

of the greatest of modern poets, whose works have thrilled five continents, whose poetry has almost revolutionized literature, and whose genius was employed with terrible force in the service of his country—of liberty and equality. The incidents of this story are identified with the great man himself, and arose in great measure from the accidents of his fortune.

It will be recollected that the famous *coup d'état* took place in Paris on December 2, 1851. Victor Hugo was one of the first persons proscribed by Louis Napoleon. He had persistently resisted the attempts of Bonaparte and his adherents to destroy the republic and re-establish the empire, and was consequently especially obnoxious to the new ruler. He first took refuge with his family in Belgium. Political pressure secured his expulsion from that country, and he then took up a residence in the island of Jersey, and finally settled down in Guernsey, everywhere fulminating against the emperor, until the fall of the empire in 1870.

Mademoiselle Hugo made known the object of her visit to her lawyer in something like the following statement: While her family were living at Brussels, during the exile, a wealthy English family was residing there named Pinsen. The Hugo and Pinsen families became acquainted, and after a time intimate—sufficiently intimate, at all events, for a love affair to spring up between young Pinsen and Mademoiselle Adèle. There are no means of knowing how sincere or fervent was the affection on the part of the young man, but no doubt remains as to the intensity of passion on the part of the young lady. Mademoiselle Adèle Hugo became perfectly infatuated with Pinsen, madly, blindly in love. At that time, although Victor Hugo had a recognized place in literature, had been made a member of the chamber of peers by Louis Philippe, and, on the re-establishment of the republic in 1848, had been honoured by the people of Paris with a seat in the Constituent Assembly—he was, nevertheless, then poor and in exile. *Les Misérables*, the great work which established his fame and secured his fortune, did not appear until two or three years after this. In consequence, it will not seem remarkable that the Pinsens discouraged this love affair. The English are the best match-makers in the world, and money is never left out of the account.

The exact date of this courtship cannot now be accurately fixed, but it was probably about 1860-61. There is a strong presumption of mutual attachment. Mademoiselle Hugo was handsome, of accomplished manners, unusual talents and fiery temperament. The lovers became engaged, and in spite of the opposition of Pinsen's family, they went through the form of a secret marriage. Young Pinsen about this time went to England. He either rejoined his regiment, from which he was temporarily absent, or else purchased a commission as lieutenant. Mr. Motton's recollection is that he then bought a commission and entered the army for the first time, but some of the officers of the regiment, who formerly served with Pinsen, give their impression that he was transferred from another regiment to the Sixteenth in 1861.

The matter is not of great importance. It is sufficient to know that Pinsen left Brussels for England, and on leaving his lady-love he promised, with every token of sincerity and honour, that she should join him in England, and that the marriage, which had been secret in Brussels, should be publicly celebrated in an English church. Just at this point—probably December, 1861—his regiment was ordered to Halifax, and Lieutenant Pinsen wrote to Mademoiselle Hugo informing her of this fact, and asking her to join him in London, have their marriage duly celebrated, and go together to Halifax.

When this proposition was received, it was duly discussed in the Hugo family circle. Victor Hugo would not entertain the idea. He demanded that Lieutenant Pinsen should come to Brussels and marry his daughter there. Madame Hugo agreed with this; but Adèle was infatuated, and her fiery spirit would not accept this wise paternal counsel. She insisted upon going to London at all hazards, and even in defiance of all social rules. When it was found that the impetuous girl was determined to have her way, her mother at length acquiesced so far as to accompany her to London.

On their arrival they found, to their mortification and chagrin, that Lieutenant Pinsen had sailed with his regiment for Halifax, and without leaving any message or satisfactory explanation; indeed, the circumstances gave indubitable evidence of desertion. Adèle and her mother had no other course than to return at once to Brussels.

But the unhappy girl was madly in love; she belonged to that class of intense natures which are led away by passion, and she could not rest content apart from her lover. Clandestinely she left Brussels and took passage on board a steamer, said to be the *Great Eastern*, for New York. On her arrival there she started for Halifax, where she assumed the name of Miss Lewly. Alas! for her fond dreams of a happy re-union with the man in whom all her ardent and unconquerable affections were centred. She found him indifferent; she resorted to every means to secure his regard, but her love was spurned. All her time and attention were devoted to him; she sent notes to him daily, but without effect. It would not be just to regard Pinsen's conduct as the result of base heartlessness; it may be that the importunities of the frenzied girl had produced a reaction in his mind and heart. It may be, also, that he saw evidences of that lack of mental equipoise which has sadly enough developed into permanent and hopeless insanity. It is the fact, at all events, that he entirely repulsed his former sweetheart,

and refused to renew the intimacy and regard of those halcyon days when they talked of love in Brussels.

