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## COSMOPOLIS

By PAUL BOURGET

With a Preface by JULES LEMAITRE, of the French academy,

### PAUL BOURGET

Born in Amiens, September 2, 1852, Paul Bourget was a pupil at the Lycee Louis le Grand, and then followed a course at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, intending to devote himself to Greek philology. He, however, soon gave up linguistics for poetry, literary criticism, and fiction. When yet a very young man, he became a contributor to various journals and reviews, among others to the 'Revue des deux Mondes, La Renaissance, Le Parlement, La Nouvelle Revue', etc. He has since given himself up almost exclusively to novels and fiction, but it is necessary to mention here that he also wrote poetry. His poetical works comprise: 'Poesies (1872-876), La Vie Inquiete (1875), Edel (1878), and Les Aveux (1882)'.

With riper mind and to far better advantage, he appeared a few years later in literary essays on the writers who had most influenced his own development--the philosophers Renan, Taine, and Amiel, the poets Baudelaire and Leconte de Lisle; the dramatist Dumas fils, and the novelists Turgenieff, the Goncourts, and Stendhal. Brunetiere says of Bourget that "no one knows more, has read more, read better, or meditated, more profoundly upon what he has read, or assimilated it more completely." So much "reading" and so much "meditation," even when accompanied by strong assimilative powers, are not, perhaps, the most desirable and necessary tendencies in a writer of verse or of fiction. To the philosophic critic, however, they must evidently be invaluable; and thus it is that in a certain self-allotted domain of literary appreciation allied to semi-scientific thought, Bourget stands to-day without a rival. His 'Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine (1883),



Nouveaux Essais (1885), and Etudes et Portraits (1888) are certainly not the work of a week, but rather the outcome of years of self-culture and of protracted determined endeavor upon the sternest lines. In fact, for a long time, Bourget rose at 3 a.m. and elaborated anxiously study after study, and sketch after sketch, well satisfied when he sometimes noticed his articles in the theatrical 'feuilleton' of the 'Globe' and the 'Parlement', until he finally contributed to the great 'Debats' itself. A period of long, hard, and painful probation must always be laid down, so to speak, as the foundation of subsequent literary fame. But France, fortunately for Bourget, is not one of those places where the foundation is likely to be laid in vain, or the period of probation to endure for ever and ever.

In fiction, Bourget carries realistic observation beyond the externals (which fixed the attention of Zola and Maupassant) to states of the mind: he unites the method of Stendhal to that of Balzac. He is always interesting and amusing. He takes himself seriously and persists in regarding the art of writing fiction as a science. He has wit, humor, charm, and lightness of touch, and ardently strives after philosophy and intellectuality--qualities that are rarely found in fiction. It may well be said of M. Bourget that he is innocent of the creation of a single stupid character. The men and women we read of in Bourget's novels are so intellectual that their wills never interfere with their hearts.

The list of his novels and romances is a long one, considering the fact that his first novel, 'L'Irreparable,' appeared as late as 1884. It was followed by 'Cruelle Enigme (1885); Un Crime d'Amour (1886); Andre Cornelis and Mensonges (1887); Le Disciple (1889); La Terre promise; Cosmopolis (1892), crowned by the Academy; Drame de Famille (1899); Monique (1902)'; his romances are 'Une Idylle tragique (1896); La Duchesse Bleue (1898); Le Fantome (1901); and L'Etape (1902)'.

'Le Disciple' and 'Cosmopolis' are certainly notable books. The latter marks the cardinal point in Bourget's fiction. Up to that time he had seen environment more than characters; here the dominant interest is psychic, and, from this point on, his characters become more and more like Stendhal's, "different from normal clay." Cosmopolis is perfectly charming. Bourget is, indeed, the past-master of "psychological" fiction.

To sum up: Bourget is in the realm of fiction what Frederic Amiel is in the realm of thinkers and philosophers--a subtle, ingenious, highly gifted student of his time. With a wonderful dexterity of pen, a very acute, almost womanly intuition, and a rare diffusion of grace about all his writings, it is probable that Bourget will remain less known as a critic than as a romancer. Though he neither feels like Loti nor sees like Maupassant--he reflects.

JULES LEMAITRE  
de l'Academie Francaise.

## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

I send you, my dear Primoli, from beyond the Alps, the romance of international life, begun in Italy almost under your eyes, to which I have given for a frame that ancient and noble Rome of which you are so ardent an admirer.

To be sure, the drama of passion which this book depicts has no particularly Roman features, and nothing was farther from my thoughts than to trace a picture of the society so local, so traditional, which exists between the Quirinal and the Vatican. The drama is not even Italian, for the scene might have been laid, with as much truth, at Venice, Florence, Nice, St. Moritz, even Paris or London, the various cities which are like quarters scattered over Europe of the fluctuating 'Cosmopolis,' christened by Beyle: 'Vengo adesso da Cosmopoli'. It is the contrast between the rather incoherent ways of the rovers of high life and the character of perennity impressed everywhere in the great city of the Caesars and of the Popes which has caused me to choose the spot where even the corners speak of a secular past, there to evoke some representatives of the most modern, as well as the most arbitrary and the most momentary, life. You, who know better than any one the motley world of cosmopolites, understand why I have confined myself to painting here only a fragment of it. That world, indeed, does not exist, it can have neither defined customs nor a general character. It is composed of exceptions and of singularities. We are so naturally creatures of custom, our continual mobility has such a need of gravitating around one fixed axis, that motives of a personal order alone can determine us upon an habitual and voluntary exile from our native land. It is so, now in the case of an artist, a person seeking for instruction and change; now in the case of a business man who desires to escape the consequences of some scandalous error; now in the case of a man of pleasure in search of new adventures; in the case of another, who cherishes prejudices from birth, it is the longing to find the "happy mean;" in the case of another, flight from distasteful memories. The life of the cosmopolite can conceal all beneath the vulgarity of its whims, from snobbery in quest of higher connections to swindling in quest of easier prey, submitting to the brilliant frivolities of the sport, the sombre intrigues of policy, or the sadness of a life which has been a failure. Such a variety of causes renders at once very attractive and almost impracticable the task of the author who takes as a model that ever-changing society so like unto itself in the exterior rites and fashions, so really, so intimately complex and composite in its fundamental elements. The writer is compelled to take from it a series of leading facts, as I have done, essaying to deduce a law which governs them. That law, in the present instance, is the permanence of race. Contradictory as may appear this result, the more one studies the cosmopolites, the more one ascertains that the most irreducible idea within them is that special strength of heredity which slumbers beneath the monotonous uniform of superficial relations, ready to reawaken as soon as love stirs the depths of the temperament. But there again a difficulty, almost

insurmountable, is met with. Obligated to concentrate his action to a limited number of personages, the novelist can not pretend to incarnate in them the confused whole of characters which the vague word race sums up. Again, taking this book as an example, you and I, my dear Primoli, know a number of Venetians and of English women, of Poles and of Romans, of Americans and of French who have nothing in common with Madame Steno, Maud and Boleslas Gorka, Prince d'Ardea, Marquis Cibo, Lincoln Maitland, his brother-in-law, and the Marquis de Montfanon, while Justus Hafner only represents one phase out of twenty of the European adventurer, of whom one knows neither his religion, his family, his education, his point of setting out, nor his point of arriving, for he has been through various ways and means. My ambition would be satisfied were I to succeed in creating here a group of individuals not representative of the entire race to which they belong, but only as possibly existing in that race--or those races. For several of them, Justus Hafner and his daughter Fanny, Alba Steno, Florent Chapron, Lydia Maitland, have mixed blood in their veins. May these personages interest you, my dear friend, and become to you as real as they have been to me for some time, and may you receive them in your palace of Tor di Nona as faithful messengers of the grateful affection felt for you by your companion of last winter.

PAUL BOURGET.

PARIS, November 16, 1892.

COSMOPOLIS

CHAPTER I

A DILETTANTE AND A BELIEVER

Although the narrow stall, flooded with heaped-up books and papers, left the visitor just room enough to stir, and although that visitor was one of his regular customers, the old bookseller did not deign to move from the stool upon which he was seated, while writing on an unsteady desk. His odd head, with its long, white hair, peeping from beneath a once black felt hat with a broad brim, was hardly raised at the sound of the opening and shutting of the door. The newcomer saw an emaciated, shriveled face, in which, from behind spectacles, two brown eyes twinkled slyly. Then the hat again shaded the paper, which the knotty fingers, with their dirty nails, covered with uneven lines traced in a handwriting belonging to another age, and from the thin, tall form, enveloped in a greenish, worn-out coat, came a faint voice, the voice of a man afflicted with chronic laryngitis, uttering as an apology, with a strong Italian accent, this phrase in French:

"One moment, Marquis, the muse will not wait."

"Very well, I will; I am no muse. Listen to your inspiration comfortably, Ribalta," replied, with a laugh, he whom the vendor of old

books received with such original unconstraint. He was evidently accustomed to the eccentricities of the strange merchant. In Rome--for this scene took place in a shop at the end of one of the most ancient streets of the Eternal City, a few paces from the Place d'Espagne, so well known to tourists--in the city which serves as a confluent for so many from all points of the world, has not that sense of the odd been obliterated by the multiplicity of singular and anomalous types stranded and sheltering there? You will find there revolutionists like boorish Ribalta, who is ending in a curiosity-shop a life more eventful than the most eventful of the sixteenth century.

Descended from a Corsican family, this personage came to Rome when very young, about 1835, and at first became a seminarist. On the point of being ordained a priest, he disappeared only to return, in 1849, so rabid a republican that he was outlawed at the time of the reestablishment of the pontifical government. He then served as secretary to Mazzini, with whom he disagreed for reasons which clashed with Ribalta's honor. Would passion for a woman have involved him in such extravagance? In 1870 Ribalta returned to Rome, where he opened, if one may apply such a term to such a hole, a book-shop. But he is an amateur bookseller, and will refuse you admission if you displease him. Having inherited a small income, he sells or he does not, following his fancy or the requirements of his own purchases, to-day asking you twenty francs for a wretched engraving for which he paid ten sous, to-morrow giving you at a low price a costly book, the value of which he knows. Rabid Gallophobe, he never pardoned his old general the campaign of Dijon any more than he forgave Victor Emmanuel for having left the Vatican to Pius IX. "The house of Savoy and the papacy," said he, when he was confidential, "are two eggs which we must not eat on the same dish." And he would tell of a certain pillar of St. Peter's hollowed into a staircase by Bernin, where a cartouch of dynamite was placed. If you were to ask him why he became a book collector, he would bid you step over a pile of papers, of boarding and of folios. Then he would show you an immense chamber, or rather a shed, where thousands of pamphlets were piled up along the walls: "These are the rules of all the convents suppressed by Italy. I shall write their history." Then he would stare at you, for he would fear that you might be a spy sent by the king with the sole object of learning the plans of his most dangerous enemy--one of those spies of whom he has been so much in awe that for twenty years no one has known where he slept, where he ate, where he hid when the shutters of his shop in the Rue Borgognona were closed. He expected, on account of his past, and his secret manner, to be arrested at the time of the outrage of Passanante as one of the members of those Circoli Barsanti, to whom a refractory corporal gave his name.

But, on examining the dusty cartoons of the old book-stall, the police discovered nothing except a prodigious quantity of grotesque verses directed against the Piedmontese and the French, against the Germans and the Triple Alliance, against the Italian republicans and the ministers, against Cavour and Signor Crispi, against the University of Rome and the Inquisition, against the monks and the capitalists! It was, no doubt, one of those pasquinades which his customers watched him at work upon, thinking, as he did so, how Rome abounded in paradoxical meetings.

For, in 1867, that same old Garibaldian exchanged shots at Mentana with the Pope's Zouaves, among whom was Marquis de Montfanon, for so was called the visitor awaiting Ribalta's pleasure. Twenty-three years had sufficed to make of the two impassioned soldiers of former days two inoffensive men, one of whom sold old volumes to the other! And there is a figure such as you will not find anywhere else--the French nobleman who has come to die near St. Peter's.

Would you believe, to see him with his coarse boots, dressed in a simple coat somewhat threadbare, a round hat covering his gray head, that you have before you one of the famous Parisian dandies of 1864? Listen to this other history. Scruples of devoutness coming in the wake of a serious illness cast at one blow the frequenter of the 'Cafe Anglais' and gay suppers into the ranks of the pontifical zouaves. A first sojourn in Rome during the last four years of the government of Pius IX, in that incomparable city to which the presentiment of the approaching termination of a secular rule, the advent of the Council, and the French occupation gave a still more peculiar character, was enchantment. All the germs of piety instilled in the nobleman by the education of the Jesuits of Brughetti ended by reviving a harvest of noble virtues, in the days of trial which came only too quickly. Montfanon made the campaign of France with the other zouaves, and the empty sleeve which was turned up in place of his left arm attested with what courage he fought at Patay, at the time of that sublime charge when the heroic General de Sonis unfurled the banner of the Sacred Heart. He had been a duelist, sportsman, gambler, lover, but to those of his old companions of pleasure whom chance brought to Rome he was only a devotee who lived economically, notwithstanding the fact that he had saved the remnants of a large fortune for alms, for reading and for collecting.

Every one has that vice, more or less, in Rome, which is in itself the most surprising museum of history and of art. Montfanon is collecting documents in order to write the history of the French nobility and of the Church. His mistresses of the time when he was the rival of the Gramont-Caderousses and the Demidoffs would surely not recognize him any more than he would them. But are they as happy as he seems to have remained through his life of sacrifice? There is laughter in his blue eyes, which attest his pure Germanic origin, and which light up his face, one of those feudal faces such as one sees in the portraits hung upon the walls of the priories of Malta, where plainness has race. A thick, white moustache, in which glimmers a vague reflection of gold, partly hides a scar which would give to that red face a terrible look were it not for the expression of those eyes, in which there is fervor mingled with merriment. For Montfanon is as fanatical on certain subjects as he is genial and jovial on others. If he had the power he would undoubtedly have Ribalta arrested, tried, and condemned within twenty-four hours for the crime of free-thinking. Not having it, he amused himself with him, so much the more so as the vanquished Catholic and the discontented Socialists have several common hatreds. Even on this particular morning we have seen with what indulgence he bore the brusqueness of the old bookseller, at whom he gazed for ten minutes without disconcerting him in the least. At length the revolutionist seemed to have finished his

epigram, for with a quiet smile he carefully folded the sheet of paper, put it in a wooden box which he locked. Then he turned around.

"What do you desire, Marquis?" he asked, without any further preliminary.

"First of all, you will have to read me your poem, old redshirt," said Montfanon, "which will only be my recompense for having awaited your good pleasure more patiently than an ambassador. Let us see whom are you abusing in those verses? Is it Don Ciccio or His Majesty? You will not reply? Are you afraid that I shall denounce you at the Quirinal?"

