemy, warned her that she danced and flaunted on the edge of an abvss: but the borders of an abvss hung with the most entrancing flowers. After all she could not find much that disturbed her, beside the fact that she was in the company of Camille du Boccage.

She was not often alone with him but constantly in his presence. No word of love was exchanged between them, but the strongest, deepest, most intoxicating intimacy bound them.

He would look at her across a crowd; the pressure of his hand when he said good night; his smile when he saw her in the morning; this was enough. Careful not to allow a handle to any slanderer, not to trespass on the rigid rules of propriety. Lucille Debelleyme enjoyed this intricate and difficult game that she and M. du Boccage played.

This secret alliance, this complete, silent understanding produced a serene tranquillity that enveloped them whenever they were together--alone or among others.

Her cold sensitive, fastidious nature, profoundly shocked by the

little girl, to note the change in his voice as he spoke to her, to experience the subtle joy of seeing him turn his head, pause in his conversation and look at her as she entered any room in which he might be.

His wife wrote to him; Lucille Debelleyme had come upon him tearing up the unopened letters in the familiar writing and throwing them under his writing-table, she had also come upon him tearing up a packet of Parisian newspapers, "No doubt he and I are being pilloried there."

sordid issue of her one love adventure, did not fret at this long prelude to a drama on which the curtain might never rise. It was enough to see him, to listen to him, to know he was always there, near, to know that he watched her when she played with his charming

sink effaced into the background? Would she, Lucille Debelleyme, become now what all the world believed her to be, mistress of M. du Boccage?

He had not asked her for the slightest favour; if he did Mademoiselle Debelleyme did not know what her answer would be. For the first time in her life she found that her usual cool, keen consideration of her own interests were confused by a rising passion.

She could not of course avoid asking herself how is this going to end? Had the Duchess really given way, resigned herself, without a struggle, to the authority of the governess? Would the lawful wife's father, her relatives, the Royal Family, public opinion, allow her to

Continual parties in honour of the charming little granddaughter of M. de Frediani were given on his vast estates while the Southern spring

de Frediani were given on his vast estates while the Southern spring burst open around them. The sky and stars and flowers, sun and moon and sea offered the most entrancing decoration for any tale of love. One night Lucille Debelleyme, who always had to leave balls and receptions early with her little charge, put a lace shawl over her delicate silk dress and quietly left the Palace; she had wanted to for many nights. The moon was full and, urged by a restless excitement. she had been unable to remain in her room. She walked without conscious direction through a grove of oleanders and came out on the shore, pale gold sands silvered by the moonlight, a line of slowly curling surf white as ivory, and a sea of violet blue. Above her the Southern moon seemed huge and very near and she felt as if she could catch it in her hand. She walked along slowly, losing herself in the enchantment and beauty, and where some low rocks dark with the fragrance of some rich aromatic plants stood, almost at the water's edge, she met Camille du Boccage. She wondered if he had followed her, but she did not greatly care; he was hatless and pale, the moonlight touched his thick blond hair, his colourless face, the linen of his cravat and shirt almost into the likeness of an alabaster statue, only faintly tinged with colour, and Mademoiselle Debellevme thought, idly curiously, of the statue of Cupidon that she had noticed, looking over her shoulder into the mirror the first day that she came to the Faubourg St. Honore. She did not pause in her slow walk along the edge of the surf and he fell into step beside her. She could see nothing remarkable in this. Without a word they experienced the intense delight of complete intimacy, their everyday relationship and circumstances completely forgotten. Their hands hung idly a their sides and as if by accident their fingers touched. The silver mist that seemed to rise from land and sea, drawn up towards the moon, enveloped them both, shutting them off from reality. She raised her face, smiling steadily, and he

"Is this love or something more?"

The question seemed to have no meaning, for what could be more than love? Yet she knew; here was something so rare that she had

never known of it before and never would look for it again, something so real that all the rest of her life seemed a sham beside it; he and she, in what relationship? It did not matter. He and she, drifting towards what catastrophe? It did not matter. They had met, and recognised each other, by what magic? She did not care. It was

They walked on again in silence, she shivered as the cold creeping edge of the sea wetted her thin doeskin shoes. He took her hand and turned it over curiously in his own, looking down at her.

"Of course," he whispered in a voice that sounded far away, "this would be too powerful for anyone to resist. Nothing would matter beside this."

"No. no."

A sudden inlet of the sea running in a wide arm between the rocks cut off their progress. They turned back and saw before them the Palace with its lighted windows showing deep yellow in the

incandescent blueness of the night.

"What will happen?" asked Lucille.

"I do not know."

said, under his breath:

enough that they had.

He seemed like a man under the influence of a heavy drug. She knew, and this was one of the traits she admired in him, that he was very sober, he neither drank nor smoked; his vices and indulgences

Frediani stood.

This was a very different ocean from that which had lapped the dreary beach before the austere respectability of the Villa Violette. She drew her fine, silk hem away from the crawling reach of the

ivory-coloured foam and found pleasure in the grace of her own gesture. She looked up again at his face outlined between her and the sea, illuminated by the moonshine. It was slightly distorted, that face, there was something of the demi-god, she thought, in the outline...debased demi-god or noble beast? Something, at least, not human, something she had always wanted, that satisfied her

They walked on towards the purple rock on which the great Palace

were not those that left traces upon his person. Yet to-night he

Above all she was not one to indulge her own passion. They mounted in silence the dark rock, scented from the growing plants; from the open windows of the Palace came the sound of a polka.

All that winter Lucille Debellevme had listened to the polkas so

fashionable in Paris, she had heard them played, she had played

She neither tempted nor repelled as she walked beside him in silence; she was not one to force a moment, to provoke a climax.

them hundreds of times...Never yet had she danced the polka or any other dance: the music came out persistently into the night.

"I must go back."

"Yes, I was wrong to believe that here we should be free from spies--

"Well. it's her father's house!"

seemed intoxicated

completely.

"Everyone is against us."

"It matters so little."

"Lucille, Lucille, you played that polka in Paris?"

"For your daughters."

"Is it honest to marry a boy of seventeen?--my father--"

"I must go."

"Yes. you are right to think of your reputation--"

Tenderly she replied:

You risk too much."

She moved swiftly from him, leaving him a shadow among the rustling oleanders. The Palace rose sheer above her with the menacing bulk of a monster chained to the rocks; the lighted windows were like eyes to spy and mock, but above was the moon, the fresh night wind, below the sweep of the surf on the sand. These

"I do not. I have nothing to lose equal to what I have gained. But you!

were her allies; in their presence she was justified.

When she reached her own room she was shaken by a force of emotion she could not control, and she fell on her knees by the bed of chestnut wood. The window was open wide and all the beauty of the night outside seemed filled with his presence. The governess put

the night outside seemed filled with his presence. The governess put out all the candles except one. She undressed quickly, unhooking, unbuttoning in haste, taking off the little shoes cold with sea water,

the corsets of white satin warm from her body. She peered into the mirror, not with self-assurance as usual, but timidly, asking herself:

"Am I lovely enough? Will he expect more than this?"

He knew where her room was; she kept a night lamp burning and set her door wide, but he did not come. She writhed under the scorn of her own caution, she wished she had not been at such desperate

She put out the one candle: the moonlight was enough.

pains to impress on him the legend of her purity.

She flung herself face downwards on the bed and bit her thumb to steady her nerves; persistently there beat on her ears the rhythm of the polka.

The Marechal Frediani decided to accompany his son-in-law and his grandchild back to Paris and Lucille Debelleyme knew the reason of this decision. The scandal that the pride and dignity of Madame du Boccage had for so long kept at bay had now broken into the open. Every newspaper published in Paris had something about this

aristocrat of the ancien regime living in open adultery with the shameless governess, who was, according to some, Italian,

according to others, English, according to all, on the make. The Church was roused against this atheist who defied all moral laws, the legitimists were roused against this member of the old nobility who had followed the cadet branch of the House of Bourbon, and the people, hating anything to do with the Chamber of Peers, murmured in increasing fury against this flaunting of open immorality which in a less important man would have been punished severely.

Lucille Debelleyme knew from the moment she arrived in Paris that the affair had come to a climax.

Very shortly after her return to the Faubourg St. Honore, where Madame du Boccage had received her with resigned sweetness,

and put them down on the ornate Empire bureau before the old soldier, pointing out to him the paragraphs where there were scarcely veiled insinuations against herself.

"An abominable situation has been created for me, I cannot remain with your daughter, Monsieur Le Marechal, another day. There is nothing tor me to do but to immediately withdraw from her establishment. from Paris."

the governess waited on the Marshal Frediani who had come, she knew to Paris with the sole purpose of removing her from his

She carried in her small, exquisitely gloved hand some newspapers

daughter's household.

"Because I am helpless, friendless, a young woman who has been foully attacked, and because you. Monsieur, know that I am innocent. You had my behaviour every minute of the day, under your eyes, in Corsica."

"Why. Mademoiselle, do you come to me?"

M. Frediani did not immediately answer, he was perfectly aware of his daughter's frightful situation, of the miserable disarray in her household, of the long separation between her and her husband. He disliked the governess for the part she had played in the tragedy of

Madame du Boccage but he could not precisely put his finger on what the part was; he was baffled. It was quite true that during the stay in Corsica he had observed nothing; and this move now, this appeal to him, was it cunning or innocence?--he did not know. Experienced diplomat as he was he could read nothing in the cold eyes, so brilliant, so searching, that the governess turned on him in

righteous indignation.

She must certainly go, he had resolved that. She must, as soon as

He rose, took a turn about his beautiful apartment, then with an air of friendly but formidable authority, he paused before the slender expectant figure of the governess.

"No, Mademoiselle, it is not the moment for you to leave my daughter's establishment. To do so would be to confirm all the lying gossips which have so justly offended you; ignore their slanders and they fall silent of themselves."

"Of all things avoid a scandal?" asked Mademoiselle Debelleyme, rising to her feet. "Yes, for the sake of your daughter, of your grandchildren, of your son-in-law himself, perhaps, for the sake of all your house and connection?"

"Certainly. Mademoiselle, that is my wish."

"But for me," she lightly struck her breast, "you do not think of my reputation or peace of mind, or happiness? I am worthless, a

"I do not see, Mademoiselle, how you would serve your interests by leaving my daughter's house now. Remain where you are, pursue your usual course of life and we can talk of this later, when all this

nobody!"

hurly burly has died down."

possible, leave the Faubourg St. Honore, but the wily old man saw that for her to go with a burst of scandal would be to play into her hands, to make her a heroine, a victim, to sacrifice his daughter's dignity and peace of mind, and would create an uproar that would split the whole house of Montlosier du Boccage and probably cast a slur on the whole of the ancient peerage, already with so much

difficulty upholding if prestige in the eyes of the people.

"Then, Monsieur Le Marechal, will you please see your daughter and

get her to ask me herself to stay in her establishment? This request cannot come from M. du Boccage, as you must be aware, nor scarcely from yourself: she alone, for her own sake, must ask me to remain " The old man was silent: he began to perceive that he dealt with a

only to remain there but to remain on the most honourable terms: that was why she had forced his hand, compelling him to ask his daughter to allow this formidable enemy to remain under her roof.

He bit his lip and his dark Southern eves were angry but she had him

very clever person. No doubt the governess had not the least intention of leaving the Faubourg St. Honore, no doubt she meant not

cornered, there was nothing he could do but to accede. "I will speak to Madame du Boccage: it is desirable that vou should for the present"--he stressed the three words and Mademoiselle Debellevme perfectly understood why--"remain in the Faubourg St.

Honore."

The governess took her dignified leave, she had triumphed completely. The Marechal Frediani kept his word, he spoke earnestly to his

daughter: "I returned to Paris with the full intention of helping you to get rid of

this young woman, but I was not quite prepared for this outburst of scandal--that must be weathered. She has come to me, she had the effrontery to complain, she has won, I fear, the first move. She must remain until all this noise has died down. Take my advice, my dear

Fanny; I know something of the world, show yourself as friendly as possible to this creature, have an air of disdaining all that is insinuated, and presently, we will get rid of her."

miserable slanders."

"It is you alone who can do anything. Fanny; I will not deny that the situation is ugly. What," he added with impulsive irritation, "is the matter with Camille? Is he in love?"

"In love, yes, but in what fashion? I confess that I have lost all hope! But I did not wish to tell anyone, not even you. You know nothing of

my sufferings, of what it has been like; I have been wrong, too, I lose my temper, I speak violently and I make scenes and he can endure none of these things, and vet when he is with me I cannot control

With an effort she maintained her calm. "Tell me, father, you are experienced, you know the world, men and women. They were together under your eves in Corsica. Is she, I do not know--I am

"I had already resolved to do so. I will do all I can to ignore these

Madame du Boccage agreed with her father with a readiness that surprised him; her pride in her family, her dignity as wife and mother were strong, she was ready for almost any sacrifice that would avoid a scandal which would reflect so miserably on herself, her father, her

children, on the whole caste to which she belonged.

mvself."

baffled--is she his mistress?"

"His mistress, no, though it may seem strange, I do not think so."

"What then is it? It is like an enchantment, a witchcraft, as if she has taken possession of his very soul. He has given her all my authority, all my power. he has put in her charge all my children."

Seeing a rising storm of hysteria threaten his daughter's uneasy calm, the old man put his hand on her shoulder and said tenderly:

"Think no more of it. Fanny, we must wait, we must be patient." Dignity, generosity, charity, these are your only weapons."

"I know, but, Camille, my children, they are lost..."

violent to last "

them into her trunk.

Looking at her father timidly, the Duchess asked in a pitiful voice:

"Nay, not lost, this passion, this infatuation, whatever it is, is too

"Do you intend that she shall go?" "I do, I shall use all my power, all my authority; I have the Roval Family behind me, public opinion; he cannot resist. Do not look so uneasy,"

he added impatiently; his daughter was taring at him with an expression of awful terror. "What is the matter, do you not wish this

creature flung out of your establishment? Nav. all must be done with decorum, she must have a pension, she must be sent to England. It shall be arranged." "But, Camille," murmured the Duchess, "he will never forgive me. I

have a presentiment--I know not--but I believe if I force him to give her up, whatever she may be to him. I shall at the same time destroy myself." * * * * *

On the occasion of Madame du Boccage's birthday, the governess

sent the Duchess an exquisite piece of needlework designed and made by herself. Complimentary, charming and delicate letters were

exchanged, the Duchess returned the present, that she received with graciousness, by a gift of a bracelet of blue turquoises arranged so that they looked like a cluster of forget-me-nots. Mademoiselle Debelleyme tried them on, an ironic smile on her lips, and then flung

the newspapers became less frequent and gossiping tongues wagged more slowly, and finally, with disgust, fell silent; M. du Boccage had been saved by the tact of his father-in-law, by the generosity of his wife. It was impossible to say either openly or secretly that the pale young woman who, bearing herself with

dignified respect, sat behind the Duchess in her box at the Opera, at the Hippodrome, who shared her carriage with her in the Bois, who continued to take charge of her children, who frequently led them to the old Marechal Frediani's establishment, was the mistress of her

Madame du Boccage, who had begun to go about much in society in order to dispel the scandals so vibrant in Paris, frequently appeared with her husband at formal entertainments. On several occasions she offered the governess a seat in her box at the Opera: paragraphs in

husband. In a few weeks talk had died away and things were as they had been in the Faubourg St. Honore, It was then that the Marechal Frediani. with his daughter's assistance, prepared an ultimatum for the Duke,

who, during all this cautiously arranged intrigue, had given no indication of what he thought or felt.

* * * * * Mademoiselle Debelleyme was not deceived by the false calm which had descended on the household in the Faubourg St. Honore, nor by the compliments that passed between herself and Madame du

She understood perfectly the intentions of M. Frediani to get rid of her quietly when the gossip died away. She waited, tenacious, resolute and patient, but she saw, with a certain ironic tenderness,

Boccage, nor even by the seats in the carriage and at the Opera.

that M. du Boccage, at least, thought that he had triumphed over his wife and father-in-law, for he began to plan other journeys to

From these pleasant prospects a sharp interview with M. Frediani brusquely awakened him; the Marechal demanded in plain terms when this folly was to come to an end and the blonde governess to be sent about her business?

The Duke received these sudden reproofs in a silence that the older man perceived was both amazed and bitter. The Marechal stressed

England, to Italy, with his eldest children and the governess for

his point.

"This has been going on for two years; the press of Paris has taken care to inform the whole world that you are the subject of all manner.

of scandalous rumours."

The Duke, in a low voice, threw in one of his banal phrases:

"Your daughters, your children, are they to be sacrificed?"

"They know nothing, they are children."

"Vulgar scandal matters nothing to me."

company.

exclaimed:

M. du Boccage had met his father-in-law in the salon de reception where he had first seen Lucille Debelleyme, and as he spoke he stood in the corner between the mirror and the alphaster statue of

stood in the corner between the mirror and the alabaster statue of Cupid stringing his bow. He was nearly as pale as the white figure, and his face, still mechanically smiling, had something of the same sinister expression.

Exasperated, for he believed that he had behaved in this irritating affair with the greatest tolerance and generosity, the Marechal

"What, plainly, do you hope to do?"

"To keep Mademoiselle Debelleyme in my employment until my children no longer require a governess."

"And do you also intend to persuade everybody that there is nothing unusual in this resolution? Do you hope to travel over England, Italy and France with your daughters and their governess without their mother and expect that you will not start the most provoking slanders?"

Debelleyme?"

"No," replied the haughty old man flushing with deep anger, "I have been too complacent, I have played the odious part of pretending not to know what was going on under my nose. I have never spoken to anyone. I even received her in my house in Corsica, for I believed

that must be the end of it, that when you returned to Paris she would

"Have you." asked the Duke in a low, harsh voice, "been one of

endeavoured to destroy the character of Mademoiselle

helped spread these same

slanders and

those who have

leave."

"Why should she leave?" asked the Duke; his smile stretched to a grimace as he fixed his dark eyes, glittering under the thick, fair lashes, steadily on his father-in-law.

"You are blinded by a fatal passion to ask such a question."

"Ah, you, like all the others, believe she is my mistress."

"It is difficult to believe anything else."

"If it is any satisfaction to you I can assure you that she is not. I put it to you in confidence. Monsieur Le Marechal, whether in Corsica you

saw anything wrong? You know you did not and that Mademoiselle Debelleyme is a young woman of unblemished reputation."

The old man was profoundly irritated by these words, which were spoken with a tone of barely controlled fury, the more so as he was

indeed baffled as to what was the precise relationship between his

son-in-law and the governess.

"If I had observed anything," he replied, coldly, "I should have had to interfere. But what does that matter?" he added with exasperated impatience. "You know well enough how the thing looks to the world."

"And care nothing," said the Duke, advancing a step towards his father-in-law. "This young woman suits me. I admire her

management of my household, since she has been with me I have had more peace than ever in my life before. I intend that she will remain."

The Marechal endeavoured to control his rage and despair; he felt he was dealing with a character that he could neither understand nor manage, with a stranger too, yet he had loved his son-in-law whom

he had hitherto always found agreeable, amiable and docile.

"It is like a bewitchment," he muttered. Then aloud, collecting all his forces: "Listen, Camille, I do not wish to think evil, I do not wish to cause trouble, but this woman must go. With all dignity, with all respect. She had better be sent to England, I will undertake to pay her a pension for life, if you will, give her what she wants--whatever she demands."

The Duke's curious smile deepened.

"It is not a question of money, she suits me, that is all."

"You are the only one in the household whom she does suit.

Everyone is against her, the servants loathe her--"

"Ah. the servants." the Duke's sneer was deadly. "the servants whom

Fanny has trained to spy on me!"

"If Fanny has spied on you no doubt you have given her good cause for suspicion, but, my dear Camille, your domestic affairs are not my

concern. I know I cannot assure my daughter's happiness by any interference of that nature. Have a dozen mistresses, if you will, but do not but them in charge of your house and your children."

Drawing himself up, the formidable old man, moved by profound emotion, added: "If you do not give way, I must take strong measures. I shall refuse to receive you in my house and refuse to see that woman if she brings the children to see me. You will not then be able to avoid a tremendous scandal. Remember that I have behind

me the whole of public opinion. If you wish, I will see drawn up tomorrow a separation between you and Fanny. You may choose then, Camille, between your wife and this woman."

The Duke turned away quickly to hide his face, but his father-in-law saw it reflected in the glass; it was contorted and sweat drops had gathered underneath the pale, stiff hair. He I was opening and closing his powerful hands and his wide shoulders shook.

"You are beside yourself. I have regarded you with great affection and I am still fond of you, Camille," said the Marechal, picking up his gloves and cane. "This passion, this infatuation, whatever it may be, I confess I do not understand; but I understand very well what I must

do, and I will not retract a word of what I have said."

Pulling out his handkerchief and wiping his face, still without turning, the Duke muttered:

"We are going almost immediately to Javiaux du Boccage. Cannot this question remain until we return? Perhaps when I am out of Paris these rumours will peter out."

"If you take Mademoiselle Debelleyme with you to the country that is not likely, nor can I permit this delay; my daughter will refuse to accompany you unless the dismissal of the governess is settled before you go."

This was a declaration of war. The Duke was no longer dealing with an overwrought, hysterical woman. Here was something more formidable to face than the frantic letters, jealous cries and entreating tears of poor Fanny.

He said nothing but stood with his back to the Marechal and

continued to wipe his face, holding the handkerchief so that even in the mirror his expression could not be seen.

"You have heard, Camille, you have understood?"

Receiving no reply, the old soldier, profoundly depressed, left the

Faubourg St. Honore.

Madame du Boccage, under the guidance of her father, wrote her

husband a letter that was quite different from those romantic, sentimental, heartbroken outpourings which lay in the drawer of the green desk.

In it she told him with calm dignity that she insisted on the departure

of the governess, that she wished to undertake the education of her own daughters until they were old enough to be married, that the boys should remain at the College Bourbon with a tutor, and that she would refuse to depart for Javiaux du Boccage until the governess 'My father has offered to Mademoiselle Debelleyme a yearly pension. In returning with these means to England, her talents and her introductions will procure her a good position. There need be no scene. Her withdrawal will be assured in an honourable manner by a

pension from my father guaranteed by myself and her departure to England which will explain in a favourable manner her sudden leaving of our family. If Mademoiselle Debelleyme makes the excuse

had left the Faubourg St. Honore.

that she must go to Javiaux du Boccage to fetch some of her property that she has there, then I will wait in Paris until she returns, I believe I have shown already sufficient complaissance to save your reputation before the eves of Paris.' The Duchess sent this letter to her husband in the morning; during the day she did not see him, she believed he was closeted with the

governess. This did not give her the torment it would have formerly done for now she was convinced that he must give way and Mademoiselle Debelleyme leave. Yet she shrank from the thought of her triumph as she had formerly shrunk from the thought of her

defeat. Towards the evening her husband softly entered her apartment: it was so long since he had come to see her that the very sight of him in her own room seemed unnatural. Not finding her in her boudoir he had come into her bedroom where she was sitting languidly by the

window, having pulled aside the heavy damask curtains. It was becoming oppressively hot in Paris; the trees on which Fanny du Boccage gazed were dry and scorched.

She turned and looked at the man she had once so passionately loved with the only emotion which she now ever regarded him, that of fear.

Clasping her hands, whispering a prayer, Fanny du Boccage forced the courage to say:
"Have you not read my letter? I cannot leave for Javiaux du Boccage."

As he came towards her she turned away, his look made her shrink

"Do you persist, then," he said in a low voice, "in your attacks against me? Ah, by this act you have spoilt all your life, take care!"

She rose, holding on to the curtains. Ruined by ill-health and devastating emotion as she was, heavy in her figure and slow in her movements, yet she was not without dignity or some remains of her

He appeared sullen, unnaturally quiet; she waited for him to speak.

"We go to Javiaux du Boccage to-morrow." he announced.

against the heavy folds of the damask.

once warm, seductive beauty, which had often enough brought him to his knees with passion.

"You make a party against me," he whispered, "you set the priests, the Royal Family, the public, I know not who, the servants against me, even the children-you try to corrupt their souls, you inspire them with

hatred of their father."

"These are ignoble words!" cried Fanny du Boccage wildly.
"Camille, what has happened to you? You used to be so good, so tender, so kind! This woman...ah..."

"Seek further back than that," he interrupted, "she has had nothing to do with it; hold her blameless, please!"

"Ah, you are so ready to defend her!" With a cry that was one of as

He did not reply but continued to walk up and down the chamber, trying, she thought, to ease his profound irritation with those quick, almost stealthy movements. He paused by the bed where she saw him glance up at the heavy baldaquin from which hung the curtains of

much bewilderment as of despair. Madame du Boccage exclaimed:

"Who is this woman, what is she?"

Brussels net supported by gilt armorini.

martyrdom to the end?

attitude of the man that she sickened with fright and began to mumble a promise that she would go to Javiaux du Boccage, would try to live in the same house with the governess.

After all, there was no more that she could suffer; she had endured

the last pangs of neglect and jealousy; why not go on and face the

But as she had no hope of ever recovering his affection, much less

She believed that in the tumult of his thoughts he did not know what he was doing, what he was gazing at; his face had a blank expression, yet there was something so menacing in the whole tense

his love, her pride, her father, her confessor's advice, the real interests of her children, inspired her with strength; she caught back her stammering avowal of weakness and was silent.

When at length he left what seemed his blind contemplation of the bed and turned towards her, demanding in a harsh voice: "Will you come to Javiaux du Boccage with Mademoiselle Debelleyme?" she,

answered: "No."

She thought that he was advancing on her to strike her; he gave her again that peculiar smile which for so many years she had found so

though clinging to the silk cords of the curtains to give her support,

again that peculiar smile which for so many years she had found so lovable but which of late had seemed to her terrible, as if it was

"Well, we shall see." His voice was a low whisper as if he could command no more

For the first time Fanny du Boccage saw with pleasure her husband

caused by a string being pulled at the back of a mask.

leave her: she had cowered before him.

That lonely, hot night she wrote in the diary that had become her sole relief: "It is true, as my father, as all say, that I have rendered him a real service but-he will never pardon me. He will revenge on me day

by day, hour by hour, minute by minute this service I have done him. He will be revenged on me for being right when he was wrong. The abyss opens every day more profoundly between us. The more he reflects the more he will feel himself guilty and the heavier will be his vengeance on me. The future frightens me, I tremble in thinking of it, I

feel myself so alone. My God, come to my aid, give me the strength for these new trials, if it is Your wish, grant the greatest mercies

possible for my children, for him, the unhappy man, who suffers, I can see that! He feels his position! My God, have pity on my poor children. left alone without advice in the middle of these agitations, these furies! And their father, my God, do not abandon him, make the light enter into his spirit, open Thy arms for his repentance, fortify

him, sustain him, see that he does not fall! Alas, my God, he is blind

and knows not what he does."

Lucille Debelleyme continued her calm way, performed her duties

with her usual radiant gaiety towards the children, her respectful behaviour towards Madame du Boccage, her tactful courtesy

towards the servants. She knew that she was the centre of what the Duchess had called "these agitations and these furies." She knew that the servants hated her and spied on her. She knew the Marechal word, a pressure of the hand were enough—she believed in his loyalty, his pride; despite the great forces against him she was confident he would not give way.

An unexpected visit from an unsuspected enemy, the Abbe Galle, the confessor of Madame du Boccage, and in this case the emissary of the Marechal Frediani, disagreeably roused the governess from her sense of security.

Courteous, cool, but obviously hostile and formidable, the priest remained standing in Lucille Debelleyme's gay little boudoir which he had never entered before. She stood leaning carelessly with an air of respectful insolence against the muslin lace curtains, her delicate figure, her melancholy face, resplendent in the powerful sun of July; the Abbe, with an air of authority which she found peculiarly galling, came at once to his business

worked to remove her. She maintained her calm trust in M. du Boccage—she saw very little of him, his visits were now brief, even his conversations, his diversions with his children were distracted. Using a natural patience and a powerful tenacity she did not try to force his confidence, she never asked him what he was about to do nor what her fate was to be, she waited for a signal for them all to go to Javiaux du Boccage. She believed she was sure of him. a look. a

Madame la Duchesse demands your departure, you cannot refuse it."

With an air of candid astonishment the smiling governess replied:

"Mademoiselle, I beg you to reflect seriously on the troubles your presence is causing in this house. No one dares to speak to you face to face; I have thought therefore that it is my duty to show you the disaster towards which you push an illustrious family. If you insist on staying here, it will be impossible to avoid a great scandal. This scandal will follow you all your life—do not persist in your resistance.

complimentary letters--what has she to complain of in my behaviour? And if she has these complaints why does she not bring them to me herself Monsieur l'Abbe?" The priest looked at her with a grave glance that stripped aside all

"Madame the Duchess demands my departure? My relations with her are excellent, it is not long since that we exchanged presents and

her subtle pretences.