The story of her residence in Halifax is a very sad one. She remained three or four years, during which she was chiefly engaged in dogging her lover by night and by day, but without success. She had at least two lodging-places during her stay, the first being with a Mrs. Saunders. She sent frequent letters to Pinsen, and received quite a number in return, brought by his servant. From those who knew her intimately, some painfully interesting particulars can be gleaned of her life. She was eccentric to a remarkable degree. In going out of the house she was invariably closely veiled. Sometimes at night she used to disguise herself in male apparel, and walk through the streets wearing a tall hat and flourishing a delicate cane. The details of her life, for the year and a half she boarded at Mrs. Saunders', were published nearly two years ago in one of the Halifax papers. When she first arrived in Halifax she stopped at the Halifax Hotel, and through the agency of a French cook there she secured lodgings at Mrs. Saunders's. She hired a room in the house, which she furnished herself, and was to board herself. According to the landlady she ate but little, and did very little cooking; her chief diet was bread and butter and chocolate. The Saunders, under the belief that she was poor, used often to furnish her with meals.

Her employment was writing; her handwriting was most beautiful—like copper-plate impressions. She soon had great masses of manuscript. Mr. Motton mentions that she used to bring large bundles of beautifully written manuscript to his office, and offered it to him, saying: "Publish this some time, and you will create a great sensation and make a fortune." Unfortunately Mr. Motton had not much interest in literary matters at that time, and feeling, no doubt, that his fair client's mind was not well balanced, did not accept the offer. Some literary interest might have surrounded her stories at this sad period of her life. She once told Mr. Motton, after he became aware of her identity, that her father used to tell her that she wrote better than he did, and with more power.

This writing, from day to day in her room, with an occasional visit from Pinsen during the first year or two, was the sole occupation of Adèle Hugo for the three years or more that she lived in Halifax. She took no care of her room, and utterly neglected her person and clothing. For a time after her arrival Pinsen visited her at times, and during this period she kept up appearances in dress; but after he discontinued his visits, she fell into a sort of melancholy condition, confining herself to her room, pacing the floor at night, and neglecting her personal appearance. When she came to Mrs. Saunders' she had a large quantity of clothing, many silks, velvets and ball dresses, but they are described as being then somewhat faded and worn. She took no care to renew her clothing, and soon began to be destitute, especially in her underclothing and linen.

For a long time the Saunders family were entirely ignorant of the history of their strange lodger. She was a profound mystery to them, and all attempts to ascertain the true story of her life were fruitless. She received many letters and sent many, but they were all written in French, and the addresses were quite unfamiliar to the good people with whom she was staying. Her identity was discovered quite accidentally. Mr. Saunders used to wait at dinners given by the best people in town, and on one occasion the French cook in the service of Sir Hastings Doyle, who was then commander-in-chief of the forces in British America, came to Saunders' house to inform him that he was to attend at a certain dinner to be given a few evenings subsequently. Some of Miss Lewly's letters were lying on the parlour table, waiting to be mailed. The cook, observing the address, said in surprise: "Why, who is sending this letter? This is directed to the greatest Frenchman of the day." The letter was addressed:

VICOMTE VICTOR HUGO,
Guernsey,
Great Britain.

After this Mrs. Saunders was able to obtain the true story of her lodger, and she felt certain that so distinguished a man as her father would not care to have his daughter living comparatively destitute of the ordinary comforts of life. She accordingly took the liberty of sending him a letter, detailing fully the present position and circumstances of his wandering child. This brought an immediate response from Victor Hugo, in which he thanked Mrs. Saunders most profusely for her kind interest in Adèle, requested her to make every necessary provision for her clothing, comfort and respectability, and assured her that he would be only too happy to meet all expenditures. All bills were promptly paid by the post. A number of letters were received by Mrs. Saunders from Victor Hugo, but not much importance was attached to them, beyond the subject-matter, by the recipients, and most of them were mislaid. When one of Mrs. Saunders' daughters grew up and was made acquainted with the story of the young lady, she began to search the house for Hugo's letters, and succeeded in finding two or three of them. All of these letters speak of Miss Lewly as Madame Pinsen, and none of them speak of her as his daughter. He describes her as a lady of high position and influential relations, in whom he took a great interest.

One of these letters, which are now in possession of Mrs. Saunders, is as follows:

BRUSSELS, October 15, 1865.

M. Hugo presents his best compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Saunders, and begs to inform them that a box full of winter clothes is being sent to the post to Miss Lewly, to be deposited in their house under the

usual name of Madame Pinsen. M. Hugo has not forgotten the obliging kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Saunders, and trusts that under their good care the box will be delivered as quick as possible to the young lady.