"No flies enter a closed mouth," replied the old conspirator, justifying the proverb by the manner in which he shut his toothless mouth, into which, indeed, at that moment, neither a fly nor the tiniest grain of dust could enter.

"An excellent saying," returned the Marquis, with a laugh, "and one I should like to see engraved on the facade of all the modern parliaments. But between your poetry and your adages have you taken the time to write for me to that bookseller at Vienna, who owns the last copy of the pamphlet on the trial of the bandit Hafner?"

"Patience," said the merchant. "I will write."

"And my document on the siege of Rome, by Bourbon, those three notarial deeds which you promised me, have you dislodged them?"

"Patience, patience," repeated the merchant, adding, as he pointed with a comical mixture of irony and of despair to the disorder in his shop, "How can you expect me to know where I am in the midst of all this?"

"Patience, patience," repeated Montfanon. "For a month you have been singing that old refrain. If, instead of composing wretched verses, you would attend to your correspondence, and, if, instead of buying continually, you would classify this confused mass . . . . But," said he, more seriously, with a brusque gesture, "I am wrong to reproach you for your purchases, since I have come to speak to you of one of the last. Cardinal Guerillot told me that you showed him, the other day, an interesting prayer-book, although in very bad condition, which you found in Tuscany. Where is it?"

"Here it is," said Ribalta, who, leaping over several piles of volumes and thrusting aside with his foot an enormous heap of cartoons, opened the drawer of a tottering press. In that drawer he rummaged among an accumulation of odd, incongruous objects: old medals and old nails, bookbindings and discolored engravings, a large leather box gnawed by insects, on the outside of which could be distinguished a partly effaced coat-of-arms. He opened that box and extended toward Montfanon a volume covered with leather and studded. One of the clasps was broken, and when the Marquis began to turn over the pages, he could see that the interior had not been better taken care of than the exterior. Colored prints had originally ornamented the precious work; they were almost effaced. The

yellow parchment had been torn in places. Indeed, it was a shapeless ruin which the curious nobleman examined, however, with the greatest care, while Ribalta made up his mind to speak.

"A widow of Montalcino, in Tuscany, sold it to me. She asked me an enormous price, and it is worth it, although it is slightly damaged. For those are miniatures by Matteo da Siena, who made them for Pope Pius II Piccolomini. Look at the one which represents Saint Blaise, who is blessing the lions and panthers. It is the best preserved. Is it not fine?"

"Why try to deceive me, Ribalta?" interrupted Montfanon, with a gesture of impatience. "You know as well as I that these miniatures are very mediocre, and that they do not in the least resemble Matteo's compact work; and another proof is that the prayerbook is dated 1554. See!" and, with his remaining hand, very adroitly he showed the merchant the figures; "and as I have quite a memory for dates, and as I am interested in Siena, I have not forgotten that Matteo died before 1500. I did not go to college with Machiavelli," continued he, with some brusqueness, "but I will tell you that which the Cardinal would have told you if you had not deceived him by your finesse, as you tried to deceive me just now. Look at this partly effaced signature, which you have not been able to read. I will decipher it for you. Blaise de Mo, and then a c, with several letters missing, just three, and that makes Montluc in the orthography of the time, and the b is in a handwriting which you might have examined in the archives of that same Siena, since you come from there. Now, with regard to this coat-of-arms," and he closed the book to detail to his stupefied companion the arms hardly visible on the cover, "do you see a wolf, which was originally of gold, and turtles of gales? Those are the arms which Montluc has borne since the year 1554, when he was made a citizen of Siena for having defended it so bravely against the terrible Marquis de Marignan. As for the box," he took it in its turn to study it, "these are really the half-moons of the Piccolominis. But what does that prove? That after the siege, and just as it was necessary to retire to Montalcino, Montluc gave his prayer-book, as a souvenir, to some of that family. The volume was either lost or stolen, and finally reduced to the state in which it now is. This book, too, is proof that a little French blood was shed in the service of Italy. But those who have sold it have forgotten that, like Magenta and Solferino, you have only memory for hatred. Now that you know why I want your prayer-book, will you sell it to me for five hundred francs?"

The bookseller listened to that discourse with twenty contradictory expressions upon his face. From force of habit he felt for Montfanon a sort of respect mingled with animosity, which evidently rendered it very painful for him to have been surprised in the act of telling an untruth. It is necessary, to be just, to add that in speaking of the great painter Matteo and of Pope Pius II in connection with that unfortunate volume, he had not thought that the Marquis, ordinarily very economical and who limited his purchases to the strict domain of ecclesiastical history, would have the least desire for that prayer-book. He had magnified the subject with a view to forming a legend and to taking advantage of some rich, unversed amateur.

On the other hand, if the name of Montluc meant absolutely nothing to him, it was not the same with the direct and brutal allusion which his interlocutor had made to the war of 1859. It is always a thorn in the flesh of those of our neighbors from beyond the Alps who do not love us. The pride of the Garibaldian was not far behind the generosity of the former zouave. With an abruptness equal to that of Montfanon, he took up the volume and grumbled as he turned it over and over in his inky fingers:

"I would not sell it for six hundred francs. No, I would not sell it for six hundred francs."

"It is a very large sum," said Montfanon.

"No," continued the good man, "I would not sell it." Then extending it to the Marquis, in evident excitement, he cried: "But to you I will sell it for four hundred francs."

"But I have offered you five hundred francs for it," said the nonplussed purchaser. "You know that is a small sum for such a curiosity."

"Take it for four," insisted Ribalta, growing more and more eager, "not a sou less, not a sou more. It is what it cost me. And you shall have your documents in two days and the Hafner papers this week. But was that Bourbon who sacked Rome a Frenchman?" he continued. "And Charles d'Anjou, who fell upon us to make himself King of the two Sicilies? And Charles VIII, who entered by the Porte du Peuple? Were they Frenchmen? Why did they come to meddle in our affairs? Ah, if we were to calculate closely, how much you owe us! Was it not we who gave you Mazarin, Massena, Bonaparte and many others who have gone to die in your army in Russia, in Spain and elsewhere? And at Dijon? Did not Garibaldi stupidly fight for you, who would have taken from him his country? We are quits on the score of service . . . . But take your prayer-book-good-evening, good-evening. You can pay me later."

And he literally pushed the Marquis out of the stall, gesticulating and throwing down books on all sides. Montfanon found himself in the street before having been able to draw from his pocket the money he had got ready.

"What a madman! My God, what a madman!" said he to himself, with a laugh. He left the shop at a brisk pace, with the precious book under his arm. He understood, from having frequently come in contact with them, those southern natures, in which swindling and chivalry elbow without harming one another--Don Quixotes who set their own windmills in motion. He asked himself:

"How much would he still make after playing the magnanimous with me?" His question was never to be answered, nor was he to know that Ribalta had bought the rare volume among a heap of papers, engravings, and old books, paying twenty-five francs for all. Moreover, two encounters which followed one upon the other on leaving the shop, prevented him from



meditating on that problem of commercial psychology. He paused for a moment at the end of the street to cast a glance at the Place d'Espagne, which he loved as one of those corners unchanged for the last thirty years. On that morning in the early days of May, the square, with its sinuous edge, was indeed charming with bustle and light, with the houses which gave it a proper contour, with the double staircase of La Trinite-des-Monts lined with idlers, with the water which gushed from a large fountain in the form of a bark placed in the centre-one of the innumerable caprices in which the fancy of Bernin, that illusive decorator, delighted to indulge. Indeed, at that hour and in that light, the fountain was as natural in effect as were the nimble hawkers who held in their extended arms baskets filled with roses, narcissus, red anemones, fragile cyclamens and dark pansies. Barefooted, with sparkling eyes, entreaties upon their lips, they glided among the carriages which passed along rapidly, fewer than in the height of the season, still quite numerous, for spring was very late this year, and it came with delightful freshness. The flower-sellers besieged the hurried passers-by, as well as those who paused at the shop-windows, and, devout Catholic as Montfanon was, he tasted, in the face of the picturesque scene of a beautiful morning in his favorite city, the pleasure of crowning that impression of a bright moment by a dream of eternity. He had only to turn his eyes to the right, toward the College de la Propagande, a seminary from which all the missions of the world set out.

But it was decreed that the impassioned nobleman should not enjoy undisturbed the bibliographical trifle obtained so cheaply and which he carried under his arm, nor that feeling so thoroughly Roman; a sudden apparition surprised him at the corner of a street, at an angle of the sidewalk. His bright eyes lost their serenity when a carriage passed by him, a carriage, perfectly appointed, drawn by two black horses, and in which, notwithstanding the early hour, sat two ladies. The one was evidently an inferior, a companion who acted as chaperon to the other, a young girl of almost sublime beauty, with large black eyes, which contrasted strongly with a pale complexion, but a pallor in which there was warmth and life. Her profile, of an Oriental purity, was so much on the order of the Jewish type that it left scarcely a doubt as to the Hebrew origin of the creature, a veritable vision of loveliness, who seemed created, as the poets say, "To draw all hearts in her wake." But no! The jovial, kindly face of the Marquis suddenly darkened as he watched the girl about to turn the corner of the street, and who bowed to a very fashionable young man, who undoubtedly knew the late pontifical zouave, for he approached him familiarly, saying, in a mocking tone and in a French which came direct from France:

"Well! Now I have caught you, Marquis Claude-Francois de Montfanon!.... She has come, you have seen her, you have been conquered. Have your eyes feasted upon divine Fanny Hafner? Tremble! I shall denounce you to his Eminence, Cardinal Guerillot; and if you malign his charming catechist I will be there to testify that I saw you hypnotized as she passed, as were the people of Troy by Helen. And I know very positively that Helen had not so modern a grace, so beautiful a mind, so ideal a profile, so deep a glance, so dreamy a mouth and such a smile. Ah, how lovely she is! When shall you call?"

"If Monsieur Julien Dorsenne," replied Montfanon, in the same mocking tone, "does not pay more attention to his new novel than he is doing at this moment, I pity his publisher. Come here," he added, brusquely, dragging the young man to the angle of Rue Borgognona. "Did you see the victoria stop at No. 13, and the divine Fanny, as you call her, alight? . . . She has entered the shop of that old rascal, Ribalta. She will not remain there long. She will come out, and she will drive away in her carriage. It is a pity she will not pass by us again. We should have had the pleasure of seeing her disappointed air. This is what she is in search of," added he, with a gay laugh, exhibiting his purchase, "but which she could not have were she to offer all the millions which her honest father has stolen in Vienna. Ha, ha!" he concluded, laughing still more heartily, "Monsieur de Montfanon rose first; this morning has not been lost, and you, Monsieur, can see what I obtained at the curiosity-shop of that old fellow who will not make a plaything of this object, at least," he added, extending the book to his interlocutor, at whom he glanced with a comical expression of triumph.

"I do not wish to look at it," responded Dorsenne. "But, yes," he continued, as Montfanon shrugged his shoulders, "in my capacity of novelist and observer, since you cast it at my head, I know already what it is. What do you bet? . . . It is a prayer-book which bears the signature of Marshal de Montluc, and which Cardinal Guerillot discovered. Is that true? He spoke to Mademoiselle Hafner about it, and he thought he would mitigate your animosity toward her by telling you she was an enthusiast and wished to buy it. Is that true as well? And you, wretched man, had only one thought, to deprive that poor little thing of the trifle. Is that true? We spent the evening before last together at Countess Steno's; she talked to me of nothing but her desire to have the book on which the illustrious soldier, the great believer, had prayed. She told me of all her heroic resolutions. Later she went to buy it. But the shop was closed; I noticed it on passing, and you certainly went there, too . . . Is that true? . . . And, now that I have detailed to you the story, explain to me, you who are so just, why you cherish an antipathy so bitter and so childish--excuse the word!--for an innocent, young girl, who has never speculated on 'Change, who is as charitable as a whole convent, and who is fast becoming as devout as yourself. Were it not for her father, who will not listen to the thought of conversion before marriage, she would already be a Catholic, and--Protestants as they are for the moment--she would never go anywhere but to church . . . When she is altogether a Catholic, and under the protection of a Sainte-Claudine and a Sainte-Francoise, as you are under the protection of Saint-Claude and Saint-Francois, you will have to lay down your arms, old leaguer, and acknowledge the sincerity of the religious sentiments of that child who has never harmed you."

"What! She has done nothing to me?" . . . interrupted Montfanon. "But it is quite natural that a sceptic should not comprehend what she has done to me, what she does to me daily, not to me personally, but to my opinions. When one has, like you, learned intellectual athletics in the circus of the Sainte-Beuves and Renans, one must think it fine that Catholicism, that grand thing, should serve as a plaything for the

daughter of a pirate who aims at an aristocratic marriage. It may, too, amuse you that my holy friend, Cardinal Guerillot, should be the dupe of that intriguer. But I, Monsieur, who have received the sacrament by the side of a Sonis, I can not admit that one should make use of what was the faith of that hero to thrust one's self into the world. I do not admit that one should play the role of dupe and accomplice to an old man whom I venerate and whom I shall enlighten, I give you my word."

"And as for this ancient relic," he continued, again showing the volume, "you may think it childish that I do not wish it mixed up in the shameful comedy. But no, it shall not be. They shall not exhibit with words of emotion, with tearful eyes, this breviary on which once prayed that grand soldier; yes, Monsieur, that great believer. She has done nothing to me," he repeated, growing more and more excited, his red face becoming purple with rage, "but they are the quintessence of what I detest the most, people like her and her father. They are the incarnation of the modern world, in which there is nothing more despicable than these cosmopolitan adventurers, who play at grand seigneur with the millions filibustered in some stroke on the Bourse. First, they have no country. What is this Baron Justus Hafner--German, Austrian, Italian? Do you know? They have no religion. The name, the father's face, that of the daughter, proclaim them Jews, and they are Protestants--for the moment, as you have too truthfully said, while they prepare themselves to become Mussulmen or what not. For the moment, when it is a question of God!.... They have no family. Where was this man reared? What did his father, his mother, his brothers, his sisters do? Where did he grow up? Where are his traditions? Where is his past, all that constitutes, all that establishes the moral man?.... Just look. All is mystery in this personage, excepting this, which is very clear: if he had received his due in Vienna, at the time of the suit of the 'Credit Austro-Dalmate', in 1880, he would be in the galleys, instead of in Rome. The facts were these: there were innumerable failures. I know something about it. My poor cousin De Saint-Remy, who was with the Comte de Chambord, lost the bread of his old age and his daughter's dowry. There were suicides and deeds of violence, notably that of a certain Schroeder, who went mad on account of that crash, and who killed himself, after murdering his wife and his two children. And the Baron came out of it unsullied. It is not ten years since the occurrence, and it is forgotten. When he settled in Rome he found open doors, extended hands, as he would have found them in Madrid, London, Paris, or elsewhere. People go to his house; they receive him! And you wish me to believe in the devoutness of that man's daughter!.... No, a thousand times no; and you yourself, Dorsenne, with your mania for paradoxes and sophisms, you have the right spirit in you, and these people horrify you in reality, as they do me."