"Madame la Duchesse has not any particular grievance against you, Mademoiselle. She intends, on the advice of her father, the Marechal, to rearrange her establishment, she will herself take care of her daughters, the education of her son is provided for elsewhere.

There is no longer any reason for your presence in this house."

"I am astonished," replied Mademoiselle Debelleyme coldly. "What has occurred, Monsieur l'Abbe, to bring about this sudden resolution on the part of the Marechal and Madame du Boccage? Forgive me if I know nothing. I live enclosed here with the children, performing my duties."

faint colour to the pale cheeks of the governess. "You are very clever. Mademoiselle Debellevme: a voung lady of your talent will never lack a post. I believe you are also clever enough to have understood me perfectly and to act on my advice."

The Abbe smiled and there was something in that smile, at once compassionate, understanding and sadly disdainful that brought a

Lucille Debelleyme was silent: her attitude remained completely self-

assured, but in her heart was a little growing chill of fear.

"And Monsieur le Duc?" she asked after a pause.

"He has nothing to do with the affair, the decision remains with

"Remember, Mademoiselle, it is not words nor even actions that count before God, but the intentions of the heart."

"It is such banalities, Monsieur l'Abbe, that disgust the intelligent with religion."

He turned to leave: at the door he turned and looking again sadly at

the slender figure of the graceful young woman, he added:

Madame and her father."

When M. du Boccage came to see his children that evening, Lucille
Debellevme, without comment, repeated to him her interview with the

Abbe.

The Duke sat down by the pianette and began savagely turning over pages of the music which she had been copying for his daughters.

"This scandal the Abbe spoke of," he said, "can be nothing but a legal separation; you see, they force things to the extreme."

legal separation; you see, they force things to the extreme."

And then the governess, breaking her long silence, asked quietly:

"What do you intend to do?"

For reply he muttered another question:

"Do you expect anything of me?"

"No." she said. coolly. "nothing whatever. You owe me nothing. I have

always been your paid dependant, generously treated."

And approaching the other side of the little musical instrument,

"It is curious to think, is it not, Monsieur le Duc, that you and I are the only two people who know the truth of all this? The entire world thinks we are lovers." "Yes." he whispered. He looked up at her: a sense of perfect intimacy, of complete understanding passed between them, "she has cornered me as if I was a tracked beast with the entire hunt out after me. All of them, in hue and cry at my heels! Her servants, her priests, her father!" He clenched the frail music sheets in his hands and flung them down. "I am to lose everything, my position, the children, the money...She will have no mercy, and why? Because I could not continue to be her lover, because I relegated the duties she was incapable of to one who could undertake them. For that I am to be ruined." "No. I will leave." "You will leave? Do you think that the better way?"

turning on his downcast face her full brilliant glance, she added, with

a flash of feeling in her voice:

"I think it is the only way, but I will accept no pension from M. Frediani, and I will not go to England."

"What will you do, then? Where will you go?"

much as he could endure and though she by no means intended to lose any hold on him, she thought that her interests were now best served by conceding all.

"We have done no wrong," she said guietly, "even the Marechal and

She hesitated, it was in her mind to bring forward her imaginary suitor, to talk of saving herself by a miserable marriage, but she decided, on reflection, that this would be unwise. He had had as "I will find a way vet. I will prove to you what this has meant to me. Yes...ves..." he added, distracted, "it is better that you should give way than subject yourself to these daily affronts--these scenes with

Madame du Boccage--I cannot endure them--the house is hell."

the Abbe had to admit that. They spoke to me with respect, I shall leave with complete dignity. If you, Monsieur, if the children wish to

continue any friendship with me you know where I am."

As if he had not heard what she said he whispered:

she intended to give her departure some drama.

should Lendure that?"

"It has always been," said Mademoiselle Debelleyme with bitter tranquillity. "I stayed for your sake. Monsieur, and for that of the children. Believe me, it has not been very pleasant for me--the servants, inspired by Madame du Boccage, hate me: I am, as you say, daily affronted. I have even been--with the Abbe to-day--

threatened with a scandal that will remain with me all my life. Why

friend." He rose and made half-blindly for the door, murmuring, "they'd better take care-they'd letter take care." then paused and looked back at Lucille Debellevme. She returned his gaze steadily, passionately; she was furiously disappointed that he had abandoned her to her enemies, but she

"I cannot think what it will be like without you. You were my only

understood with perfect sympathy his position. She did not blame him at all, she valued, in that moment, the man himself as she had never valued him before.

Nor did she intend that this should be the end of their strange, exasperating relationship; when she conceded the most she meant

to cling the most tenaciously, and now that she was forced to leave

that I shall not add to your troubles."

"Are we, then, to admit defeat? To accept commands forced on us?"

"We are, at least, to appear to do so." At that he made a step towards her, but her quick gesture, her quick words held him off. "No! Every moment that you spend with me is counted. Spare me what ignominy you can."

"It is right that I should make this sacrifice. Be assured. Monsieur.

He left her and she sat down at once and wrote to Madame du Boccage, excusing herself from a personal interview by saying that she was too emotionally overcome.

'Madame la Duchesse, I wished to express to you myself the sentiments that animate me but I feel that in the present

circumstances it would be a task beyond my power. Permit me to defer to a more calm and happy time the thanks which I wish to address to you for the generosity with which you have rewarded my feeble services. In this moment of leaving the children, towards whom I have always felt the liveliest tenderness, I find, in witnessing your satisfaction, a powerful consolation. I accept with gratitude the offers of recommendation that you say you will give me and I shall hasten to avail myself of them sometime when they may be useful to me. At present the health of my grandfather, very doubtful for several

offers of recommendation that you say you will give me and I shall hasten to avail myself of them sometime when they may be useful to me. At present the health of my grandfather, very doubtful for several months, makes it a duty for me to go to him at once. I beg your permission to delay till a later date the account of all the various expenses, etc., which I must make to you, and I beg you, Madame, to believe in the assurance, of my most profound respect.

Lucille Debelleyme.'

When she had written this letter and sent it by the nurse to the apartments of the Duchess. Lucille Debelleyme paused and, locking

one for Lucille Debelleyme, penniless, without friends or resources, a servant. She must go, she would be no better off than she had been two years before when she had entered the Faubourg St. Honore. All the delights, the luxuries, the pleasures of the Du Boccage establishment would now be lost. She would have to face frightful humiliation in this sudden departure, the gratified sneers of the servants—and then the children—she was really fond of the children.

his children. She allowed herself no emotional breakdown, but set her teeth and began to plan for the future, trampling down her defeat.

Madame du Boccage replied, with that air of candid dignity that

herself into her room, faced her defeat as if it was a tangible object

The other woman had won the battle, always an unequal, dangerous

blocking her path.

motioning it aside.

came naturally to her, to the letter in which the governess, in a tone so coldly formal, confessed that she had lost the battle and that her resignation had been wrung from her. Without touching on the painful circumstances of the case the Duchess thanked Mademoiselle Debelleyme for her care of the children and promised to take every occasion to be useful to one who was so diligent, so good and so faithful an instructress. She offered several letters of introduction to English ladies. Lady Hislop, Lady Tankerville, Miss Elkinson, and

letter declaring that Mademoiselle Debelleyme's conduct had given every satisfaction during the period of her stay in the Faubourg St. Honore, and thanking her for recommending to her this excellent young lady.

Madame du Boccage further added to her generosity by sending with the note a book which Mademoiselle Debelleyme had once

admired at Locroi. It was an English work entitled Amateur Gardening for Gentlewomen and was decorated with many beautiful

even promised to send to the French Ambassadress in London a

Lucille Debelleyme read the letter but did not open the book; the recommendations were useless to her, she did not intend to go to

England, and she had, for at least the present, lost her interest in

hand-coloured plates.

amateur gardening.

If Madame du Boccage had accepted her victory with gracious dignity, she did not however intend to forego any of the fruits of it; when she perceived that her husband, in order to put off the day of the governess' departure, now delayed the journey to Javiaux du

Boccage she declared that she would remain in her own apartments

till the governess had left the house.

The Duke begged her to at least share her meals with the governess as before; she replied she would feel too embarrassed sitting at table with one who was under dismissal, but when by chance she hassed the governess on the stairs Madame Du Boccare greated.

passed the governess on the stairs Madame Du Boccage greeted with the most serene kindness the woman who had wrought such bitter havoc in her life.

It was not as easy for Lucille Debelleyme to leave the Faubourg St. Honore as she had thought it might be; her strength was not as great

as she had believed. These last days were full of an extreme nervous tension, with the servants all looking at her with scarcely concealed triumph, avoiding her when they could, the children depressed and tearful, Marechal de Frediani, all the members of the House of Montlosier du Boccage keeping away from the Faulbudg St. Honore

till she left it. Her one friend, the Duke, defeated like herself, unable to offer her any hope, any suggestion, any succour for the future, Lucille Debelleyme felt her spirits sink, but she kept her control; repeatedly she said to herself, "go quietly, no scenes, he has had

But when the last moment came and she had packed all her belongings (they amounted now to a good deal more than the one poor trunk she had entered the family with) when she had shut up the pianette, drawn the cover over the harp, watered her flowers for the last time, she felt such a sense of loss, that it was difficult for her not to do what the woman whom she so despised did—break down, cry

enough of those."

and scream

folded in her lap, she was sitting in her favourite chair of pale brocade when the Duke brusquely entered her apartment. She knew that during these last few days his life had been as painful as her own--he had put up with daily scenes with his wife, strong criticism from her father, her relatives, the Church. An expression of sharp suffering had erased all youth from his face. He began to talk confusedly with his usual banal and clumsy phrases.

With her bonnet and cloak already on, her hands neatly gloved.

Lucille Debelleyme pitied him profoundly, it was like seeing a dumb creature in agony that could not express its pain. He muttered expressions of rage about the rumours spread against him, against the Marechal, the Abbe, his wife, regrets he could not take Lucille Debelleyme with him to Javiaux du Boccage, and mingled with all this he promised to pay her fifteen hundred francs yearly in

Lucille watched him being torn by a terrible inarticulate passion. She remembered that whisper in Corsica; "Is this love or something more?"

She had a sudden, bleak realisation that in this long, patient game

recognition of her services whether or not she found another place.

she had played she had staked and lost more than she knew; M. du Boccage, she knew now, was more to her than the wealthy aristocrat

handkerchief.

He made a little moaning sound and was with her and had her in his arms. That was a moment of pure delight for Lucille Debelleyme; what ease in his warmth, his contact, what relief to feel his body through his fine clothes; the very sensation of the cloth of his coat against her cheek, the perfume that he used was delicious. This was what she had been afraid of—realising how much he meant to her, and not being able to go on; she desperately pushed him away with a gesture that seemed of anger, but it was too late, Matilde, the maid had cautiously opened the door and seen them in each other's arms.

who could give her all her heart's desire in the way of luxury and pleasure, power and pride, more than the friend who understood her, who supported her, more than the only champion she had ever known; he was the man she loved. She began to sob quietly, like a child, into her little gloved hand, not troubling even to find a

directly and uttered the first and last word of defiance she used during her stay in the Faubourg St. Honore:

"Monsieur le Duc is here, go and tell your mistress where and how you find him."

"Madame du Boccage would like to speak to Monsieur le Duc."

Her face was sullen with malice; Lucille Debelleyme stared at her

He had recoiled, at the entrance of the servant, but only a step; he continued to gaze at Lucille Debelleyme from under his thick, pale

lashes, and she thought with a wild triumph:
"Surely if that moment meant half as much to him as it did to me he

"Surely if that moment meant half as much to him as it did to me he will find me, he will see me again."

will find me, he will see me again."

In half an hour she was in her hired carriage and had left the

Lucille Debelleyme drove to St. Cloud.

No longer would a neglected wife have to sit lonely in her splendid apartments knowing that Lucille Debelleyme was entertaining her husband in the rooms above. No longer would she, tortured by insomnia, by jealousy, by mental and physical agony be forced to herself descend to espionage and wander miserably up and down

the stairs, in and out the corridors, seeking to discover the whereabouts of her husband, of her governess, no longer need she risk an outburst of rage by knocking timidly at his door. She would

Faubourg St. Honore and through the sunny, dusty streets of Paris.

not do that again; the last time he had frightened her--he had taken her by the shoulders and pushed her across the corridor from his own rooms to hers, in her presence smashed an enamel vase and ripped a lace shawl that she had flung over a chair; the fury of a spoilt child, or the savagery of a man desperately roused? Madame du Boccage did not know; but she was frightened, he was so changed. She had always, until these last few years, thought of him as indolent, sweet-tempered, easily led...

Well, she had triumphed, there would be peace now in the Faubourg

St. Honore; but as she sat lonely as ever that evening, she could not feel that the departure of the governess had lifted any load from her heart. The words her husband had spoken to her still rung in her ears: "You will not go with her to Javiaux du Boccage?--you have spoilt all your life, so, you will not go-we shall see!"

With her eyes and head aching Fanny du Boccage wrote the last lines in her diary, she would write no more. What more would there be to say? She believed that everything was finished between

herself and her husband, between herself and Lucille Debelleyme.

wrongdoing, his malice, and will not understand that I can pardon and forget. My merit in that is not so great as he believed, I could not help being lealous where I love and I can forgive easily. How will all this finish?--I cannot believe in happiness." For a moment Fanny du Boccage could write no more, her great sorrow weighed her down. She could scarcely yet realise that it was all over, that the man she loved and for whose love she had fought was lost and perhaps her children lost too; all day they had been crying for the governess...she had forced him to choose between herself and Lucille Debellevme--he had let the other woman go but he had not returned to her... Madame du Boccage, sincerely pious, turned to her usual refuge and concluded her diary by a prayer: "my God, my God, sustain me. direct me. I am afraid of the future, of his threats, of the difficulties which arise every day. If You will be there, in You I have confidence. You will sustain the poor mother to whom You have given the desire to protect her children--succour me." She put her diary in a packet with some other papers and sealed this with a black seal and wrote on the cover. "To be given to my husband after my death." As she did this she felt a shudder of fear, as if she was condemned to die: so strong was this presentiment that she began to think about her health, she had been very ill of late, it was quite possible she had not long to live. She went through her other papers and sealed them also with the black wax. Monsieur Desire Gavaudan de Clery received his granddaughter

with bitter contempt. She had no sooner entered his meagre

She had no hope for the future as she wrote: "He is always unpleasant to me now he feels too keenly the extent of his

expected to see something even more splendid, does he not then give you presents, do you not run up accounts in his name?"

Lucille Debellevme had been prepared for these insults and took no

notice.

apartment than he began to assail her with mocking reproaches.

"So in your splendour and grandeur you remembered your poor old grandfather! Have you come to take me promenading in the Bois in Monsieur du Boccage's carriage? I suppose you have at least a magnificent equipage at the door? Ah. your gown is very fine though I

"I have left the Faubourg St. Honore," she said, leaning against the table for support, "and I must beg you to take me in, for the sake of

appearances, for the sake of my dignity."

leaving, you must take me in."

for either these last couple of years! Why have you come to me whom you have ignored when you had a few sous to spend? Why doesn't Monsieur du Boccage do something for you?"

"I have had," said Lucille, steadily keeping to the point, "to give your

name, to say I was coming to stay with you, that was my excuse for

"Appearances and dignity!" he sneered. "you have had little regard

"Must, indeed! I will not. Did I not warn you?"
"I regret nothing." Lucille defied him with a pale smile. "I am asking you for a little help, you are my grandfather, my only relative--are you

going to refuse me?"

He looked her up and down with cold and malicious contempt.

...

"You must be a fool as well as a hussy."

granddaughter replied:
"It is you are the fool, Grandfather; I suppose you have listened to the stories current in Paris? Well, they are all lies--believe me or not as you like. Monsieur du Boccage is not my lover."
"Then, my girl, you have played your cards very badly. You've created a scandal, lost your place and gained nothing out of it! Be gone, I will not be involved in your affairs."

Without losing patience and with a coldness equal to his own, his

on my own. I cannot go back to being a servant. Enough perhaps to marry--with a small dowry I could find a husband."

This mention of money turned the old man's malice to fury.

"Life is impossible in Paris for you. Why do you want to stay, you imbecile? Go away anywhere--Russia--England--ttaly--I care not. I

"You must have money," she insisted, standing her ground with quiet desperation. "Give me some, enough to start a little school for girls

yourself. After all," he added with a sneer, "you have done pretty well so far. You may find someone else who will give you a fine carriage to ride about in."

His granddaughter gave him a long look and gazed round the mean,

have nothing to give you, you must rely on what you can make

squalid room.
"What am I going to do? I have had to leave suddenly, I have had no chance to make preparations."

At that the old man, muttering sullenly to himself, took a piece of paper from his pocket and wrote on it a name and address: 'Madame Flamme, 9, rue du Harlay.' "You may go there. She knows

me, she will take you in for a night or two. That is more than many

With that he turned his back on her. She, without a word, left him, went out to the waiting cab which was still piled with her luggage, and asked the driver to go to Number 9, Rue du Harlay.

people in Paris would just now. I think, and if you have any sense left

at all you will leave the country as quickly as possible."

The Hotel du Boccage was closed, the family and the servants had gone to Javiaux du Boccage, only the concierge remained in charge.

Lucille Debelleyme walked in front of the high gates, above which waved the pleasant summer trees, gates which were now locked and

closed to her, as it seemed, for ever. But she still resisted the demand of her enemies, she would not, however bribed by pensions or recommendations, go to England. By diligence, by tenacity, by accepting a miserable weekly sum she had secured a position in a small school for girls, which was situated in the same Rue du Harlay

but meagre enterprise, run for the benefit of the better class tradespeople who wished to ape gentility, was run by a Madame Trou, a Swiss woman who, it seemed, had passed by the scandals of Paris which had so brushed the bloom off the fair fame of Lucille Debelleyme. At least she appeared satisfied by the governess'

excellent English testimonials and by the last letter written by

where she had found refuge with Madame Flamme. This pretentious

Madame du Boccage. She accepted her brilliant services in return for a small remuneration and a miserable room looking out at the back of the house on to a small enclosed courtyard.

The governess faced all these disadvantages with a smile. She was,

at least, entrenched in Paris. The humiliations of her position, the poverty of her surroundings, were detestable, especially after two years of luxury, but they were also effective. She stood out as a poor

implacable decorum. The establishment of Madame Trou was of the utmost respectability. Her refusal of the benefits offered her by the Marechal de Frediani and by Madame du Boccage was not, she knew, without an impressive dignity. She had lost all--she had been ruthlessly sacrificed to the unfounded jealousy of a sick, stupid woman; she must surely, in the eyes of many, cut the figure of a martyr... Madame Trou's establishment was partially closed for the holidays. there only remained a few girls whose parents were abroad and who had no friends to offer them holidays. It was Mademoiselle Debelleyme's duty during her first weeks in the Rue du Harlay to give a few lessons in music, needlework and painting to these poor neglected creatures, and occasionally to take them out in the public parks and places of instruction--the Botanical Gardens, the Museums of the Louvre. She performed these duties conscientiously, but without her usual gaiety. Indeed, as the days went on she found it very difficult to sustain the part she had undertaken, to walk on foot or ride in an omnibus when she had ridden in a carriage, to sleep in a small, dingy room, to eat coarse, greasy, unappetising food, to have the company of these stupid, plain, provincial girls, the dull, pedantic Madame Trou, after that intoxicating intimacy with a man like Camille du Boccage, after the affection she had enjoyed from his charming children

Her mind wandered to the glories of Javiaux du Boccage that her rival was enjoying, and the thought of that magnificent place which she had so admired was almost intolerable to the governess.

young creature earning her living under difficulties, earning an honest and an honourable living. She had preserved, even in this vicissitude, even in spite of her grandfather's repudiation, her

to be assailed, soul and body, by a longing for the master of all that magnificence. She repeated to herself the words murmured on that moonlit shore in Corsica: 'Is this love or something more?' Clever as she was, firm as was the grip she had on herself, she had scarcely realised how she would miss him, how precious to her had been that one friend--that one protector, that potential lover. There

languishing in the stale squalor of the narrow city streets. She began

little letters full of affection, and she replied eagerly, passionately, making no secret of her desolation. Writing to the eldest girl, Isabelle, who was of an age, the governess affected to believe, to understand, she dwelt on her misery, on her despair, the wretched post she was forced to take, the

unpleasantness of Paris in the great heat of the summer, the effect on her own health, her homesickness, her vearning for Javiaux du

was not a sign from him, but the two eldest children wrote charming

Boccage, and at the end of the letter added that she intended to change her life by a marriage that would be in a way a sort of suicide but which, she declared, she offered as a final sacrifice to the conventions, to clear her name for the sake of her dear charges whose peace she had outraged so unwittingly, by impulsive indiscretion.

She knew that the little Isabelle would not be able to understand these lines, she knew also that she would take them not to her mother but to her father.

It was the Duke who replied to this letter; in a few curt phrases he asked after her health, said he lacked her company at Javiaux du

Boccage but that the work of restoration was proceeding very well.

He demanded to know what was this marriage project, was it that she had mentioned to him before? He begged her to wait till his return to Paris when he hoped to be able to arrange something more

This was not much in the way of a love letter, nor even of a letter from a friend, but Lucille Debelleyme knew the man with whom she dealt, she was satisfied. She wrote to him in reply, she dwelt on her sufferings, on her miseries, she emphasised the marriage, this

satisfactory for the future.

lost. She reiterated that only he and she knew their mutual innocence, she poured scorn on their slanderers, she dwelt with regret on the beauties of Javiaux du Boccage and contrasted it with the squalid surroundings she was forced to endure.

He responded by platitudes but she believed that she could read

under the dry words the throb of passion and she replied again in language that never infringed decorum (for she always had it in mind

sacrifice, this kind of suicide she was making to stop all slander, to regain the honourable place in the world which she feared she had

that his wife or some spy might see the letters) but yet in a language that must speak to even the most stupid of men in an unmistakable tone of adoration.

She would marry or not marry as he directed, he was he one friend, her generous protector, her future lay in his hands....

This correspondence was Lucille Debelleyme's last weapon, she did not mean to lose it or misuse it; remembering the hysterical letters of Madame du Boccage, which she was sure had never been read by her husband, she wrote briefly and to the point, yet never coldly, nor did she need to employ any art. duplicity or hypocrisy in this

correspondence which had become the sole interest of her impoverished life. Seated in her cramped, dingy room, looking out on the dirty courtyard, again dressed as she had been in Belgrave Square (she did not dare show in the Rue du Harlay the gowns she

had flaunted so prettily in the Faubourg St. Honore) Lucille
Debellevme realised that she had no object in her life bevond that of

than a friendship.

M. du Boccage was absorbed in the restoration of Javiaux du Boccage; his wife was completely estranged from him. She had got rid of the presence but not the influence of Lucille Debellevme. It was

renewing this enchanting friendship, of making it, at any cost, more

lamented the absence of the beloved governess. "If only Mademoiselle were here." "We used to do so and so with Mademoiselle." "mademoiselle did it like that." "mademoiselle used to make it so amusing." And she had surprised out of them the

the same with her children, they avoided her, were sullen and petulant in her presence, all her arts could not win them. They openly

confession that the governess wrote to them and they wrote to her.

"And to him also, I suppose," she thought. "How can life go on like this? I shall never separate them—never."

The Marechal de Frediani, believing he had very comfortably settled a painful affair, had returned to Corsica and the Duchess had, in the isolation of the country, no friend beyond Matilde. She resorted to reproaches, she accused her children to their faces of disloyalty in preferring the governess to herself; she frightened and repelled them by tears and scenes. They fled from he to the company of their

preferring the governess to herself; she frightened and repelled them by tears and scenes. They fled from her to the company of their nurses, when they heard her step on the stairs they would shut themselves in their room and refuse to answer when she knocked on the door.

The Duke, without comment on this chaos, sent the boys to Locroi with a tutor and ordered the nurses to keep the other children away from their mother as much as possible.

Dryly, and before several servants, as if he sought their protection,

to return to Paris."

"To visit, I suppose," she thought, "the Rue du Harlay."

She resolved that the governess must leave Paris, the battle was not then yet won, there was still another struggle ahead; with an effort the Duchess braced herself for this. Her father was abroad but she had

the Duke informed his wife that he had decided to return to the Faubourg St. Honore—the work on the chateau did not require his supervision for the moment. The Duchess vehemently objected.

"Do you then," he asked, "find it so agreeable here? I wish urgently

She was actuated by nobler motives than mere jealousy; she had resigned herself to the loss of her husband, but she could not resign herself to the loss of her children who might, she firmly believed, be morally ruined by the Influence of a woman who was, to Fanny du Boccage, abominable. She had been told by all her anxious advisers

that the only hope of saving her family from disgrace, ridicule--the worst dishonour--was to break the connection (whatever it might be)

still her priests. her lawyers--she would get their advice as to how to

dislodge the blonde governess from the Rue du Harlay.

between her husband and Lucille Debellevme.

But, always tactless, and now in her emotional turmoil more than ever incapable of dealing with so complicated a situation, the Duchess employed no arts to gain her purpose.

"What! You want to return to Paris, in this heat! What is Paris like in August? Everyone is away--"

"I might return here presently. The journey is very short. If you wish you can remain here--with Cesarine and Laure. I will take Isabelle."

"Why?" unable to check her anguish Fanny du Boccage added in a

the Rue du Harlay--your own daughter as a screen!"

Affecting not to hear this the Duke replied:

"I want to take Isabelle to the dentist, she has been complaining of toothache--"

"I could take her--one night in Paris would suffice for that."

"If you wish. But I have affairs to attend to in Paris--there is no need."

for you to accompany me--"

whisper--"Yes, one of the children, to save your face when you visit

"You are foolish to torment yourself with these suspicions."

"Camille, pray do not try to deceive me by this miserable strategy! I can believe nothing that you say. Once you were candour itself, now I

"I, too, have affairs," replied Fanny du Boccage with that total lack of subterfuge that he found so galling. "If you work to keep Lucille

Debellevme in Paris I must work to see that she leaves."

detect you in lie after lie, evasion after evasion--"
"And whose fault is that?" he muttered, turning away, then, harshly, "I am returning to Paris and I shall take Isabelle."
"I, then, shall accompany you. I do not like this place--this senseless

"I, then, shall accompany you. I do not like this place—this senseless extravagance, this stupid luxury—no. I cannot be left here—but neither can I remain in Paris. We will go on to Dieppe."

"Is it possible you wish to return there?"
"Why not?" but she shivered as she recalled the dull pallor of the Villa

Violette, the monotony of that veiled sea. "We will find another house. I shall not stay in Paris while Lucille Debelleyme is in Paris.

Feeling the lack of air, for the evening was stifling, she hastened out of the half-furnished apartment and walked slowly up and down the wide white stone terrace. The massive shape of the ornate building, covered in part by scaffolding, showed heavy against the luminous sky; the trees were motionless, no wind stirred the grass. Madame du Boccage, walking heavily, paced up and down the cracked paving-stones. She rejoiced in the increasing symptoms of her

Remember, Camille, I have my friends, my protectors now."

not take the outraged heart much longer to wear out the failing body? Her husband appeared at the long, open, uncurtained window behind her, and stood for a moment, his hands on the window frame, looking about him at the red evening sky; the reflection of this glow was on his face and hair touching his intense pallor. His wife, pausing near him, scrutinised him painfully.

illness, her shortness of breath, the pain in her side, giddiness, a dimming of the sight; she hoped she would die soon, surely it would

He was a stranger and not in the least like the man she had married, yet always the man she loved. He wore a riding suit, costly, negligent; he had been directing the workmen who, under the supervision of an architect, were decorating the chapel, his high boots were covered with white dust and stained by liquid plaster, there was clay on his hands. He seemed to be at one with the enormous empty chateau, the sombre uninhabited landscape and on his handsome face was

the sombre uninhabited landscape and on his handsome face was that blank look which the Duchess had noticed, with an inexplicable sense of terror, when he had stared at the heavy baldaquin of her bed in the Faubourg St. Honore. It was as if, she thought, his spirit was utterly estranged from all about him; terrified of that immobile stare, she crossed to the window and asked him in a low voice to

give her his arm as she was tired.

