

ed distinct, for a longer time, in the deepening twilight of the room. I was not sorry when I could see it no longer. I would have preferred that that carving had not been in the room alone with me that afternoon.

It was growing darker still, and, as the few objects near me faded away, and my attention was no longer occupied, I heard again the murmuring in the air, which had troubled me at first, but this time it was still more perplexing. Now and then, as I listened, it seemed about to become deeper; and then, with the utmost effort, I could not hear it at all. It was its monotony (while it lasted) that teased me. If any one of the multitudinous noises, of which I supposed it to be composed, would have predominated for a moment I should have been content. If some clanging peal of bells would have broken out near me, or come from a distance upon a sudden shifting of the wind, I would have lighted my lamp and gone on with the perusal of my book. But it was still the same confusion of noises—so perfectly blended, that although sometimes it became louder, no distinct sound could be caught. As if at a certain moment all its components increased, in exact proportion, in order to preserve a perfect monotony.

It is strange that this trifling fancy was gradually sapping the foundations of my resolution—holding me with so singular a fascination, that I was compelled to abandon my studies for that day. I began to suspect that the sudden change, from a life of pleasure, to one of solitary study had wrought some injury to my mind. I experienced a degree of timidity and irresolution that I had never known before. I had other strange fancies. Once, while walking to and fro, in my room, I had seen my features, darkly in the glass, and instinctively shrunk from looking there again. Afterwards, on reflecting, I could not divest myself of the notion that they were not my features that I had seen there, but a face wholly different. I sat down again, and thought, of going out and wandering in the streets. I knew that during the cold weather, great wood fires were lighted at midnight, in certain open places in the city, that the houseless might not perish of the cold; and I thought of spending the night by one of these, and not returning to my room until day-light.

From this mood I was suddenly startled by a noise, as of something falling on the floor of the adjoining room. I was startled, because I had always known that room to be uninhabited; and as it communicated by a door with my room, I knew that I should have heard of any change in this respect. It was one of those rooms, often met with in the great houses of Paris (where each floor is divided into many apartments, or, as we should say in England, sets of chambers), into which it had been found impossible to admit sufficient daylight for a sitting room. In such a case, the usual course would have been to let it with my room as a sleeping-chamber; but I had declined it, and it had remained unoccupied during the several years of my residence there.

I listened attentively for a repetition of the noise, and now all my wild fancies were forgotten in this new feeling of curiosity. I had never been in that room, for the door had always been kept locked, and the key was in the possession of the porter below; but I recollected, now, having frequently heard noise in the night, which I had attributed to the wind out of doors, but which, I seemed now to remember, had come from the empty garret. I had once heard from the Concierge (though I had taken it for an idle story) that Danton—memorable among the tyrants of the Revolution—had lived in a room in that house. And now I thought I remembered that it was in a house in that quarter where he had spent the night (it was the night of the terrible butcheries at the prisons of La Force and the Conciergerie) in conversation with Camille-Desmoulins, until, seeing the first glimmering of the dawn across the house-tops, he told Camille that a terrible blow had been struck at Royalism, even while they had been sitting there. It seemed to me remarkable that I had not thought of this be-

fore. I remembered now distinctly the words "across the house-top," in the account that I had read, and a superstitious conviction forced itself upon me, that it was in that very room that Danton (affecting, as it was common with the revolutionary leaders, an appearance of poverty) had dwelt.

My fancy had wandered away among the scenes of that terrible Revolution, when I was aroused again by a second noise. But this time it was the sound of a light foot step walking in the room. I listened, and waited, with my eye fixed upon the door, and now for the first time I remarked a faint light shining through the keyhole. The footstep ceased for a moment, and then I saw by the long light in the crevice, at the door, which I had always supposed to be locked; was not. I had not heard any movement of the handle of the lock, but I felt convinced that it had only just been opened; for it was impossible, otherwise, that I should not have observed it. The door trembled for a moment, as if an undecided hand were upon the lock, and then, opening wide, I saw, to my surprise, the figure of a man standing in the doorway.

He held in one hand a thin candle, with a shade, which threw that part of the room in which I sat into darkness; but I could see him distinctly, as he stood there a moment, apparently hesitating whether to go on or turn back. His face was deadly pale, and his eyes, in the light that struck upward, through the aperture in the shade, were fixed and sunken. His dress was that which was worn by the old revolutionary leaders; but he bore no resemblance to the portrait of Danton. I recognised him at a glance. The prominent forehead, the short pointed nose, the scornful curl of the upper lip, the powdered hair, the frilled shirt, the broad sash, and even the nosegay in his hand—all, except the general faded look of his attire, identified him at once with the ideal indelibly fixed in mind, by portrait and tradition, of the great fanatical Jacobin, Maximilian Robespierre. The door closed sharply behind him, as if by the current of air, for his light was extinguished at the same moment. I heard his footstep across my room; the door closed behind him as he went out upon the landing. I listened but could hear no footstep descending the stairs. I walked to the door, and looked down into the darkness of the great staircase, and listened, but the house was quite still.