"Not the least in the world," replied the writer, who had listened to the Marquis's tirade; with an unconvinced smile, he repeated: "Not the least in the world.... You have spoken of me as an acrobat or an athlete. I am not offended, because it is you, and because I know that you love me dearly. Let me at least have the suppleness of one. First, before passing judgment on a financial affair I shall wait until I understand it. Hafner was acquitted. That is enough, for one thing. Were he even the greatest rogue in the universe, that would not prevent his daughter

from being an angel, for another. As for that cosmopolitanism for which you censure him, we do not agree there; it is just that which interests me in him. Thirdly,... I should not consider that I had lost the six months spent in Rome, if I had met only him. Do not look at me as if I were one of the patrons of the circus, Uncle Beuve, or poor Monsieur Renan himself," he continued, tapping the Marquis's shoulder. "I swear to you that I am very serious. Nothing interests me more than these exceptions to the general rule--than those who have passed through two, three, four phases of existence. Those individuals are my museum, and you wish me to sacrifice to your scruples one of my finest subjects.... Moreover,"--and the malice of the remark he was about to make caused the young man's eyes to sparkle "revile Baron Hafner as much as you like," he continued; "call him a thief and a snob, an intriguer and a knave, if it pleases you. But as for being a person who does not know where his ancestors lived, I reply, as did Bonhomet when he reached heaven and the Lord said to him: 'Still a chimney-doctor, Bonhomet?'--'And you, Lord?'. For you were born in Bourgogne, Monsieur de Montfanon, of an ancient family, related to all the nobility-upon which I congratulate you--and you have lived here in Rome for almost twenty-four years, in the Cosmopolis which you revile."

"First of all," replied the Pope's former soldier, holding up his mutilated arm, "I might say that I no longer count, I do not live. And then," his face became inspired, and the depths of that narrow mind, often blinded but very exalted, suddenly appeared, "and then, my Rome to me, Monsieur, has nothing in common with that of Monsieur Hafner nor with yours, since you are come, it seems, to pursue studies of moral teratology. Rome to me is not Cosmopolis, as you say, it is Metropolis, it is the mother of cities.... You forget that I am a Catholic in every fibre, and that I am at home here. I am here because I am a monarchist, because I believe in old France as you believe in the modern world; and I serve her in my fashion, which is not very efficacious, but which is one way, nevertheless.... The post of trustee of Saint Louis, which I accepted from Corcelle, is to me my duty, and I will sustain it in the best way in my power.... Ah! that ancient France, how one feels her grandeur here, and what a part she is known to have had in Christianity! It is that chord which I should like to have heard vibrate in a fluent writer like you, and not eternally those paradoxes, those sophisms. But what matters it to you who date from yesterday and who boast of it," he added, almost sadly, "that in the most insignificant corners of this city centuries of history abound? Does your heart blush at the sight of the facade of the church of Saint-Louis, the salamander of Francois I and the lilies? Do you know why the Rue Bargognona is called thus, and that near by is Saint-Claudedes-Bourguignons, our church? Have you visited, you who are from the Vosges, that of your province, Saint-Nicolas-des-Lorrains? Do you know Saint-Yves-des-Bretons?"

"But," and here his voice assumed a gay accent, "I have thoroughly charged into that rascal of a Hafner. I have laid him before you without any hesitation. I have spoken to you as I feel, with all the fervor of my heart, although it may seem sport to you. You will be punished, for I shall not allow you to escape. I will take you to the France of other days. You shall dine with me at noon, and between this and then we will

make the tour of those churches I have just named. During that time we will go back one hundred and fifty years in the past, into that world in which there were neither cosmopolites nor dilettantes. It is the old world, but it is hardy, and the proof is that it has endured; while your society--look where it is after one hundred years in France, in Italy, in England--thanks to that detestable Gladstone, of whom pride has made a second Nebuchadnezzar. It is like Russia, your society; according to the only decent words of the obscene Diderot, 'rotten before mature!' Come, will you go?"

"You are mistaken," replied the writer, "in thinking that. I do not love your old France, but that does not prevent me from enjoying the new. One can like wine and champagne at the same time. But I am not at liberty. I must visit the exposition at Palais Castagna this morning."

"You will not do that," exclaimed impetuous Montfanon, whose severe face again expressed one of those contrarities which caused it to brighten when he was with one of whom he was fond as he was of Dorsenne. "You would not have gone to see the King assassinated in '93? The selling at auction of the old dwelling of Pope Urban VII is almost as tragical! It is the beginning of the agony of what was Roman nobility. I know. They deserve it all, since they were not killed to the last man on the steps of the Vatican when the Italians took the city. We should have done it, we who had no popes among our grand-uncles, if we had not been busy fighting elsewhere. But it is none the less pitiful to see the hammer of the appraisers raised above a palace with which is connected centuries of history. Upon my life, if I were Prince d'Ardea--if I had inherited the blood, the house, the titles of the Castagnas, and if I thought I should leave nothing behind me of that which my fathers had amassed--I swear to you, Dorsenne, I should die of grief. And if you recall the fact that the unhappy youth is a spoiled child of eight-and-twenty, surrounded by flatterers, without parents, without friends, without counsellors, that he risked his patrimony on the Bourse among thieves of the integrity of Monsieur Hafner, that all the wealth collected by that succession of popes, of cardinals, of warriors, of diplomatists, has served to enrich ignoble men, you would think the occurrence too lamentable to have any share in it, even as a spectator. Come, I will take you to Saint-Claude."

"I assure you I am expected," replied Dorsenne, disengaging his arm, which his despotic friend had already seized. "It is very strange that I should meet you on the way, having the rendezvous I have. I, who dote on contrasts, shall not have lost my morning. Have you the patience to listen to the enumeration of the persons whom I shall join immediately? It will not be very long, but do not interrupt me. You will be angry if you will survive the blow I am about to give you. Ah, you do not wish to call your Rome a Cosmopolis; then what do you say to the party with which, in twenty minutes, I shall visit the ancient palace of Urban VII? First of all, we have your beautiful enemy, Fanny Hafner, and her father, the Baron, representing a little of Germany, a little of Austria, a little of Italy and a little of Holland. For it seems the Baron's mother was from Rotterdam. Do not interrupt. We shall have Countess Steno to represent Venice, and her charming daughter, Alba, to represent a small

corner of Russia, for the Chronicle claims that she was the child, not of the defunct Steno, but of Werekiew-Andre, you know, the one who killed himself in Paris five or six years ago, by casting himself into the Seine, not at all aristocratically, from the Pont de la Concorde. We shall have the painter, the celebrated Lincoln Maitland, to represent America. He is the lover of Steno, whom he stole from Gorka during the latter's trip to Poland. We shall have the painter's wife, Lydia Maitland, and her brother, Florent Chapron, to represent a little of France, a little of America, and a little of Africa; for their grandfather was the famous Colonel Chapron mentioned in the Memorial, who, after 1815, became a planter in Alabama. That old soldier, without any prejudices, had, by a mulattress, a son whom he recognized and to whom he left--I do not know how many dollars. 'Inde' Lydia and Florent. Do not interrupt, it is almost finished. We shall have, to represent England, a Catholic wedded to a Pole, Madame Gorka, the wife of Boleslas, and, lastly, Paris, in the form of your servant. It is now I who will essay to drag you away, for were you to join our party, you, the feudal, it would be complete.... Will you come?"

"Has the blow satisfied you?" asked Montfanon. "And the unhappy man has talent," he exclaimed, talking of Dorsenne as if the latter were not present, "and he has written ten pages on Rhodes which are worthy of Chateaubriand, and he has received from God the noblest gifts--poetry, wit, the sense of history; and in what society does he delight! But, come, once for all, explain to me the pleasure which a man of your genius can find in frequenting that international Bohemia, more or less gilded, in which there is not one being who has standing or a history. I no longer allude to that scoundrel Hafner and his daughter, since you have for her, novelist that you are, the eyes of Monsieur Guerillot. But that Countess Steno, who must be at least forty, who has a grown daughter, should she not remain quietly in her palace at Venice, respectably, bravely, instead of holding here that species of salon for transients, through which pass all the libertines of Europe, instead of having lover after lover, a Pole after a Russian, an American after a Pole? And that Maitland, why did he not obey the only good sentiment with which his compatriots are inspired, the aversion to negro blood, an aversion which would prevent them from doing what he has done--from marrying an octoroon? If the young woman knows of it, it is terrible, and if she does not it is still more terrible. And Madame Gorka, that honest creature, for I believe she is, and truly pious as well, who has not observed for the past two years that her husband was the Countess's lover, and who does not see, moreover, that it is now Maitland's turn. And that poor Alba Steno, that child of twenty, whom they drag through these improper intrigues! Why does not Florent Chapron put an end to the adultery of her sister's husband? I know him. He once came to see me with regard to a monument he was raising in Saint-Louis in memory of his cousin. He respects the dead, that pleased me. But he is a dupe in this sinister comedy at which you are assisting, you, who know all, while your heart does not revolt."

"Pardon, pardon!" interrupted Dorsenne, "it is not a question of that. You wander on and you forget what you have just asked me.... What pleasure do I find in the human mosaic which I have detailed to you?"

I will tell you, and we will not talk of the morals, if you please, when we are simply dealing with the intellect. I do not pride myself on being a judge of human nature, sir leaquer; I like to watch and to study it, and among all the scenes it can present I know of none more suggestive, more peculiar, and more modern than this: You are in a salon, at a dining-table, at a party like that to which I am going this morning. You are with ten persons who all speak the same language, are dressed by the same tailor, have read the same morning paper, think the same thoughts and feel the same sentiments.... But these persons are like those I have just enumerated to you, creatures from very different points of the world and of history. You study them with all that you know of their origin and their heredity, and little by little beneath the varnish of cosmopolitanism you discover their race, irresistible, indestructible race! In the mistress of the house, very elegant, very cultured, for example, a Madame Steno, you discover the descendant of the Doges, the patrician of the fifteenth century, with the form of a queen, strength in her passion and frankness in her incomparable immorality; while in a Florent Chapron or a Lydia you discover the primitive slave, the black hypnotized by the white, the unfreed being produced by centuries of servitude; while in a Madame Gorka you recognize beneath her smiling amiability the fanaticism of truth of the Puritans; beneath the artistic refinement of a Lincoln Maitland you find the squatter, invincibly coarse and robust; in Boleslas Gorka all the nervous irritability of the Slav, which has ruined Poland. These lineaments of race are hardly visible in the civilized person, who speaks three or four languages fluently, who has lived in Paris, Nice, Florence, here, that same fashionable, monotonous life. But when passion strikes its blow, when the man is stirred to his inmost depths, then occurs the conflict of characteristics, more surprising when the people thus brought together have come from afar: And that is why," he concluded with a laugh, "I have spent six months in Rome without hardly having seen a Roman, busy, observing the little clan which is so revolting to you. It is probably the twentieth I have studied, and I shall no doubt study twenty more, for not one resembles another. Are you indulgently inclined toward me, now that you have got even with me in making me hold forth at this corner, like the hero of a Russian novel? Well, now adieu."

Montfanon had listened to the discourse with an impenetrable air. In the religious solitude in which he was awaiting the end, as he said, nothing afforded him greater pleasure than the discussion of ideas. But he was inspired by the enthusiasm of a man who feels with extreme ardor, and when he was met by the partly ironical dilettanteism of Dorsenne he was almost pained by it, so much the more so as the author and he had some common theories, notably an extreme fancy for heredity and race. A sort of discontented grimace distorted his expressive face. He clicked his tongue in ill-humor, and said:

"One more question!... And the result of all that, the object? To what end does all this observation lead you?"

"To what should it lead me? To comprehend, as I have told you," replied Dorsenne.

"And then?"

"There is no then," answered the young man, "one debauchery is like another."

"But among the people whom you see living thus," said Montfanon, after a pause, "there are some surely whom you like and whom you dislike, for whom you entertain esteem and for whom you feel contempt? Have you not thought that you have some duties toward them, that you can aid them in leading better lives?"

"That," said Dorsenne, "is another subject which we will treat of some other day, for I am afraid now of being late.... Adieu."

"Adieu," said the Marquis, with evident regret at parting. Then, brusquely: "I do not know why I like you so much, for in the main you incarnate one of those vices of mind which inspire me with the most horror, that dilettanteism set in vogue by the disciples of Monsieur Renan, and which is the very foundation of the decline. You will recover from it, I hope. You are so young!" Then becoming again jovial and mocking: "May you enjoy yourself in your descent of Courtille; I almost forgot that I had a message to give to you for one of the supernumeraries of your troop. Will you tell Gorka that I have dislodged the book for which he asked me before his departure?"

"Gorka," replied Julien, "has been in Poland three months on family business. I just told you how that trip cost him his mistress."

"What," said Montfanon, "in Poland? I saw him this morning as plainly as I see you. He passed the Fountain du Triton in a cab. If I had not been in such haste to reach Ribalta's in time to save the Montluc, I could have stopped him, but we were both in too great a hurry."

"You are sure that Gorka is in Rome--Boleslas Gorka?" insisted Dorsenne.

"What is there surprising in that?" said Montfanon. "It is quite natural that he should not wish to remain away long from a city where he has left a wife and a mistress. I suppose your Slav and your Anglo-Saxon have no prejudices, and that they share their Venetian with a dilettanteism quite modern. It is cosmopolitan, indeed.... Well, once more, adieu.... Deliver my message to him if you see him, and," his face again expressed a childish malice, "do not fail to tell Mademoiselle Hafner that her father's daughter will never, never have this volume. It is not for intriguers!" And, laughing like a mischievous schoolboy, he pressed the book more tightly under his arm, repeating: "She shall not have it. Listen.... And tell her plainly. She shall not have it!"

## CHAPTER II

### THE BEGINNING OF A DRAMA



"There is an intelligent man, who never questions his ideas," said Dorsenne to himself, when the Marquis had left him. "He is like the Socialists. What vigor of mind in that old wornout machine!" And for a brief moment he watched, with a glance in which there was at least as much admiration as pity, the Marquis, who was disappearing down the Rue de la Propagande, and who walked at the rapid pace characteristic of monomaniacs. They follow their thoughts instead of heeding objects. However, the care he exercised in avoiding the sun's line for the shade attested the instincts of an old Roman, who knew the danger of the first rays of spring beneath that blue sky. For a moment Montfanon paused to give alms to one of the numerous mendicants who abound in the neighborhood of the Place d'Espagne, meritorious in him, for with his one arm and burdened with the prayer-book it required a veritable effort to search in his pocket. Dorsenne was well enough acquainted with that original personage to know that he had never been able to say "no" to any one who asked charity, great or small, of him. Thanks to that system, the enemy of beautiful Fanny Hafner was always short of cash with forty thousand francs' income and leading a simple existence. The costly purchase of the relic of Montluc proved that the antipathy conceived for Baron Justus's charming daughter had become a species of passion. Under any other circumstances, the novelist, who delighted in such cases, would not have failed to meditate ironically on that feeling, easy enough of explanation. There was much more irrational instinct in it than Montfanon himself suspected. The old leaguer would not have been logical if he had not had in point of race an inquisition partiality, and the mere suspicion of Jewish origin should have prejudiced him against Fanny. But he was just, as Dorsenne had told him, and if the young girl had been an avowed Jewess, living up zealously to her religion, he would have respected but have avoided her, and he never would have spoken of her with such bitterness.