He did so without a word, she leant on him heavily as he fell in step.

too late even now? This miserv--it seems as if it cannot be true--" "Are you not satisfied even yet? What have you to complain of? You have had your own way. The governess has gone." "Only her bodily presence. I think. Camille. How harshly you speak! Surely you know what I mean-it is this estrangement that is killing me--" "I gave way. I can do no more." "Camille," she hung heavily on his arm, she gazed up at him earnestly, "it was for your sake and for that of the children that she had to go--not for mine. I am so used to unhappiness--but everyone said you were wrong--that it could not be--" "Oh, everyone, eh?" she felt his arm tremble under her clasp, "Well, she has gone and everyone should be satisfied." He spoke with such cold hostility that she had not the heart to reply:

as they reached the end of the terrace where low steps led to the

"Would you not care to see the funeral vaults under the chapel? They

"Why? It is really a superb Gothic design, excellently carried out."

with her along the terrace. She was acutely conscious of the difference in their appearance, he in the full comeliness of his manhood and she, exhausted, worn in soul and body without either

Suddenly, she said with an utter, a hopeless sincerity, "Camille, is it

strength or charm.

lawns. he asked abruptly:

have been working on them to-day."

"No. I should not care to. Camille."

"Why should I?" she sighed, "in a short while I shall be there for ever." She spoke with complete sincerity, but these were exactly those words of melodrama that he most detested.

He paused; she loosened her arm from his and stood apart from him; she wore a light muslin dress, the sunset dyed it a pale scarlet.

She shook her head; she was aware that she was wrong in showing no interest in the work which so absorbed him, but she could not bring herself to play a part, to assume any aspect of happiness.

"You will not come?" he insisted.

at least. He has come."

"As you please," he replied with that ironic coldness she found more hard to bear than his worst rages, and leaving her standing alone on the great expanse of the terrace he turned towards the chapel, walking slowly and looking at his hands from which he pulled fragments of dried plaster.

M. du Boccage called on Mademoiselle Debelleyme at the Rue du Harlay. The servant, her eyes lively with curiosity, gave his message to Lucille Debelleyme; descending the narrow stairs she had to pass Madame Trou whose broad face expressed an hostile curiosity, but

the governess slipped past, keeping her eyes lowered. She was watched and suspected even here.

"What does it matter? He has come! There was, then, behind the banal words of his letters--something. Friendship? Passion? Interest

M. du Boccage waited in the parlour reserved for interviewing

girls, Isabelle and Cesarine, danced about with excitement on the worn Empire horse-hair couch.

The embarrassment of this meeting was dispelled by the children's joyous welcome of their governess; while they clung to her with exclamations of pleasure and love, she looked over their blonde heads at their father.

parents; it was full of the greasy smell of cooking; he walked up and down impatiently, his handkerchief to his nostrils, and his two little

He had not said a word beyond some murmur when she had entered but, as usual, their eyes told each other everything.

Greedily they stared; how necessary they were, one to the other; this

separation (so foolish for their enemies to insist on that) had only shown them the vital need they had one for the other, and how empty, how impossible were days spent apart.

After the gloomy, lonely miseries of the Rue du Harlay, the presence

of M. du Boccage seemed, to the governess, to transform the world. They exchanged a few commonplaces, always looking at each other, while she spoke to the children the words that she meant him to hear; of her suffering, of her ill-health (did she not appear pale and thin?),

how she missed Javiaux du Boccage and their company, the dullness, the stupidity, of the people with whom she was surrounded, of her half thoughts of marriage with an old man she detested. "I must somehow put an end..."

She broke off, having never taken her vivid glance from his face, she

She broke off, having never taken her vivid glance from his face, she felt that the man was trembling, overwhelmed, she knew his violent jealousy was aroused, darkness flickered in his eyes as he stammered out his banalities

Lucille Debelleyme was not sorry that the Duke should see this instance of the tyranny under which she lived; as the door closed on the figure of the Swiss woman she murmured: "It is killing me to live here." Then with rising agony not feigned: "I shall die in this disgusting place."

She glanced at the children, making an effort to control herself; how was she to speak to him alone? What was he going to arrange or to

do? She began, contrary to her nature, to be impatient.

Madame Trou knocked at the door, then immediately opened it. Her plain face was hard and ugly with suspicion; "Would Mademoiselle's visitor detain her much-longer? One of the pupils wished for her

music lesson, the hour was already passed."

He owed her something, too, for what length of time must she endure this? Had he no device whereby they could at least have half an hour alone?

The Duke, aroused by the appeal in her brilliant eyes told the children to go to the carriage and fetch the basket of fruit and flowers that they had brought up from Javiaux du Boccage for Mademoiselle.

As the little girls ran out and the door closed after them, she turned to

As the little girls ran out and the door closed after them, she turned to him instantly; she did not trust him, was not sure if he knew how to make the best of this snatched moment.

"Well?" she demanded, "what are you going to do? I'm trapped and helpless."

She approached him, risking the torment of another embrace; there was so much she must risk.

"What did you mean when you said to me-On the seashore at Corsica. "is this love or something more?"

harassed as he was, to think of some device, some expedient; yet, contemptuous as she usually was towards all hesitations and falterings, she did not blame this man, for she loved him.

"Can we not meet somewhere?" she whispered, "without the children? You and I, not as governess and employer--"

"As what then?"

"You must tell me that--as anything you please. This has gone far enough, has it not?"

"I have always respected you--I would not offer you the least affront," but his eyes contradicted the words, he had always an air, as she well knew, of saving what he did not mean, of entrenching himself

She replied in a lowered voice for she feared a spy at the door.

"Can you bear it? I cannot--tell me where I shall come."

He was silent and she with her whole urgent presence goaded him.

"Yes. But is it in good hands--our mutual fortunes?"

"We are both of us in torment, is there no way out?"

behind half-inarticulate conventionalities.

"You know "

"Oh. Mon Dieu!"

the Rue Keller? To-morrow at six."

He took a key from his pocket and placed it on the table, not daring

He said. "Do you know the chemist and perfumer's at the corner of

believe they are for your sole use." This, then, was one of them; he was putting her on a level with those other, obscure rivals; as indeed she had asked him to do.

She put the key in her beaded reticule: "This is because there is no other way."

"Can you suggest anything else?"

They already heard the eager feet of the children outside. "No, nothing. Only this—you did well to respect me. I have as much virtue as I ever professed to have...."

to touch her hand, indeed she shrank back for fear he should do so.
"There is a side door and you go up one flight of stairs: it was taken

Lucille Debelleyme remembered instantly, vividly, the phrases in the Duchess' letter: "those little rooms you are known to hire--I do not

in the name of Luc Raby."

"I know. You'll come?"

there."

"You've thought of me. vou've missed me?"

"God knows," he whispered with violence, "how much!" The laughing children entered the room bearing between them a huge basket laden with exotic fruits and flowers, rare, costly, as they placed this rich trophy of the summer before Mademoiselle Debelleyme she whispered between her exclamations of joy at dusky grapes, soft peaches, red-stained nectarines, the last roses and striped dahlias,

cast in this sudden profusion into her miserable privation: "I shall be

It was not difficult for Madame du Boccage to learn what she

nurses' repetition to Matilde and Matilde's instant bearing of the news to her mistress was the matter of an hour or so. "A visit to the dentist indeed! But first they had gone to the Rue du Harlay..." The Duchess consulted with the Abbe Galle, with her lawver, Maitre Cottin: although death was in her soul she was still resolved, for her children's sake, not to give in. What would their fate be if they fell powerless into the hands of this other woman? She was advised to insist on an instant departure for Dieppe, and the Abbe Galle undertook to immediately dislodge the governess from the Rue du Harlay. He would bring pressure to bear on Madame Trou and force her to demand from her new teacher a certificate of good behaviour recently written and signed from Madame du Boccage. Madame Trou could say with truth that scandalous rumours had begun to reach her ears, indeed had been confirmed by the visit to M. du. Boccage to his one-time governess the very day he had arrived in Paris, glossed over by the presence of the children, no doubt, but a glaring piece of indiscretion none the less. She could, therefore, with propriety demand this new certificate of good character. Madame du Boccage would, of course, refuse it, the

regarded as this new outrage on the part of her husband. The innocent chatter of the children themselves before their nurses, the

governess would be expelled from the Rue du Harlay and ruined, penniless, without a good name, would have nowhere to go; she would then be reduced, so the astute Abbe argued, to accept the generous charity of her enemies, take a handsome pension and some more excellent testimonials and return to England.

Madame du Boccage hesitated a little before employing these methods, which savoured of brutality, but she had resigned herself to

the guidance of her advisers, and a few hours after the Duke's visit to

That same evening she told Lucille Debelleyme what had occurred: "I must have this certificate of character, Mademoiselle. If you are on the good terms you say you are with Madame du Boccage then there will be no difficulty in obtaining it—if there is any difficulty in obtaining it I cannot keep you here—I have my reputation to think of. I live a very retired life and I had not heard of all these scandalous rumours when I engaged you. I cannot have the parents of my charges objecting to

the Rue du Harlay the Abbe waited on Madame Trou; he found that woman, who disliked Lucille Debelleyme, ready to espouse the cause of justice and to preserve the respectability of her dreary establishment as well as eager to please a great lady of such

influence as the Duchesse du Boccage.

morrow night, it might not be true.

the character of the young person whom I employ to instruct them."

Lucille Debelleyme's heart swelled with hatred against this woman, against all the horde of women, respectable, spiteful, virtuous, whom she represented.

"You shall have your certificate of good character, Madame. I will

secure it for you to-morrow."

The woman was silent at this bold front and left her with a cold glance of enmity; Lucille Debelleyme's rage exploded in a burst of rare laughter that startled the other, who paused on the stairs to listen.

"A certificate of virtue from Fanny du Boccage!"

The governess laughed to think that she was really as 'virtuous' as she said she was--who would believe that?--perhaps, after to-

Lucille Debelleyme passed rapidly through the streets on her way to

seemed to be everywhere; the air was full of murmurs of discontent and disdain for M. Guizot, for his master. The evening papers that were being eagerly bought and read were full of scandals about the ruling classes. A general had been found quilty of corruption, a minister of intrigues, a lunatic prince had

murdered his mistress...the first two had been punished, no doubt, the third sent to an asylum, but people would not forget; these

the Rue Keller, the heat was suffocating and it seemed to her excited imagination that there was unrest everywhere. Outside the shops, the clubs, the cafes, groups of people disputed and surged; placards

scandals fermented in the masses, and the whole structure of the Orleans monarchy which had risen out of the tumult of the famous Three Days was steadily shaken by the increasing menace of popular scorn.

The governess had difficulty in finding the Rue Keller as it was in a quarter unknown to her. She took an omnibus for she felt strangely fatigued; the man who was sitting next to her had one of the evening sheets on his knee; she could not avoid seeing the headlines of an inflammatory political article, and on another column the word-again

and again--'murder.' She had never dwelt on murder nor indeed any crime before, she had always relegated it into that part of life which she knew existed

but with which she was never faced. Now in her disturbed, distracted state, an odd sickening curiosity crept into her mind...People of her

own class, people of a class higher than her own, did commit murder. Why? Deeds of violence were, to her, incredibly stupid, an

underground method was the only way, she was sure, of attaining one's end. She did not reflect that while it is the savage, the stupid, who commit murders, it is often the subtle and the fastidious who

instigate them.

to the floor of the bus, so that the word 'Murder' was under the feet of Lucille Debelleyme.

It was so hot in the omnibus. A fat woman entered with two plucked fowls in a handkerchief; dangling over her legs and her cotton skirt were their heads; on which hung the withered flesh of the combs and

Her companion, who smelt of garlic, put a spotted red foulard over his face to keep off the flies and the newspaper slipped off his knee

wattles, and long red feathers; drops of blood and water dripped from the ends of their yellow beaks. Passers-by hailed the omnibus, which stopped reluctantly; steam rose from the lean backs of the horses; the conductor took off his shapeless cap, mopped his bald head and pulled from his pocket a sensational paper-backed romance which he read as the vehicle jerked over the cobbles. Tom placards, on houses, hoardings and kiosks announced old plays: La Kerne Margot by Alexandre Dumas, Haydee by Scribe and Aubersummer fetes, the 'Chateau des Fleurs' at the Arc-de-Triomphe with comic songs, games, Bengal lights—one franc entrance. The print

Kerne Margot by Alexandre Dumas, Haydee by Scribe and Aubersummer fetes, the 'Chateau des Fleurs' at the Arc-de-Triomphe with comic songs, games, Bengal lights-one franc entrance. The print shops showed metal caricatures of Teste and Cubieres, who had brought such infamy on the government, and reproductions of a popular painting that, in crude satire, showed the Paris of 1847 under the likeness of the Rome of Tiberius; everywhere could be sensed a public unrest, a malaise, a nervous disquiet.

"Or am I wrong? Is it only in myself, this uneasiness?"

She got out of the jolting omnibus at the corner of a small cobbled street and, following the conductor's direction, found the Rue Keller. There was the chemist's shop with the strong August sunshine

gleaming across the huge purple, crimson and green bottles, with jars of medicines showing through the open door. There, at the side, was the little door of which she had the key.

She passed it, and walked away rapidly up the street. She had been

bleak, cold bedroom where Robert Morrison lay drunk. She was not a woman who could easily become used to the peculiar, furtive atmosphere of illicit intrique. It was not the duplicity that shocked her, but the slur on her pride. She had gone up to Robert Morrison's hired bedchamber because he represented (she had thought) her only chance of escape from an insupportable situation; she turned back now because of the urge of a similar desperation, and took the key out of her purse. Events had so narrowed down her sphere of action that there was only this left to do; a complete resignation, a complete abnegation, she could not contemplate. The stairs were dark, already lit by a small let of gas which showed another door at the top, that of the apartment which was marked with the assumed name the Duke had given her. She turned the key and entered, closing the door carefully behind her, holding her breath, stepping even more lightly than usual. He was not there: she sat down at a table covered with a long chenille cloth in the centre of the room, and peered round, pale with an increasing rage against her destiny. Her hand had been forced, she was doing the thing that she had above all things not wished to do, throwing away the fruits of years of self-respect, decorum, of correct behaviour. If she was discovered, and she believed that, spied upon as she was, she would certainly be discovered, she would be openly revealed as the wanton that her enemies had for the last two years de-dared her to be. She would have lost that nominal innocence which was her chief asset. The need she had of the man whom she had come to meet waged with her disgust that he could have found nothing better for her than this. The room was hidden away at the back of the small house and looked on a blank wall, the sun, though still powerful, was completely

shut away and twilight fell over the small apartment where she

reminded of the inn at Paddington, the back parlour and the large.

modern--all frivolous with decor of the Regency, no touch of the present century. Her gaze concentrated on the long couch with gold-scrolled back, set in the wall behind looped draperies, covered with silk pillows and cashmere shawls.

Who was that woman for whom he had furnished the room, and how often had he entertained her or others? The governess locked her hands under her chin; supposing he did not come? She had always found it so agreeable to realise that he was like herself, so capable of getting his end by plot and plan, by underground intrigues. But this

waited. She endeavoured to divert herself (nor was this so difficult as her curiosity was avid) by noticing every detail of her surroundings. All was in his taste, she could see that at once: nothing much

worked against herself now, she could not be quite sure of him, even though she believed that his feeling for her was genuine. After all, he had never committed himself to her save by half-looks, half-words. Their behaviour had always been of complete outward discretion.

"He does not give a woman much to build on and what, after all, can I be to him compared to all he risks in any further dealings with me?"

There were some Journal de Modes on the table, Le Follet, Le Courier des Dames; she turned over the glossy leaves and became discontented with her own gown, not the finest that she had, but the smartest in which she had dared leave the Rue du Harlay. For whose diversion had he bought these frivolous pictures of ruffled silks, wide laces and frail bonnets?

"Some women know how to get these things without fuss or scandal-mon Dieu! It must have been my virtuous training that set me on the

of his position and he meets me here!"

Her cupidity, her disappointment clouded her delight in him:

wrong path! A man of his wealth--and what have I had of him? A man

He broke in on her meditation, holding in his hand the fashionable light top-hat, that, high and wide, made so many men appear ridiculous, but which oddly suited his height and build. The governess remained seated and such was her control that not a

"Peers of France were not formerly so cautious nor so niggardly. I

fear that I am born into the wrong century."

instantly: "this time we must really come to a definite understanding. this time we cannot leave it vaque." M. du Boccage put down his hat, gloves and cane, then locked the

tinge of colour passed over her pale, pensive face; she thought

door; they did not speak to each other. He approached the table where she sat waiting; she nerved herself to hear what he was going to say and not to be jarred at the wrong words he was sure to employ. She was used to interpreting his banalities, but sometimes

she resented them. Whatever her feelings for him, at the present moment they were not strong enough to lift her above those minute exasperations: this place where she was forced to meet him. this silence, overshadowed the triumph of the fact that he had come...

At length he said: "Madame du Boccage insists that we all go to harries me day and night. I have not a moment's respite."

Dieppe to-morrow. I cannot resist without a further scandal. She How flat an opening for a clandestine love meeting! The picture he

evoked was touched by absurdity for the governess; a family trip to the seaside--the carriage full of children, the servants busy with

luggage, the nurses scolding, everything--now her own touch was lacking--in chaos, and in the midst of these agitated domesticities

this elegant young man--this roue mangue. Ah, Camille Pierre Marie du Boccage Montlosier had indeed made himself ridiculous by his early marriage; but if the thought of Dieppe gave the governess a

"I have been driven," he repeated sullenly; "she harries me--"
"Yes," smiled the governess, "she has harried you here. Monsieur du
Boccage, harried you and me to this shameful place."

He glanced at her sharply, askance, and his mouth twitched:

little amusement, it was obvious that it afforded none to the Duke: his

sense of humour had for some while been in eclipse.

"I hardly believed you would come."

She read the words and the look; he was one of those men who held women sharply divided into two classes, the chaste and the wanton:

having put Lucille Debelleyme in the first category, it was profoundly

difficult for a mind like his to remove her to the second.

"Yes, I have made this sacrifice," she still continued to smile. She took off her bonnet and swung it by the lilac ribbons. "The last sacrifice."

"It need never be known."

us into the hands of our enemies? You say they have driven us here, where will they drive us next?"

He continued to look at her intensely, with an expression, she thought, as if he waited for a signal, but she could not think what signal: her exasperation grew.

"But I dare say it will be!" She rose. "Do you not see this is delivering

signal; her exasperation grew.

"So you are to leave Paris to-morrow and I--what is to become of me? Am I to stifle in the Rue du Harlay, if indeed that woman will keep me there--vou have not obtained, indeed, you cannot obtain

that letter which is demanded from your wife?"

"That marriage?" he asked sharply.

"Perhaps worse than that."

She began walking up and down the room swinging her bonnet by the lilac strings. He sat down at the table in the chair she had just left

and dropped his head in his hands, his elbows on the piles of

His indolent gaiety, his haughty self-assurance so skilfully cloaked by a smiling amiability were all gone, she pitied him as he sat in that

He said under his breath: "she will not give it to me." then, "if you

Lucille Debelleyme interrupted: "It would be a useless humiliation. Do you not see it is a trap to get rid of me? But I will not go. I will not

were to come yourself to-morrow and ask for it..."

magazines.

leave Paris. After all, there are always things one can do."

abject attitude. He, wealthy and powerful, with every worldly advantage was as cornered, as defeated, as helpless as herself. She bent over him, put her hand on his shoulder. He instantly shuddered at her touch.

"There must be something, you are not going to give in, let them do what they will? Have you no authority, are you not master in your own

home? Come, we are no longer in the relations of master and servant. We can speak clearly I hope, plainly, Camille." For the first time she used his name. He glanced up quickly with eager expectancy.

"I have not come here to use evasion, your troubles, your humiliations

do not come from me. When you begged me to stay, I stayed, though the position was almost insupportable. When you asked me to go I went and I made no scenes."

my loyalty. I have done what I could."

She turned aside, her nerves giving way before his immobility, his stupefied air.

"I have thought of you like that, too--my one friend, the only creature who has treated me as if I was a human being. You know you have

"It is true, it is true; you have been my one friend,"

"Mon Dieu! I would not be so forced down by circumstances! Are you not young, with money and position? With everything most people cut each other's throats to get? And do you allow this odious woman-come. she is odious to me and to you also. is she not?"

As if stimulated by the intense passion in her words he rose to his feet. "she is odious to me. I hate her, I have for her a repugnance--"
"That is enough!" cried the governess. "Free yourself of her, be done with it!"

He did not reply but cast his eyes down while a shudder passed over

his face as if an unspeakable thought was struggling in his mind; she added swiftly: "Why did you ask me to come here to-day?"

"I had," he answered with difficulty, "to speak with you in private. There has always been somebody, the children, servants, spies--"

"Yes." she retorted. "It is very difficult for us to get away from all that

even here. You seem tongue-tied, stifled—but what? The weight of custom, the legend of my respectability?"

He said slowly: "I cannot believe in what we are being driven to--"

"What we are being driven to, Camille, what do you mean?--that you

the services of your virtuous wife, I no longer have to satisfy your friends and relations as to my purity and my good behaviour.—I have come at last to the position where certificates of virtue and decorum are not required."

"I do not want you to lose everything through me. I do not like what I do, what I am forced to do. I have never asked a woman like you to a place like this before."

Lucille Debelleyme smiled, his code that it hurt him so to surrender, mattered very little to her: she had already sacrificed her own.

are forced to ask me to be your mistress?--well, this is a proper place, is it not? I am no longer in charge of your little children nor in

slipping his control, he added: "I find that life without you is awful, impossible. You are ill, dying in that hideous Rue du Harlay. I must do something, I must alter it."

"Get me." she said with rising contempt for his slowness, for his

With the greatest possible effort, as if all his faculties were fast

pension to England—then all will be peaceful again. Get rid of me and go your way."

"You know that I cannot."

inaction, "that letter from Madame du Boccage--send me with a

"Then what do you intend to do with me?"

She believed that he was going to ask her to be his secret mistress and she believed that she was going to accept his proposal, yet her

pride was not stung as it had been when Robert Morrison had turned on her and said he had no intention of marrying her. She was better

on her and said he had no intention of marrying her. She was better schooled now, besides, her senses, her emotions were touched; she believed that it would be impossible to live without this man...

"Life is blank without you. I never thought this would happen to me, to be so entangled and trapped."

"Cut free," breathed the governess, leaning towards him.

"I must think of my name, of my family, my children."

"And must you not," she asked, leaning further forward, "a little think of me?"

She rose impulsively, throwing aside her long, patient restraint, as if

"I have always restrained myself, Camille. I thought you had enough to endure from that other woman, and I have been forced to earn my livelihood for many years so am not able to indulge in emotionalism, but I too could weep and pray. I too could point to my wrongs and

she unbuttoned a cloak and cast it down.

She sank down on the couch set in the wall and flung her bonnet on the cushion beside her; he turned to stare at her, she was annoyed by the stray thought that made her think of the marble mask of the cupidon in the salon of the Faubourg St. Honore, for he had that same strange expression, a smile that might pass as gaiety but on a closer inspection seemed a grimace of unutterable desolation.

sufferings, I too could ask you to take pity on me, to contemplate what my life has been! I am a woman after all, not a machine. I am, too, what you think of as a good woman."

"Do you love me?" he asked, his voice was hoarse and his tone flat, she saw that he was at the end of all subterfuge as she was herself;

sne saw that he was at the end of all subterfuge as sne was nerselt; they dropped all the tricks of the elaborate game that they had played so long.

"I love you, You are, in every way, my only hope and love, is it that? I

He approached her and unsteadily sank on his knees beside the couch and put his head and his arms on the pillows beside her, in the relaxed attitude of a tired child. She saw his shoulders heave under the fine cloth and though she could hear nothing she thought that he sobbed, and she sat silent, not intruding on his grief by a gesture.

The light was failing in the small, overcrowded room-she had been there longer than she knew; with the setting of the sun the heat seemed to increase; all the fumes of a summer day in the city began to assail them. She began to count the hours they had before them. how long might they in safety stay there...the habit of calculation was

don't know--perhaps, as you said, something more."

so strong with her that she could not forget it, even in this moment of genuine emotion. She touched his shoulder. "Camille, we are both very wretched. Do not lose heart--there must be a way out." He lifted his head to look at her, his hair had fallen over his eyes.

which strangely altered his appearance. "Yes, I'll find a way. Will you stay with me here to-hight? All the night?"

Her answer came in a whisper: "I dare not, we are spied on, you know, do not forget that. If I am not at the Rue du Harlay at least to sleep, the worst will be suspected."

"Stay with me to-night."

Twice she had knelt at is feet; it was curious to see him kneeling.

Detached from his usual surroundings, his usual manners, his

personality changed; this fascinated her, for she had thought, with the self-confidence of a clever woman, that she had known him through

and through; she recalled her mistake with Robert Morrison. The Duke had not been weeping: his eves were clear, his complexion

pale, why then had he hidden his face? To conceal what emotion?

She got to her feet and moved away: "I saw you had something here to make coffee. I feel so thirsty, my throat quite parched. The gas, too, shall I not light it? It is getting so dark,"

"And hot too." he complained, rising quickly. "suffocating."

With what seemed a frantic gesture he threw off his blue coat. It fell on the ground at her feet, she stooped to pick it up, he prevented her, their hands met.

"What is this in the pocket? You have had a bottle in the pocket, I think it is broken." Her fingers closed on a small phial which had struck the floor. He instantly took it from her and returned it to the coat pocket.

"It is laudanum--I found it in the room of Madame du Boccage. It is

safer for me to have it."

"Ah yes--safer," murmured the governess. He dropped the coat on the couch; she noticed he had twisted several times round his waist, a thin, green cord; he saw her look and explained: "that also I found it in her room."

"You think she contemplates suicide?"

"Who knows? I have been thinking, too, of the baldaquin of her bedsince you spoke of it—it is dangerous, I must have the workmen in to make it more secure."

They looked at each other through the gloom, she put her hand out as if she tried to move a veil between them. "If such a thing should happen," she sighed. "What a frightful thought! But our only hope is in some such accident."

affection. His embrace was so powerful that it was difficult for her to draw breath through her slender body, his kisses and tears on her face left her in no doubt as to the emotion she had roused in this man. In broken inarticulate cries, he breathed his passionate desire for her, his furious hatred for their mutual enemy, his agony at seeing her wilt and fade in the Rue du Harlay, his horror at the thought of the marriage with which she had tormented him, his disgust, his fury at spies, the whole world--he and she only--For a moment her desperately aroused emotion overwhelmed her intellect, she could think of nothing except that she was in his embrace--but for a moment only. Even then her pride and her

As if to efface the impression of these words she suddenly cast herself into his arms in an abandonment of self-pity of desire, of

the climax, what I cannot get now I shall never get. It is my last, my only chance. Why should I not have from him everything a woman may have?" She was lost for a second only. Then she caught at her senses, her intellect, and extricated herself even at that moment, from his intense desire, and her intense wish to accept it in the fullest. As he

ambition took over, she began to plan and calculate--to think: "This is

for her, what he would give her, she wrenched herself away, disordered, distracted as she was: "Why not then everything? I am not to be had this way after all..."

continued to murmur with his lips on her bare neck what he would do

Expressing the very height of a frenzy, long-suppressed ambition. she said: "A separation--a divorce--marriage with me--why not? It has been done before and if I'm so much to you--"

By his instant withdrawal from her she at once realised that this had been in his mind too. She was not asking a higher price for herself than he had already in his mind put on her; yet she wondered if this as hard to fight herself as it was to fight him...but the prize was surely worth it--"I cannot think." she whispered. "really, my mind does not work--have Lasked too much?" "No more than you deserve," he was gripping the back of the chair by the table; when had she seen him do that before and why did she want to know? Ah, that first day that she had seen him in the Hotel du Boccage--she must control these wandering thoughts. "You think that? Why not do it--for me?" "You want it? More than anything? More than the night--we might have together here?" The way of ambition was also the way of honour; she with instinctive skill took advantage of that. "You would think less of me--vou are not the man to love where vou despise. I want vour love." He did not move, she thought the gilt chair would break in his formidable grip; his face was flushed, his hair was tumbled over his eves. She was frightened by the part she played, but she would not give way; her mood was not the mood of melting romance in which she had set aiar her door in the Palazzo Frediani. She was defeated now, with nothing to lose but that nominal innocence that the world valued so highly, that secretly she valued so highly herself--"to become his harlot is to give his wife the final triumph--why should I? Yet how resist? I was mad to come."

She found a candle on a porcelain gueridon by the window and lit it,

as if there was protection in the small light.

could be done, if they could now, possibly, leave each other; it was

make her write it--I am as virtuous as she is--she owes me that letter-I want to publish it before all Paris--" she heard him come up behind her; she stared into the little flame melting the hard wax; she forced herself to repeat:

"The letter--"

"Is that more to you then staying here with me?"

"Yes."