Another of the letters is as follows:

GUERNSEY, February 5, 1866.

MY DEAR MRS. SAUNDERS,—I am indeed exceedingly thankful to you for your kind note. Your information has been most welcome. I hope Miss Lewly will at last be induced to come home to her own family. Her mother is very anxious to get her home, and has unfortunately been prevented by a serious indisposition from crossing over to Halifax. She intends doing so as soon as the spring will come. Until then be kind enough to give information which I will faithfully transmit to her friends, and for which they are extremely obliged to you. Tell me also, in your letter, how I can repay you for the stamps you are affixing to your letters. I can, indeed, very easily repay you for these trifling expenses, but never for your Christian kindness.

It will now be easy to understand the purpose of Miss Hugo's visit to Mr. Motton's office. Wearied with a fruitless pursuit of her faithless and callous lover, and finding the time approaching when his regiment would be ordered away to another station, as a last resort she went to consult with a lawyer to see, perchance, if there was any remedy in the law—if any means existed of compelling Pinsen to do justice alike to her affections and her honour. She had the agony to hear among the current gossip of the city that Pinsen had become engaged to a lady in fashionable society, residing in Dartmouth—a town situate on the opposite side of Halifax harbour. It is, of course, impossible to report all that passed between attorney and client in the secrecy of the consulting-room. It is sufficient to say that the story of her relations with Pinsen was fully unfolded, and though the case did not present many points for the consideration of a lawyer, yet Mr. Motton was so far interested in her case as to send a letter to Pinsen. The circumstance of his relations with Mademoiselle Hugo becoming known to his Dartmouth friends, all social intercourse was at once terminated by the young lady and her family.

But really nothing of any consequence could be done by Mr. Motton. A suit for breach of promise would have been an unsatisfactory remedy, and no legal evidence of a marriage which would be recognized in the courts in Nova Scotia was available. Mademoiselle Hugo used to speak of her wrongs to her lawyer with burning cheek and flashing eye. Her eyes he describes as being almost terrible in their fiery brightness when she was aroused. She repeatedly declared in passionate words that she was Pinsen's wife in the sight of Heaven, and that he should never marry another woman.

A word may be devoted to Lieutenant Pinsen. Several persons remember him well. He was never distinguished from the ordinary subaltern in a British regiment, except, perhaps, that he appears to have been rather more of a dandy. He was of average height, rather handsome and decidedly stylish in appearance. He wore long moustaches, and took great pains to appear in most exquisite mode, and was essentially a ladies' man. Much has been reported concerning his subsequent life, but nothing sufficiently authentic to justify any definite statement. There seems little doubt, however, that he has since married—it is said—a lady of means. It has also been stated that he was seen by a former acquaintance under conditions which indicated that he was not in affluent circumstances. But nothing reliable can be given. It was known in his regiment as well as in the town that he was followed by a lady who claimed him as her own; but he stoutly denied all insinuations, and the romance was, to the public, merely a matter of passing curiosity.

As the time drew near for the Sixteenth Regiment to leave Halifax, the infatuated Adèle was keenly alert for the movements of her truant lover. Only one line of English steamers then called at Halifax, and these always came to Cunard's wharf. Every steamer day, filled with a vague fear that Pinsen would attempt to make his escape, she took a cab and her clothing and went to the wharf, there to wait and watch if Pinsen embarked for England, and ready in that case to follow him wherever he might go. This occurred several times, but he never took this means of leaving.

At length the regiment embarked for Barbadoes—the station to which it was ordered. Faithful to her mission, Adèle promptly followed and took up her residence in the little town where the garrison was stationed. She lodged with a Mrs. Chadderton. Here she devoted herself to writing, and walked in the streets in dowdy apparel and with an air and manner so eccentric that she was subjected to jests and ribaldry. In time she came to be associated with Captain Pinsen—who, it seems, had got his company—and was known to the people of the little town as Madame Pinsen.

The rest is easily told. After her sad sojourn in Halifax, Adèle Hugo wearied out her steadfast heart in Barbadoes. Many harrowing details of her life in both these places have been purposely withheld. The generous heart will never seek to draw the veil from the hidden depths of human grief and misfortune. An exile from home, friends and country—a poor unhappy waif in a lonely and comfortless world! With her beauty, her talents and her family connections she might have been an ornament of European society. But that all-powerful impulse of love, which has often enough turned and overturned the lives of men and the events of history, irresistibly bore her on to a life of unspeakable misery. Reason became dethroned, and she was finally immured in an insane asylum, where she still ekes out a blighted life. Her father, at his death, bequeathed her half his fortune—two million francs.