The true motive of his antipathy was that he loved Cardinal Guerillot, as was his habit in all things, with passion and with jealousy, and he could not forgive Mademoiselle Hafner for having formed an intimacy with the holy prelate in spite of him, Montfanon, who had vainly warned the old Bishop de Clermont against her whom he considered the most wily of intriguers. For months vainly did she furnish proofs of her sincerity of heart, the Cardinal reporting them in due season to the Marquis, who persisted in discrediting them, and each fresh good deed of his enemy augmented his hatred by aggravating the uneasiness which was caused him, notwithstanding all, by a vague sense of his iniquity.

But Dorsenne no sooner turned toward the direction of the Palais Castagna than he quickly forgot both Mademoiselle Hafner's and Montfanon's prejudices, in thinking only of one sentence uttered by the latter that which related to the return of Boleslas Gorka. The news was unexpected, and it awakened in the writer such grave fears that he did not even glance at the shop-window of the French bookseller at the corner of the Corso to see if the label of the "Fortieth thousand" flamed upon the yellow cover of his last book, the *Eclogue Mondaine*, brought out in the autumn, with a success which his absence of six months from Paris, had, however, detracted from. He did not even think of ascertaining if the

regimen he practised, in imitation of Lord Byron, against embonpoint, would preserve his elegant form, of which he was so proud, and yet mirrors were numerous on the way from the Place d'Espagne to the Palais Castagna, which rears its sombre mass on the margin of the Tiber, at the extremity of the Via Giulia, like a pendant of the Palais Sacchetti, the masterwork of Sangallo. Dorsenne did not indulge in his usual pastime of examining the souvenirs along the streets which met his eye, and yet he passed in the twenty minutes which it took him to reach his rendezvous a number of buildings teeming with centuries of historical reminiscences. There was first of all the vast Palais Borghese--the piano of the Borghese, as it has been called, from the form of a clavecin adopted by the architect--a monument of splendor, which was, less than two years later, to serve as the scene of a situation more melancholy than that of the Palais Castagna.

Dorsenne had not an absent glance for the sumptuous building--he passed unheeding the facade of St.-Louis, the object of Montfanon's admiration. If the writer did not profess for that relic of ancient France the piety of the Marquis, he never failed to enter there to pay his literary respects to the tomb of Madame de Beaumont, to that 'quia non sunt' of an epitaph which Chateaubriand inscribed upon her tombstone, with more vanity, alas, than tenderness. For the first time Dorsenne forgot it; he forgot also to gaze with delight upon the rococo fountain on the Place Navonne, that square upon which Domitian had his circus, and which recalls the cruel pageantries of imperial Rome. He forgot, too, the mutilated statue which forms the angle of the Palais Braschi, two paces farther--two paces still farther, the grand artery of the Corso Victor-Emmanuel demonstrated the effort at regeneration of present Rome; two paces farther yet, the Palais Farnese recalls the grandeur of modern art, and the tragedy of contemporary monarchies. Does not the thought of Michelangelo seem to be still imprinted on the sombre cross-beam of that immense sarcophagus, which was the refuge of the last King of Naples? But it requires a mind entirely free to give one's self up to the charm of historical dilettanteism which cities built upon the past conjure up, and although Julien prided himself, not without reason, on being above emotion, he was not possessed of his usual independence of mind during the walk which took him to his "human mosaic," as he picturesquely expressed it, and he pondered and repondered the following questions:

"Boleslas Gorka returned? And two days ago I saw his wife, who did not expect him until next month. Montfanon is not, however, imaginative. Boleslas Gorka returned? At the moment when Madame Steno is mad over Maitland--for she is mad! The night before last, at her house at dinner, she looked at him--it was scandalous. Gorka had a presentiment of it this winter. When the American attempted to take Alba's portrait the first time, the Pole put a stop to it. It was fine for Montfanon to talk of division between these two men. When Boleslas left here, Maitland and the Countess were barely acquainted and now---- If he has returned it is because he has discovered that he has a rival. Some one has warned him--an enemy of the Countess, a confrere of Maitland. Such pieces of infamy occur among good friends. If Gorka, who is a shot like Casal, kills Maitland in a duel, it will make one deceiver less. If he avenges himself upon his mistress for that treason, it would be a matter of

indifference to me, for Catherine Steno is a great rogue.... But my little friend, my poor, charming Alba, what would become of her if there should be a scandal, bloodshed, perhaps, on account of her mother's folly? Gorka returned? And he did not write it to me, to me who have received several letters from him since he went away; to me, whom he selected last autumn as the confidant of his jealousies, under the pretext that I knew women, and, with the vain hope of inspiring me.... His silence and return no longer seem like a romance; they savor rather of a drama, and with a Slav, as much a Slav as he is, one may expect anything. I know not what to think of it, for he will be at the Palais Castagna. Poor, charming Alba!"

The monologue did not differ much from a monologue uttered under similar circumstances by any young man interested in a young girl whose mother does not conduct herself becomingly. It was a touching situation, but a very common one, and there was no necessity for the author to come to Rome to study it, one entire winter and spring. If that interest went beyond a study, Dorsenne possessed a very simple means of preventing his little friend, as he said, from being rendered unhappy by the conduct of that mother whom age did not conquer. Why not propose for her hand? He had inherited a fortune, and his success as an author had augmented it. For, since the first book which had established his reputation, the 'Etudes de Femmes,' published in 1879, not a single one of the fifteen novels or selections from novels had remained unnoticed. His personal celebrity could, strictly speaking, combine with it family celebrity, for he boasted that his grandfather was a cousin of that brave General Dorsenne whom Napoleon could only replace at the head of his guard by Friant. All can be told in a word. Although the heirs of the hero of the Empire had never recognized the relationship, Julien believed in it, and when he said, in reply to compliments on his books, "At my age my grand-uncle, the Colonel of the Guard, did greater things," he was sincere in his belief. But it was unnecessary to mention it, for, situated as he was, Countess Steno would gladly have accepted him as a son-in-law. As for gaining the love of the young girl, with his handsome face, intelligent and refined, and his elegant form, which he had retained intact in spite of his thirty-seven years, he might have done so. Nothing, however, was farther from his thoughts than such a project, for, as he ascended the steps of the staircase of the palace formerly occupied by Urban VII, he continued, in very different terms, his monologue, a species of involuntary "copy" which is written instinctively in the brain of the man of letters when he is particularly fond of literature.

At times it assumes a written form, and it is the most marked of professional distortions, the most unintelligible to the illiterate, who think waveringly and who do not, happily for them, suffer the continual servitude to precision of word and to too conscientious thought.

"Yes; poor, charming Alba!" he repeated to himself. "How unfortunate that the marriage with Countess Gorka's brother could not have been arranged four months ago. Connection with the family of her mother's lover would be tolerably immoral! But she would at least have had less

chance of ever knowing it; and the convenient combination by which the mother has caused her to form a friendship with that wife in order the better to blind the two, would have bordered a little more on propriety. To-day Alba would be Lady Ardrahan, leading a prosaic English life, instead of being united to some imbecile whom they will find for her here or elsewhere. She will then deceive him as her mother deceived the late Steno--with me, perhaps, in remembrance of our pure intimacy of to-day. That would be too sad! Do not let us think of it! It is the future, of the existence of which we are ignorant, while we do know that the present exists and that it has all rights. I owe to the Contessina my best impressions of Rome, to the vision of her loveliness in this scene of so grand a past. And this is a sensation which is enjoyable; to visit the Palais Castagna with the adorable creature upon whom rests the menace of a drama. To enjoy the Countess Steno's kindness, otherwise the house would not have that tone and I would never have obtained the little one's friendship. To rejoice that Ardea is a fool, that he has lost his fortune on the Bourse, and that the syndicate of his creditors, presided over by Monsieur Ancona, has laid hands upon his palace. For, otherwise, I should not have ascended the steps of this papal staircase, nor have seen this debris of Grecian sarcophagi fitted into the walls, and this garden of so intense a green. As for Gorka, he may have returned for thirty-six other reasons than jealousy, and Montfanon is right: Caterina is cunning enough to inveigle both the painter and him. She will make Maitland believe that she received Gorka for the sake of Madame Gorka, and to prevent him from ruining that excellent woman at gaming. She will tell Boleslas that there was nothing more between her and Maitland than Platonic discussions on the merits of Raphael and Perugino.... And I should be more of a dupe than the other two for missing the visit. It is not every day that one has a chance to see auctioned, like a simple Bohemian, the grand-nephew of a pope."

The second suite of reflections resembled more than the first the real Dorsenne, who was often incomprehensible even to his best friends. The young man with the large, black eyes, the face with delicate features, the olive complexion of a Spanish monk, had never had but one passion, too exceptional not to baffle the ordinary observer, and developed in a sense so singular that to the most charitable it assumed either an attitude almost outrageous or else that of an abominable egotism and profound corruption.

Dorsenne had spoken truly, he loved to comprehend--to comprehend as the gamester loves to game, the miser to accumulate money, the ambitious to obtain position--there was within him that appetite, that taste, that mania for ideas which makes the scholar and the philosopher. But a philosopher united by a caprice of nature to an artist, and by that of fortune and of education to a worldly man and a traveller. The abstract speculations of the metaphysician would not have sufficed for him, nor would the continuous and simple creation of the narrator who narrates to amuse himself, nor would the ardor of the semi-animal of the man-of-pleasure who abandons himself to the frenzy of vice. He invented for himself, partly from instinct, partly from method, a compromise between his contradictory tendencies, which he formulated in a fashion slightly pedantic, when he said that his sole aim was to "intellectualize the

forcible sensations;" in clearer terms, he dreamed of meeting with, in human life, the greatest number of impressions it could give and to think of them after having met them.

He thought, with or without reason, to discover in his two favorite writers, Goethe and Stendhal, a constant application of a similar principle. His studies had, for the past fourteen years when he had begun to live and to write, passed through the most varied spheres possible to him. But he had passed through them, lending his presence without giving himself to them, with this idea always present in his mind: that he existed to become familiar with other customs, to watch other characters, to clothe other personages and the sensations which vibrated within them. The period of his revival was marked by the achievement of each one of his books which he composed then, persuaded that, once written and construed, a sentimental or social experience was not worth the trouble of being dwelt upon. Thus is explained the incoherence of custom and the atmospheric contact, if one may so express it, which are the characteristics of his work. Take, for example, his first collection of novels, the 'Etudes de Femmes,' which made him famous. They are about a sentimental woman who loved unwisely, and who spent hours from excess of the romantic studying the avowed or disguised demi-monde. By the side of that, 'Sans Dieu,' the story of a drama of scientific consciousness, attests a continuous frequenting of the Museum, the Sorbonne and the College of France, while 'Monsieur de Premier' presents one of the most striking pictures of the contemporary political world, which could only have been traced by a familiar of the Palais Bourbon.

On the other hand, the three books of travel pretentiously named 'Tourisime,' 'Les Profils d'Etrangeres' and the 'Eclogue Mondaine,' which fluctuated between Florence and London, St.-Moritz and Bayreuth, revealed long sojourns out of France; a clever analysis of the Italian, English, and German worlds; a superficial but true knowledge of the languages, the history and literature, which in no way accords with 'l'odor di femina', exhale from every page. These contrasts are brought out by a mind endowed with strangely complex qualities, dominated by a firm will and, it must be said, a very mediocre sensibility. The last point will appear irreconcilable with the extreme and almost morbid delicacy of certain of Dorsenne's works. It is thus however. He had very little heart. But, on the other hand, he had an abundance of nerves and nerves, and their irritability suffice for him who desires to paint human passions, above all, love, with its joys and its sorrows, of which one does not speak to a certain extent when one experiences them. Success had come to Julien too early not to have afforded him occasion for several adventures. In each of the centres traversed in the course of his sentimental vagabondage he tried to find a woman in whom was embodied all the scattered charms of the district. He had formed innumerable intimacies. Some had been frankly affectionate. The majority were Platonic. Others had consisted of the simple coquetry of friendship, as was the case with Mademoiselle Steno. The young man had never employed more vanity than enthusiasm. Every woman, mistress or friend, had been to him, nine times out of ten, a curiosity, then a model. But, as he held that the model could not be recognized by any exterior sign, he did not think that he

was wrong in making use of his prestige as a writer, for what he called his "culture." He was capable of justice, the defense which he made of Fanny Hafner to Montfanon proved it; of admiration, his respect for the noble qualities of that same Montfanon testify to it; of compassion, for without it he would not have apprehended at once with so much sympathy the result which the return of Count Gorka would have on the destiny of innocent Alba Steno.

On reaching the staircase of the Palais Castagna, instead of hastening, as was natural, to find out at least what meant the return to Rome of the lover whom Madame Steno deceived, he collected his startled sensibilities before meeting Alba, and, pausing, he scribbled in a note-book which he drew from his pocket, with a pencil always within reach of his fingers, in a firm hand, precise and clear, this note savoring somewhat of sentimentalism:

"25 April, '90. Palais Castagna.--Marvellous staircase constructed by Balthazar Peruzzi; so broad and long, with double rows of stairs, like those of Santa Colomba, near Siena. Enjoyed above all the sight of an interior garden so arranged, so designed that the red flowers, the regularity of the green shrubs, the neat lines of the graveled walks resemble the features of a face. The idea of the Latin garden, opposed to the Germanic or Anglo-Saxon, the latter respecting the irregularity of nature, the other all in order, humanizing and administering even to the flower-garden."

"Subject the complexity of life to a thought harmonious and clear, a constant mark of the Latin genius, for a group of trees as well as an entire nation, an entire religion--Catholicism. It is the contrary in the races of the North. Significance of the word: the forests have taught man liberty."