He put his arms round her and pulled open her thin summer bodice:

"The letter," she stammered, with her back to him, "I want that letter--

she whispered, her lips near his was:

"Get that letter from your wife--divorce her--separate from her--what you will--then come back to me--"

"Lucille--vou cannot--make terms. now."

she felt his flesh warm through the linen shirt, she leant her head back so that it rested under his chin; it seemed to her that his grasp was strong enough to tear her heart out with one movement, but what

Half naked as she was, she drew away with a pride that overwhelmed his strength.

that he would be ashamed--that he was ashamed now.

"I'm not a harlot. I will not be--some day she would know--and you would be ashamed."

She frantically searched his face for an answer to this--some lovers

could have persuaded her, even then, that pride, ambition and honour were as nothing compared to love--but not this man. The baffled anger in his eyes, the guiver of his mouth, his half-recoil told

She loosened his slackened fingers from her bare breast. "I will not do it."

silence shuddered back into his self-control. She wondered if she had gone too far, denied him and herself too violently, if her sacrifice and his was for nothing. She buttoned up her bodice, turned away, pulled her bonnet from the couch, swinging it mechanically by the pale, lilac strings.

She took his hand and held it with her own above the now flaring flame of the candle so that fire stung their flesh. He winced, then in

What she had set herself was almost beyond her: she put her bonnet on and tied the ribbons under her chin in an attempt to steady her nervous, rising hysteria by movement.

"Tell your wife to give me that letter." "Come to the Faubourg St. Honore to-morrow."

"Very well. I will be there. I shall expect the letter--and from you--some action--"

As he put on his coat, as it in a stupor, she stared again at the green cord twisted round his braces, under the pique waistcoat; she thought of the bottle of laudanum in his pocket. Why had he not allowed his wife to use it? The image of the heavy baldaguin came

before her mind--she would not give way, yet she grasped the edge of the table to support herself and was half regretful that he had not forced her, made an end of this torment of virtue it cost so much to

keep. Her own mood was so distraught that she could not for once clearly understand his point of view; was he not too silent, had he not given away too soon? It was the first time since she had known him

was frantic He picked up his hat and gloves, put them down and picked them up again. "To-morrow, then," he repeated several times, "to-morrow,"

intimately that she was not aware of what he was feeling or thinking: only through the haze of her own emotion she sensed that the man

He tried to leave the room, forgetting that he had locked the door, then he fumbled several times with the wrong kev; all the while he

"If you care enough," she whispered, still holding on to the table.

struggled for escape she did not speak nor look at him.

"You shall see how much I care."

Then he was gone, the door slammed after him and she sprang into instant action which seemed without her own volition.

"It is madness to deny such a moment--such a man--and myself--I cannot do it--what does anything matter? If only he stays--Camille. Camille, return!"

She did not know if she spoke or thought these frantic phrases; she

dashed out the candle with her blistered hand, snatched up her cloak and bag (prudent even then) and ran from the darkening room, down

the stairs into the twilit street. The gas was flaring in the chemist's shop and the bright jets sent the reflections of the monstrous brilliant bottles of vivid water in patches of red and purple and green on the

dirty pavement. She looked up and down the street, she could see

him, not far away vet, walking unsteadily, his hat in his hand. The hot

gloom of evening made his pale clothes and blond hair appear ash-

like, as if he was a figure without substance.

Too late. "What have I done? What will be do?" Lucille Debellevme thought: "This is going to be the most difficult night of my life. I wonder how I shall live through it." She had returned

to the Rue du Hanay decorously early, decorously attired. Madame Trou had been in the corridor as if waiting for her and gave her a suspicious look. "You have the letter for which I asked you. Mademoiselle?" she demanded in her thick, ugly French. "I shall have it to-morrow." replied the governess guietly. She

marvelled at the power of her own self-control, she certainly owed something to her long and bitter training. "To-morrow, in the afternoon, I am calling on Madame la Duchesse du Boccage in the Faubourg St. Honore. She is herself personally giving me this letter." "I cannot wait longer than to-morrow. Mademoiselle. As I have explained to you before, if I had had any idea of the state of the case I should not have taken you in." Mademoiselle Debelleyme merely smiled at this insolence. She went carefully up the dingy stairway with the worn drugget, holding her

gown off her elegant feet; she looked back over her shoulder at the scowling, suspicious Swiss woman as she repeated:

"To-morrow, Madame, to-morrow." Her tiny room, cramped and dirty as it was, was a refuge. She could not hope to sleep but she could hope to indulge in the agony of her insomnia alone, unspied on for a few hours at least.

The long night was very close. She had the sash windows open as wide as possible, top and bottom; the air that entered was stale, tainted and brought no relief.

flesh

be able to give it."

Taking off only her bonnet and gloves she knelt by the bed and pulled the pillows, covered in cool coarse linen, under her hot face, turning them in search of further coolness as they became heated from her

it seemed to give no light.

"I've gone too far, I should not have denied him. I have injured myself and him. I cannot go on like this for ever. I asked too much, he will not

When the full moon came up behind the black masses of the houses

offered her because of ambition and pride? Her aching loneliness was almost insupportable. Perhaps the other woman would master him after all, she and her formidable allies...Perhaps he would leave for Dieppe on the morrow and she would never see him again.

It was likely enough she would never receive the letter that was to restore her character and she might be turned with ignominy from the

Was it possible that she had refused the greatest delight ever

doors of Madame Trou; worse, when she went to the Faubourg St. Honore to-morrow it might be to once again see the gates closed.

Such awful dread and misery possessed her that she had difficulty to keep from crying aloud.

When as the hot night sank into the first coppery glow of day she heard a noise outside, she sprang to her door, filled by she knew not what apprehension.

gown. "I feel sick. Mademoiselle. I couldn't sleep it was so hot, the smells from the streets, and the noises," and her eyes widened with

surprise to see the governess was fully dressed.

Madame la Duchesse du Boccage...

One of the girls was outside, a dving nightlight in her hand, her plain face livid, her greasy hair falling in a plait over her flannel dressing-

"I also," said Mademoiselle Debelleyme in her careful tone, "found it difficult to sleep, that is why I am dressed so early." She returned to her room, but through the thin wall she could hear the girl retching. How long must she stay here, how long could she possibly endure to

stay here? It was not likely he would sleep either; perhaps, already. he was preparing himself for that interview with his wife in which he would tell her that she must give the certificate of good character that would keep her enemy in Paris, or even that he wished for a divorce, a separation, the first step to putting her rival in her place?--Lucille.

"Am I mad to have thought of such a thing? Have I lost all in asking too much? A few stolen interviews in the Rue Keller were better than

nothina." The dawn strengthened, showing in detail all the squalor of the room. The noises of the street began, the rattle of a wagon, the cry of a hawker. It was nearly daylight over Paris, the beggar's instruments

squealed out a polka, the tune floated across the narrow yard on to which her window looked and brought her to her knees again with her fingers in her ears, not daring to recall that moment of enchantment by the sea, in Corsica. Her blistered finger hurt as it pressed against her cheek; she had not before noticed that wound.

* * * * *

of you-some action."

She drank a great deal of coffee but could eat no food. The fruit and flowers from Javiaux du Boccage flaunted in the dingy dining-room; Madame Trou looked askance at the extravagant present, but ate greedily the grapes and peaches. Mademoiselle Debelleyme gave a music lesson to two of the girls, while the third, who had been taken ill in the night, lay on the mohair-covered sofa, groaning now and then with nausea.

Madame Trou had insisted that the two girls should learn the fashionable La Belle Helene polka. As they played it one after the other, again and again, stumbling over the notes, the governess.

All that morning there was no message, no sign, but after all had she expected or he promised any? She must wait until the afternoon, when she would call on the Duchess and demand the letter; he would be there of course; what had been her last words to him?--"I expect

leaning against the tall pianoforte with the drawn red-silk front, thought: "This is torture, this is what people mean by acute torture. It is curious how one keeps using words without knowing what they really mean—but now I know what is meant by torture."

At the unpleasant meal in the gloomy little dining-room, where no one for the language induced by the heat could get the food. Madage.

At the unpleasant meal in the gloomy little dining-room, where no one, for the languor induced by the heat, could eat the food, Madame Trou again reminded her assistant of the necessity for the letter from Madame du Boccage.

"I am going this afternoon to fetch it."

She dressed herself with great care for this interview; Madame du Boccage should not think that she was any less sure of herself. She

would risk the disapproval of Madame Trou, for, surely, she must, somehow, soon escape from the Rue du Harlay. She selected a pale-grey cashmere dress trimmed with a soutache of white braid:

As she tied the strings she remembered that she had left behind the key of the apartment in the Rue Keller, one of her mistakes: it would have been pleasant to have had it in her pocket when she confronted Fanny du Boccage. His face was so constantly before her mind that she paused to stare at it as if he really stood there: how different he looked with his hair fallen over his eves--peculiar, light coloured hair like a Northerner.

for bonnet?--that with the taffeta frills and the lilac ribbons she had

worn vesterday--she had nothing prettier.

marked every detail of that imagined countenance, the slight fullness under the chin, the slight weariness of the face, the lines under the eves that showed complete maturity... "I shall expect of you some action."

How unattractive she had at first found that excessive fairness: she

She slipped out of the Rue du Harlay without anyone noticing her; circumspect, composed, she proceeded to the Faubourg St. Honore; she did not feel very triumphant nor very sure of herself. "He ought to have seen me this morning, after such a parting as we had it was his duty to see that I was immediately reassured." Yet how impossible to believe that he would abandon her: she must believe that he would not fail her...

As she turned into the familiar Faubourg St. Honore, which was to her a street of joyous and happy memories, she paused and closed her eyes to steady herself, then advanced slowly with her light, easy step over the pavement. She still looked down for she dreaded to see even from a distance that the lodges were closed, the gates

locked, the family away; she could not face the realisation that he might have forsaken her.

attendance on the Duchess and she thought, with a gleam of dreadful hope, "she has been taken ill, she has not been able to sustain the struggle, she is, perhaps, dying—ah! that is why he did not come."

But why the crowd? Why this commotion? The porter was standing in the midst of a little group of men who seemed to be eagerly questioning and writing the answers down in notebooks. She had seen some of these at the great receptions and been told that they were journalists, that they represented the new and growing power of the press. The porter's face was contorted, at first she had scarcely

recognised him: he gesticulated vehemently and kept drawing his

Lucille Debelleyme pulled her veil over her face and passed into the crowd in the courtyard; among others there were a few women of the lower classes with their baskets and marketing handkerchiefs on their arms. She looked up at the familiar mansion, the white facade showed charminaly through the little trees. The blinds were down in

hand over his throat

But when she did raise her glance she saw the gates of the Hotel du Boccage wide open and a crowd filling the courtyard, pressing round the porter's lodges, while a string of carriages blocked the roadway. People were passing hurriedly from these carriages in and out of the Hotel du Boccage; they were all, she noticed, men. Among them she recognised one of the doctors whom she had often seen in

the pretty windows adorned with their festoons of marble flowers; the terraces and steps were full of agitated people coming and going.

"A stroke of apoplexy? Is she then dead?"

The governess turned and spoke to a woman beside her. "Can you

fried of the family, I came on a visit."

on the edge she paused, there was something she must know. One of the young men with a notebook was hastening along the pavement, to his newspaper office no doubt; she detained him, standing in his way. "Tell me, you must have information—this crime? What is known of it?"

He shrugged, not inclined to speak, impatient to be on his way: "Thieves, they say. I suppose they thought the house empty, the

family returned unexpectedly. There was another outrage in the Elysee Bourbon two days ago. No one seems to know anything. The magistrates are there and the police commissioners of the quartier

Mademoiselle Debelleyme pushed her way through the crowd, but

Not only the woman to whom she spoke but everyone who could hear her question answered with eager horror: "Where have you been that you have not heard? A frightful crime was committed last night-

Madame du Boccage has been murdered."

* * * * *

du Roule."

"But she—is it certain that she was murdered?"

In obedience to a long-forgotten training the young man crossed himself: "That is certain—it is horrible, I have seen the room. I really can tell you nothing, it will all be in the papers. I believe that they are

puzzled." His face crinkled up as she had seen the face of the sick airl crinkled up last night. "Excuse me. I feel ill-it is one of those

things one does not expect," to defend himself he added, "M. Edouard du Boccage fainted."

"Fainted? Why?"

"He saw the room. Do you not understand? She had defended

The young woman drew back as if she saw by her feet that thick, warm trickle from the slaughter-house oozing over the baked stone.

"I should stay away from the Faubourg St. Honore, Mademoiselle, if I were you-" the youth hurried away in search of a cognac.

Mademoiselle looked back at the Hotel du Boccage, the crowd had increased even in the few moments since her arrival. People were hurrying from all directions, she thought they had a menacing air, and remembered that sinister sense of rising tumult which she had

herself--there had been a struggle. It is really incredible--I mean, one

does not imagine it like that--there was so much blood--"

noticed in the streets last evening; it seemed now as if all those bitter discontents and muttered furies had found a focus in the Hotel du Boccage. More carriages, cabs, drove up, more men got out, doctors, neighbours, magistrates, police--what had happened--did she dare ask herself that?

"I shall expect of you some action."

She put her fingers to her mouth to prevent herself from crying aloud

and fled back to the Rue du Harlay; she had nowhere else to go.

When Lucille Debellevme returned. Madame Trou stuck her head out

of the sitting-room and asked: "Eh, you are back early, have you got the paper?"

From over her shoulder came the tinkle of the polks. La Relle Helene

From over her shoulder came the tinkle of the polka. La Belle Helene and the hiccoughing moans of the sick girl, the greasy garlic odour of the dinner hung in the hot air.

The governess did not reply; it seemed as if she had not heard. She

bannisters to support herself and continually stumbled, catching her feet in her long skirt. Madame Trou stared after her: "Ah, you have not got it! It has all been a tale! Well, Mademoiselle, vou must leave to-morrow." She closed the door of the parlour with an angry slam, still there faintly penetrated to Lucille Debelleyme's ears the broken rhythm of the polka. She fled into her room and locked the door: the maid had not vet swept and tidied it. The bed was disordered, her clothes, her toilet articles were in disarray; for the first time in her life she lacked neatness in her personal surroundings. For the first time in her life she did not care what her surroundings were: "What to do? Where to go? Where to hide? If I could stop thinking, is there any way to stop

went upstairs, hurrying, yet with difficulty, for she had to hold on to the

thinkina?" She dropped against the tumbled bed, then fell on the dusty floor. Through the window, still open top and bottom, as she had set it during the night, the sunshine fell in a hot square over her prone body. By the utmost effort of her powerful will she did prevent herself from thinking, not a single reflection passed through her mind, but

she could not prevent these words beating like a hammer throughout her whole body. "I ought to have kept that laudanum, I ought to have taken the laudanum from him," and "I shall expect some action from vou." She hoped at first that she would faint or die or in some way pass into unconsciousness; but her courage and her strength seemed, despite her own wish, to gather force. Aware of the great heat of the

August sun on her arms and shoulders as she lav on the floor, she shifted and crawled into the hot shadows at the side of the room: Her indomitable spirit that had been overthrown but not beaten roused her to faint hope: "Perhaps, after all, even now, there may be a way out--why should I fear the worst?"

There were heavy steps, loud voices, on the stairs and a sharp rap at her door; had he perhaps come for her? Had thieves really broken in

presently she sat up and put back the pale hair that fell over her face smudged by dust, marked from the pressure of the rough rug at the foot of the bed. Flies buzzed continuously, hawkers should hoarsely outside: she thought that the word they velled was 'murder.'

last night to the Hotel du Boccage and murdered the woman who had surprised them at their work?

Lucille Debelleyme got to her feet, searched for a handkerchief,

wiped her face, put back her hair. The imperative knock was repeated, she turned the key with stiff fingers. Madame Trou was

outside and behind her the maid and two of the pupils, all agape and agog, pale, unfriendly faces thrust forward, staring at her with inquisitive eyes. Behind them on the first landing of the stairway were two policemen, others showed beyond them.

At the sight of Lucille Debelleyme standing pale and composed in her doorway. Madame Trou began to stammer something

"Well, Madame?" asked the governess; she stepped on the landing

and closed the door behind her; ignoring the group of bewildered, alarmed and spiteful females, she spoke coolly over their heads, glancing down the stairs at the policemen:

"Yes, Messieurs, what do you want?"

venomous, horrified, half inarticulate.

One of the men came up the stairs, putting aside the other women;

small courtyard. She made no protest, but seemed to hold an amused contempt for all her surroundings. She had asked for all her possessions and they had been given her. When she was told that she might, if she wished, communicate with friends, she had replied: "I have none." When she was asked if she would have a lawyer, she replied: "I have no means whereby I can pay one," but when told that

she would be brought before the examining magistrates on the following day, she demanded with impressive gravity: "Of what am I accused? I am in complete ignorance of all the details of this atrocious crime which you dare to charge to me. I demand to be enlightened. What occurred in the Faubourg St. Honore last night? You say that M. du Boccage is a murderer," and with an emphasis of contemptuous passion she added: "Impossible! I know him well, the best, the most generous, the kindest of men, he would not lift his hand against a woman, against any creature. He must be as

Lucille Debelleyme was lodged in the Conciergerie in a small room of the women's prison, a quadrangular building that looked on a

"It is believed, on the clearest evidence, that M. du Boccage murdered his wife, and you are arrested as his accomplice."

his look and his voice were expressionless.

* * * * *

innocent as I am myself."

She spoke these words to the men who had been, since dawn, investigating the apartments and the inmates of the Hotel du Boccage; M. de Tassy, Prefet de Police and M. Mauzisse, the Public Prosecutor, who had been summoned from their beds to join the commissaries of the Quartier du Roule and the Quartier du Champs Elysees in the chamber of the murdered woman.

They had visited the governess in her cell, hoping to surprise from

M. de Tassy answered her defiance; he was a man of sixty, robust, implacable, impassive, hardened by constant contact with crime. His sombre frock coat, his fringe of grey whiskers, his heavy watch-chain and starched collar, his well-polished boots and brown leather gloves gave him an air of hypocritical respectability; he looked like an English Methodist from a provincial town. It was he who, alone, cool and patient, had, unmoved, examined the corpse and its

her, in this moment of terrible emotion, the truth that she would have time to tamper with before her formal examination on the morrow.

convince M. le Procureur du Roi, M. le Juge d'instruction, M. le Procureur General that this was a matter for the Chamber of Peers. ls that not so, M. Mauzisse?"

The Public Prosecutor assented. He was troubled by an affair that

seemed likely to distract the entire government, and caressed his ginger beard with nervous fingers as he looked at the woman who had been the cause, he was convinced, of a crime to the last degree

surroundings in the Hotel du Boccage and then named the murderer

"Unfortunately, Mademoiselle, it is too clear that M. du Boccage is the assassin. I was able after my investigations this morning to

to his horrified, embarrassed colleagues.

her face: he put in sharply:

horrible, stupid and inconvenient.

"Impossible," said the governess.

"The Court of Peers is convoked at present, and I, Mademoiselle,

shall bring this charge before them-that of murder against M. du Boccage."

As she spoke M. Mauzisse stared keenly from behind his spectacles at Lucille Debelleyme. M. de Tassy had never taken his gaze from

"Unfortunately, Mademoiselle, he is a peer of France and it is impossible to arrest him without a direct order from the King. He is in his own house but he is being watched."

M. de Tassy, shrewd, cold and practised an observer as he was, could see no flinching in the bright, vivid glance of the governess as she replied to him:

"I would I were beside M. du Boccage in his distress. He is my one friend, my only protector. Perhaps I could give him a little comfort, even if everyone is against him."

"You will tell your story to-morrow before me, Mademoiselle, and my colleagues. I am bound to tell you that popular opinion is hot against

vou also. It is a most terrible, a most difficult, almost an incredible

"Am I, then, to be examined without any preparation, without knowing where I stand? What have you against me, under what excuse was I

"The news of this most horrible crime has caused an explosion of fury in Paris, it is with difficulty that we prevent the crowd from storming the Hotel du Boccage and seizing the person of the Duke."

Mademoiselle Debelleyme showed nothing but an outburst of

generous emotion as she exclaimed:

affair, even in my experience."

The governess replied:

M. Mauzisse put in sternly:

arrested?"

"Where is he--in danger? Has he been arrested?"

"Mademoiselle, the domestic history of the Hotel du Boccage has

"And, in brief, Mademoiselle, we have quite sufficient evidence--" M. Mauzisse broke off dramatically, and then, after a pause during which the governess' gaze never faltered from his, he added: "--to send M. du Boccage to the guillotine if he were not a peer of France. And you also..."

"--if I were not innocent," finished Lucille Debelleyme boldly. M. de Tassy was baffled by this audacious defence, he had come to visit her before her examination because he expected an hysterical feminine breakdown in which the entire truth would emerge. He had supposed that the young woman, completely broken, would confess to the whole intrigue, that she had been the mistress of M. du Boccage, that she had put him up to the crime, that she had plotted murder to regain her foothold in the Hotel du Boccage. Instead of

that, by this cool effrontery, she had added to the confusion of a baffling affair. He thought her courage and intelligence remarkable, and began to understand how she had obtained such an extraordinary hold on a man like M. du Boccage. He glanced at M. Mauzisse and shrugged his shoulders, then, using the method of direct accusation, when she again pressed for details of the crime.

long been common property, it has furnished a scandal in which the press of Paris has concerned itself for the last year--we have besides read the letters of Madame la Duchess du Boccage to her husband, we have also her diary, we have the witness of the

servants--"
"Ah. spies!"

cried out:

"No need, Mademoiselle, for this hypocrisy, you very well know the details of what you planned yourself!"

She looked at him in a way that made him feel that his method was

"Would you do me the favour. Monsieur, to tell me what has become of the children? I had a great affection for them."

stupid and melodramatic. She asked quietly:

It was M. Mauzisse who answered gruffly:

friends; though the Marechal de Frediani is in Corsica, his brother is in Paris, he has taken some of the children and the others have gone to the Dowager Madame du Boccage."

"The House of Montlosier du Boccage do not lack relations and

"Ah, have they told that poor blind woman of this horrible crime?"
"I do not think so, I believe she has been informed that her daughterin-law perished in a stroke of apoplexy. Enough, Mademoiselle, I
leave you to your own reflections, we shall see in the morning if we

"My life has been lived in the light of day, every action clear and open," replied the governess, "it is I who want the truth, it is I who am completely at a loss as to what has really happened."

She sat down at the bare prison table, looking so frail and young.

can get the truth out of you--remember confession is your only hope."

resigned and melancholy that the hardened men of the world felt bewildered; even M. de Tassy was not quite so sure of her guilt as he had been when he entered her cell.

"Let me see a doctor and have a sleeping draught." she asked.

"Let me see a doctor and have a sleeping draught," she asked, looking down at her quivering hands folded in front of her, "otherwise I do not think I shall have the strength for to-morrow."

I do not think I shall have the strength for to-morrow."

Thinking that if she either broke down or pretended to break down

they would lose the evidence of the one person who had the key to this appalling affair, and also that she might betray herself to the doctor, M. de Tassy agreed to this visit.

suspected him of being sent as a spy, and realised that every word she said to him would be repeated; she was used to being in a trap or a cage, watched and threatened. She lay still and silent on her prison bed, answering briefly the questions that he asked her about

As it was one of the doctors who usually attended Madame du Boccage who visited the governess in her cell, she at once

her health; then she demanded of him in a low voice, as she had demanded of M. de Tassy, details of the crime in the Faubourg St. Honore.

Dr. Lappe, an old man with a fashionable practice, was still shaken by what he had seen that morning, embarrassed and shocked by the part suddenly thrust on him. But he did as he had been instructed by the implacable M. de Tassy, gave her the information she had asked

for and, seated by her low, wooden bed, watched the effect on her. Nor did she try to evade his scrutiny, her hands hung at her side, there was no attempt to hide her face. A small jet of gas in an open metal case that hung above the bed cast a coarse light on that small-featured, fair face, and the tumble of fine hair on the rough pillow.

teatured, fair face, and the tumble of fine hair on the rough pillow Beneath the lamp was an unheeded crucifix.

The doctor stammered:

"The servants were roused this morning by the sound of a bell coming from the apartment of Madame, the family were ready to depart for Dieppe to-day, some of the servants had gone in

advance, several more had been dismissed by M. du Boccage yesterday. Those who were there ran to the assistance of their mistress. They found her on the floor by her bed, dead; she had been attacked and killed with an abominable fury. At first it was believed

the corridor, it was found that all the bells had been cut except the one in the far corner of the room which the poor lady finally found. M. du Boccage was fully dressed, his clothes were stained--from head to foot--he was supposed to have been the first to find his wife, to embrace her in his distress, to have in this manner covered himself with blood."

The governess moved slightly on the prison bed but she did not flinch, and the doctor, observing her with professional, yet uneasy

that thieves had done this, but there was no trace of anyone entering from the outside. The handle and the lock had been taken off the little door leading from Madame's bedchamber to her toilet cabinet and

on entering found him emptying a basin of water out of the window; he had been washing his clothes and burning fragments of cloth on the hearth, a suffocating morning like this and a fire burning! Ah, well. Mademoiselle, I will not give you any more details, I will have pity on you, except to say when M. du Boccage was examined his denials

were embarrassed, miserable, that on his person was found a green cord and a bottle of laudanum--he could give no explanation of these.

"His room was in the most frightful disorder; one of the magistrates

keenness, continued:

In his room, too, were weapons, a pistol, knives."

Closing her eyes the governess said:

"If he did it, it was because she drove him mad, after one of their terrible quarrels."

"So at first it was supposed, but the cut hells. Mademoiselle, the

"So at first it was supposed, but the cut bells. Mademoiselle, the handle taken off the door?--and, another thing, it was noted soon

nandle taken off the door?—and, another thing, it was noted soon after the Duke began to be suspected, that he cast himself with his full weight on his wife's bed and that he glanced up at the baldaquin, which is very massive. as if expecting it to fall."

Then they found her letters, her diary—and yours..."

"They have seen those also?" She opened her eyes; they were fearless. "Ah well, they will declare nothing but my innocence."

"The police have searched your lodging in the Rue du Harlay.

"It was examined afterwards and found that the supports had been loosened and much of the cement taken away and replaced by wax. The workmanship was clumsy--that of an amateur, no doubt--but every time that the Duchess got into bed she risked the baldaquin falling on her. It looks like premeditation, doesn't it. Mademoiselle?

Mademoiselle--they have the other part of the correspondence--M. du Boccage's letters to you."

"They will learn nothing from those." She raised herself suddenly on

her elbows, looking like a child with the veil of pale, disordered curls falling over her slight shoulders. "There is one thing more, doctor--M.

du Boccage? He is still free in his own house?--no one dare touch him?"

"That is the dilemma, he is a peer of France, they have had to apply to the King. Oh, the scandal! His Majesty will do a great deal not to

see the Chevalier of the Duchesse D'Orleans dragged to the

auillotine..."

"To the guillotine?" repeated the governess, "to the guillotine? What will he do?" she added, clutching the doctor's arms.

"His friends, the peers, have given him his chance, it is not for me to

"His friends, the peers, have given him his chance, it is not for me to say what he will do. Mademoiselle, you must think of yourself, you must confess—everything."

The old man rose; despite his professional insensibility and his worldly self-assurance he was agitated, overwhelmed.

glass with a steady hand. "I wish it could give me repose for ever, Monsieur."

Dr. Lappe rose and turned away; he had never been in a prison cell before: it was not a comfortable situation for a cosy old gentleman

"Yes, I will think of myself-there's no one else to think of me." The governess took the sleeping draught he had prepared, raising the

who had gentle, pretty daughters of his own, whose practice had been wholly with the idle, the elegant, the well-behaved—then, what he had seen this morning in the greyness of the dawn; those curtains of Brussels lace hanging from gilt amorini, torn, stained—that

nightcap of net with silk strings on the mantelpiece, soaked and dripping, those prints on the delicate walls, prints of a thumbless hand fumbling for bell ropes that had been cut away-and Madame

du Boccage herself--thirty wounds--eleven on the head alone-butchery--then, the scene in the dining-room where the dust covers had not been taken off the furniture for a family en passage--eight o'clock in the morning the magistrates gathered round the long table, among them Camille du Boccage, his redingote closed to the chin, his hands gloved in brown leather, his sleeves, the knees of his trousers freshly washed, still damp, his face colourless, impassive, staring past everyone there--preserving, despite the hour, the

"Of what are you thinking, M. Lappe?" cried the governess from the bed. "You have horror in your eyes!"

"Ah, I thought you slept--the draught--" stammered the old doctor. "Is

occasion, his disarray, his air of elegance--grotesque, dreadful and

it not strong enough?"