Was I to believe my senses? Here I sat, exactly as I had sat ten minutes before. My stove was cold; my room was dark; I was alone; my book was open before me. I saw the light still in the daguerreotypist's window, on the roof, and at other places, far off. I walked over, and tried the door of the room, but it was fast locked again. Everything was in its usual state. In a few minutes from the time with I first fancied that I heard the noise, the door had been unfastened, this strange apparition had passed through my room, the door was re-fastened, and no trace of what had happened remained. I was not dreaming? No. But how often, in sleep, had I questioned myself of the reality of my dream, and invariably ended by convincing myself that I was awake—sometimes even remembering that I had deceived myself before; but always, at last, conquering my own objection, and coming to the conclusion that this time, at least, I stood amid the real life of the daylight world. But I rubbed my eyelids, rose again, and walked to and fro, and convinced myself that I was really awake.

What could I think, but that my reason was becoming weakened? The life I had led for some time had been wild and reckless. I had become so accustomed to excitement, that it was almost necessary to my existence; so that when I applied myself to a steadier life, I experienced something of the depression of the drunkard in the first days of his reformation. The mood in which this vision had found me was favourable to such hallucinations. My mind had been unsettled. My fancies would not let me apply myself to my task. Whimsical, and filled with vague apprehensions, I knew that my

mental state exactly coincided with the descriptions of those who have been visited by similar apparitions.

Smoking would, I thought, soothe me. I lighted some wood in my stove with a fusee, and taking down my pipe from the wall, filled it, and sat there smoking hour after hour. The great transparent bowl glowed in the darkness at every puff, so deeply that I could watch the wreathes of smoke by the light that it gave. I strove to fix my mind upon cheerful images—thinking of an English home, where the tatted call was ever ready to be killed when I should return, but chiefly of the Eugenie, (of whom I knew myself unworthy,) lily-handed, lovelier than the loveliest of all flowers!

I dropped asleep, and awoke several times, always dreaming and waking up with the feeling, that my strange vision was a portion of my dream; but the burning embers in my stove recalled to me what had passed, and each time, putting on more fuel, I dropped asleep again.

I do not know how long I had been sleeping the last time. When I awakened, my fire was out, and I was in darkness. I knew, however, that it was past midnight the hour at which my ghostly visitor would probably have returned, if he had an intention of returning. My slumbers had tranquillised me. Looking out of the window, it did strike me that a certain dark object, close upon the next roof, had somewhat the look of a monk, staring out of his cowl at me through my window; but I speedily recognized it for a portion of the daguerreotypist's apparatus for fixing his customers in the required position. The fog had cleared away. There were no lights on any of the roofs, or at any windows far and wide. In the distance rose the dusky towers of St. Sulpice; and the stars were shining.

I had determined to go to bed, and think no more of my apparition until the morning, when turning to light my lamp, my eye caught again a faint light through the key-hole of the adjoining room. This was stranger still; for I knew that no one, in the habit of shutting doors so noisily, could have passed through my room while I had been sleeping. I lighted my lamp and listened. I heard again a light footstep, and presently a voice as of some one talking to himself, though loud enough, sometimes, for me to distinguish his words:

"A good wind getting up, such a wind as blows sharp dust into the face on a frosty night. Whew! I wouldn't turn a dog out. This is cheerless; but better than that hot cursed place, full of shrieking, whining men, and women. How the dusky Satan took that girl, and turned her till her brain was giddy, and she swooned! She had a pretty simple look; but she would not have been there if she were as innocent as her face. They knew me. The priest taunted me with my free use of the guillotine. No matter. That peasant girl did not shrink from the monster, nor look upon my hands to see if they were blood-stained, when we joined the others in their devilry. Oh! it was a pretty sight for them to see a man with some thousands of murders on his mind, looking so merry, and handling a nosegay so delicately—a nosegay that they knew so well in all my portraits! Well, well! enough of this for to-night. My feet can scarcely forget their habit. The fascination of that whirling multitude haunts me. I seem to have her still—my peasant girl. Steadily! Hold me firmly. Now then! Away!"

My mysterious neighbour seemed to be turning rapidly about the room, I heard the quick movement of his feet; and then a noise, as if a heavy body had come violently in contact with the wainscot. I walked on tiptoe to the door, and looked through the keyhole, but my sight only ranged over a small portion of the room, and I could see no one. There was a silence for some moments. Then I heard him talk—again:

"This kind of sport does not suit the middle of the night. I shall wake the whole floor! Let me see; how am I to amuse myself? No rest for me to-night. At daylight I must begone."