He had hardly finished writing that oddly interpreted memorandum, and was closing his note-book, when the sound of a familiar voice caused him to turn suddenly. He had not heard ascend the stairs a personage who waited until he finished writing, and who was no other than one of the actors in his "troupe" to use his expression, one of the persons of the party of that morning organized the day before at Madame Steno's, and just the one whom the intolerable marquis had defamed with so much ardor, the father of beautiful Fanny Hafner, Baron Justus himself. The renowned founder of the 'Credit Austro-Dalmate' was a small, thin man, with blue eyes of an acuteness almost insupportable, in a face of neutral color. His ever-courteous manner, his attire, simple and neat, his speech serious and discreet, gave to him that species of distinction so common to old diplomatists. But the dangerous adventurer was betrayed by the glance which Hafner could not succeed in veiling with indifferent amiability. The man-of-the-world, which he prided himself upon having become, was visible through all by certain indefinable trifles, and above all by those eyes, of a restlessness so singular in so wealthy a man, indicating an enigmatical and obscure past of dark and contrasting struggles, of covetous sharpness, of cold calculation and indomitable energy. Fanatical Montfanon, who abused the daughter with such unjustness, judged the father justly. The son of a Jew of Berlin and of a Dutch Protestant,

Justus Hafner was inscribed on the civil state registers as belonging to his mother's faith. But the latter died when Justus was very young, and he was not reared in any other liturgy than that of money. From his father, a persevering and skilful jeweller, but too prudent to risk or gain much, he learned the business of precious stones, to which he added that of laces, paintings, old materials, tapestries, rare furniture.

An infallible eye, the patience of a German united with his Israelitish and Dutch extraction, soon amassed for him a small capital, which his father's bequest augmented. At twenty-seven Justus had not less than five hundred thousand marks. Two imprudent operations on the Bourse, enterprises to force fortune and to obtain the first million, ruined the too-audacious courtier, who began again the building up of his fortune by becoming a diamond broker.

He went to Paris, and there, in a wretched little room on the Rue Montmartre, in three years, he made his second capital. He then managed it so well that in 1870, at the time of the war, he had made good his losses. The armistice found him in England, where he had married the daughter of a Viennese agent, in London, for the purpose of starting a vast enterprise of revictualing the belligerent armies. The enormous profits made by the father-in-law and the son-in-law during that year determined them to found a banking-house which should have its principal seat in Vienna and a branch in Berlin. Justus Hafner, a passionate admirer of Herr von Bismarck, controlled, besides, a newspaper. He tried to gain the favor of the great statesman, who refused to aid the former diamond merchant in gratifying political ambitions cherished from an early age.

It was a bitter disappointment to the persevering man, who, having tried his luck in Prussia, emigrated definitively to Vienna. The establishment of the 'Credit Austro-Dalmate,' launched with extraordinary claims, permitted him at length to realize at least one of his chimeras. His wealth, while not equaling that of the mighty financiers of the epoch, increased with a rapidity almost magical to a cipher high enough to permit him, from 1879, to indulge in the luxurious life which can not be led by any one with an income short of five hundred thousand francs. Contrary to the custom of speculators of his genus, Hafner in time invested his earnings safely. He provided against the coming demolition of the structure so laboriously built up. The 'Credit Austro-Dalmate' had suffered in great measure owing to innumerable public and private disasters and scandals, such as the suicide and murder in the Schroeder family.

Suits were begun against a number of the founders, among them Justus Hafner. He was acquitted, but with such damage to his financial integrity and in the face of such public indignation that he abandoned Austria for Italy and Vienna for Rome. There, heedless of first rebuffs, he undertook to realize the third great object of his life, the gaining of social position. To the period of avidity had succeeded, as it frequently does with those formidable handlers of money, the period of vanity. Being now a widower, he aimed at his daughter's marriage with a strength of will and a complication of combinations equal to his former

efforts, and that struggle for connection with high life was disguised beneath the cloak of the most systematically adopted politeness of deportment. How had he found the means, in the midst of struggles and hardships, to refine himself so that the primitive broker and speculator were almost unrecognizable in the baron of fifty-four, decorated with several orders, installed in a magnificent palace, the father of a charming daughter, and himself an agreeable conversationalist, a courteous gentleman, an ardent sportsman? It is the secret of those natures created for social conquest, like a Napoleon for war and a Talleyrand for diplomacy. Dorsenne asked himself the question frequently, and he could not solve it. Although he boasted of watching the Baron with an intellectual curiosity, he could not restrain a shudder of antipathy each time he met the eyes of the man.

And on this particular morning it was especially disagreeable to him that those eyes had seen him making his unoffending notes, although there was scarcely a shade of gentle condescension--that of a great lord who patronizes a great artist--in the manner in which Hafner addressed him.

"Do not inconvenience yourself for me, dear sir," said he to Dorsenne. "You work from nature, and you are right. I see that your next novel will touch upon the ruin of our poor Prince d'Ardea. Do not be too hard on him, nor on us."

The artist could not help coloring at that benign pleasantry. It was all the more painful to him because it was at once true and untrue. How should he explain the sort of literary alchemy, thanks to which he was enabled to affirm that he never drew portraits, although not a line of his fifteen volumes was traced without a living model? He replied, therefore, with a touch of ill-humor:

"You are mistaken, my dear Baron. I do not make notes on persons."

"All authors say that," answered the Baron, shrugging his shoulders with the assumed good-nature which so rarely forsook him, "and they are right.... At any rate, it is fortunate that you had something to write, for we shall both be late in arriving at a rendezvous where there are ladies.... It is almost a quarter past eleven, and we should have been there at eleven precisely.... But I have one excuse, I waited for my daughter."

"And she has not come?" asked Dorsenne.

"No," replied Hafner, "at the last moment she could not make up her mind. She had a slight annoyance this morning--I do not know what old book she had set her heart on. Some rascal found out that she wanted it, and he obtained it first.... But that is not the true cause of her absence. The true cause is that she is too sensitive, and she finds it so sad that there should be a sale of the possessions of this ancient family.... I did not insist. What would she have experienced had she known the late Princess Nicoletta, Pepino's mother? When I came to Rome on a visit for the first time, in '75, what a salon that was and what a Princess!.... She was a Condolmieri, of the family of Eugene IV."



"How absurd vanity renders the most refined man," thought Julien, suiting his pace to the Baron's. "He would have me believe that he was received at the house of that woman who was politically the blackest of the black, the most difficult to please in the recruiting of her salon.... Life is more complex than the Montfanons even know of! This girl feels by instinct that which the chouan of a marquis feels by doctrine, the absurdity of this striving after nobility, with a father who forgets the broker and who talks of the popes of the Middle Ages as of a trinket!.... While we are alone, I must ask this old fox what he knows of Boleslas Gorka's return. He is the confidant of Madame Steno. He should be informed of the doings and whereabouts of the Pole."

The friendship of Baron Hafner for the Countess, whose financial adviser he was, should have been for Dorsenne a reason for avoiding such a subject, the more so as he was convinced of the man's dislike for him. The Baron could, by a single word perfidiously repeated, injure him very much with Alba's mother. But the novelist, similar on that point to the majority of professional observers, had only the power of analysis of a retrospective order. Never had his keen intelligence served him to avoid one of those slight errors of conversation which are important mistakes on the pitiful checker-board of life. Happily for him, he cherished no ambition except for his pleasure and his art, without which he would have found the means of making for himself, gratuitously, enough enemies to clear all the academies.

He, therefore, chose the moment when the Baron arrived at the landing on the first floor, pausing somewhat out of breath, and after the agent had verified their passes, to say to his companion:

"Have you seen Gorka since his arrival?"

"What? Is Boleslas here?" asked Justus Hafner, who manifested his astonishment in no other manner than by adding: "I thought he was still in Poland."

"I have not seen him myself," said Dorsenne. He already regretted having spoken too hastily. It is always more prudent not to spread the first report. But the ignorance of that return of Countess Steno's best friend, who saw her daily, struck the young man with such surprise that he could not resist adding: "Some one, whose veracity I can not doubt, met him this morning." Then, brusquely: "Does not this sudden return make you fearful?"

"Fearful?" repeated the Baron. "Why so?" As he uttered those words he glanced at the writer with his usual impassive expression, which, however, a very slight sign, significant to those who knew him, belied. In exchanging those few words the two men had passed into the first room of "objects of art," having belonged to the apartment of "His Eminence Prince d'Ardea," as the catalogue said, and the Baron did not raise the gold glass which he held at the end of his nose when near the smallest display of bric-a-brac, as was his custom. As he walked slowly through the collection of busts and statues of that first room, called "Marbles"

on the catalogue, without glancing with the eye of a practised judge at the Gobelin tapestry upon the walls, it must have been that he considered as very grave the novelist's revelation. The latter had said too much not to continue:

"Well, I who have not been connected with Madame Steno for years, like you, trembled for her when that return was announced to me. She does not know what Gorka is when he is jealous, or of what he is capable."

"Jealous? Of whom?" interrupted Hafner. "It is not the first time I have heard the name of Boleslas uttered in connection with the Countess. I confess I have never taken those words seriously, and I should not have thought that you, a frequenter of her salon, one of her friends, would hesitate on that subject. Rest assured, Gorka is in love with his charming wife, and he could not make a better choice. Countess Caterina is an excellent person, very Italian. She is interested in him, as in you, as in Maitland, as in me; in you because you write such admirable books, in Maitland because he paints like our best masters, in Boleslas on account of the sorrow he had in the death of his first child, in me because I have so delicate a charge. She is more than an excellent person, she is a truly superior woman, very superior." He uttered his hypocritical speech with such perfect ease that Dorsenne was surprised and irritated. That Hafner did not believe one treacherous word of what he said the novelist was sure, he who, from the indiscreet confidences of Gorka, knew what to think of the Venetian's manner, and he; too, understood the Baron's glance! At any other time he would have admired the policy of the old stager. At that moment the novelist was vexed by it, for it caused him to play a role, very common but not very elevating, that of a calumniator, who has spoken ill of a woman with whom he dined the day before. He, therefore, quickened his pace as much as politeness would permit, in order not to remain tete-a-tete with the Baron, and also to rejoin the persons of their party already arrived.

They emerged from the first room to enter a second, marked "Porcelain;" then a third, "Frescoes of Perino del Vaga," on account of the ceiling upon which the master painted a companion to his vigorous piece at Genoa--"Jupiter crushing the Giants"--and, lastly, into a fourth, called "The Arazzi," from the wonderful panels with which it was decorated.

A few visitors were lounging there, for the season was somewhat advanced, and the date which M. Ancona had chosen for the execution proved either the calculation of profound hatred or else the adroit ruse of a syndicate of retailers. All the magnificent objects in the palace were adjudged at half the value they would have brought a few months sooner or later. The small group of curios stood out in contrast to the profusion of furniture, materials, objects of art of all kinds, which filled the vast rooms. It was the residence of five hundred years of power and of luxury, where masterpieces, worthy of the great Medicis, and executed in their time, alternated with the gewgaws of the eighteenth century and bronzes of the First Empire, with silver trinkets ordered but yesterday in London. Baron Justus could not resist these. He raised his glass and called Dorsenne to show him a curious armchair, the carving of a cartel, the embroidery on some material. One glance sufficed for him to

judge.... If the novelist had been capable of observing, he would have perceived in the detailed knowledge the banker had of the catalogue the trace of a study too deep not to accord with some mysterious project.

"There are treasures here," said he. "See these two Chinese vases with convex lids, with the orange ground decorated with gilding. Those are pieces no longer made in China. It is a lost art. And this tete-a-tete decorated with flowers; and this pluvial cope in this case. What a marvel! It is as good as the one of Pius Second, which was at Pienza and which has been stolen. I could have bought it at one time for fifteen hundred francs. It is worth fifteen thousand, twenty thousand, all of that. Here is some faience. It was brought from Spain when Cardinal Castagna came from Madrid, when he took the place of Pius Fifth as sponsor of Infanta Isabella. Ah, what treasures! But you go like the wind," he added, "and perhaps it is better, for I would stop, and Cavalier Fossati, the auctioneer, to whom those terrible creditors of Peppino have given charge of the sale, has spies everywhere. You notice an object, you are marked as a solid man, as they say in Germany. You are noted. I shall be down on his list. I have been caught by him enough. Ha! He is a very shrewd man! But come, I see the ladies. We should have remembered that they were here," and smiling--but at whom?--at Fossati, at himself or his companion?--he made the latter read the notice hung on the door of a transversal room, which bore this inscription: "Salon of marriage-chests."

There were, indeed, ranged along the walls about fifteen of those wooden cases painted and carved, of those 'cassoni' in which it was the fashion, in grand Italian families, to keep the trousseaux destined for the brides. Those of the Castagnas proved, by their escutcheons, what alliances the last of the grand-nephews of Urban VII, the actual Prince d'Ardea, entered into. Three very elegant ladies were examining the chests; in them Dorsenne recognized at once fair and delicate Alba Steno, Madame Gorka, with her tall form, her fair hair, too, and her strong English profile, and pretty Madame Maitland, with her olive complexion, who did not seem to have inherited any more negro blood than just enough to tint her delicate face. Florent Chapron, the painter's brother-in-law, was the only man with those three ladies. Countess Steno and Lincoln Maitland were not there, and one could hear the musical voice of Alba spelling the heraldry carved on the coffers, formerly opened with tender curiosity by young girls, laughing and dreaming by turns like her.

"Look, Maud," said she to Madame Gorka, "there is the oak of the Della Rovere, and there the stars of the Altieri."

"And I have found the column of the Colonna," replied Maud Gorka.

"And you, Lydia?" said Mademoiselle Steno to Madame Maitland.

"And I, the bees of the Barberini."

"And I, the lilies of the Farnese," said in his turn Florent Chapron, who, having raised his head first, perceived the newcomers. He greeted them with a pleasant smile, which was reflected in his eyes and which

showed his white teeth. "We no longer expected you, sirs. Every one has disappointed us. Lincoln did not wish to leave his atelier. It seems that Mademoiselle Hafner excused herself yesterday to these ladies. Countess Steno has a headache. We did not even count on the Baron, who is usually promptness personified."

"I was sure Dorsenne would not fail us," said Alba, gazing at the young man with her large eyes, of a blue as clear as those of Madame Gorka were dark. "Only that I expected we should meet him on the staircase as we were leaving, and that he would say to us, in surprise: 'What, I am not on time?' Ah," she continued, "do not excuse yourself, but reply to the examination in Roman history we are about to put you through. We have to follow here a veritable course studying all these old chests. What are the arms of this family?" she asked, leaning with Dorsenne over one of the cassoni. "You do not know? The Carafa, famous man! And what Pope did they have? You do not know that either? Paul Fourth, sir novelist. If ever you visit us in Venice, you will be surprised at the Doges."

She employed so affectionate a grace in that speech, and she was so apparently in one of her moods--so rare, alas! of childish joyousness, that Dorsenne, preoccupied as he was, felt his heart contract on her account. The simultaneous absence of Madame Steno and Lincoln Maitland could only be fortuitous. But persuaded that the Countess loved Maitland, and not doubting that she was his mistress, the absence of both appeared singularly suspicious to him. Such a thought sufficed to render the young girl's innocent gayety painful to him. That gayety would become tragical if it were true that the Countess's other lover had returned unexpectedly, warned by some one. Dorsenne experienced genuine agitation on asking Madame Gorka:

"How is Boleslas?"