"Cive me enother to night I do not cloop as easily."

in some curious fashion, absurd.

"Give me another--to-night I do not sleep so easily--"

entered and sat down in silence by the prisoner's bed; Lucille Debellevme turned her face to the wall. With expert fingers the wardress crocheted a baby's boot in white thread and never raised her eves from this work nor ceased to count the stitches. **** While the angry crowd clustered round the Hotel du Boccage openly demanding the punishment of the murderer, who, they feared, owing to his rank, his friendship with the Royal Family, would escape retribution (there was already talk that the King had smuggled him to England), while the whole peerage was aghast, shaken by this frightful disaster, while the civil authorities were faced by the problem of what to do with a criminal who was also a peer of France, a member of one of the noblest, most powerful families of the realm. Lucille Debelleyme, suddenly the most notorious, most hated woman in France, appeared before M. Mauzisse the procureur general, and M. Hamelin juge d'instruction. These men and their clerks could not help looking with avid curiosity at this woman whom all the world accused of long, shameless and secret adultery, of murder plotted in the shadow of a nursery, between the kisses and caresses of the children of the victim--this nobody who had brought to ruin a famous House. She was calm and had dressed herself carefully, her gown of pale nankeen was adorned with white braid en soutache, she wore a little jacket of black moire. She carried her frilled straw bonnet with the lilac ribbon, as if she expected, after her examination, to be permitted to leave the Conciergerie.

The setting was one of extreme unliness, the walls drab. The light

He left her, having no further courage: a wardress immediately

"No. I dare not."

aromatics; M. Hamelin, who was extremely stout, felt the heat and alternately wiped his bald head and napped at the flies with his foulard; two clerks at a side table covered with baize, took down with great speed question and reply. The Prefet de Police, M. de Tassy, quite unmoved, conducted the examination.

He began by repeating, in formal fashion, his accusation of last night—M. du Boccage was a murderer, and she, calling herself Lucille Debelleyme, was his accomplice. The prisoner broke passionately, without restraint, but not with hysteria, into denials:

"It is impossible. I do not believe that he has done it. May I go to him?

from a high window fell on a bare expanse of brick and the group of elderly men in their frock coats, striped trousers, formidable in their massed authority, their sombre gravity, their air of being not only on the side of the law but that of God. M. Viou had an irritating cough and sucked lozenges that scented the stale air with a sickly whiff of

-may I see him? If he has done it, then indeed I am as much to blame as he, it was that unhappy letter--I should not have asked for it--a letter to restore my character. Messieurs, that I demanded of him, that he was to have obtained from his wife. Some madness--I know I was wrong--I should never have asked for it--in my letters to the children."

"We do not want your sentimental self-accusations, Mademoiselle, we want the truth. These letters of which you spoke--"
"You can read them, Messieurs."

M. de Tassy interrupted:

"We have already read them. They are not only addressed to the

"We have already read them. They are not only addressed to the children. These letters that you speak of are also written to M. du Boccage."

"was it shared by M. du Boccage?"

"No," replied Lucille Debelleyme immediately. "M. le Duc had nothing for me but the kindness any generous, chivalrous man might feel for a dependant in his house who served him well. I loved his children, I did what I could for them, their mother did not know how to treat them..."

"Ah," interrupted M. de Tassy, "if Mr. du Boccage committed this crime, are we to believe he did it because his wife did not know how to treat their children?"

Mademoiselle Debelleyme did not reply to this but it seemed rather from contempt for the judges than from lack of anything to say. M. de Tassy, inexorable, continued with increasing sternness; he did not know if the young woman spoke with sincerity or was playing a skilful and dangerous game, but he followed the principle that to discover

"The truth is very different, Mademoiselle. Everyone is aware of the profound disorder which you brought into this household. Everyone knows the life the Duke and Duchess led, there was even a suggestion, more than one suggestion, of judicial separation."

"How was I to know any of that? I was in a position of paid servant in the household, in the confidence of no one. I felt the warmest esteem

the crime one must assume that the accused is quilty.

"I do not deny it. I have said repeatedly he was so good, so generous to me, my one friend, my one protector. I did feel for him, I do now, affection, tenderness, loyalty." Her clear bold glance travelled from one to another of the keen faces watching her with such hostility. "Is it impossible for you. Messieurs, to believe in an honest affection? I

"This sentiment of tender affection." asked the Prefet de Police.

am not an adultress."

children of whom I had the entire care; how should I, so occupied, in such company, know the scandals of Paris?"

She argued this unlikely plea with such art that her examiners were more baffled than they dared allow to appear.

and friendship for M. du Boccage but he did not tell me his secrets, discuss his wife's domestic affairs with me. I lived enclosed with the

"Were you not. Mademoiselle, aware of a scandal when Monsieur l'Abbe Galle himself came to speak to you, to beg you to leave the mansion?"

"I was aware of it then, and I left immediately; it was certainly a shock

to me for I believed myself on good terms with Madame du Boccage. We had exchanged presents not long before and complimentary letters. But the moment I discovered it was otherwise and I was a source of trouble in the house, I left."

Triumph edged her smile. She had spoken the truth but, though it carried a reluctant conviction that it was the truth even in the minds of these men who had been so sure of her guilt, M. de Tassy pursued the charge.

"Well Mademoiselle you had nothing for the Duke but respectful

"Well, Mademoiselle, you had nothing for the Duke but respectful friendship, and he nothing for you but a kind esteem, and you left the house immediately you thought you were causing any disorder, any anxiety for Madame la Duchesse, and yet as soon as you had left there was an exchange of letters—the Duke returned before his usual custom indeed most suddenly to Paris and his first visit was to you."

custom, indeed most suddenly, to Paris and his first visit was to you."

"I have confessed, Monsieur, that those letters were my weakness, I

"I have confessed, Monsieur, that those letters were my weakness, I could not endure this sudden separation from the children and from

their father too. I have told you he was my only friend. It is true he came to see me but he brought the children. I had had to appeal to

mentioned which are supposed to have run round Paris for months. It was a question of my honour, my livelihood."

M. de Tassy interrupted:

"This letter--you knew well enough the Duchess would not give it you. No doubt her husband demanded it of her--what is the result?--yesterday morning she was murdered."

"There is no one whose horror of that crime could be greater than mine."

M. de Viou scribbled a note on a sheet torn from his pocket-book and handed it to M. de Tassy. The Prefet de Police read it. then.

him for this certificate of reinstatement. I was aware then, Messieurs, only too poignantly aware, of these scandals that you have

"You say that you knew nothing of any scandal until M. l'Abbe Galle spoke to you-yet it is well known to members of the family Montlosier Boccage that on the return from your visit to Corsica, which shocked everyone, you went to M. Le Marechal de Frediani.

exclaiming: "A good point!" turned again to the prisoner:

seemingly outraged by comments in the press?"

ignore such vile rubbish. I did so."

"That is true. Friends of mine pointed out some paragraphs--"
"Friends?--what friends have you?"

"Probably none. Monsieur, I had friends when I was more fortunate. I was so hurt by these illusions that I wished to leave M. du Boccage--I asked M. de Frediani to bear witness to my behaviour in Corsica.

He did so, he begged me, with all respect, to remain with his daughter--he said such scribblings were nothing, that the republican papers libelled all the members of the aristocracy--that I was to

Galle spoke to you of the trouble you were causing in the house of Madame du Boccage?"

The candid eyes of the governess expressed surprise as she answered:

"Yet, after this conversation, you were surprised when M. l'Abbe

"Certainly, Monsieur. How could I suspect that Madame du Boccage was disturbed by stupid gossip that her own father had assured me was beneath the notice of even a poor creature like myself?"

M. Mauzisse pulled at his beard with a movement of irritation, but M.

de Tassy continued, undisturbed by the prisoner's strategy; he changed his ground and made an attack in an unexpected quarter.

"Matilde Bernard, maid to Madame du Boccage, swears that on the morning of your departure from the Faubourg St. Honore she came

upon you--in your own room, in the arms of M. le Duc."

"Servants spy and lie. Monsieur, as a matter of habit. This woman followed M. le Duc day and night--she could give you an analysis of all his movements. But it happens to be true that she saw me in his

arms. I had been packing, I was very upset at this sudden dismissal, M. le Duc came to take my keys. At the moment of giving them I was seized by an attack of giddiness--I was about to fall, M. de Duc caught me--it is possible that you, Monsieur, might have done the same."

"We are not here to speculate on that, Mademoiselle. The woman

"We are not here to speculate on that, Mademoiselle. The woman Bernard maintains that you said, on being discovered--'Go and tell your mistress where and how you found M. le Duc."

"That is a lie. And a stupid one. You perceive the creature's

despicable mind!" The prisoner's contempt was icy.

"Well, what did you say?"

"I cannot remember--I have said I was half unconscious--I thought nothing of the support of M. le Duc."

defended herself inch by inch, directly accused her:

"M. du Boccage committed this murder at your instigation. You were his mistress--you wished at any cost to return to the Faubourg St. Honore. It was you who inspired him to replace the plaster of the

baldaquin with wax, and to keep, in case of an opportunity, a cord on

M. de Tassy, exasperated by the tenacity of this woman who thus

his person and poison in his pocket."

Lucille Debelleyme's bright eyes flickered from one to another of the grim, hostile faces confronting her but she did not wince.

"If Madame du Boccage had died naturally and M. du Boccage had offered me his hand I should, out of affection for the children, have

refused the fils failed is ribuid, out of affection for the children, have refused to consent to a marriage which would have discredited them, and I happen to be. Monsieur, the type of woman who has no other thoughts of any connection with a man than marriage. He was not my lover—he did not plan to make me his wife. Surely there is something in my accents which will convince you that I speak the truth?"

"Your accents may be all very well." replied M. de Tassy. "but your

matter is incredible. If there was no tie, no feeling whatever between you and M. du Boccage, why did he retain you in his household in the face of the frantic entreaties of his wife, of the threats of his father-in-law, of the murmurs of public opinion, of the warnings of the Royal Family?"

"I did not know that he had done so." The governess raised her head

are, on your own admission, penniless, friendless, helpless, a nobody. You have created a good deal of mystery and romance about yourself but you are merely the illegitimate daughter of one Lucille Clery, and your father is unknown even to yourself. Your one relative, Desire Gavaudan de Clery, a man of dubious character, disowns you. You have been earning your own living since you were about eighteen, you have gone from one place to another, never

with a movement that seemed triumphant. "If that is so, Messieurs, no doubt it was because I was able to make his children happy and

"Ah. Mademoiselle, you allocate to yourself an impossible virtue. You

produce some order into his establishment."

remaining very long anywhere."

"That may be, Mademoiselle, but your training, your circumstances, your prospects make it most unlikely that you would have been able to resist a man like M. du Boccage, cultured, charming, elegant, wealthy, one with whom, as you confess, you had many tastes in

"But," interrupted Lucille Debelleyme, smiling, "I have always taken away with me. Messieurs, the most excellent testimonials."

common, but unfortunately, easily led by a dominating woman--a man whom you admit you regard with tender affection."

The governess smiled again; she did not find these magistrates so terrifying, she could more than hold her own with them.

The governess smiled again; she did not find these magistrates so terrifying, she could more than hold her own with them.

"Perhaps I should not have resisted him," she answered quietly. "But have I not told you, Messieurs, that he never made love to me?

Perhaps, as you say, if he had laid siege to me I should not have been able to preserve my honour against one who, as you so rightly judge, seemed so attractive to a miserable nobody like myself.

Maybe my gratitude, my loyalty would have made me sacrifice to M. du Boccade my reputation, my honour, though it never could have

wife's head; but he never offered me any manner of love."

"I never heard a prisoner so obstinate!" exclaimed M. de Viou, angrily.

"Perhaps, Monsieur, you never heard one so innocent."

"Bah!" M. de Tassy rose with calculated violence. "You are lying, go back to your cell and consider if it is wise to continue lying."

But when the prisoner had been led out, he turned to his colleagues

and threw up his hands in a gesture of despair.

* * * * *

inspired me to insinuate to him a design to touch one hair of his

the prison where the governess was enclosed.

This central figure of this unparalleled scandal regarded all who passed before her with a fixed gaze, she was well trained to repel spiteful scrutiny. She remained an enigma to all those who were permitted to visit her in her cell or to watch her taking her hour's exercise slowly walking to and fro, wearing the light nankeen dress

adorned with white soutache, in the narrow courtyard between the

Hatred, desire for vengeance, cruel curiosity beat against the wall of

four prison facades, grim with barred windows.

She had been offered the consolations of a priest, but remembering the Abbe Galle, who had struck one of the first blows towards her downfall, she had refused.

She had equally disdained the religious books offered her by the wardress, but she took from among her own possessions a small

volume of fashionable poems given her by a former pupil, and this was constantly in her hands either when she sat in her cell or when

She murmured over again and again to herself the sentimental foolish lines—they served to keep her from thinking.

she walked in the dreary little enclosed courtyard.

he almost incredible

wife or a jealous mistress.

Daily one or more of the judges, lawyers or police visited and questioned her; they believed, in common with the rest of Paris, that this extraordinary woman held the key to this crime, so terrible as to

She learnt from their accusing words how the whole country was shaken by this brutal murder. Not that murders of this kind did not happen almost every day, but no one paid much attention when some miserable wretch in a slum raised his hand against a nagging

It was the rank, the wealth of the victim, still more the rank, the wealth of the murderer, which roused this fury of class feeling. The angroup mob that the police could hardly keep in check outside the Hotel du

mob that the police could hardly keep in check outside the Hotel du Boccage wanted not so much justice as to assure themselves that the great nobleman would receive the same punishment as an insignificant villain, and, behind this increasing clamour, led and inflamed by furious articles in the press. was the sayage desire to

Inflamed by furious articles in the press, was the savage desire to see the head of a peer of France roll on the guillotine step. There was an explosion of rage against the House of Peers, against the aristocracy, against the King himself, against the whole insolent, arrogant world of money and leisure which, in the eyes of the people, had fallen into disrepute with the murder at the Hotel du Boccade.

had fallen into disrepute with the murder at the Hotel du Boccage.

Lucille Debelleyme listened to the threats and denunciations of her examiners without betraying herself; she was neither hysterical nor defiant, and all her answers had a cold common sense at variance with her romantic history, her extraordinary circumstances.

answer was "No--he is still being watched in his own Hotel, as the King could not bring himself to sign a decree for the arrest of a peer of France the affair was held in suspension; M. du Boccage was continually being examined but he had fallen into a low state of health and refused to answer official questions." The elaborate and detailed denials with which he had at first defended himself had given place to sullen, brief excuses. "He was too overcome, he was too fatigued, he had nothing to say."

Repeatedly she asked: "Has M. du Boccage admitted he is a

She then demanded: "If the Duke had been arrested?" Again the

murderer?" and they were forced to answer "No."

blameless Fanny du Boccage, already canonised by the grief of a people.

Lucille Debelleyme listened to these accounts, which the police hoped would strike some emotional admission from her, with downcest ourse

His brother, his friends had been allowed to visit him, the Marechal de Frediani was being called back from Corsica; meanwhile, a most sumptuous funeral, attended by everyone of consequence in France, had been given in the Madeleine for the victim—the martyr, the chaste and stainless woman, the devoted wife, the loving mother, pious.

downcast eyes.

Exasperated by this enigma M. de Tassy said:

"Well, Mademoiselle, have you nothing to say, no expression of grief

or horror even for this tragedy in which you were so closely concerned? Do you not at least condemn the horrible crime which the man whom you call your friend, your protector, has committed?"

"M. du Boccage, according to your own account, M. le Prefect, has not confessed he is a murderer. Why, therefore, should I assume him

"He is and you are his accomplice. Remember. Mademoiselle, we have your letters."

"You will learn nothing from them except my devotion to this man and my love for his children, my pity for his situation, my desire to help the

guilty when I do not even know the whole details of the case, when you are my only informer, when what you say is obviously designed to frighten me. to impress me with the fact that he is a criminal?"

regret at my present situation is that it prevents me going to him."

"Are you as shameless as all that; you have the effrontery to say that you would go to him, in the face of everything, through the blood of his murdered wife!"

one person who has been kind to me." Quietly raising her brilliant eves she added: "I would now willingly give my life for his. my one

"Through anything. Monsieur; he is my friend; it is your misfortune if you cannot understand the power of friendship. He must be suffering, be in torment. He and I—" and here a note of wild exultation swept her careful voice out of control, "should be together now; alone, out of all Paris, out of all France we perhaps understand each other."

careful voice out of control, "should be together now; alone, out of all Paris, out of all France we perhaps understand each other."

"That is a dangerous admission, Mademoiselle. I believe you have confessed a little too much; no doubt you and M. du Boccage understood each other only too well!"

"It is impossible for friends to understand each other too well."

"Remember we have your letters."

"Search them, Monsieur, through and through--you will find you are cruelly slandering an innocent woman--maybe. God help you, an

innocent man."

Her looks, her manners, her gestures would have carried a conviction of innate sincerity, of the dignity and candour of innocence had not it seemed so unlikely that what she said was true. M. de Tassy remained amazed at her art, her fortitude, but certain of her guilt. He was forced to close one enguiry after another without having obtained anything from Lucille Debelleyme to damage either herself or M. du Boccage, M. de Tassy grimly admired the courage whereby this young woman, without a friend, without advice. surrounded by enemies, in an awful position, under the very shadow of the guillotine, thus defended herself with skill and a proud dignity behind which seemed to sparkle the vehement passion of innocence falsely accused. For a week the ex-governess of the Faubourg St. Honore endured the tortures of her position with the stoicism of an Indian brave at the stake. She was under perpetual surveillance, even at night she would be wakened suddenly in the hope of startling her into some exclamation that might prove an admission of guilt. When she walked in the little garden into which the autumn sunshine penetrated for only a short time, police, journalists, men of letters, all the inquisitive people who could contrive to bribe a way into the Conciergerie regarded her with insatiable curiosity from behind the grilled windows of the prison. They saw a slight figure in a neat pale dress, with long, fair curls hanging on her shoulders, a lace scarf tied round her head, walking to and fro with measured steps, her eyes fastened on a book she held in her slender hand. She made no attempt to attract any pity, not by so much as an

upward glance did she appeal to those who pressed their faces against the bars of the upper window, staring at her as if she had been the inhabitant of some unknown world suddenly caught and caded.

was elegant, composed, dignified beyond what seemed possible to expect of a woman in her circumstances.

Some men said that they could understand the fatal infatuation of M. du Boccage, but not one of all those who peered and spied and commented and judged Lucille Debelleyme felt for her the least sympathy.

All pity, all compassion, all respect and admiration had been lavished on the woman who lay in the gilt and purple velvet coffin, heavy with armorial bearings, hidden beneath a mountain of costly

M. de Tassy did not fail to detail to Lucille Debelleyme the amazing

flowers in the sombre black-hung aisles of the Madeleine.

The more sensitive of those who so cruelly observed her found her beautiful with that beauty which does not consist only in exactitude of feature but in the grace, the poise, the air of the entire person. She

scenes of public grief at this funeral, the frantic tokens of veneration, of love that followed the mutilated remains of her former mistress to the vaults of the Madeleine--the extravagant wreaths and immense bouquets that even the very poorest had sent to do honour to one so beloved, so wronged.

The governess coolly remarked: "Poor woman! Had I had the means I, too, would have liked to have sent a wreath."

Debelleyme was left alone in a solitude which he hoped would wear

She was warned, however, that they were searching through her

down her resolute resistance.

correspondence, through that of the Duke, through papers and letters of Madame du Boccage. Her warder and the curious who continued to watch her when she walked in the garden left her in no doubt as to the violent emotion of the people, the popular fury, even the prospect

She maintained her calm, behind which seemed to surge a fierce contempt. No one could surprise her into tears: on all occasions she conducted herself with a brave coolness that provoked a reluctant admiration but alienated all possible sympathies.

One morning as she walked up and down the narrow courtvard (she never refused to take this exercise, though well aware to what it exposed her) a republican journalist pressing against the bars of one

of a revolution if she and her paramour were not brought to justice.

of the lower windows exclaimed, loud enough for her to hear: "A charming but a wicked woman." The governess raised her brilliant eves from her little book and. turning her elegant head, looked full at the young man with a glance he was never to forget and never to remember without a sense of uneasiness.

"Do you really know what wickedness is?" she demanded. "Even were liudged and condemned, you would be bold to apply that word to me." That afternoon she was again summoned before M. de Tassy and his colleagues. She was observed to tremble a little as she passed

into the room where they subjected her to their interrogations: she asked the wardress who accompanied her for a glass of water. This was given her and she seemed to recover her composure, but when she entered the room and glanced at those hostile figures, those

stern, accusing faces, she requested, for the first time, permission to seat herself. "Was it possible," thought M. de Tassy, "that she was,

at last, weakening?" A chair was given her--she waited with folded hands and downcast eves, as so often she had awaited the "Well, Mademoiselle, this terrible affair is now a little different from when we questioned you last." "Is that so. Monsieur? As you know. I am totally ignorant of what is occurring in Paris." "We will enlighten you. It is now certain M. du Boccage committed this frightful murder." "Has he confessed?" "He has confessed in the only fashion which, a man of his birth could use: by committing another crime he has escaped the punishment of the first." The Prefet de Police paused, watching with cold interest the young woman, who moved slightly on her chair, fumbled with her handkerchief, raised it to her lips and dropped it again. "Has he confessed?" she asked again, her composure a little blurred.

inspection of a new employer, the commands of a mistress, the

judgment of a superior, M. de Tassy began:

"He is dead. Mademoiselle, dead in prison. He did the only thing he could do, he swallowed arsenic."

"Dead in prison," repeated Lucille Debelleyme in an expressionless

"Dead in prison," repeated Lucille Debelleyme in an expressionless voice.

"He was arrested at five in the morning and taken to the prison of

"He was arrested at five in the morning, and taken to the prison of the Luxembourg, Mademoiselle. He was then already a dying man,

he had brought arsenic with him from Javiaux du Boccage. As soon as he saw he was suspected he drank this frightful poison. He has

lose her inhuman calm; she sprang from her seat with an involuntary movement of horror, as if she recoiled from a terrible sight.

"Dead--he is dead!" The waiting, watchful men were silent. "And I knew nothing about it," she continued. "I was never told--if I had been there perhaps he would not have done it."

"Mademoiselle, there was nothing else for him to do. By his action, frightful as it is, he has at least spared the peerage the disgrace of seeing the head of a Montlosier du Boccage in the basket of the guillotine."

Falling into her chair, Lucille Debelleyme asked in a low voice:

judged and punished himself--he has gone before God to answer for this crime--leaving you. Mademoiselle, the responsibility before

The judges then had, at last, the satisfaction of seeing their victim

human justice."

"Did he suffer?"

arsenic."

"Laudanum, that's better," she muttered, her hands to her mouth, "why didn't he use the laudanum?"

"Ah. you know. then, he had laudanum?"

"The torments of the damned, Mademoiselle. It is not easy to die by

Even in that moment she did not allow them to gain an advantage over her:

"You vourself told me that." she replied.

She sat crouched and rigid, she seemed to have shrunk under their

M. de Tassy rose to his feet. This was surely the moment to strike a final blow that would extract, in this agony of grief, the truth from Lucille Debellevme, who had just learnt that she had no accomplice to shield, no friend to fight for, no protector on whom she might. however fantastically, hope to rely in the future. Leaning forward and pressing his hands on the table, M. de Tassy exclaimed: "Confess, Mademoiselle, have pity upon yourself, offer the only reparation in your power--that of the truth." Still drooping on her chair and shading her eyes with her hands the governess replied: "You know all." "Ah, you admit then that we are right." "Right in what. Messieurs? You have examined my letters. No doubt

eves so that it was to them as if they looked at the figure of a child.

by year, therefore you must know everything about me. I have no secrets." Then, as if to herself, as if trying to understand this new and awful fact, she murmured: "He is dead—he is dead."

M. de Tassy took advantage of this indication of anguish and, hoping to overwhelm and break her by telling her of the torture of the man whom they still regarded as her lover and accomplice, he began to

by now you have gone into my life day by day, month by month, year

relate the details of the death of M. du Boccage.

To the rage of the people, denied its prey, he had taken arsenic, not, as was falsely believed, with the connivance of the Chamber of Peers and his relatives, desperately anxious to avoid a horrible

desire of the police to arrest the suspect. Despite all the efforts of a number of doctors to keep him alive the Duke had died after a week of torment. He had a strong constitution and was in perfect health--he had resisted for several days the inroads of the deadly poison. During the last few days of his life he

public scandal: he took it immediately he had believed himself suspected. He had bad ample leisure, for M. le Duc Pasquier had. by invoking the authority of the Chamber of Peers, resisted the

who endeavoured to force an admission of quilt. At this point Lucille Debelleyme broke into the impassive official narrative "Ah. the old man. blind with cataract--I remember him." she whispered--"Despite these--torments M. du Boccage confessed

had been incessantly questioned by the representative of the Chamber of Peers, their indomitable chancellor M. le Duc Pasquier.

nothing?" "There was no need--his terrible action betrayed all." "He confessed nothing?" persisted the governess and M. de Tassy admitted that M. du Boccage had died without a direct avowal of the crime passing his lips--he did not add that the Duke's last word. in answer to the stern question: "Are you quilty?" had been: "No!"

"Then," said the governess, suddenly lowering her hands and looking at her examiners directly. "If he has died without confessing he could have said nothing of an accomplice. Therefore why do your suspicions continue to fall on me?" "Reason, logic, common sense, I know, too, that criminals always lie."

It is very natural."

have had time enough to read this now, and carefully, too, every line I wrote. Well, Messieurs, what did you find in them?"

Her judges were silent, admitting nothing, retracting nothing, intimidating her by their immobility. The truth was that though her letters might give rise to strong suspicions of guilt, they contained no actual proofs of either adultery or murder. The ones to M. du

"This is merely your assumption," she parried, "you have talked much of my letters, of my correspondence with M, du Boccage—you

address to one who was a protector, friend and affectionate master; in brief, every line she had written, and the few short, badly expressed letters of the Duke to her, confirmed the almost incredible relationship that she had avowed existed between them; neither could the cold eyes of justice see in the impassioned letters of the victim, nor in her diary, any proof that Madame du Boccage was actually convinced that the governess was her husband's mistress.

As the formidable silence continued, Lucille Debelleyme's gaze wandered from the group of watchful men; she appeared to forget

Boccage were, indeed, couched in such terms as she would

she was not alone. Leaning on the back of the chair she twisted her fingers together and whispered: "so they are orphans, the little ones whom I loved so much. He, too, was more a friend than a master during two years! I have received from him such proofs of goodness and affection—he never said a hard word to me—never! He did all he could to help me and so often I needed help—he is dead—dead in a prison—in agony! That terrible blind old man! They say that I

provoked this awful tragedy."

She looked up suddenly as if again aware she was being watched, listened to. "Never believe that he premeditated this crime, he was the best, the most excellent of men, he became mad! Oh, if you knew

what his home was. Anyone might have lost their reason in the

middle of that hell."

"Not through me. Look at me! Do I look like the sort of woman to plot adultery and murder in the shadow of an infant's cradle?"

The melodrama of these words were counteracted by her grave and

clear accent. "It is impossible." she added.

"Ah. Mademoiselle, you admit that the Hotel du Boccage was a

hell?"

The judges did not give way. M. de Tassy made a last effort: "The crime was premeditated. You have heard of the wax inserted in

the baldaguin, of the cord that M. du Boccage wore twisted round his braces, you know of the two phials of poison, laudanum and arsenic. he carried in his pocket. Come, is it not true that you regarded the death of Madame du Boccage, who was so justly outraged against you, as the only chance of your return to this household?"

"I never thought that, therefore it would be impossible for me to inspire another with it."

"We have read your correspondence, Mademoiselle. In these last letters you wrote to the Duke you mention several times your hopes for the future, you dwell on the paradise of Javiaux du Boccage, you

appear to look forward to happy days again amid these splendoursto you so novel, so entrancing--what is the meaning of that?" The governess smiled, a convulsive movement of the lips that

painfully distorted her face: "Can one who is about to commit a

charming, this peaceful future amid the delights of Javiaux du

frightful crime talk of happy days ahead? Is it not well known that when one is quilty that there is no more peace or happiness?" "Well, then, Mademoiselle, to what did you refer? What was this "Messieurs, I comforted myself with the way of delusion, of dreams, as the utterly wretched will. Perhaps, understanding so little of the real grievances of Madame du Boccage against me I hoped that she

might relent. Perhaps I was thinking of the future, when my dear publis would be all grown up-mothers themselves. Messieurs, how

Boccage to be?"

can I recall what I thought of when I wrote those letters from the fullness of my heart? All I know was that no idea of any crime disturbed me."