"Very well, I suppose," said his wife. "I have not had a letter to-day. Does not one of your proverbs say, 'No news is good news?'"

Baron Hafner was beside Maud Gorka when she uttered that sentence. Involuntarily Dorsenne looked at him, and involuntarily, master as he was of himself, he looked at Dorsenne. It was no longer a question of a simple hypothesis. That Boleslas Gorka had returned to Rome unknown to his wife constituted, for any one who knew of his relations with Madame Steno, and of the infidelity of the latter, an event full of formidable consequences. Both men were possessed by the same thought. Was there still time to prevent a catastrophe? But each of them in this circumstance, as is so often the case in important matters of life, was to show the deepness of his character. Not a muscle of Hafner's face quivered. It was a question, perhaps, of rendering a service to a woman in danger, whom he loved with all the feeling of which he was capable. That woman was the mainspring of his social position in Rome. She was still more. A plan for Fanny's marriage, as yet secret, but on the point of being consummated, depended upon Madame Steno. But he felt it impossible to attempt to render her any service before having spent half an hour in the rooms of the Palais Castagna, and he began to employ that half hour in a manner which would be most profitable to his possible

purchases, for he turned to Madame Gorka and said to her, with the rather exaggerated politeness habitual to him:

"Countess, if you will permit me to advise you, do not pause so long before these coffers, interesting as they may be. First, as I have just told Dorsenne, Cavalier Fossati, the agent, has his spies everywhere here. Your position has already been remarked, you may be sure, so that if you take a fancy for one, he will know it in advance, and he will manage to make you pay double, triple, and more for it. And then we have to see so much, notably a cartoon of twelve designs by old masters, which Ardea did not even suspect he had, and which Fossati discovered--would you believe?--worm-eaten, in a cupboard in one of the granaries."

"There is some one whom your collection would interest," said Florent, "my brother-in-law."

"Well," replied Madame Gorka to Hafner with her habitual good-nature, "there are at least two of these coffers that I like and wish to have. I said it in so loud a tone that it is not worth the trouble of hoping that your Cavalier Fossati does not know it, if he really has that mode of espionage in practice. But forty or fifty pounds more make no difference--nor forty thousand even."

"Baron Hafner will warn you that your tone is not low enough," laughed Alba Steno, "and he will add his great phrase: 'You will never be diplomatic.' But," added the girl, turning toward Dorsenne, having drawn back from silent Lydia Maitland, and arranging to fall behind with the young man, "I am about to employ a little diplomacy in order to find out whether you have any trouble." And here her mobile face changed its expression, looking into Julien's with genuine anxiety. "Yes," said she, "I have never seen you so preoccupied as you seem to be this morning. Do you not feel well? Have you received ill news from Paris? What ails you?"

"I preoccupied?" replied Dorsenne. "You are mistaken. There is absolutely nothing, I assure you." It was impossible to lie with more apparent awkwardness, and if any one merited the scorn of Baron Hafner, it was he. Hardly had Madame Gorka spoken, when he had, with the rapidity of men of vivid imagination, seen Countess Steno and Maitland surprised by Gorka, at that very moment, in some place of rendezvous, and that surprise followed by a challenge, perhaps an immediate murder. And, as Alba continued to laugh merrily, his presentiment of her sad fate became so vivid that his face actually clouded over. He felt impelled to ascertain, when she questioned him, how great a friendship she bore him. But his effort to hide his emotion rendered his voice so harsh that the young girl resumed:

"I have vexed you by my questioning?"

"Not the least in the world," he replied, without being able to find a word of friendship. He felt at that moment incapable of talking, as they usually did, in that tone of familiarity, partly mocking, partly sentimental, and he added: "I simply think this exposition somewhat

melancholy, that is all." And, with a smile, "But we shall lose the opportunity of having it shown us by our incomparable cicerone," and he obliged her, by quickening her pace, to rejoin the group piloted by Hafner through the magnificence of the almost deserted apartment.

"See," said the former broker of Berlin and of Paris, now an enlightened amateur--" see, how that charlatan of a Fossati has taken care not to increase the number of trinkets now that we are in the reception-rooms. These armchairs seem to await invited guests. They are known. They have been illustrated in a magazine of decorative art in Paris. And that dining-room through that door, with all the silver on the table, would you not think a fete had been prepared?"

"Baron," said Madame Gorka, "look at this material; it is of the eighteenth century, is it not?"

"Baron," asked Madame Maitland, "is this cup with the lid old Vienna or Capadimonte?"

"Baron," said Florent Chapron, "is this armor of Florentine or Milanese workmanship?"

The eyeglass was raised to the Baron's thin nose, his small eyes glittered, his lips were pursed up, and he replied, in words as exact as if he had studied all the details of the catalogue verbatim. Their thanks were soon followed by many other questions, in which two voices alone did not join, that of Alba Steno and that of Dorsenne. Under any other circumstances, the latter would have tried to dissipate the increasing sadness of the young girl, who said no more to him after he repulsed her amicable anxiety. In reality, he attached no great importance to it. Those transitions from excessive gayety to sudden depression were so habitual with the Contessina, above all when with him. Although they were the sign of a vivid sentiment, the young man saw in them only nervous unrest, for his mind was absorbed with other thoughts.

He asked himself if, at any hazard, after the manner in which Madame Gorka had spoken, it would not be more prudent to acquaint Lincoln Maitland with the secret return of his rival. Perhaps the drama had not yet taken place, and if only the two persons threatened were warned, no doubt Hafner would put Countess Steno upon her guard. But when would he see her? What if he, Dorsenne, should at once tell Maitland's brother-in-law of Gorka's return, to that Florent Chapron whom he saw at the moment glancing at all the objects of the princely exposition? The step was an enormous undertaking, and would have appeared so to any one but Julien, who knew that the relations between Florent Chapron and Lincoln Maitland were of a very exceptional nature. Julien knew that Florent--sent when very young to the Jesuits of Beaumont, in England, by a father anxious to spare him the humiliation which his blood would call down upon him in America--had formed a friendship with Lincoln, a pupil in the same school. He knew that the friendship for the schoolmate had turned to enthusiasm for the artist, when the talent of his old comrade had begun to reveal itself. He knew that the marriage, which had placed the fortune of Lydia at the service of the development of the painter,

had been the work of that enthusiasm at an epoch when Maitland, spoiled by the unwise government of his mother, and unappreciated by the public, was wrung by despair. The exceptional character of the marriage would have surprised a man less heeding of moral peculiarities than was Dorsenne, who had observed, all too frequently, the silence and reserve of that sister not to look upon her as a sacrifice. He fancied that admiration for his brother-in-law's genius had blinded Florent to such a degree that he was the first cause of the sacrifice.

"Drama for drama," said he to himself, as the visit drew near its close, and after a long debate with himself. "I should prefer to have it one rather than the other in that family. I should reproach myself all my life for not having tried every means." They were in the last room, and Baron Hafner was just fastening the strings of an album of drawings, when the conviction took possession of the young man in a definite manner. Alba Steno, who still maintained silence, looked at him again with eyes which revealed the struggle of her interest for him and of her wounded pride. She longed, without doubt, at the moment they were about to separate, to ask him, according to their intimate and charming custom, when they should meet again. He did not heed her--any more than he did the other pair of eyes which told him to be more prudent, and which were those of the Baron; any more than he did the observation of Madame Gorka, who, having remarked the ill-humor of Alba, was seeking the cause, which she had long since divined was the heart of the young girl; any more than the attitude of Madame Maitland, whose eyes at times shot fire equal to her brother's gentleness. He took the latter by the arm, and said to him aloud:

"I should like to have your opinion on a small portrait I have noticed in the other room, my dear Chapron." Then, when they were before the canvas which had served as a pretext for the aside, he continued, in a low voice: "I heard very strange news this morning. Do you know Boleslas Gorka is in Rome unknown to his wife?"

"That is indeed strange," replied Maitland's brother-in-law, adding simply, after a silence: "Are you certain of it?"

"As certain as that we are here," said Dorsenne. "One of my friends, Marquis de Montfanon, met him this morning."

A fresh silence ensued between the two, during which Julien felt that the arm upon which he rested trembled. Then they joined the party, while Florent said aloud: "It is an excellent piece of painting, which has, unfortunately, been revarnished too much."

"May I have done right!" thought Julien. "He understood me."

### CHAPTER III

#### BOLESLAS GORKA

Hardly ten minutes had passed since Dorsenne had spoken as he had to Florent Chapron, and already the imprudent novelist began to wonder whether it would not have been wiser not to interfere in any way in an adventure in which his intervention was of the least importance.

The apprehension of an immediate drama which had possessed him, for the first time, after the conversation with Montfanon, for the second time, in a stronger manner, by proving the ignorance of Madame Gorka on the subject of the husband's return--that frightful and irresistible evocation in a clandestine chamber, suddenly deluged with blood, was banished by the simplest event. The six visitors exchanged their last impressions on the melancholy and magnificence of the Castagna apartments, and they ended by descending the grand staircase with the pillars, through the windows of which staircase smiled beneath the scorching sun the small garden which Dorsenne had compared to a face. The young man walked a little in advance, beside Alba Steno, whom he now tried, but in vain, to cheer. Suddenly, at the last turn of the broad steps which tempered the decline gradually, her face brightened with surprise and pleasure. She uttered a slight cry and said: "There is my mother!" And Julien saw the Madame Steno, whom he had seen, in an access of almost delirious anxiety, surprised, assassinated by a betrayed lover. She was standing upon the gray and black mosaic of the peristyle, dressed in the most charming morning toilette. Her golden hair was gathered up under a large hat of flowers, over which was a white veil; her hand toyed with the silver handle of a white parasol, and in the reflection of that whiteness, with her clear, fair complexion, with her lovely blue eyes in which sparkled passion and intelligence, with her faultless teeth which gleamed when she smiled, with her form still slender notwithstanding the fulness of her bust, she seemed to be a creature so youthful, so vigorous, so little touched by age that a stranger would never have taken her to be the mother of the tall young girl who was already beside her and who said to her

"What imprudence! Ill as you were this morning, to go out in this sun. Why did you do so?"

"To fetch you and to take you home!" replied the Countess gayly. "I was ashamed of having indulged myself! I rose, and here I am. Good-day, Dorsenne. I hope you kept your eyes open up there. A story might be written on the Ardea affair. I will tell it to you. Good-day, Maud. How kind of you to make lazy Alba exercise a little! She would have quite a different color if she walked every morning. Goodday, Florent. Good-day, Lydia. The master is not here? And you, old friend, what have you done with Fanny?"

She distributed these simple "good-days" with a grace so delicate, a smile so rare for each one--tender for her daughter, spirituelle for the author, grateful for Madame Gorka, amicably surprised for Chapron and Madame Maitland, familiar and confiding for her old friend, as she called the Baron. She was evidently the soul of the small party, for her mere presence seemed to have caused animation to sparkle in every eye.



All talked at once, and she replied, as they walked toward the carriages, which waited in a court of honor capable of holding seventy gala chariots. One after the other these carriages advanced. The horses pawed the ground; the harnesses shone; the footmen and coachmen were dressed in perfect liveries; the porter of the Palais Castagna, with his long redingote, on the buttons of which were the symbolical chestnuts of the family, had beneath his laced hat such a dignified bearing that Julien suddenly found it absurd to have imagined an impassioned drama in connection with such people. The last one left, while watching the others depart, he once more experienced the sensation so common to those who are familiar with the worst side of the splendor of society and who perceive in them the moral misery and ironical gaiety.

"You are becoming a great simpleton, my friend, Dorsenne," said he, seating himself more democratically in one of those open cabs called in Rome a botte. "To fear a tragical adventure for the woman who is mistress of herself to such a degree is something like casting one's self into the water to prevent a shark from drowning. If she had not upon her lips Maitland's kisses, and in her eyes the memory of happiness, I am very much mistaken. She came from a rendezvous. It was written for me, in her toilette, in the color upon her cheeks, in her tiny shoes, easy to remove, which had not taken thirty steps. And with what mastery she uttered her string of falsehoods! Her daughter, Madame Gorka, Madame Maitland, how quickly she included them all! That is why I do not like the theatre, where one finds the actress who employs that tone to utter her: 'Is the master not here?'"

He laughed aloud, then his thoughts, relieved of all anxiety, took a new course, and, using the word of German origin familiar to Cosmopolitans, to express an absurd action, he said: "I have made a pretty schlemylade, as Hafner would say, in relating to Florent Gorka's unexpected arrival. It was just the same as telling him that Maitland was the Countess's lover. That is a conversation at which I should like to assist, that which will take place between the two brothers-in-law. Should I be very much surprised to learn that this unattached negro is the confidant of his great friend? It is a subject to paint, which has never been well treated; the passionate friendships of a Tattet for a Musset, of an Eckermann for a Goethe, of an Asselineau for a Beaudelaire, the total absorption of the admirer in the admired. Florent found that the genius of the great painter had need of a fortune, and he gave him his sister. Were he to find that that genius required a passion in order to develop still more, he would not object. My word of honor! He glanced at the Countess just now with gratitude! Why not, after all? Lincoln is a colorist of the highest order, although his desire to be with the tide has led him into too many imitations. But it is his race. Young Madame Maitland has as much sense as the handle of a basket; and Madame Steno is one of those extraordinary women truly created to exalt the ideals of an artist. Never has he painted anything as he painted the portrait of Alba. I can hear this dialogue:

"You know the Pole has returned? What Pole? The Countess's. What? You believe those calumnies? Ah, what comedies here below! 'Gad! The cabman has also committed his 'schlemylade'. I told him Rue Sistina,

near La Trinite-des-Monts, and here he is going through Place Barberini instead of cutting across Capo le Case. It is my fault as well.

I should not have heeded it had there been an earthquake. Let us at least admire the Triton of Bernin. What a sculptor that man was! yet he never thought of nature except to falsify it."

These incoherent remarks were made with a good-nature decidedly optimistic, as could be seen, when the fiacre finally drew up at the given address. It was that of a very modest restaurant decorated with this signboard: 'Trattoria al Marzocco.' And the 'Marzocco', the lion symbolical of Florence, was represented above the door, resting his paw on the escutcheon ornamented with the national lys. The appearance of that front did not justify the choice which the elegant Dorsenne had made of the place at which to dine when he did not dine in society. But his dilettantism liked nothing better than those sudden leaps from society, and M. Egiste Brancadori, who kept the Marzocco, was one of those unconscious buffoons of whom he was continually in search in real life, one of those whom he called his "Thebans", in reference to King Lear. "I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban," cried the mad king, one knows not why, when he meets "poor Tom" on the heath.