The examiners rose. "Very well. Mademoiselle, you will have nothing

before a commission of the Chamber of Peers who have been appointed to investigate this dismal affair."

The governess stood up with an almost imperceptible movement of terror: "Now, without any preparation?--with none to advise?"

further to say to us, that is clear. It now only remains to send you

"If you are as innocent as you say you need no preparation or advice."

With a final movement of pride she held her head high, with that peculiar carriage that gave her an air of unconquerable fortitude.

"Very well, Messieurs, I am ready."

The usher conducted her down the corridor into another room; there a high-set window cast a cold light on a table where another group of

men awaited her. They were representatives of the Chamber of Peers who had been appointed to conduct the Du Boccage affair. Most of them had been present at the relentless investigation of the

Most of them had been present at the relentless investigation of the dying man in the cell in the Luxembourg where another criminal had recently attempted suicide, and some of them had been present at the Chateau d'Eu when Louis Philippe, his hand unsteady from

anguish, had signed the decree for the arrest of his friend, one of the most powerful supporters of his House, exclaiming: "The wretch! he has done worse than he knows!"

The chairman of this small committee of aristocrats was M. le Duc

Pasquier. He leant forward on the table, slightly to the left, for his right

eye was almost completely covered by a cataract; his huge chin was

swathed in folds of batiste which came high on his sagging cheeks,

on which the white whiskers made a sharp line. He was dry.

implacable, hard, the only witness of the torture of M. du Boccage

who had been unmoved, though he had afterwards declared--"it was the most terrible death-bed he had ever, in his long experience. known"

Lucille Debelleyme had always regarded him with instinctive terror:

she had now some reason for what had been a senseless hatred. She looked away from the Chancellor to his companions and sensed

at once the difference between them and the lawyers and police she had just left; these were not official investigators of crime, impartial

administrators of justice, but gentlemen of high birth, who found

themselves in an unprecedented position, faced by an unpleasant

task, overwhelmed by the disgrace, perhaps the distress, brought on their order by this fantastic crime on the part of one of their

members. In the youngest there, the blond Comte du Bondy, Mademoiselle shivered to recognise a certain likeness to M. du

Boccage. An easy chair was set for her, she was addressed courteously. M. Decaze asked her if the sun was in her eyes; none of them stared at her offensively, as had her other judges, and one or

two were plainly distressed and embarrassed. But she knew that in M. Pasquier she had a more terrible opponent than even in the iron

M. de Tassy.

He began with a guiet, ruthless onslaught:

"Mademoiselle, I was present, day and night, during the last hours of M. du Boccage. I know all. Confess, therefore, your part in this horrible affair and let justice be finally satisfied."

"I have nothing to confess."

"Think again. I know all." The white-ringed eyes fixed her with contempt. Suddenly he demanded: "What were your last words to M.

The prisoner's hands tightened on the back of her chair; the picture of the room in the Rue Keller was so intense before her eyes that it seemed absurd that these men could not see it too: had he, tortured

du Boccage?"

"No."

"Please answer, Mademoiselle."

by the arsenic, broken by the pitiless interrogation, half delirious, betrayed her? Her last words: "I shall expect of you some action."

"It is difficult to recall what seemed, at the time, so unimportant. Probably--'Good-bye, Monsieur'--the children, Isabelle, Cesarine, were present, we were all talking together."

"There was not promise of a further meeting?"

"Did you think, then, you might never see him again?"

"Why should I? I believed that I might see him when I went to the

Hotel du Boccage the following day for my interview with Madame--"

"Had you any hope of obtaining this certificate of good character, so

"Had you any hope of obtaining this certificate of good essential to you?"

"Very little, since I knew Madame had sent the Abbe Galle to urge Madame to ask for it."

"Why, then, did you make this attempt, this appeal?"

"Ah, Monsieur, will not the desperate, the cornered, make the most

"To what do you attribute the ardent desire on the part of so many important, intelligent people, to remove you from Paris?"

"To the unreasonable jealousy of Madame du Boccage, to the

foolish, the most pitiful of efforts--of mistakes?"

relentless schemes of her toadies."

This bold answer astonished them.

"Do you endeayour to prejudice us against Madame du Boccage, an

angel of charity, of devotion, of piety, this saint, this martyr? That will not do your cause much good, Mademoiselle."

"I speak the truth as I have seen it before my eyes for two years. Saint-martyr-what you will-I know what she made that house. I do not defend myself--why should I? I have nothing to defend. I do not lie-I have no need to lie. I thought you wished from me some enlightenment on the cause of this, to you, incomprehensible

-I have no need to lie. I thought you wished from me some enlightenment on the cause of this, to you, incomprehensible tragedy--I endeavour to give it to you. Yet I always speak in the dark, for I do not know if indeed M. du Boccage murdered his wife."

"I do " replied M. Pasquire. M. Decage tall and elegant with thinning."

"I do," replied M. Pasquire. M. Decaze, tall and elegant, with thinning hair and lively eyes, who had been a personal friend of M. du

Boccage, here asked if he might speak to the prisoner. The Chancellor assented.

The Due Decaze chose gentle methods.

was my friend and I am thankful that he escaped the unspeakable ignominy of a public execution." "He did not confess?" said the governess, looking steadily at this new inquisitor. "Not in words " "He said nothing of any accomplice, then?"

"Mademoiselle. I was present with the prisoner during those last frightful hours of his life. He was guilty and he punished himself. He

"In any case, he would not have said that. He was, at the last, true to his breeding. He betrayed no one; he would not even say where he had purchased the arsenic."

"But the police are almost certain that it was at that shop in the Rue Keller." put in the Chancellor.

The governess gave a cry which she guickly explained:

"My hand--I clutched the chair--I was not thinking." She showed a bandaged palm. "I hurt myself."

"How, Mademoiselle?" demanded the Chancellor sternly, suspecting an attempt at another suicide. "Were you allowed knives?"

"No, nor any weapon, nor any cord--you see, these ugly buttons have been put on my shoes that used to lace"--she put out her pretty foot and smiled fixedly. "I blistered my hand before I was arrested. It

festers."

M. le Duc Decaze resumed his examination, which he put on a lofty

plane of which M. Pasquier cynically disapproved.

Voltairean as he was, he declared that he felt more at ease and begged for a little crucifix to hold on his breast--" Lucille Debellevme listened without flinching to this account of the final repentance of a fellow atheist. "If that is true, it is very extraordinary," she remarked. "My word of honour that it is true."

"Mademoiselle, before M. du Boccage died he saw a priest, I knelt at the head of his bed--M. l'Abbe de Noirlieu brought him the last sacraments--this calmed him--he admitted that he was relieved--

hallucinations?" M. Decaze was slightly discomposed; she took advantage of that to add:

"Well, Monsieur, is it not also true that the dying suffer from

"And what is the object of relating this to me?"

The Due Decaze replied:

this hideous tragedy."

"To soften your heart, to induce you to also ease yourself by a repentance, by expiation-to warn you of that final hour which will come to you also when you too will need a priest, a crucifix--to reveal to you the wordless confession of your lover, your accomplice--to

move you to give that confession which alone can clear up the mystery of this abominable crime--"

M. Pasquier, who disliked the sentimental tone of this, added:

"Come. Mademoiselle, you can no longer avoid giving us the clue to

"The clue? Look for it then in the character of Madame du Boccage; in the actions of this saint and martyr, not in mine, you must look for the causes of this crime."

"What, Mademoiselle, do you mean to insinuate that Madame du Boccage deserved her fate? Do you attempt to excuse the murderer by giving faults to his victim?"

"Perhaps," said the governess erect and rigid; a movement went

Lucille Debellevme rose in one swift movement: she seemed in a

second to have become the accuser, not the accused.

among the men facing her. "Madame du Boccage requires no advocate--all the world is ready to venerate her, to mourn her, to repeat her eulogies. I speak for him--I have just heard he is dead. I will not be disloyal to my one friend. I tell you that this saint of yours drove that man mad; through his madness she perished, all gloridy her. But he what has been add to him? The worse graphy the post

her. But he--what has happened to him? The worse agony, the most horrible death."

Even the Chancellor was silent, for she seemed to speak with all her body, all her soul, her words were only part of her violent expression

body, all her soul, her words were only part of her violent expression of some deep passion.

"Seek, I say, in the nature, in the actions of this stupid, jealous, uncontrolled, violent woman, in her rages, her scenes, her

uncontrolled, violent woman, in her rages, her scenes, her espionages, her reproaches, her endless letters, her bigotry, her persistent pursuit—not in me—the causes of this crime. Find in the fury of a woman who loved and was not loved the cause of this murder!"

M. Pasquier rose.

"Enough. We will hear no more. The prisoner is obdurate. We waste our time, our appeals before a heart so hard, a conscience so

He began to leave his place; the others rose; the Chancellor's almost blind eyes turned in the direction where he dimly perceived the prisoner to be.

"Enough of evasion, M. du Boccage was a brute, a monster, his

callous--before a woman capable of no generous impulse, no tender

sentiment "

had recovered herself.

martyred wife was a saint, and you, Mademoiselle the governess, I need not name you—you know what you are. The examination is closed."

For a moment Lucille Debelleyme appeared overwhelmed by this denunciation, all the lustre of passion and pride, left her; she remained drooping by the chair as the peers began to file out of the

narrow door where the usher waited. But before the first had left, she

"Stop, Messieurs. One thing more." They paused, grouped between the table and door, holding their hats and gloves. "Messieurs, you have evoked the crucifix. I have seen, in this wretched prison, symbols of the Christian faith—above my bed there also hangs a crucifix—well, I have this to say to you. M. Pasquier has spoken of the Due du Boccage as a monster, he has branded me as a creature of nameless infamy—no doubt you all support him—"

Due du Boccage as a monster, he has branded me as a creature of nameless infamy--no doubt you all support him--"

M. de Bondy, openly agitated, made a gesture of dissent. "Ah, then--not all! I know I speak now, not to the agents of the police, to lawyers who see evil everywhere, but to gentlemen. Well, then, this--if M. du Boccage was this monster, if I am an infamous woman--is it given to you to judge?"

"We act for worldly justice, yes," replied the Chancellor.

had one word of compassion. Not one word of compassion. Monsieur!" "You have not deserved it. Mademoiselle." said M. Pasquier. "Would not, for that reason, your Christ give it us? Would not your God be with us, rather than with her? Already canonised, you say! But I think the Christ you quote descended into hell." Looking at her bandaged hand, she added: "If he had himself told me he had done this, planned it. I would have gone to him, comforted him--even if it meant drawing suspicion on myself. Has not your Christ as much lovalty, as much love as a wretch like myself?" "Ah!" exclaimed M. Pasquier, "You admit, then, Mademoiselle, to-love?" "To love, yes. Not to adultery. Cannot you discern the difference?"

"But you have spoken of God. From men, neither he, dying in atrocious torments—nor I, alone, as I have often been reminded, outcast nameless, homeless, degraded by universal suspicion, have

-it is finished. Let us indeed leave them to God." Turning to the young woman he said in a lower tone:

"What is your object in reminding us, Mademoiselle, of Christ's compassion?"

M. Decaze gently touched the Chancellor on the arm. "The time has passed for attempts at traps, my dear friend. Neither has confessed-

She put her hands to her throat, as if to ease some constriction there, and the gesture horribly reminded M. Decaze of M. du

Boccage when, no longer able to swallow, he had clutched at the muscles atrophied by the action of the arsenic.

"To ask for yours. Whatever he did, he has expiated. Do you not

The Chancellor made a movement of disgust, but M. Decaze and M. de Bondy restrained him from speech.

His followers, do not follow His impossible example!"

your God were real, I think He would have pitied me."

his children--"

think that I shall also? Imagine the rest of my life. I loved him. I loved

"Ah, shrink from me. Monsieur Pasquier! You should be satisfied. The more I loved, the more I shall be punished. I do not believe in your Christ whom you use to frighten children and the dying--for you.

"These are dreadful words, Mademoiselle. A priest attended M. du Boccage with eager pity—he could attend you--"
"Yes, for the same purpose, to extort a confession! A priest cast the first stone at me. in the Faubourd St. Honore. I want no priests. But if

The vound Comte de Bondy broke into hurried, nervous speech:

"What," asked M. Decaze, "do you want of us?"

"I said--your compassion. Your justice, too. Do not leave me with the brand of an adulteress--of murderess." With a sudden drop of speech, of look, she added flatty: "I have always been most

speech, of look, she added flatly: "I have always been most respectable. I have excellent testimonials."

The peers glanced at each other, all of them were perturbed; those who had seen the deathbed of M. du Boccage felt that here was something beyond human handling.

"You want your release?" asked M. Decaze.

"No, M. le Duc, my exoneration."

"What, after all, is there against her? Nothing in her letters, nothing in her replies, nothing in her conduct! All that we have to go on is public opinion, gossip of servants, the vulgar interpretation of certain appearances—all things which must be rejected by men of reason and judgment!"

M. Pasquier shrugged: he had already heard from M. Mauzisse that

to extract a confession; he spoke aside to M. Decaze, who said:

"Mademoiselle, this ends your examination. You will hear the result to-morrow."

the case against the governess had completely broken down. This examination before the Committee of Peers had been a last attempt

Caressing her injured hand in silence, the governess made a vague salutation.

As the peers hastened down the dirty corridors of the prison M. de Bondy exclaimed:

"That is a remarkable woman! What imperious grace! What dignity! What talent!"

"Are you, too, becoming infatuated with Lucille Debelleyme?"

M. de Bondy put in eagerly:

The young man shuddered:

With a melancholy smile M. Decaze asked:

"Mon Dieu! I hope I shall never see her again!"

The next day Lucille Debelleyme was told that she was free.

The released prisoner stepped out of a side door of the Conciergerie early on a September morning; she wore the pale nankeen dress with the white soutache and the straw bonnet with the

lilac-coloured ruffles, and ribbons which had become famous throughout Paris. As the door closed behind her she hesitated: a crowd of journalists, of curious strangers awaited her. They pressed round with suggestions, requests, half insolent, half inquisitive, wholly

What had she to say to the press? To these powerful papers who

"Had she not written some memoirs justifying herself while she was prison?"--"Would she give permission to have

with their greedy enquiries, their insatiable curiosity...

had led the hue and cry against her?

malicious

correspondence with M. du Boccage published?"--"Was it true that various scoundrels seeking notoriety had offered to marry her?"--"Where was she going now?"--"What was her name--so many stories had spread round Paris-was it Lucille Clery, Lucille Debelleyme, Mary Showler--was she English, Italian, Corsican?"--"Could she not, for one of the more enterprising papers, write a story

of her life?"

She leant against the prison door, like the fox when the hounds surround him at last; no one had the least pity, they thronged closer

She came forward with a sudden movement which caused them to step back, then raised her brilliant glance that few could encounter with equanimity, and said, with the very essence of scorn:

"It is permitted. Messieurs, to pass?"

"Where are you going, Mademoiselle? Can I escort you? I fear it will not be very pleasant for you when you are recognised." She considered him, he had a fresh, boyish face under his tasselled cap. "Get a carriage." she said. "There are several waiting outside the prison." He did so-then hesitated at the door of the cab after she had got in. feeling that here was a lost professional chance; she looked at him straightly, unsmiling: "I have nothing to tell anyone--nothing. I have, however, a favour to ask." "A favour. Mademoiselle?" "Yes--can you tell me where M. du Boccage is buried?" The young journalist showed troubled reluctance but he could not for long resist the insistent gaze of the woman, more imperious than imploring fixed upon him. "In The Cemetery of the South--it was very guiet--at night--the police saw to it for fear of the people--" "Where? How might one find it?"

"I don't know, Mademoiselle--it was, one understands, a pauper's

They fell away, muttering, and one youth showed the chivalry that she had disdained to implore; he thrust his notebook in his pocket and.

pulling off his hat, came forward.

grave."

"Nothing, Mademoiselle. What would you? It was a secret burial, no priest, no prayers. We wished we could have found out about it but we did not till too late."

Lucille Debelleyme's large eyes, totally void of expression, continued to stare at the young man until he coloured and uneasily pulled at his

"Nothing? No stone? No cross?"

collar, and asked her where he should direct the carriage? A denser crowd was already beginning to gather; early as it was, others besides the journalists had contrived to hear of the release of Lucille Debelleyme.

"The common ditch." she said without answering his question. "Do

you know the number?"

"No-one knows that. Mademoiselle; I assure you it was kept very quiet, there was fear of public trouble. Where shall I direct the man?"

"Tell him to drive on, I will think afterwards where I am going."

The young man obeyed, then elbowed his way through the other newspaper men and the curious who were beginning to surge round

newspaper men and the curious who were beginning to surge round the coach and horse.

So, Lucille Debelleyme drove away from the Conciergerie; she did not know where to go, her grandfather. Madame Trou-she felt ill at

not know where to go, her grandfather, Madame Trou-she felt ill at the mere thought of either St. Cloud or the Rue du Harlay. She had no friend, no money beyond the few sous in her bag; she had been obliged to leave her possessions in prison until she could give an

address to which they could be sent.

After the cab had driven for a few minutes through the mist

After the cab had driven for a few minutes through the misty September morning, the man stopped, got down off the box and

The man stared at her, grumbled something uncivil under his breath, mounted the box and drove to the narrow street near the railway station where the Santerres lived.

Mademoiselle Debelleyme herself rang the bell; she smiled into the

asked his passenger where she intended to go? Lucille Debelleyme gave the address of Monsieur Santerre; she added aloud: "Perhaps

they will take me in."

face of the woman who opened the door and who instantly retreated with a movement of horror, putting her hands to her mouth.

"Yes, it is I, Lucille Debelleyme—you know all that has happened. I have nowhere to go, will you take me in, even for one night?"

No one in Paris had followed the tragedy of the Hotel du Boccage with more horrified interest than this old servant of the murdered Duchess, no one had lamented Fanny du Boccage more bitterly nor cried out more frequently and vehemently bitter imprecations on the head of the governess, but when this simple, superstitious woman saw Lucille Debelleyme, whom justice had dismissed, against whom

no proof could be found but who was dishonoured, ruined, penniless, she only hesitated a moment. The strongest motive in her startled mind was that of her sincere but conventional piety. The sinner must not be turned away, the penitent must not be suffered to depart, a creature in despair must not be allowed to do a deed of violence.

the night you came to Paris."
"I remember."

"Come upstairs, your old room is empty--you remember, you had it

She opened her bag and paid the coachman and followed Madame Santerre, who crossed herself continually, up to the little room with

Madame Santerre, in a timid voice, asked if she should get her anything—Refreshments? Coffee? Water?

"I was offered all that in the prison, but could not take it then and cannot take it now."

"A priest shall I send a priest?"

the cheap crucifix above the bed and the high window looking out

over Paris

- The governess shook her head.
- Madame Santerre, overawed, hesitated by the door. She could not take her gaze from her fearful visitor.

 "Mademoiselle, you would not disgrace me? I want to be charitable.

"I have only need of a little repose, to be by myself. I shall soon think of something... I shall not trouble you for long. I must find strength."

You would not here..."

"Kill myself?" finished the governess. "No, I can promise you that. Besides, I have nothing, neither knife nor poison. Perhaps that may come to me presently, but not now, not here. Be reassured."

As the humble woman still remained horror-stricken and trembling, reluctant in the doorway. Mademoiselle Debelleyme, who had thrown off her bonnet, said:

"Can you do me one favour? Can you tell me the number of the grave of M. du Boccage in The Cemetery of the South?"

Madame Santerre burst into convulsive sobs and rubbed her eyes with her rough apron, exclaiming:

"Why should I not ask, Madame Santerre? Why should I be ashamed to speak his name? Come, you must know. All his servants and dependants know, or am I to go to the Comte Edouard or even to his mother?"

"Oh, how can you ask me that?--how dare you ask me that! Oh,

Mademoiselle, what a frightful thing to ask!"

Madame Santerre's cries and sobs redoubled:

nothing. The old Marechal Frediani went himself to comfort her, he has begged everyone not to tell her, she thinks it was illness, she is blind, she is old, she knows nothing!"

"No need to tell me all that," said the governess. "I understand the

"Oh, you must not go to her! I entreat you not to go to her! She knows

"I believe, Mademoiselle, that it is one thousand and fifty-four."

The woman turned and fled crossing berealf again as if she

The woman turned and fled, crossing herself again as if she hastened away from some tangible evil.

During the time that she had been in the Conciergerie Lucille
Debelleyme had contrived to reflect on nothing, to analyse nothing, to

permit herself neither regrets nor hopes, to blot out her personality in her situation. She had lived from moment to moment, concerning herself only with maintaining her fortitude and baffling the efforts of her enemies to extort from her dangerous confessions. She had

her enemies to extort from her dangerous confessions. She had read stupid verses until she knew them by heart, she had counted up to fantastic numbers, she had made up poems, exercises in English, French and Italian, she had drawn elaborate geometric designs, she

hands and lips and by an exercise of an extraordinary willpower to keep realisation away from her. Now the strain was over, she was free, she was not overlooked, not spied on, she did not need to keep herself taut and alert for fear the door would suddenly open and some unfriendly face look round hoping to surprise her in disorder, in despair. Now she could no longer prevent herself from thinking, she locked the door, turning the clumsy great key with guivering hands and threw

had arranged patterns for embroidery with the pencil and paper given her, and so she had contrived with mechanical actions of her

"He is dead." She could no longer keep that fact at arm's length. That time he had rushed from her--from the room above the chemist's shop in the Rue Keller had been an eternal farewell: he and all he meant was gone from her life for ever.

For their mutual frustration, their mutual tragedy she blamed herself.

herself on the straight, hard bed, beneath the crucifix.

"I went too far. I ought to have known with whom I dealt. I did know he was obtuse, not very intelligent, in the depths of his nature violent and savage. I should have seen he was being so driven that he did not

know what he did. I should not have held off. Now there is not even that to remember--that I was once in his arms--frustrated, thwarted. If I had not denied him he would not have done it."

She dared, for the first time, to try to reconstruct the crime, "Had he gone straight from her to the apartment of his sleeping wife, crept in,

a murderer indeed, and struck at the wretched woman in her sleep? So his accusers said. There had been no guarrel, no recrimination? Had he turned, like a creature at bay, and destroyed savagely what tormented him?"

told me he had taken that from her, or did he intend to use it for her destruction, or for mine, or for his own? And the baldaquin--I remember when I first saw it--" All this turnult of horrified speculation passed into an agony of loneliness. That was her predominant feeling. She had been robbed of the one person whom she loved, who would have protected her, stood by her, who understood her... She sat up suddenly on the bed, jerked to that posture by the sheer

violence of her emotion, and put her fingers to her throat as if she

would strangle herself with her own hands.

"How was it done, how long did she suffer, how soon did he come to his senses, when did he take the poison? How they must have tortured him! Death by arsenic, I have heard what that means. Why did he not take the laudanum? And the cord? Was he lving when he

The waste of it, the pity of it, and they had dared to cast him into a pauper's grave--he who had gloried in the magnificence of Javiaux du Boccage--he so proud, so gay, so fine. She began to weep, and these, the first tears she had shed, were drawn from her by sheer pity for his body, distorted with the convulsions of the poison, mutilated with the surgeon's knife, rotting

in the earth, lost, gone, wasted. "I always knew that to think of it, to pause, to realise, would be to give

way--to give way is damnation--well, that has happened now."

She wondered, in bitter fury, what had kept her up so long, why she had so tenaciously and so skilfully defended this life, this liberty

which were so barren and so useless? She scorned now her own instinct of self-preservation, her own indomitable pride which had given her such incredible courage. Yet even now, almost against her

own will, she dragged herself out of engulfing despair. There was one thing she might do, one person to whom she might turn for some comfort.

The Dowager Duchesse du Boccage sat by a bright fire, for the autumn days were damp. Her face was in shadow, for she was sitting in a deeply-hooded leather chair, but the firelight showed her fine blue-veined hands grasping a small brass crucifix. She was in a complete bewilderment of grief: these two sudden deaths, apoplexy.

cholera, one after the other without any farewells! Not all the tender soothing of her son, the caresses of her daughters, the consolations of the Marechal Frediani, of her friends, could wholly erase from the blind woman the terror that something worse than sudden death had occurred. Camille and Fanny! So suddenly, so soon!

Her maid told her with tender respect (the gentle lady was well loved by everyone who knew her) that a young woman wished to see her;

she had come to solicit some personal charity and had mentioned the name of l'Abbe Galle. Such visitors were not infrequent in the apartment in the Faubourg St. Germain where Madame du Boccage spent a peaceful and benevolent old age.

Yet she hesitated, for this was an intrusion on her grief, her mourning, her rigid retirement from all social duties. She made some anxious

seemed in much trouble, she had wept as she had made her plea to be allowed to see Madame la Duchesse du Boccage.

"Admit her, then, Clarise, one must not be cold to the grief of others

enquiries-the maid said it was a young woman who was veiled and

because one has so heavy a sorrow oneself."

As the blind woman waited in her hooded, chair by the fire, her

hands still nervously holding the small crucifix sent her by her dead son, and which she could not bear out of her touch; she heard her maid return and another step beside that of Clarise.

She said kindly:

"Mademoiselle, you have been sent to me by l'Abbe Galle? Pray come forward; I am, unfortunately, blind but I can hear very well."

Lucille Debelleyme came to the fireside and stood erect, looking down on the old, helpless woman. She was staring, she knew, at the one person in Paris who had not been told her story, to whom her name had not been mentioned with abhorrence, to whom all her actions had not been depicted in a bad light, the one person in

Paris, in France, who did not know of the tragedy in the Faubourg St. Honore, the one person who could speak of Camille du Boccage with love and respect.

"Who are you?" asked the blind woman into the silence. "Have you a message from the Abbe Galle? Where are you? I hear nothing."

"Madame, I have no message, I used his name to gain admittance."

Lucille Debelleyme, peering closely into the shadows of the hooded chair, saw the old woman move uneasily.

"I know that voice though I have not heard it for some time. Who are

you?"
"I am Lucille Debelleyme; I was your daughter-in-law's governess.

You used to be kind to me."

The old lady raised the hands holding the small crucifix and placed them on her breast.

"I have not been able to come before. I was ill, what I want is a little pity, a little friendship," "I do not understand. Mademoiselle Debelleyme--are you in trouble. distress? I heard that you had left, that you were no longer in charge of my grandchildren? Why is that?" "This double bereavement overwhelms me. Madame. I thought you were the one person to whom I might speak of..." She cut her sentence off short and the blind woman, leaning forward, asked anxiously: "Speak of what?" "Of your son, of M. du Boccage." "Why do you want to come to me to speak of him?" "Because there is no one else." She approached the old woman, bending down and speaking in, a low, rapid voice: "I am in great trouble, I hardly know what to do. You are the person who might save me." "Save you from what. Mademoiselle?" The lady shrank back. inexplicable terror possessed her, she felt on the brink of some insupportable knowledge. "What is that crucifix you hold so tightly, so constantly, Madame? Did

"Why have you staved away so long? Why do you come now? What

do vou want?"

crucifix—the last thing he touched--was he thinking of me? He never betrayed me, no, my darling, you kept our secret though they tortured you so—and so did I—"

Madame du Boccage felt small, cold fingers close over hers eagerly, greedily.

he send it to you?" As she spoke she thought: "If only I could get that

"Clarise, Clarise!"

She called loudly:

maid, who never stayed long from her blind mistress, instantly entered, alert, apprehensive.

her away!"
"Mademoiselle, please leave at once!" cried the alarmed maid; "you have disturbed Madame la Duchesse!"

"Clarise. I do not know who this is here but she must not stay, send

Lucille Debelleyme drew back to the other side of the hearth, and the

"You know who I am," urged Lucille Debelleyme, "do you send me away?"

"I entreat you to go at once, I have nothing for you, I can have nothing.

I was told that you had left the Hotel du Boccage and that I must not speak of you."

"More Christian charity." whispered Lucille Debellevme, staring at

"More Christian charity," whispered Lucille Debelleyme, staring at the crucifix, "more Christian compassion."

"Please go, Mademoiselle," said Clarise, firmly, standing in front of her mistress, "as Madame has requested."

"Madame du Boccage-might I--once-just touch that crucifix? In charity?"

"She is mad," whispered the old lady, afraid. "There has been some trouble of which I have not heard-what has she to do with Camille?"

"If you would let me hold the crucifix I might tell you--"

Suddenly, and with the utmost horror, realising the identity of the

The visitor ignored the servant.

intruder. Clarise cried with vehemence:

know how to deal with you!"

Lucille Debelleyme glided away; catching hold of the warm familiar hand of her maid the Duchess asked timidly:

"Has she gone?"

"Begone at once! M. de Frediani is expected anv instant: he will

"She has gone, Madame. Oh, pray do not disturb yourself. I will see that she does not come again," and pretending she had not recognised the visitor: "Who was it?--can you give me her name that I may caution the servants not to admit her again?"

Eiected by aversion, by fear, Lucille Debellevme descended the

stairs of the fine house in the Faubourg St. Germain.

Outside she saw a familiar figure descending from a handsome carriage—the Marechal Frediani, who had come with that flamboyant chivalry that all Paris so much admired to console the unsuspecting mother of his daughter's murderer.

Lucille Debelleyme, with her veil across her bonnet, stood and

laughed over an anecdote concerning this old soldier; sent to restore order in Poland, he had massacred all the revolutionaries and sent back an ironic message: "Peace in Warsaw." She began to laugh as the old man, whose bearing had not been altered by age but who now stooped under the shock of an overwhelming grief, turned up the great steps of the house, and he at this dreadful sound, turned and glanced over his shoulder. She took a step towards him: "Peace in the Faubourg St. Honore, M. Le Marechal!" she said and turned quickly in the direction of The Cemetery of the South. She found his grave, with weariness that she did not notice and difficulties that she ignored, after walking through the long avenues of tombs, heavy, sombre, ironic temples to the dead, avenues of straight poplar and hard Cyprus, blue-black in the September sunshine, past solitary crape-clad mourners, grave-diggers and

looked at him. She recalled how she and her grandfather had once

sunshine, past solitary crape-clad mourners, grave-diggers and guardians. There, in the large communal grave, was number one thousand and fifty-four. There was no name, no date...The ground round about was trampled by the feet of the curious, the journalists who must write something more for their papers, the morbid whose appetite for the horrible must be whetted, by perhaps a few who had come secretly, to say a prayer.

There was no one in sight and dusk was falling; the sun retreated, in sinking waves of light behind the tombs. Lucille Debelleyme lay down full length on the damp earth and, closing her eyes, pressed against the heap of clay broken by the sexton's spade as closely as if she

embraced his form--as if her frantic grasp could penetrate earth, oak boards, linen, and seize him in her arms. Her most bitter regret was for his body that was now so close under her own but which she would never see or touch again. * * * * *

Santerre's small house. She had neither eaten, nor drunk, nor rested all day. She was not aware of any fatigue, only of a lightness in her head. It was M. Santerre who opened the door this time, as quickly as if he had been in readiness, waiting behind the door. He looked

It was nearly dark when she again rang the bell of Madame

at her eyes gleaming behind the veil, he could see no more of her face than that. Her thin shoes were covered with mud, the white braid of her dress, to which fragments of dead leaves and earth were clinging, was dirty, her gloves were torn and her bag was hanging open and empty on her arm.

"You must not come in." he said quickly. "my wife was too kind. I will not have it, you must go away at once." "Where to? Where am I to go?"

"Some priest, some charity; there are places for such as vou. You do

not come into my house, you bring a curse with you, you would attract on me the attention of all Paris. Begone." He closed the door in her face. Lucille Debelleyme turned away; she began to walk faster and faster through the twilight. As she reached the more frequented streets she

broke into a run, she had only one thought, one desire--immediate extinction.

Too impatient to wait until she reached the river, she intended to throw herself under a passing vehicle and she hurried eagerly to the streets where the traffic was most dense. Turning a corner sharply in

her headlong flight, which was causing the passers-by to turn and

This light, this doorway, this name seemed to Lucille Debelleyme to surge up in front of her out of an utter blackness; she was suddenly conscious of an acute, overwhelming fatigue. She made a movement forward as if to catch at those placards for support—she was in the doorway, then in the church and had sunk on a bench—the first to which she had come

gaze curiously at her, she found herself on the steps of a lighted doorway where the bright glow of the unscreened gas fell on various placards and notices which showed that this was a church, a Protestant church, and that the preacher was one Frederic Monet.

service, the congregation, all reminded her of her English days when she had had to lead her charges to a Protestant church. She wondered what had brought her here, where she was...She fixed her dazed eyes on the tall, gaunt man who, at once fervid and monotonous, preached of submission to the will of God, of patience, of resignation

Frederic Monet was preaching; the interior of the building, the

of resignation.

Pastor Frederic Monet reluctantly left his church with the sense of discouragement that comes to an actor who, though successful, has

not been, through convention, applauded. His faith was also his art and his livelihood, he had put into it all the aspirations of a simple heart, all the strength of a mediocre intelligence, he was most completely himself when he was preaching about the terrors of sin,

the beauties of repentance and the joys of forgiveness of God.

When he was in the pulpit he became wrapped in an exultation that

When he was in the pulpit he became wrapped in an exultation that sometimes touched ecstasy; the reaction when he had to leave the empty church was always in proportion to his enthusiasm. He felt a vague melancholy, a slight disappointment, to think of all these

people who had listened to him so silently, who should have been so impressed, scattering, passing away into trivialities of their daily lives, without, it seemed, either acknowledgment of his powers or need of his administrations. It was true that he knew some of his flock and that some of them came to him with their troubles but these were always very ordinary, and Frederic Monet, a born missionary, a fervent, earnest believer in the mercies of God and the traps of the devil, had, he felt regretfully, so far neither met one nor the other, and his pleasant, amiable, hard-working ordinary life had not brought him into touch with the drams of wither crime or repentance. The verger was following the pastor round the church, extinguishing

the gas-lamps, and Frederic Monet lingered reluctantly, leaving the church with the regret of one who leaves a scene of what should have been a triumph. As he reached the door he saw that one member of the congregation was still seated on the bench directly inside the door. She was neither praying nor, it seemed by the inattentive

the reticule hanging open on her arm, the bits of dead leaves and earth that clung to her dress, her thin shoes stained and trodden down, her straw bonnet with the crumpled lilac strings.

He looked at her sideways, his attention attracted by her pale. elegant nankeen dress trimmed with white soutache, her torn gloves,

droop in her attitude, waiting for him.

"One of the unfortunates of the street," thought the pastor in automatic disgust, that he instantly and shamefacedly repressed.

As he approached the young woman she did not move; a glance at her pale, refined face with the dosed eyes and the parted lips changed his opinion. A lady, after all, and her clothes in good taste and well made. Her state of exhaustion then and the disorder of her attire must be the result of some frightful accident.

entangled on the briars.

"Mademoiselle...Mademoiselle...I fear you are ill. Can I be of any service to you?" He half feared she was unconscious but she opened her eyes and gave him a glance so bright and clear that he felt a faint uneasiness.

"You are the pastor Frederic Monet?"

Pleased, he nodded.

The pastor felt excited. Was she in trouble, and had she, hearing of his eloquence, his tolerance, his enthusiasm, come to him?

His hesitation left him as he came up to her with the eager firmness of the shepherd who has unmistakably espied the lost sheep

"Then do not say," replied the clergyman earnestly, flushing with pleasure, "that you were brought here by chance. God directed you."

"I listened to your sermon, it applied exactly to my case."

The young woman smiled:

"Perhaps."

She tried to rise but, too faint to hold herself on her feet, sank again on the bench. The verger, interested and prying, paused behind the

pastor and waited to turn out the last gas-lamp by the door.

"You are in need of succour, Mademoiselle? You are in some distress?"

"I am in deep distress."

"Will you confide in me-will you trust me? That is my duty and my

"Even the outcast and the despised?" and again she gave him that glance that seemed in its blazing vitality so out of place with the drooping exhaustion of her appearance.

"Those more than any," replied the pastor, firmly, his earnestness.

privilege--to help all."

him at a glance, said:

his honest goodness were unmistakable.

"I will tell you first who I am. I have been let out of the Conciergerie this morning. I am friendless and dishonoured. I have just been turned from the doors of an acquaintance, I am penniless." She rose, supporting herself against the drab, painted plaster wall. "I am Lucille Debellevme."

The young woman, who despite her emotional upheaval could read

unable to repress a forward movement of greedy curiosity.

No one had read the flamboyant accounts of the tragedy of the Hotel du Boccage with more sincere horror than had Frederic Monet and, though he strove so hard to be charitable to the worst of sinners, he had not been able to think of Lucille Debelleyme without a deep aversion.

Then the pastor did wince and the verger, close behind him, was

had not been able to think of Lucille Debelleyme without a deep aversion.

She noticed his trouble.

"No doubt, Monsieur, you have followed my case in all its details, yet you can know very little of my story. I was examined in secret—I had no advisers, no lawyers, no friends. No one put forward my side of the question, but unable to find the least evidence against me they

have released me. It seems," and her voice sank lower, "that they might as well have sent me to the quillotine, for I perceive I am

he reminded himself that there was nothing against this woman but the evil tongues of the multitude. Human justice, rather, human malice had not been able to discover that she was guilty, it was not for him to judge, nor by as much as a look to turn her from seeking the Mercy of God.

Frederic Monet was instantly ashamed of his movement of dismay:

become an object from which even the charitable shrink."

and said with deepest sincerity:

"Mademoiselle, I am ready to believe there is no evil in you. You are in a terrible situation, the knowledge of your own innocence must be

He grasped her small cold hand in the torn glove in his large fingers.

your major support."

Lucille Debelleyme smiled at this banality which happened to be the exact truth, and pulled away her hand from his, for his friendly grasp made her think of another, when such different fingers, so powerful, had closed round her own. M. Monet, in his black frock-coat, his grey

"Mademoiselle, you are a Protestant?" he urged anxiously.

"Yes, I am a Protestant. In my despair I turned here--my instinct was to destroy myself but something..."

whiskers, his portly build, had a look of M. de Tassy.

"It was God," exclaimed the pastor, "who saved you from that desperate crime!"

He waited, with a certain bewilderment, a certain delicacy, for her to explain herself further; she stared round the ugly building, the walls of slate-coloured paint, the deep-set, dusty windows, black in their

recesses, the gas globes on iron arms, the rows of cheap benches

did she see the symbol that had become to her one of mockery, that reminded her both of the cruelty of man and a denied love token—the crucifix.

She glanced vaguely from the pastor to the verger, who, in the yellow, wavering light of the last gas-lamp, was staring at her with such unabashed curiosity; his keys hung in his hand.

"You think, both of you, that I am guilty? I suppose all Paris thinks so. I know I am without a friend. No doubt the most terrible stories have been spread about me, but the truth—no one would guess that!"

"You were a Protestant," exclaimed the pastor, "in the midst of the Roman Catholics! Madame du Boccage, poor woman was a bigot, is it possible—"

shining with harsh yellowish varnish; the House of God! There was something in that absurdity that distracted her acute agony. Nowhere

"It is true that I was persecuted for my religion by the priest, the Duchess herself, all of them—the Duke tried to rescue his children and confide them to me. We were never more than friends. Consider, was it likely?—he never saw me except when his children

were present."

Why was she saying this, trying to make these two ridiculous men, in their hideous building, believe her? From desire, after all, to live, or from natural mechanical duplicity? She did not herself know but she

their hideous building, believe her? From desire, after all, to live, or from natural mechanical duplicity? She did not herself know but she continued quietly to defend herself, like an automaton wound up to go through a routine of words and gestures.

To the naive honest man who listened she was the very picture of persecuted innocence; a Protestant at the mercy of Papist cabals!

Why had he not thought of that before? He should have rushed to her defence--"Mademoiselle, you have no need--before me--to defend yourself from charges so infamous." He spoke sincerely; it was really impossible for him to associate this delicate creature with any crime. He had already come to an astounding resolution, he would rise to this moment, he would give his utmost, he would not offer the cold, sneering charity of the Pharisees, he would not suggest some Home for the destitute and the outcast...No, his own hearth, his own pious wife, his own pure daughters... "You are friendless. Mademoiselle--penniless--you have nowhere to go?" "Yes, I thought of the river but it seemed too far, I have not eaten all day."

"Come with me at once. Mademoiselle Debelleyme, my wife will welcome you, my daughters will treat you as a sister. You shall find that true charity, tolerance, kindness does exist—even in Paris."

The absurdity of this last phrase caused a smile that he interpreted as a flicker of gratitude to distort the pale lips of the governess; he

said to the gaping verger:

"Go and call a cab. Bring it immediately to the door."

As the man, still staring over his shoulder, reluctantly shuffled away.

Mademoiselle Debelleyme lightly laid her hand on the excited pastor's rough sleeve.

"You are taking me to your wife, to your daughters-you a Christian

clergyman! Well, I am innocent—I can swear it."

She turned towards the distant altar that was only a gathered blot of shadows in the deep murk of the chapel. She lifted her hand and

"I take God to witness that I am neither an adulteress nor a murderess. M. du Boccage was not my lover and I did not inflame him to murder his wife."

said distinctly:

"Why should people not believe me? Is it that everyone has a mind so foul that they cannot conceive of virtue? But you, you perhaps can

She turned her wild stare on the pastor and added:

credit what seems to so many an incredible truth."

She caught him up into her emotion; he became her champion, her defender, he was subtly flattered, greatly moved.

"I believe you," he declared solemnly, as if he gave an absolution.

She turned her head aside without replying; when her chin drooped she noticed the earth, the dead leaves still on her dress and remembered where they came from. With a shriek, such as the pastor had never heard from human lips before, she fell awkwardly against him. The verger hurried in panting, aghast at this unparalleled excitement; between them they lifted the light weight of Lucille Debellewme and carried her to the hired cab

Lucille Debelleyme and carried her to the hired cab.

The pastor Monet's supper was ready, the fire was burning

The pastor Monet's supper was ready, the fire was burning cheerfully, the lamp in the large, opal globe lit, the wife was hastening, in a kindly fashion, the one little maid in the final preparation of the last meal.

a text; one of the beatitudes, "Blessed are the pure in heart," began to flourish in gold and scarlet under her pen. Her sister Hortense sat beside her knitting a curly tippet in white Iceland wool. She had recently recovered from a slight attack of bronchitis and it was anxiety on her behalf and the unexpected dampness of the autumn day which had kept the family at home instead of attending as usual the Thursday service of the husband and father at the Chapel of the Oratory. The demoiselles Monet were plain young women with pallid complexions and greasy hair, their teeth were irregular and they had a tendency to pimples and violent attacks of indigestion. There was only a year between them and they were exactly alike, similar too in their sweet and patient dispositions. Pliant, stupid and obedient, they

had inherited their father's unwavering piety and absorbed their mother's conventional decorum so successfully that they had become in all the utmost that their parents could have wished. The flame of their unblemished goodness flickered brightly even after five

At a side table in the pleasant parlour Louise Monet was illuminating

years' residence in the corruption which they were well aware blighted the capital; their father, though anxious at first as to the wisdom of transporting these two innocents from a small country town to the hectic wickedness of Paris, had long since had his fears allayed. The virtue of Louise and Hortense Monet was such as could walk unspotted through the streets of Babylon; they lived as removed from the world about them as fishes swimming in a bowl are removed from that houses them. Louise was going to be a

missionary in China, Hortense was betrothed to a young man of whom her parents completely approved.

A tall, robust youth leant against the mantelpiece, and stared at the two girls absorbed in their work. He was an American, in training for holy orders, one Nathaniel Meadows, a distant relative of Madame

Monet, who came of a well-known Evangelical family from New York.

drowsy young bull about his heavy head and shoulders, the dark red curls, the full features and the brown eyes, expressing a rather dazed kind of nobility. His ill-cut clothes of expensive materials were outlandishly ugly, and his movements were awkward. Suddenly, an impetuous opening of doors, the blowing in of the chill. foggy autumn air, exclamations, a search for change to pay for this unusual luxury of a cab, for vinegar, for eau-de-Cologne, broken explanations and an unconscious stranger was laid on the gleaming horse-hair sofa drawn near the fire. Madame Monet, experienced, capable, kindly, soon had the situation in hand. No spirits were ever allowed in the house but a glass of home-made cordial, highly alcoholic. was forced between the rigid lips of the unconscious young woman, while the girls gently drew off the straw bonnet with the crumpled lilac ribbon, drew from the cold fingers the torn gloves and from the feet, bruised from running, the thin, soiled slippers. The family Monet experienced all the righteous joy of the good

Samaritan, they glowed with the pleasure of putting into practice

Not without grandeur, his eyes sparkling with a fanatic charity, the

great trouble, she is a Protestant, she turned to a Protestant for

He had had no experience of anything except the most rigid Puritanism, and no thought of rebellion against the uncomfortable tenets in which he had been so vigorously schooled ever crossed a mind obtuse, self-satisfied, narrow. The least suggestion of any infringement of that code of morals that he considered had been drawn up by God Himself shocked him profoundly. But his appearance was that of a strong, kindly animal: there was a look of a

pastor addressed his wife:
"Marthe, this is Mademoiselle Debelleyme," then as the name made them all pause in alarm, he added quickly: "she has sworn to me on the table of the Lord that she is innocent. She came to me in her

long-smouldering virtues.

He spoke guite sincerely, for he had already forgotten that the young woman had told him that it was by chance she had turned into his church. He saw her now and would always see her as running straight from the doors of the Conciergerie to the refuge of the Oratory.

SUCCOUR."

"It is a test," he added excitedly, "a test of our faith. I would not send her to hospital, to some public organisation-I have brought her here to my own hearth, to my own wife and daughters. Tell me. Marthe. have I done right?" "You have shown courage," she said, looking at him with admiration.

"No one else in Paris would have done as much."

"She is friendless--she is penniless--despised and rejected of men, Marthe." he continued with rising enthusiasm, "she has been greatly wronged. I believe her oath, she was persecuted because she was a Protestant "

The three honest women drew a deep breath of horror, of understanding. Hortense pitvingly flicked away some dead leaves and earth which clung to the bodice of the unconscious victim of the

Romish Church; Madame Monet bathed the poor fallen head, so richly adorned with pale curls, with her handkerchief wrung out in eau-de-Cologne and water. This practical New Englander relied on her husband in everything and she wholeheartedly accepted his

verdict in the matter of Lucille Debelleyme. She was eager to step

into the position of protector of the innocent, champion of the

maligned, especially as the persecution of the Protestants was the

only portion of the story of the human race that she knew, and she knew that well indeed: so that had been the cause of the whole

tragedy! She could believe it without hesitation, without difficulty. The

They all began to talk together in low, excited tones. How everything fitted in! "Yes...ves...that was it. of course--a Protestant against a crowd of Catholics--what slander, what lies!" The actual murder they shut out of their consideration, not mentioning it, not thinking of it. The man had been driven mad of course by the scandalous attacks of the priests. No need to dwell on that. Lucille Debelleyme stirred and sat up. Her bodice was open at the neck, drops of water were on her cheeks and her curls lay damp and dark on her forehead. The pastor and his family gazed at her almost with veneration: compassion had passed into respect, pity into a fervent championship. All of them had forgotten Nathaniel Meadows; he stood on the verge of the group, half in the shadows, straining his attention to understand the situation. He could only partially grasp the meaning of the rapid French phrases, but he caught again and again

poor young woman, staunchly Protestant, had been set upon, in a household of Roman Catholics, led by Jesuits probably--it was

generally the Jesuits--

the two famous names of Du Boccage and Lucille Debelleyme...

The young American had read (with a fascinated horror of which he was secretly ashamed) all the sickening details of the crime which had shaken France, but he had resisted, not without an effort, an unworthy curiosity which had urged him to go to the Conciergerie to

unworthy curiosity which had urged him to go to the Conciergerie to obtain a glimpse of the mysterious heroine of this dreadful affair. But he had not resisted what he feared was a base attraction and had continuously turned his mind to contemplation of this tragedy of lust, corruption and violence. And here was this suspect, this woman who

had been called names which the young Puritan would not dare bring across his lips, lying on the familiar horse-hair sofa by the sacred

commiserated...

He approached eagerly, he had never really seen a beautiful woman so close before, nor any woman in such emotional upheaval, in such physical disarray.

Before they had noticed him he had stared greedily at her throat, her hands, her feet, the long pale curls, the fine features, the rich, close-fitting elegant gown...Lucille Debelleyme from the Conciergerie, a

hearth of the spotless Madame Monet, being, he was sure, praised.

wronged, persecuted, friendless woman...he immediately saw her through a blaze of romantic glory as he eagerly watched these blameless, angelic women, ministering to the young woman who was so incredibly attractive. The first rapture of his short, repressed life stung the simple heart of Nathaniel Meadows. The cause of that rapture was that while his senses assured him this stranger was beautiful, the clamour of his virtuous friends assured him that she was good; he had not believed such a combination possible, nor even hoped for such luck as to find a virtuous woman who was also

seductive. The forbidden fruit and the permitted daily bread in one

luscious dish...he stared and stared and, unconsciously, licked his handsome lips.

Lucille Debelleyme accepted without protest or comment her part as Protestant victim of Roman Catholic intrigue. She was not questioned, of course, on the affair of the Hotel du Boccage, but by a sigh, a glance, a chance word, a broken phrase, she gave them to understand that their interpretation of that tragedy was indeed correct. It had been her most misguided but well-meaning attempt to rescue the children of M. du Boccage from the bigotry of their mother, from the fanaticism of the priests, her honest endeavour to

support their unfortunate father in his effort to save his children's souls which had brought about that hideous catastrophe which had

shocked France.

Nathaniel Meadows, who had lingered on in Paris longer than he had intended at first. Leaning on his arm or sitting side by side with him in some hired carriage, she would show him the more impressive sights of Paris, those that were advertised in the guide book and that all foreigners wanted to see. "She had," she remarked quietly, "a good knowledge of the Capital, having so often taken her young pupils about to show them what was instructive and amusing."

The young American, who did not lack obvious delicacy, was careful that these walks and drives should never lead them near the Faubourg St. Honore.

For several months she lived in retreat with the Monet family, and nothing in her modest behaviour evoked anything but approval in the ingenuous people who had so boldly befriended her. Soon after Christmas she began, to go out a little, often escorted by Mr.

Then Lucille Debelleyme ventured to go about alone.

"She wished," she said, "to pray in the chapel in complete solitude," and with this object begged the key of the Oratory from the willing pastor, who was deeply impressed by the further proof of her wounded piety,

wounded piety,

But Mademoiselle Debelleyme did not use the key; her little excursions led her to the Rue Keller where she would walk up and down in front of the chemist's shop, where the first sunshine of the year fell across the large bottles of coloured water in the windows.

year fell across the large bottles of coloured water in the windows, purple, red and green.

She paused sometimes by the little side door, while she glanced up and down the street with a look of unutterable grief. Then sometimes

and down the street with a look of unutterable grief. Then sometimes she would take the omnibus to The Cemetery of the South and pace to and fro before the heavy central gates without, however, finding the courage to pass through them.

On some occasions she would go to the Faubourg St. Honore and pass the heavy, locked grille between the two porters' lodges and peep through at the bare trees. The mansion was shuttered, the doors barred.

She knew, for she had procured and avidly read copies of all the August issues of the more important Parisian papers, that there was one room in that house that was sealed up by order of the Marechal Frediani—untouched, never to be looked at again. Lucille Debelleyme knew the appearance of that room, she had read the accounts of many curious, horrified spectators; the overturned furniture, the torn bedclothes, the bloodstains, that would now be black, everywhere, on the satin chairs, on the alabaster mantelpiece, on the walls; hand-prints, fingerprints in blood; the cut bell-rope, the door of the toilet-room without a handle and the heavy baldaouin. gilt

and carved, from which hung the Brussels lace curtains, still in place despite the waxen fastening.

She thought of his apartment, the green desk where she had found those letters of his wife, which had proved such damning evidence against him in the end...the portrait of Lord Clare--was it still hanging on the wall, smilling with those thick sensuous lips across the darkness? She had read of the incredible confusion of his bedroom and dressing-room, the knife, the pistol, the blood-soaked clothes. She had heard how he had thrown a bowl of discoloured water out of the window on to the garden, and there came to her mind his gesture, his action the first time she had met him, when with vide impatience he had cast out of the window the dead flowers and the

the window on to the garden, and there came to her mind his gesture, his action the first time she had met him, when with vivid impatience he had cast out of the window the dead flowers and the foul water in the dusty vase.

She wondered if the cupidon, with the sinister, dimpled face was standing lonely in the grand reception room? There would be a great

Her room, her for two years, what had they done with that? Was the little pianoforte still there and the easels on which she stood her water-colours, and the mirror in which she had looked at herself, nude, veiled only by her hair?

Javiaux du Boccage, too, that must be standing in solitude in the vast, deserted park.

The present Duke, the young boy, had been taken abroad by his relatives, the family had scattered as far as possible from the scene

deal of dust now on the pelmets, many cobwebs in the shadows of

the high window frames.

of the tragedy.

Yes, Javiaux du Boccage would be empty, how forlorn those great rooms must be, the scaffolding poles, where once his busy workmen had toiled...

And Locroi, the little Italian house in the Normandy fields, by the river,

And Locroi, the little Italian house in the Normandy fields, by the river, the weeping willows, and the orangery? All deserted, all silent.

As she stood gazing, on these visits, at the facade behind the light movements of bare trees, at the little door of the chemist's shop in the Rue Keller, or at the gloomy gate of The Cemetery of the South, such an unutterable nostalgia would possess her that her soul seemed wrenched by sheer agony out of her body to float in an abvss of black misery. But when she returned to the menage Monet.

she would be composed, serene, a little paler, a little more silent than when she had left the house perhaps, but they understood this—Exhaustion following the spiritual exultation of lonely prayers.

To the sophisticated, the cynical who had watched her in the garden

of the Conciergerie she had been charming but wicked: to these

Her grandfather died in January and left her, unexpectedly, a small sum which relieved her of the necessity of relying on the straitened means of the pastor. To repay this and to buy little gifts for the three women, she had already sold what few objects of value she possessed, among them a bracelet with blue stones that fetched a surprisingly high price.

As she had frankly told her history to the pastor, he had recommended she should take, in defiance of the world's opinion

simple people she was charming but good.

Mademoiselle Lucille Clery; let Lucille Debelleyme die with the last echoes of the hideous tragedy in which she had been involved. Her future, as a fervent Protestant, as a martyr to her faith, was assured; she made many friends, received many offers of employment, of many advantageous posts, but she refused them all, preferring for

the present at least to remain with the family Monet. Presently she would go to England or America. Now, it would certainly be

and in contempt of the world's scorn, with a gesture that put her above all shade of subterfuge, her own name. She was henceforth

impossible for her to remain in Paris, but for the moment she was not, naturally, strong enough for travel.

Sometimes, diligently reading her English religious books in the evening, she would glance over the top of the pages at Nathaniel Meadows who was never far away from her chair. Without ever

Meadows who was never far away from her chair. Without ever giving him her confidence, nor indeed appearing to take any interest in him beyond gentle friendliness, she had had a profound influence over the young man. He now dressed like a Frenchman and with

some elegance, he had learnt to speak her language correctly. His Protestantism, his anti-Catholicism were emphasised to the point of bigotry; he told all his acquaintances that Lucille Clery, not Fanny du

bigotry; he told all his acquaintances that Lucille Clery, not Fanny du Boccage, was the saint and martyr of the tragedy of the Faubourg St. Honore her father, the Marechal Frediani, had been taken from the vaults of the Madeleine to Javiaux du Boccage, and that almost at the same time the Comte Edouard had removed the mortal remains of his brother from The Cemetery of the South and laid him in an unnamed

coffin of oak covered by a plain pall, beside the sumptuous mausoleum of his wife. Side by side again, dose as in a marriage

Lucille Clery read in the papers, now so full of the tumults and confusions of political unrest, a few lines in small print which stated that the body of Madame la Duchesse du Boccage, by the wish of

bed. At last she had his company in the lonely vaults of deserted Javiaux du Boccage.

This nearly shattered the young woman's control, acquired with such

an agony of effort.

"So, she has cheated me again--at last--triumphed after all."