That Dorsenne's Parisian friends, the Casals, the Machaults, the De Vardes, those habitués of the club, might not judge him too severely, he explained that the Theban born in Florence was a cook of the first order and that the modest restaurant had its story. It amused so paradoxical an observer as Julien was. He often said, "Who will ever dare to write the truth of the history?" This, for example: Pope Pius IX, having asked the Emperor to send him some troops to protect his dominions, the latter agreed to do so--an occupation which bore two results: a Corsican hatred of the half of Italy against France and the founding of the Marzocco by Egiste Brancadori, says the Theban or the doctor. It was one of the pleasantries of the novelist to pretend to have cured his dyspepsia in Italy, thanks to the wise and wholesome cooking of the said Egiste. In reality, and more simply, Brancadori was the old cook of a Russian lord, one of the Werekiews, the cousin of pretty Alba Steno's real father. That Werekiew, renowned in Rome for the daintiness of his dinners, died suddenly in 1866. Several of the frequenters of his house, advised by a French officer of the army of occupation, and tired of clubs, hotels, and ordinary restaurants, determined to form a syndicate and to employ his former cook. They, with his cooperation, established a sort of superior café, to which with some pride they gave the name of the Culinary Club. By assuring to each one a minimum of sixteen meals for seven francs, they kept for four years an excellent table, at which were to be found all the distinguished tourists in Rome. The year 1870 had disbanded that little society of connoisseurs and of conversationalists, and the club was metamorphosed into a restaurant, almost unknown, except to a few artists or diplomats who were attracted by the ancient splendors of the place, and, above all, by the knowledge of the "doctor's" talents.

It was not unusual at eight o'clock for the three small rooms which composed the establishment to be full of men in white cravats, white waistcoats and evening coats. To cosmopolitan Dorsenne this was a singularly interesting sight; a member of the English embassy here, of

the Russian embassy farther on, two German attaches elsewhere, two French secretaries near at hand from St. Siege, another from the Quirinal. What interested the novelist still more was the conversation of the doctor himself, genial Brancadori, who could neither read nor write. But he had preserved a faithful remembrance of all his old customers, and when he felt confidential, standing erect upon the threshold of his kitchen, of the possession of which he was so insolently proud, he repeated curious stories of Rome in the days of his youth. His gestures, so conformable to the appearance of things, his mobile face and his Tuscan tongue, which softened into all the harsh e's between two vowels, gave a savor to his stories which delighted a seeker after local truths. It was in the morning especially, when there was no one in the restaurant, that he voluntarily left his ovens to chat, and if Dorsenne gave the address of the Marzocco to his cabman, it was in the hope that the old cook would in his manner sketch for him the story of the ruin of Ardea. Brancadori was standing by the bar where was enthroned his niece, Signorina Sabatina, with a charming Florentine face, chin a trifle long, forehead somewhat broad, nose somewhat short, a sinuous mouth, large, black eyes, an olive complexion and waving hair, which recalled in a forcible manner the favorite type of the first of the Ghirlandajos.

"Uncle," said the young girl, as soon as she perceived Dorsenne, "where have you put the letter brought for the Prince?"

In Italy every foreigner is a prince or a count, and the profound good-nature which reigns in the habit gives to those titles, in the mouths of those who employ them, an amiability often free from calculation. There is no country in the world where there is a truer, a more charming familiarity of class for class, and Brancadori immediately gave a proof of it in addressing as "Carolei"--that is to say, "my dear"--him whom his daughter had blazoned with a coronet, and he cried, fumbling in the pockets of the alpaca waistcoat which he wore over his apron of office:

"The brain is often lacking in a gray head. I put it in the pocket of my coat in order to be more sure of not forgetting it. I changed my coat, because it was warm, and left it with the letter in my apartments."

"You can look for it after lunch," said Dorsenne.

"No," replied the young girl, rising, "it is not two steps from here; I will go. The concierge of the palace where your Excellency lives brought it himself, and said it must be delivered immediately."

"Very well, go and fetch it," replied Julien, who could not suppress a smile at the honor paid his dwelling, "and I will remain here and talk with my doctor, while he gives me the prescription for this morning--that is to say, his bill of fare. Guess whence I come, Brancadori," he added, assured of first stirring the cook's curiosity, then his power of speech. "From the Palais Castagna, where they are selling everything."

"Ah! Per Bacco!" exclaimed the Tuscan, with evident sorrow upon his old parchment-like face, scorched from forty years of cooking. "If the deceased Prince Urban can see it in the other world, his heart will

break, I assure you. The last time he came to dine here, about ten years ago, on Saint Joseph's Day, he said to me: 'Make me some fritters, Egiste, like those we used to have at Monsieur d'Epina's, Monsieur Clairin's, Fortuny's, and poor Henri Regnault's.' And he was happy! 'Egiste,' said he to me, 'I can die contented! I have only one son, but I shall leave him six millions and the palace. If it was Gigi I should be less easy, but Peppino!' Gigi was the other one, the elder, who died, the gay one, who used to come here every day--a fine fellow, but bad! You should have heard him tell of his visit to Pius Ninth on the day upon which he converted an Englishman. Yes, Excellency, he converted him by lending him by mistake a pious book instead of a novel. The Englishman took the book, read it, read another, a third, and became a Catholic. Gigi, who was not in favor at the Vatican, hastened to tell the Holy Father of his good deed. 'You see, my son,' said Pius Ninth, 'what means our Lord God employs!' Ah, he would have used those millions for his amusement, while Peppino! They were all squandered in signatures. Just think, the name of Prince d'Ardea meant money! He speculated, he lost, he won, he lost again, he drew up bills of exchange after bills of exchange. And every time he made a move such as I am making with my pencil--only I can not sign my name--it meant one hundred, two hundred thousand francs to go into the world. And now he must leave his house and Rome. What will he do, Excellency, I ask you?" With a shake of his head he added: "He should reconstruct his fortune abroad. We have this saying: 'He who squanders gold with his hands will search for it with his feet.' But Sabatino is coming! She has been as nimble as a cat."

The good man's invaluable mimetic art, his proverbs, the story of the fete of St. Joseph, the original evocation of the heir of the Castagnas continually signing and signing, the coarse explanation of his ruin--very true, however--everything in the recital had amused Dorsenne. He knew enough Italian to appreciate the untranslatable passages of the language of the man of the people. He was again on the verge of laughter, when the fresco madonna, as he sometimes designated the young girl, handed him an envelope the address upon which soon converted his smile into an undisguised expression of annoyance. He pushed aside the day's bill of fare which the old cook presented to him and said, brusquely: "I fear I can not remain to breakfast." Then, opening the letter: "No, I can not; adieu." And he went out, in a manner so precipitate and troubled that the uncle and niece exchanged smiling glances. Those typical Southerners could not think of any other trouble in connection with so handsome a man as Dorsenne than that of the heart.

"Chi ha l'amor nel petto," said Signorina Sabatina.

"Ha lo spron nei fianchi," replied the uncle.

That naive adage which compares the sharp sting which passion drives into our breasts to the spurring given the flanks of a horse, was not true of Dorsenne. The application of the proverb to the circumstance was not, however, entirely erroneous, and the novelist commented upon it in his passion, although in another form, by repeating to himself, as he went along the Rue Sistina: "No, no, I can not interfere in that affair, and I shall tell him so firmly."

He examined again the note, the perusal of which had rendered him more uneasy than he had been twice before that morning. He had not been mistaken in recognizing on the envelope the handwriting of Boleslas Gorka, and these were the terms, teeming with mystery under the circumstances, in which the brief message was worded:

"I know you to be such a friend to me, dear Julien, and I have for your character, so chivalrous and so French, such esteem that I have determined to turn to you in an era of my life thoroughly tragical. I wish to see you immediately. I shall await you at your lodging. I have sent a similar note to the Cercle de la Chasse, another to the bookshop on the Corso, another to your antiquary's. Wheresoever my appeal finds you, leave all and come at once. You will save more for me than life. For a reason which I will tell you, my return is a profound secret. No one, you understand, knows of it but you. I need not write more to a friend as sincere as you are, and whom I embrace with all my heart."

"It is unequalled.!" said Dorsenne, crumpling the letter with rising anger. "He embraces me with all his heart. I am his most sincere friend! I am chivalrous, French, the only person he esteems! What disagreeable commission does he wish me to undertake for him? Into what scrape is he about to ask me to enter, if he has not already got me into it? I know that school of protestation. We are allied for life and death, are we not? Do me a favor! And they upset your habits, encroach upon your time, embark you in tragedies, and when you say 'No' to them then they squarely accuse you of selfishness and of treason! It is my fault, too. Why did I listen to his confidences? Have I not known for years that a man who relates his love-affairs on so short an acquaintance as ours is a scoundrel and a fool? And with such people there can be no possible connection. He amused me at the beginning, when he told me his sly intrigue, without naming the person, as they all do at first. He amused me still more by the way he managed to name her without violating that which people in society call honor. And to think that the women believe in that honor and that discretion! And yet it was the surest means of entering Steno's, and approaching Alba.... I believe I am about to pay for my Roman flirtation. If Gorka is a Pole, I am from Lorraine, and the heir of the Castellans will only make me do what I agree to, nothing more."

In such an ill-humor and with such a resolution, Julien reached the door of his house. If that dwelling was not the palace alluded to by Signorina Sabatina, it was neither the usually common house as common today in new Rome as in contemporary Paris, modern Berlin, and in certain streets of London opened of late in the neighborhood of Hyde Park. It was an old building on the Place de la Trinite-des-Monts, at an angle of the two streets Sistina and Gregoriana. Although reduced to the state of a simple pension, more or less bourgeoise, that house had its name marked in certain guide-books, and like all the corners of ancient Rome it preserved the traces of a glorious, artistic history. The small columns of the porch gave it the name of the tempietto, or little temple, while several personages dear to litterateurs had lived there, from the

landscape painter Claude Lorrain to the poet Francois Coppee. A few paces distant, almost opposite, lived Poussin, and one of the greatest among modern English poets, Keats, died quite near by, the John Keats whose tomb is to be seen in Rome, with that melancholy epitaph upon it, written by himself:

Here lies one whose name was writ in water.

It was seldom that Dorsenne returned home without repeating to himself the translation he had attempted of that beautiful 'Ci-git un don't le nom, jut escrit sur de l'eau'.

Sometimes he repeated, at evening, this delicious fragment:

The sky was tinged with tender green and pink.

This time he entered in a more prosaic manner; for he addressed the concierge in the tone of a jealous husband or a debtor hunted by creditors:

"Have you given the key to any one, Tonino?" he asked.

"Count Gorka said that your Excellency asked him to await you here," replied the man, with a timidity rendered all the more comical by the formidable cut of his gray moustache and his imperial, which made him a caricature of the late King Victor Emmanuel.

He had served in '59 under the Galantuomo, and he paid the homage of a veteran of Solferino to that glorious memory. His large eyes rolled with fear at the least confusion, and he repeated:

"Yes, he said that your Excellency asked him to wait," while Dorsenne ascended the staircase, saying aloud: "More and more perfect. But this time the familiarity passes all bounds; and it is better so. I have been so surprised and annoyed from the first that I shall be easily able to refuse the imprudent fellow what he will ask of me." In his anger the novelist sought to arm himself against his weakness, of which he was aware--not the weakness of insufficient will, but of a too vivid perception of the motives which the person with whom he was in conflict obeyed. He, however, was to learn that there is no greater dissolvent of rancor than intelligent curiosity. His was, indeed, aroused by a simple detail, which consisted in ascertaining under what conditions the Pole had travelled; his dressing-case, his overcoat and his hat, still white with the dust of travel, were lying upon the table in the antechamber.

Evidently he had come direct from Warsaw to the Place de la Trinite-des-Monts. A prey to what delirium of passion? Dorsenne had not time to ask the question any more than he had presence of mind to compose his manner to such severity that it would cut short all familiarity on the part of his strange visitor. At the noise made by the opening of the antechamber door, Boleslas started up. He seized both hands of the man into whose apartments he had obtruded himself. He pressed them. He gazed at him with feverish eyes, with eyes which had not closed for hours, and he

murmured, drawing the novelist into the tiny salon:

"You have come, Julien, you are here! Ah, I thank you for having answered my call at once! Let me look at you, for I am sure I have a friend beside me, one in whom I can trust, with whom I can speak frankly, upon whom I can depend. If this solitude had lasted much longer I should have become mad."

Although Madame Steno's lover belonged to the class of excitable, nervous people who exaggerate their feelings by an unconscious wildness of tone and of manner, his face bore the traces of a trouble too deep not to be startling.

Julien, who had seen him set out, three months before, so radiantly handsome, was struck by the change which had taken place during such a brief absence. He was the same Boleslas Gorka, that handsome man, that admirable human animal, so refined and so strong, in which was embodied centuries of aristocracy--the Counts de Gorka belong to the ancient house of Lodzia, with which are connected so many illustrious Polish families, the Opalenice-Opalenskis, the Bnin-Bninskis, the Ponin-Poniniskis and many others--but his cheeks were sunken beneath his long, brown beard, in which were glints of gold; his eyes were heavy as if from wakeful nights, his nostrils were pinched and his face was pale. The travel-stains upon his face accentuated the alteration.

Yet the native elegance of that face and form gave grace to his lassitude. Boleslas, in the vigorous and supple maturity of his thirty-four years, realized one of those types of manly beauty so perfect that they resist the strongest tests. The excesses of emotion, as those of libertinism, seem only to invest the man with a new prestige; the fact is that the novelist's room, with its collection of books, photographs, engravings, paintings and moldings, invested that form, tortured by the bitter sufferings of passion, with a poesy to which Dorsenne could not remain altogether insensible. The atmosphere, impregnated with Russian tobacco and the bluish vapor which filled the room, revealed in what manner the betrayed lover had diverted his impatience, and in the centre of the writing-table a cup with a bacchanal painted in red on a black ground, of which Julien was very proud, contained the remains of about thirty cigarettes, thrown aside almost as soon as lighted. Their paper ends had been gnawed with a nervousness which betrayed the young man's condition, while he repeated, in a tone so sad that it almost called forth a shudder:

"Yes, I should have gone mad."

"Calm yourself, my dear Boleslas, I implore you," replied Dorsenne. What had become of his ill-humor? How could he preserve it in the presence of a person so evidently beside himself? Julien continued, speaking to his companion as one speaks to a sick child: "Come, be seated. Be a little more tranquil, since I am here, and you have reason to count on my friendship. Speak to me. Explain to me what has happened. If there is any advice to give you, I am ready. I am prepared to render you a service. My God! In what a state you are!"

"Is it not so?" said the other, with a sort of ironical pride. It was sufficient that he had a witness of his grief for him to display it with secret vanity. "Is it not so?" he continued. "Could you only know how I have suffered. This is nothing," said he, alluding to his haggard appearance. "It is here that you should read," he struck his breast, then passing his hands over his brow and his eyes, as if to exorcise a nightmare. "You are right. I must be calm, or I am lost."

After a prolonged silence, during which he seemed to have gathered together his thoughts and to collect his will, for his voice had become decided and sharp, he began: "You know that I am here unknown to any one, even to my wife."

"I know it," replied Dorsenne. "I have just left the Countess. This morning I visited the Palais Castagna with her, Hafner, Madame Maitland, Florent Chapron." He paused and added, thinking it better not to lie on minor points, "Madame Steno and Alba were there, too."

"Any one else?" asked Boleslas, with so keen a glance that the author had to employ all his strength to reply:

"No one else."

There was a silence between the two men.

Dorsenne anticipated from his question toward what subject the conversation was drifting. Gorka, now lying rather than sitting upon the divan in the small room, appeared like a beast that, at any moment, might bound. Evidently he had come to Julien's a prey to the mad desire to find out something, which is to jealousy what thirst is to certain punishments. When one has tasted the bitter draught of certainty, one does not suffer less. Yet one walks toward it, barefooted, on the heated pavement, heedless of the heat. The motives which led Boleslas to choose the French novelist as the one from whom to obtain his information, demonstrated that the feline character of his physiognomy was not deceptive. He understood Dorsenne much better than Dorsenne understood him. He knew him to be nervous, on the one hand, and perspicacious on the other. If there was an intrigue between Maitland and Madame Steno, Julien had surely observed it, and, approached in a certain manner, he would surely betray it. Moreover--for that violent and crafty nature abounded in perplexities--Boleslas, who passionately admired the author's talent, experienced a sort of indefinable attraction in exhibiting himself before him in the role of a frantic lover. He was one of the persons who would have his photograph taken on his deathbed, so much importance did he attach to his person. He would, no doubt, have been insulted, if the author of 'Une Eglogue Mondaine' had portrayed in a book himself and his love for Countess Steno, and yet he had only approached the author, had only chosen him as a confidant with the vague hope of impressing him. He had even thought of suggesting to him some creation resembling himself. Yes, Gorka was very complex, for he was not contented with deceiving his wife, he allowed the confiding creature to form a friendship with the daughter of her husband's mistress. Still,



he deceived her with remorse, and had never ceased bearing her an affection as sorrowful as it was respectful. But it required Dorsenne to admit the like anomalies, and the rare sensation of being observed in his passionate frenzy attracted the young man to some one who was at once a sure confidant, a possible portrayer, a moral accomplice. It was necessary now, but it would not be an easy matter, to make of him his involuntary detective.

"You see," resumed he suddenly, "to what miserable, detailed inquiries I have descended, I who always had a horror of espionage, as of some terrible degradation. I shall question you frankly, for you are my friend. And what a friend! I intended to use artifice with you at first, but I was ashamed. Passion takes possession of me and distorts me. No matter what infamy presents itself, I rush into it, and then I am afraid. Yes, I am afraid of myself! But I have suffered so much! You do not understand? Well! Listen," continued he, covering Dorsenne with one of those glances so scrutinizing that not a gesture, not a quiver of his eyelids, escaped him, "and tell me if you have ever imagined for one of your romances a situation similar to mine. You remember the mortal fear in which I lived last winter, with the presence of my brother-in-law, and the danger of his denouncing me to my poor Maud, from stupidity, from a British sense of virtue, from hatred. You remember, also, what that voyage to Poland cost me, after those long months of anxiety? The press of affairs and the illness of my aunt coming just at the moment when I was freed from Ardahan, inspired me with miserable forebodings. I have always believed in presentiments. I had one. I was not mistaken. From the first letter I received--from whom you can guess--I saw that there was taking place in Rome something which threatened me in what I held dearest on earth, in that love for which I sacrificed all, toward which I walked by trampling on the noblest of hearts. Was Catherine ceasing to love me? When one has spent two years of one's life in a passion--and what years!--one clings to it with every fibre! I will spare you the recital of those first weeks spent in going here and there, in paying visits to relatives, in consulting lawyers, in caring for my sick aunt, in fulfilling my duty toward my son, since the greater part of the fortune will go to him. And always with this firm conviction: She no longer writes to me as formerly, she no longer loves me. Ah! if I could show you the letter she wrote when I was absent once before. You have a great deal of talent, Julien, but you have never composed anything more beautiful."

He paused, as if the part of the confession he was approaching cost him a great effort, while Dorsenne interpolated:

"A change of tone in correspondence is not, however, sufficient to explain the fever in which I see you."

"No," resumed Gorka, "but it was not merely a change of tone. I complained. For the first time my complaint found no echo. I threatened to cease writing. No reply. I wrote to ask forgiveness. I received a letter so cold that in my turn I wrote an angry one. Another silence! Ah! You can imagine the terrible effect produced upon me by an unsigned letter which I received fifteen days since. It arrived one morning. It

bore the Roman postmark. I did not recognize the handwriting. I opened it. I saw two sheets of paper on which were pasted cuttings from a French journal. I repeat it was unsigned; it was an anonymous letter."

"And you read it?" interrupted Dorsenne. "What folly!"

"I read it," replied the Count. "It began with words of startling truth relative to my own situation. That our affairs are known to others we may be sure, since we know theirs. We should, consequently, remember that we are at the mercy of their indiscretion, as they are at ours. The beginning of the note served as a guarantee of the truth of the end, which was a detailed, minute recital of an intrigue which Madame Steno had been carrying on during my absence, and with whom? With the man whom I always mistrusted, that dauber who wanted to paint Alba's portrait--but whose desires I nipped in the bud--with the fellow who degraded himself by a shameful marriage for money, and who calls himself an artist--with that American--with Lincoln Maitland!"

Although the childish and unjust hatred of the jealous--the hatred which degrades us in lowering the one we love--had poisoned his discourse with its bitterness, he did not cease watching Dorsenne. He partly raised himself on the couch and thrust his head forward as he uttered the name of his rival, glancing keenly at the novelist meanwhile. The latter fortunately had been rendered indignant at the news of the anonymous letter, and he repeated, with an astonishment which in no way aided his interlocutor:

"Wait," resumed Boleslas; "that was merely a beginning. The next day I received another letter, written and sent under the same conditions; the day after, a third. I have twelve of them--do you hear? twelve--in my portfolio, and all composed with the same atrocious knowledge of the circle in which we move, as was the first. At the same time I was receiving letters from my poor wife, and all coincided, in the terrible series, in a frightful concordance. The anonymous letter told me: 'To-day they were together two hours and a quarter,' while Maud wrote: 'I could not go out to-day, as agreed upon, with Madame Steno, for she had a headache.' Then the portrait of Alba, of which they told me incidentally. The anonymous letters detailed to me the events, the prolongation of sitting, while my wife wrote: 'We again went to see Alba's portrait yesterday. The painter erased what he had done.' Finally it became impossible for me to endure it. With their abominable minuteness of detail, the anonymous letters gave me even the address of their rendezvous! I set out. I said to myself, 'If I announce my arrival to my wife they will find it out, they will escape me.' I intended to surprise them. I wanted--Do I know what I wanted? I wanted to suffer no longer the agony of uncertainty. I took the train. I stopped neither day nor night. I left my valet yesterday in Florence, and this morning I was in Rome.

"My plan was made on the way. I would hire apartments near theirs, in the same street, perhaps in the same house. I would watch them, one, two days, a week. And then--would you believe it? It was in the cab which was bearing me directly toward that street that I saw suddenly,

clearly within me, and that I was startled. I had my hand upon this revolver." He drew the weapon from his pocket and laid it upon the divan, as if he wished to repulse any new temptation. "I saw myself as plainly as I see you, killing those two beings like two animals, should I surprise them. At the same time I saw my son and my wife. Between murder and me there was, perhaps, just the distance which separated me from the street, and I felt that it was necessary to fly at once--to fly that street, to fly from the guilty ones, if they were really guilty; to fly from myself! I thought of you, and I have come to say to you, 'My friend, this is how things are; I am drowning, I am lost; save me.'"

"You have yourself found the salvation," replied Dorsenne. "It is in your son and your wife. See them first, and if I can not promise you that you will not suffer any more, you will no longer be tempted by that horrible idea." And he pointed to the pistol, which gleamed in the sunlight that entered through the casement. Then he added: "And you will have the idea still less when you will have been able to prove 'de visu' what those anonymous letters were worth. Twelve letters in fifteen days, and cuttings from how many papers? And they claim that we invent heinousness in our books! If you like, we will search together for the person who can have elaborated that little piece of villainy. It must be a Judas, a Rodin, an Iago--or Iago. But this is not the moment to waste in hypotheses.

"Are you sure of your valet? You must send him a despatch, and in that despatch the copy of another addressed to Madame Gorka, which your man will send this very evening. You will announce your arrival for tomorrow, making allusion to a letter written, so to speak, from Poland, and which was lost. This evening from here you will take the train for Florence, from which place you will set out again this very night. You will be in Rome again to-morrow morning. You will have avoided, not only the misfortune of having become a murderer, though you would not have surprised any one, I am sure, but the much more grave misfortune of awakening Madame Gorka's suspicions. Is it a promise?"

Dorsenne rose to prepare a pen and paper: "Come, write the despatch immediately, and render thanks to your good genius which led you to a friend whose business consists in imagining the means of solving insoluble situations."

"You are quite right," Boleslas replied, after taking in his hand the pen which he offered to the other, "it is fortunate." Then, casting aside the pen as he had the revolver, "I can not. No, I can not, as long as I have this doubt within me. Ah, it is too horrible! I can see them plainly. You speak to me of my wife; but you forget that she loves me, and at the first glance she would read me, as you did. You can not imagine what an effort it has cost me for two years never to arouse suspicion. I was happy, and it is easy to deceive when one has nothing to hide but happiness. To-day we should not be together five minutes before she would seek, and she would find. No, no; I can not. I need something more."

"Unfortunately," replied Julien, "I cannot give it to you. There is no

opium to lull asleep doubts such as those horrible anonymous letters have awakened. What I know is this, that if you do not follow my advice Madame Gorka will not have a suspicion, but certainty. It is now perhaps too late. Do you wish me to tell you what I concealed from you on seeing you so troubled? You did not lose much time in coming from the station hither, and probably you did not look out of your cab twice. But you were seen. By whom? By Montfanon. He told me so this morning almost on the threshold of the Palais Castagna. If I had not gathered from some words uttered by your wife that she was ignorant of your presence in Rome, I--do you hear?--I should have told her of it. Judge now of your situation!"

He spoke with an agitation which was not assumed, so much was he troubled by the evidence of danger which Gorka's obstinacy presented. The latter, who had begun to collect himself, had a strange light in his eyes. Without doubt his companion's nervousness marked the moment he was awaiting to strike a decisive blow. He rose with so sudden a start that Dorsenne drew back. He seized both of his hands, but with such force that not a quiver of the muscles escaped him:

"Yes, Julien, you have the means of consoling me, you have it," said he in a voice again hoarse with emotion.

"What is it?" asked the novelist.

"What is it? You are an honest man, Dorsenne; you are a great artist; you are my friend, and a friend allied to me by a sacred bond, almost a brother-in-arms; you, the grandnephew of a hero who shed his blood by the side of my grandfather at Somo-Sierra. Give me your word of honor that you are absolutely certain Madame Steno is not Maitland's mistress, that you never thought it, have never heard it said, and I will believe you, I will obey you! Come," continued he, pressing the writer's hand with more fervor, "I see you hesitate!"

"No," said Julien, disengaging himself from the wild grasp, "I do not hesitate. I am sorry for you. Were I to give you that word, would it have any weight with you for five minutes? Would you not be persuaded immediately that I was perjuring myself to avoid a misfortune?"

"You hesitate," interrupted Boleslas. Then, with a burst of wild laughter, he said, "It is then true! I like that better! It is frightful to know it, but one suffers less-- To know it' As if I did not know she had lovers before me, as if it were not written on Alba's every feature that she is Werekiew's child, as if I had not heard it said seventy times before knowing her that she had loved Branciforte, San Giobbe, Strabane, ten others. Before, during, or after, what difference does it make? Ah, I was sure on knocking at your door--at this door of honor--I should hear the truth, that I would touch it as I touch this object," and he laid his hand upon a marble bust on the table.

"You see I hear it like a man. You can speak to me now. Who knows? Disgust is a great cure for passion. I will listen to you. Do not spare me!"

"You are mistaken, Gorka," replied Dorsenne. "What I have to say to you, I can say very simply. I was, and I am, convinced that in a quarter of an hour, in an hour, tomorrow, the day after, you will consider me a liar or an imbecile. But, since you misinterpreted my silence, it is my duty to speak, and I do so. I give you my word of honor I have never had the least suspicion of a connection between Madame Steno and Maitland, nor have their relations seemed changed to me for a second since your absence. I give you my word of honor that no one, do you hear, no one has spoken of it to me. And, now, act as you please, think as you please. I have said all I can say."

The novelist uttered those words with a feverish energy which was caused by the terrible strain he was making upon his conscience. But Gorka's laugh had terrified him so much the more as at the same instant the jealous lover's disengaged hand was voluntarily or involuntarily extended toward the weapon which gleamed upon the couch. The vision of an immediate catastrophe, this time inevitable, rose before Julien. His lips had spoken, as his arm would have been out stretched, by an irresistible instinct, to save several lives, and he had made the false statement, the first and no doubt the last in his life, without reflecting. He had no sooner uttered it than he experienced such an excess of anger that he would at that moment almost have preferred not to be believed. It would indeed have been a comfort to him if his visitor had replied by one of those insulting negations which permit one man to strike another, so great was his irritation. On the contrary, he saw the face of Madame Steno's lover turned toward him with an expression of gratitude upon it. Boleslas's lips quivered, his hands were clasped, two large tears gushed from his burning eyes and rolled down his cheeks. When he was able to speak, he moaned:

"Ah, my friend, how much good you have done me! From what a nightmare you have relieved me. Ah! Now I am saved! I believe you, I believe you. You are intimate with them. You see them every day. If there had been anything between them you would know it. You would have heard it talked of. Ah! Thanks! Give me your hand that I may press it. Forget all I said to you just now, the slander I uttered in a moment of delirium. I know very well it was untrue. And now, let me embrace you as I would if you had really saved me from drowning. Ah, my friend, my only friend!"

And he rushed up to clasp to his bosom the novelist, who replied with the words uttered at the beginning of this conversation: "Calm yourself, I beseech you, calm yourself!" and repeating to himself, brave and loyal man that he was: "I could not act differently, but it is hard!"

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Follow their thoughts instead of heeding objects  
Has as much sense as the handle of a basket

Mediocre sensibility  
No flies enter a closed mouth  
Pitiful checker-board of life  
Scarcely a shade of gentle condescension  
That you can aid them in leading better lives?  
The forests have taught man liberty  
There is an intelligent man, who never questions his ideas  
Thinking it better not to lie on minor points  
Too prudent to risk or gain much  
Walked at the rapid pace characteristic of monomaniacs

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