M. le Duc Decaze listened to a letter being read to him by his secretary. It had been inscribed with those entreaties of urgency which had caused him to select it from among his heavy

writer had caused nim to select it from among his neavy correspondence. His eyes stared across the room with an inscrutable expression as the young man read aloud in a careful unemotional voice:

unemotional voice:

'Monsieur, weighed down by the terrible tragedy which has almost extinguished my life and reason, I have refused without hesitation

extinguished my life and reason, I have refused without hesitation several advantageous offers of a post, but to-day it is happiness itself which is offered me. I have not the strength to reject it without

making a last effort to overcome my sad history. The generous man who wishes to give me his name knows all my story, has full confidence in me. If he were alone I should not have need of any

They are strangers to me. I have never seen them, nor can I hope that they will easily believe my vows and my tears. Monsieur, but I have no other proof to give them. The papers that were seized on my arrest have never been returned to me, the public only know that I was accused. Monsieur, can you in conscience declare that I was not the infamous wretch who was held up to the contempt of the world? You were there, you questioned me, you knew this miserable menage, you were present at his torments, at mine, you must have been able to understand the part that I played in this drama where I blindly worked out my fate. You know that neither ambition nor love of power could have given me the influence that I had over my unhappy pupils--You have read HIS letters and mine and you know that we did not love each other. Monsieur, I do not implore your pity but I call on

human witness, but he belongs to a rich and well-considered family that cannot see him, without uneasiness, unite his destiny with mine.

vanity to think that you recognised in me some force of character-you know that I will endure much in silence--whatever you write I will accept as the sincere judgment of a man as good, as generous as he is great in the eyes of the world, and I shall submit to it with the profound sentiment of gratitude and respect that I shall hold for you to

'The happiness of all my life depends on your reply. I tell you that because I know that it cannot influence your decision. I have the

your honour.

expressed."

my last breath. 'Signed, Lucille Clery--formerly Debelleyme.'

As the secretary sat with the letter in his hand, waiting, the aristocrat

repeated: "so she has found another protector!--who, I wonder?-well, it does not matter! She plays her part very well until the end. Is

that letter sincere now, or a piece of drama? It is rather neatly

brought back to his mind the appalling death-bed of M. du Boccage, his friend, which shook even for one of his stern calibre to remember. M. du Boccage. who had confessed nothing, whose last words had been a denial of his crime.

Lucille Clery had appealed to the judgment of M. Decaze, asked him to state the truth. Wide as was his experience, long as had been his life, shrewd and apt as was his mind, the aristocrat found it difficult, even when sincerely searching his own heart to decide what was the truth in this affair.

As she had skilfully reminded him, he had had some knowledge of the menage in the Hotel du Boccage, many opportunities of studying at first hand the characters of M. du Boccage and his wife. He had examined for days together the murderer and the woman who was supposed to be his accomplice, he had heard the commentaries of all those who had had the remotest connection with the tragedy, the

The tips of his fine fingers tapped on his knees. The letter had

opinions of many clever and impartial observers. He had seen the King, a man of many sorrows, who so loathed the death penalty that he only traced initials on the warrants except in one instance, blanch and shudder as he reluctantly signed the decree of arrest for M. du Boccage. He had heard the Monarch exclaim: "I have had much to endure since I came to the throne of France, but this is the worst of

endure since I came to the throne of France, but this is the worst of all"; he had heard the simple and savage judgment of the people. What conclusion could he come to: adultery?--the usual thing--a love intrigue? A jealous woman driving a man mad? One ought to be prepared for everything in this world, but a crime so appalling and a

prepared for everything in this world, but a crime so appalling and a man of his rank and breeding, one so fastidious, amiable and even gentle in manners and speech, uncommonly devoted to his children. Madness then, an outburst of homicidal fury; but M. Decaze had sat

for hours by the bed of the prisoner in the Luxembourg and seen how, during the most excruciating tortures he had skilfully evaded his pitiless examiners. Undeniable sanity there...and the premeditation—

madness there, yet an incredible stupidity. The crime was so clumsy that the first investigator had discovered the author of it; how could M. du Boccage have supposed that he could escape detection--or. even if he had, how could he have hoped, after this appalling murder. to introduce Lucille Debelleyme publicly into his life again, either as governess, mistress or wife? M. Decaze shrugged his shoulders: the whole affair was one from which his intelligence shrank, baffled. If he had not known it to be true he would have dismissed it as a ridiculous fable.

the Cord, the poison, the wax in the baldaguin supports? No

is not a fool, she did not conceive that brutal lunacy."

What was her relationship with the Duke?

skilful--not quite skilful enough--?

was this inseparable bond between them, and if they were lovers why should the Duke have murdered his wife when he had had all he could hope for from his blonde Egeria?

M. Decaze was completely mystified. If they were not lovers, what

And the woman who had appealed to him? An enigma indeed; he had observed her very closely, and he believed that though she might be capable of a crime she was not capable of a crass stupidity. "She

The certificate of good conduct that she had demanded and he could not obtain--that seemed to have been the final motive of the murder.

The governess had constantly emphasised her respectability, her excellent testimonials. Was that the solution, had Camille du

Boccage, weak, violent, sensual, with a streak of cruelty in his nature, harried by a thousand exasperations, poisoned by hatred of a person with whom he was forced to live, shattered his reason, his control, the rules of his caste, even his humanity against the implacable respectability of a sly little bourgeoise, cunning, prim. done it—if she had guessed his intention he would not have done it. Guiltless then, as far as human justice can go. For the rest it is incredible, inexplicable—it is even a little ridiculous."

He dictated a dry reply to the appeal of Mademoiselle Clery, in which he gave her the testimony she required to satisfy the New Englanders. Fresh distaste touched him; she had said that she loved Camille du Boccage...and in a few months' time she had found another man.

"Not even loyal!" M. Decaze put the affair out of his mind; he had other matters to think of. Paris was again on the eve of revolution.

A huge and angry crowd before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shouted hot denunciations against M. Guizot; they were, with

M. Decaze thought so, "If they had been lovers he would not have

difficulty, held in check by a strong detachment of troops and by the municipal guards who, with drawn sabres, pressed the angry people back to the edge of the pavement. All the roads leading to the Tuileries and the Palais Royal were closed by troops, many of the other streets had been closed by the people; furniture, overturned cabs, omnibuses and torn-up paving-stones formed barricades

against the military. The soldiery appeared to perform their duties languidly, the municipal guards with brutal threats and insolent force.

Shots had been fired in the Place du Chatelet and the Rue St. Denis, everywhere through the hurried orders of the military sounded angry cries of: "Down with the Ministry! Down with the Monarchy! Long live Reform!"

In front of the offices of the newspaper La National passed a procession of biers carrying the people killed by the troops; fifty-two

had already fallen. Many of them were young students and among

that the King had given way and signed the decree for the dismissal of the hated Minister; but the passions of Paris were not so easily assuaged. This concession was greeted on all sides with cries of: "No more Kinas!"

them were women and children; their escort, with cries and tears of fury, velled for arms, for vengeance! By the afternoon it was known

People attacked the troops defending the Palais Royale. The Fourteenth of the Line, the National Guards and the Municipal Guards stationed near the Rue de Valois fired on the advancing mob: this was the signal for the final explosion of popular wrath. The people, by force of numbers, thrust back the soldiers and police, and

began to burn the Palais Royal; at one of the windows of this ancient palace of the House of Orleans a young man, the son of Admiral

Baudin, appeared and announced the abdication of Louis Philippe. The victorious crowd cried: "It is too late!" and these fatal words were followed by yells of "To the Tuileries!" The Palais Royal was already flaming. Among the crowds of curious citizens, nervous, ready to fly, who kept on the fringe of the tumult was a man and a woman--Nathaniel

Meadows, with Lucille Clery hanging on his arm. As the crowd, turning with one accord to attack the Tuileries, swept out of the Colonnades of the Palais Royal, the young man guickly drew his companion into a doorway where, unobserved, they could watch this furious tide of sudden revolution sweep past.

Lucille Clery regarded the yelling, surging crowd of armed revolutionaries without fear; she had of late been a diligent reader of

the newspapers. She had scanned some of the pamphlets that were

so eagerly seized on by the populace, she had heard, during these

sudden days of revolution, many popular speeches. She knew. therefore, that it was generally considered that as the affair Testehis class, escaped the death penalty; everyone believed that M. Pasquier, instructed by the Chamber of Peers, had given the poison that had spared an aristocrat from the guillotine. Lucille Clery, leaning lightly on her companion's arm, was thinking of some years ago, when, in an inn at Paddington, she had visualised some such scene as this and thought of herself as having a hand in it, either as the Hon. Mrs. Robert Morrison, an influential British aristocrat dabbling in politics or as Mary Showler, an intelligent, intriguing courtesan. She had always wanted to pull down this House of Orleans, the younger branch of Bourbon; she had always hoped to see a return of the Bonapartes to whose patronage her family had owed whatever they possessed. Now this moment had really come. Prince Louis Napoleon was supposed to be hastening to Paris, there might be another Empire ruled over by a Bonaparte--and she had had some hand in it. not as Mrs. Morrison, not as Mary Showler. not through any direct interest or interference in politics but merely as

Cubieres had been, in the popular estimation, the downfall of the law and the army, so the affair Du Boccage had been the downfall of the old aristocracy. This crime had been quickly followed by the dissolution of the Chamber of Peers, and in the full fury of the overthrow of the Monarchy the murder of the Faubourg St. Honore was often hurled as an unanswerable insult at the Ministry, the Government and the Peerage. A criminal had, with the connivance of

"Let us stay here awhile," said Mademoiselle Clery, "at least we are safe. Everyone is going to the Tuileries."

Her companion, who was shielding her with the greatest anxiety and continually gave her loving glances of apprehension, suggested, as the street emptied, that they should turn homewards. Their marriage, for which the family Monet were making loving preparations, was only a few days ahead. Within a week they were to sail for New York.

a governess in the household of M. du Boccage.

with excitement. "There will be a battle. Perhaps they will burn the Palace--it is terrible. I wonder if the King will escape?" A surge of students, carrying a tricolour on which hung the Phrygian cap of liberty, swept by. They passed close to the doorway where the

two were sheltering and the young man took the opportunity to gather the delicate, elegant body of Lucille Clery into his powerful arms, nor did he easily let her go; she remained leaning against him as if overcome by fright, but in reality she felt no fear. She was thinking of her unblemished body, which in the interest of ambition had been offered vainly to Robert Morrison and in the interests of ambition had been vainly withheld from Camille du Boccage and was now to be given with all the rights of solemn matrimony to this young Puritan, to

"There are three thousand troops there," said the young American

"Is it worth while living in exile with this man who will always be a stranger--why does one so coolly take the line of least resistance?" She gave him a clear glance of wonder and he mistook it for a look of love and pressed her hand warmly; she turned her face aside to hide her expression.

"So, this is my destiny--always to deal with stupid men! But, after all, he can give me what I want most, in fact the only thing I want--this great prize, leisure in which to dream what might have been, to bring before a mental vision another face, another moment." The streets were deserted, they could hear the sound of firing, a low

smoke began to hang over the city.

"Let us go home." said Lucille Clerv.

whom she was in everything completely alien.

The young man, eager to do her bidding, released her from his

home: it seemed indeed a place of refuge amidst this tumult. She was still wondering if she could endure him, if, after all, the river would not have been better. Towards his person, his character, she was profoundly indifferent; she knew all there ever would be to know about him, and none of it held any interest for her. But his clothes, his manners irritated her, she longed passionately for the costly cloth, the fine linen, the delicate perfume, the extravagant details of another

embrace, adjusting her fine cashmere shawl round her shoulders and putting his arm round her waist, almost lifting her from the ground, hastened with her towards the pastor's modest pleasant

man's attire: she despised everything in Nathaniel Meadows that was not--that never could be--grand seigneur. In their hurry they turned round a corner of a side street that led quickly home; there had been a struggle there between police and insurgents and gouts of blood lay across the road. The young American realised that such a sight must be even more horrible to Mademoiselle Clery than to most women; he swung her aside towards a florist's shop. It was his intention to buy her a cluster of the southern violets, but the frightened shopkeeper was putting up his shutters and as the couple reached his door his wife was throwing in the street a can of stale water and some withered violets; flowers had not sold well in Paris for the last few days. The Villa Violette, the two vessels emptied from the windows of the

Hotel du Boccage, the bunch of faded roses cast into the Seine as the dead boy was carried to the Morgue, the trickle of blood from

under the gates of the slaughter-house, from the apartment of the husband to that of the wife.

"No flowers!" said the young man in disappointment.

Lucille Clery hid her face with a corner of her Andalusian shawl which she held to keep off, the evening fog and the fumes of the cannon

shouted out in excitement that Louis Philippe, who had been passing in review the garrison of the Tuileries, had on the approach of the mob at once jumped into a little coupe and had fled from Paris, and that the Due de Nemours who was in command of the troops defending the Royal Palace had retired. The people were in the palace, they had already found the throne, broken it to pieces and thrown it from the windows...

smoke which floated down every street. A student in a Grecian cap with a long tassel, supporting a wounded companion came by and

these words in the Paddington inn found some comfort in irony as she hung with her timid helpless air on the arm of her stalwart young protector. It gave her some pleasure to reflect how few would guess that in this insignificant humbly-born young woman was one of the main causes of the revolution which meant the downfall of a dynasty.

"I should like to pull him down": the young woman who had uttered

Yet this acrid satisfaction was veiled by such utter misery, such bitter nostalgia that she almost hated her own fortitude which enabled her to endure such unhappiness. The troops of soldiers, the ambulances, the screaming women, the surging crowds who passed, the noise of the cannons, the smoke in the air, the cries, the shouts, the rumours, all were like a mirage to Lucille Clerv: as she passed lightly, swiftly.

all were like a mirage to Lucille Clery; as she passed lightly, swiftly, close to her lover through the embattled streets, the uproar of revolution, she saw only a face which gazed back as if awaiting a signal, the lint-coloured hair disordered on the forehead: "I shall expect of you speed of the street of th

expect of you some action."

The Pastor Frederic Monet was putting up a prayer for the two lovers caught in the turmoil of the rioting, while his daughters, with

caught in the turmoil of the rioting, while his daughters, with sentimental tenderness, sewed sprays of wax orange blossoms on to the satin bonnet of the bride.

EPILOGUE

comfortable. Puritan New Englanders.

that was a task that could wait.

Mrs. Lucy Meadows was preparing, in her pleasant, brown stone house, for one of those agreeable afternoon entertainments, so well known in New York as a gathering place for the more enlightened

Christian workers. Mrs. Meadows had just returned from Long Island, where she had spent the hot American summer; she endured excessive heat very badly, and usually passed the month of August in a state of languid ill-health, but at the coming of the autumn there was

always a return of her energy and, perfect housekeeper and good organiser as she was, she would at once resume that ceaseless work which made her the admired centre of a group of prosperous.

Mrs. Meadows had been married for several years and her union with the well-known pastor Nathaniel Meadows was considered

ideal. Her devotion was of a nature at once lofty and touching; she was her husband's constant companion and assisted him in the compilation and editing of his successful paper The Christian Evangelist.

A copy of the proofs of the current issue of this journal lay on the mahogany desk between the two tall windows but Mrs. Meadows.

occupied in preparing for her guests, gave it no more than a glance;

The lion of the party was to be Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, and no doubt the subject of animated discussion would be the emancipation of the slaves in the South, which Mrs. Stowe, by her famous novel, had done so much to make a burning question of the moment.

The handsome room was clean and arranged with faultless taste. Mrs. Meadows glided here and there, rearranging, with a sure

slender shape and was finely cut, not too high at the throat and collared with beautiful lace. Her pale hair was gathered into a knot at the back of her head and was partly covered by the discreet matron's cap that was arranged on her small head with an art which approached coquetry. Her small features as yet showed no line or wrinkle but seemed in their firm outline to be made of some imperishable material. It was generally recognised that Mrs. Meadows was a very lovely woman and one wholly without vanity. Her modest habit of keeping her lovely eyes downcast was much commended: a model wife, a model marriage. There were no

judgment, clusters of autumn flowers, asters, golden rod, a few last roses that filled the vases of Colonial silver which made a satisfactory display against the dark-panelled walls. She was dressed plainly as befitted a pastor's wife but her dress flattered her

and wife and their mutual absorption in good work.

Mrs. Meadows paused and critically examined the elaborate tea service for twelve people which was laid on a side table. She picked up the massive silver piece by piece, not a speck of tarnish; with delicate fingers she raised the blue and crimson Worcester china piece by piece, not a fleck of dust. The homemade cakes were

children--a pity perhaps, but those who were most intimate with the Meadows establishment agreed that no doubt it was just as well no little ones had come to interfere with the intense devotion of husband

varied and delicious, largely her own work or made under her immediate supervision, and delicately covered by thin linen napkins of her own embroidery.

The Rev. Nathaniel Meadows was indeed, blessed in so perfect a housekeeper.

Having finished her inspection she seated herself by the wide hearth on which the first fire of the year burned clearly. Behind her hung a series of portraits, drawings and small oils, of her husband's

unseeingly across the comfortable room where this exotic woman, so completely alien to all her surroundings, sat at ease, flourishing discreetly on the substance provided by their toil and prudence.

Mrs. Meadows, in an attitude unconsciously elegant, was gazing at a bureau in the corner on which stood filigree dishes of biscuit-hued china piled with ruddy fruits and comfits in silver paper. One of the drawers of this bureau was always locked, she kept the key always about her person. In this moment of tranquillity she was wondering at the weakness which had made her preserve what really should have long ago been destroyed. She was alone, there was a bright fire, was not this, perhaps, the moment? She felt so calm, she could find the strength to handle what she did not wish to touch again, to look at what she never wished to see again. Someone must sooner or later burn or destroy the contents of that drawer; she might die before her husband, and whenever she died there would be those who. however

ancestors—sturdy, hard-working Puritan stock, good business men, able money-makers, people who had successfully defied the world, the flesh and the devil without feeling themselves obliged to lead the lives of either saint or hermit. Their square-cut faces stared

reverently, would handle what she left behind--better that she should destroy all trace of what ought to have long ago been forgotten, what she believed was forgotten by everyone but herself. She continued to stare at the locked drawer, she did not need to open it to read the contents of some of the French newspapers. La Reforme, Le Charivari, L'Union Monarchique, folded away there: the words

Charivari, L'Union Monarchique, folded away there: the words seemed to be traced on the air of the pleasant sitting-room.

At dawn on August 16th the few demestics remaining in the Hotel du

At dawn on August 16th the few domestics remaining in the Hotel du Boccage (the Duke bad dismissed almost the entire household the preceding day) were aroused by the sound of a bell being irregularly

rung from the apartments of Madame la Duchess. Dressing themselves hastily they rushed to her door but found this unaccustomedly locked from the inside. They then went round the

with blood, one of them clutched some fragments of blond hair. The disorder of the room, the overturning of light articles of furniture, smashed porcelain and torn curtains showed the unhappy woman had sustained a terrible struggle with her murderer. As the servants recoiled they saw a figure detaching itself from the shadows of the cabinet de toilette. This figure supported itself against the wall, continually took its head in its hands; as it advanced into the uncertain light of the dawn they perceived it was M. le Duc du Boccage...

From the first moment that the officers of Justice arrived on the scene a grave fact was remarked, there was no trace of robbery, of any entry from the garden. but a track of blood marked the floor from

terrace; as they approached someone from inside opened the window. They looked in and a frightful spectacle met their eyes, Madame la Duchesse du Boccage lying extended on the floor near her bed bleeding from many large wounds, her hands were covered

clothes, put on, with the assistance of Henri, his valet, a robe de chambre of brown wool lined with blue silk over trousers in wide stripes of blue and grey, a waistcoat of white batiste and a linen shirt and black silk cravat.

Despite the extreme heat of the morning, smoke from an early hour had been seen to issue from the chimney of the private apartment of M. du Boccage.

Monsieur du Boccage, while the police were examining his other

the apartment of the Duchess to that of the Duke.

M. du Boccage.

It was remarked that he wore gloves throughout the morning. When a medical examination of his person, was ordered in the afternoon the reason was apparent; his hands were covered with scratches and

there was a severe bite on one of his thumbs. It was by then established that the blond hairs clutched in the rigid fingers of the

Colonial days, it bore the name of a Cambridge maker in tall nourishing letters on the dial...another twenty minutes before she might expect even the most punctual of her guests.

Owing to the feeble light and the desire to attract no attention it took nearly two hours to traverse the back streets from the Faubourg St.

Duchess were of the same colour and length as those of her

Mrs. Meadows glanced at the clock brought from England in the

husband

Burning with thirst and shivering with cold, he was given continual drinks of iced Burgundy to ease his self-inflicted misery.

The effect of the immense quantity of arsenic he had drunk was such as to contract his body in his final agonies till he looked like a child.

When he was dead, however, the muscles relaxed and as he lav

Honors to the prison of the Luxembourg. On arrival there the prisoner was in such a state of collapse that be had to be carried to his cell.

stripped on the marble table awaiting the autopsy, the first surgeon to see him exclaimed: "What a superb athlete!"

Mrs. Meadows rose and went to the bureau, unlocked the drawer and took out the bundle of newspapers. There was a copy of The Times there too with a pencil mark round this paragraph: "We greatly

Times there too with a pencil mark round this paragraph: "We greatly regret to inform our readers of the sudden death of the Hon. Robert Morrison, who, by a most regrettable accident, was thrown from his horse while hunting in the Cotswolds to-day."

Mrs. Meadows took the papers and tossed them into the bright, clear

fire. They were burnt almost at once, but her keen eyes could discern for a second or two words where the printer's ink resisted the flame, "murder--suicide--death."

All gone now, all vanished, like the Hotel du Boccage itself which had

Marechal de Frediani had sealed up once stood, where the new governess had noted the dimpled, smiling face of the Cupidon looking over her shoulder and M. du Boccage had thrown the flowers and the stale water out of the window, and two years later another vessel containing water stained with blood: where the portrait of Lord Clare had hung on the wall of the little study gazing with his amiable, sensual smile at the green writing-desk where the correspondence

been demolished several years ago. No one wanted to live in it, nor even to build on the site. The Rue d'Elysee now crossed the ground where Lucille Debelleyme had walked for the first time on a warm spring day, where the blood-stained disordered room that the

Mrs. Meadows took up the poker and stirred the fire, not even ashes remained.

Javiaux du Boccage stood deserted; the family had scattered. The only inhabitants of that grandiose chateau were the two corpses lying

of Fanny du Boccage had been thrown by an exasperated hand. All

gone--all vanished.

side by side in the new vaults. She with all the panoply and pomp that love and affection could suggest—he under his plain black pall with a simple cross put there by the unwilling hand of outraged charity.

Mrs. Meadows looked again at the clock, in another ten minutes she might expect the first of her guests.

She had now much that in her youth she would have given half her life

the admiration of a large circle of friends; the discreet fame of a Protestant martyr who had been involved in the almost incredible machinations of Catholics and Jesuits; comfort ease leisure power

Protestant martyr who had been involved in the almost incredible machinations of Catholics and Jesuits; comfort, ease, leisure, power and influence over those who felt the force of her wit, her intellect—subtle domination.

nearer to that annihilation which was her firm conception of death.

Her husband was the first person to enter the room she had so charmingly prepared for their guests. He had been parted from her several hours and greeted her as effusively as if he had returned from a long voyage. This Evangelistic parson, robust, ardent, simple, was completely happy. He had found that which none of his readings or the transmitted experiences of his elders had predisposed him to believe possible to find—a woman who could be as alluring as an intelligent companion; the domestic wife and the accomplished mistress in one, a paragon that many men have laboured in vain to find. The Rev. Nathaniel Meadows did not thus analyse the matter to

himself: he merely considered his dear Lucy as a worthy helpmate

He kissed her, even after so many years of marriage, eagerly. She entirely pleased his senses. The richest part of his life was still those moments when he was not a Puritan, clergyman, nor she a pious matron, but when he, a man with a woman, served in secret those

expressly sent him by God.

Mrs. Lucy Meadows had indeed almost everything that Mary Showler, Lucille Debelleyme, Lucille Clery had longed for; but she secretly eagerly marked the passing of every day that brought her

lustful passions his Church forbade; when the company had gone there would be the evening together and after the evening the night...What he said was, "Have you corrected those proofs, my dear? The paper ought to go to press to-night."

"I will do it when the company have gone. Don't you think Mrs. Stowe's article rather coarse—it might offend many good Christians. I know it is only the way she expresses herself, but one does not wish

to trespass in anything beyond the dictates of the Church—"

He said that she was, as always, right, and gazed at her with looks of

love, asking her if she was quite recovered from the summer languors, if she did not find New York too hot? His appearance was fine; she had taken great pains with his manners, his dress, tastes, trying to mould him to the likeness of a memory: but the result of all her efforts was only the caricature of another man She asked him to replenish the fire and watched him while he placed the logs in that clear hollow of flame where the French newspapers and the English cutting had been consumed. He turned back to her with smiles; how charming, how elegant she was! He was always so glad when the summer, when August was over, because undoubtedly she languished in the great heat. Her figure was outlined so prettily against the wall where hung some of her own drawings of flowers, her faintly-pencilled landscapes. He sincerely blessed God for this lovely, clever wife; she had her moods, bleak, melancholy, unaccountable, but they were always brief and there was something even about her rare flashes of temper, of acid comment that pleased him, like a sharp flavour not understood but salty and stimulating. They had had few quarrels. He had once brought home a parcel of music for an entertainment in the Mission Hall: among the pieces had been an old polka. "La Belle Helene." and two of his congregation, Miss Bibby and Miss Prue Hardside had wanted to play it as a duet. Then, really, darling Lucy had behaved most strangely; she had been guite bitter and violent at the idea of secular music in the Mission Hall, and when he had urged her not to be narrow minded, she had begun to say terrible things--in French, which he could understand only roughly now, but the look, the tone!--Sometimes he recalled that unpleasant incident with a veritable shudder. Of course, she had had her way and the concert had been duly dull; of course, she had soon become herself again; he had been very careful never again to offend her extreme religious

his house in perfect order, to share his enthusiasm for his childish, unpleasant creed, was it worth while? Only because of a deep, detested instinct of self-preservation, the inability to forego those poignant memories that must cease at an atheist's death...and yet death was longed for too. "What a relief to think that I shall not go to

To satisfy the secret, clumsy, shamefaced lusts of a Puritan, to keep

susceptibility.

his Heaven--"

gleamed in the firelight.

a cherub playing with daisies that he had chosen to illustrate her essay?

She looked, she praised dutifully, then her glance fell on the number of the paper printed by the title: one thousand and fifty-four. Instantly

she bent over her work, she was hemming flannel petticoats for orphan girls; her silver thimble, wreathed with forget-me-nots.

He brought the long sheets of print over to her, admiring her little contribution, and held it before her asking if she did not like the cut of

"Those sketches, my love, should we not publish them in a little volume?"

"I really do not know, dear, whether they are suitable for Christian Evangelists. Besides, they are really very trivial. You must not flatter me, I have no talent in that direction."

"You have talents, my darling, in all directions, everything you touch is well done."

He could not read the sincere contempt in her smile as she glanced up at him, he had never been able to understand her at all and never would be. He was perfectly satisfied with the artificial self she so and fifty-four.

"I should like them published in a book. You have almost enough," he urged, gazing fatuously at the cut, the proof.

"Do you think they would be of any interest to the American public, my dear?"

"Why I am sure, such pretty, such charming sketches—your account of Louis Philippe at the Tuileries and of a holiday at Dieppe—those

scenes in a country chateau and the little anecdotes of servants and children! Why, Mrs. Stowe was speaking to me of it only yesterday; she said it was all most charmingly done. But what will you call

them?"

contemptuously offered him: her smile became fixed, one thousand

She turned a full look from her clear, formidable eyes on his candid face.

"Sketches of Home Life in France, I thought, but perhaps that is a little banal."

"I think it will do very well." Then, "It is hardly charming, pretty

enough."

He took from his wide pocket the manuscript of insipid, amiable and mildly diverting essays which Mrs. Meadows had written on the manners, surroundings and customs of those strange and rather forbidding people, the French, who, she laboured to show, had, after all, a friendly, domestic side.

One thousand and fifty-four.

As he turned over with loving admiration the sheets covered with her neat handwriting, Mrs. Meadows rose and turned her back to her

volume on which he had set his heart.

She glanced at the neat row of books in a glass case—there in the corner, next a handsome volume adorned with coloured plates, entitled. Gentlewoman's Annual Amateur Gardening, was a volume of 'Forget-me-not' for the year 1840; she touched her lips with her thimble which was wreathed with the simple blue flower: "I shall not forget them and they will not forget me--no, none of those who met me will ever forget Lucille Debellevme--no. I shall not forget--one

She turned slowly to her husband as a ring of the bell at the main

"If you really want a pretty title--after all it is a book of reminiscences.

Mr. Meadows continued persistently to ask for a title for the little

husband so that he might not surprise the uncontrollable spasm of agony, of bitter longing which convulsed the features usually so placid; and as her needle darted mechanically through the flannel the thought "how do I go on living?" seemed to dart through her heart. An apartment in the Rue Keller—was the chemist's shop still standing? A sob rose to her throat and lips—a man staring at her expectantly from

THE END

under his thick, fair lashes.

thousand and fifty-four."

door announced the first quest:

why not call it. dear. Forget-me-not?"

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