

POOR DOCUMENT

THE FLOWER GIRLS —OF— Marseilles!

(Continued.)

Philippe felt himself lost, and his irritated pride restored his courage. If he had been armed, he would have defended himself. Then he said to himself that he was not an abductor, that Blanche had chosen to follow and marry him, and that, after all, the shame in the matter was not for him. At this he angrily pushed open the shutter, demanding what was wanted.

"Open the door for us," commanded the commissaire. "We will tell you afterwards what we want."

Philippe came down the wooden ladder and opened the door.

"Are you the Sieur Philippe Cayrol?" asked the commissaire.

"Yes," answered the young man firmly. "I am ready to answer to you as guilty of abduction. You have carried off a young girl under sixteen years of age, who should be hidden with you."

Philippe smiled disdainfully.

"The former Mademoiselle Blanche de Cazalis, who is now my wife, is up stairs, said he. 'She can declare if there has been violence on my part. I know not what you mean in talking of abduction. I shall, this very day, throw myself at the feet of M. de Cazalis and ask his sanction of his niece's marriage with me.' Blanche, pale and trembling, descended the ladder. She had hastily dressed herself.

"Mademoiselle," said the commissaire to her, "I have orders to take you to your uncle, who is waiting for you at Aix. He is in tears."

"I am very sorry that I displeased my uncle," replied Blanche, with a certain firmness, "but no one must accuse M. Cayrol whom I followed and married of my own free will."

"And, turning towards the young man, moved, ready to ask her name.

"Hope Philippe," continued she; "I love you and will supplicate my uncle to be good to us. Our separation will last only a few days."

Philippe looked at her with a sorrowful air, shaking his head.

"You are a timid and weak child," said he, slowly.

Then he added in a harsh tone:

"Remember only that you are my wife, that you belong to me through the flesh and through the heart. If you desert me every hour of your life the remembrance of me will torment you; you will always feel on your lips the fiery stamp of my kisses, and that shall be your punishment."

Blanche wept.

"Love me as I love you," resumed the young man in a milder voice.

The commissaire put Blanche into a carriage, which he had sent for, and conducted her to Aix, while the two gentlemen took Philippe and led him to the prison of that town.

He could not get angry, so grotesquely extravagant did Marin's demand seem to him. Dressing back, staring the young man in the face and laughing disdainfully he answered:

"You are mad, Monsieur. I am aware that you are a hard-working and honest fellow, and that is the reason I do not order my servants to put you out of the house. Your brother is a scoundrel, a legal marriage sanctioned by you. Thus the wrong that has been done her will be obliterated."

"We are alone wrong!" cried the deputy, contemptuously. "There is no shame for Blanche de Cazalis in having been seduced by a fellow like Philippe Cayrol but there would be shame for her in allying herself with such people as you. I will never consent that marriage, which, without my sanction is null and void."

"Such people as we are have other ideas in regard to honor. But I do not insist, duty alone dictates to me the offer of reparation which you refuse. Permit me only to add that your niece is not, without doing me wrong upon a different course, if I had the honor of addressing myself to her."

"Do you think so?" said M. de Cazalis, in a strong tone.

He rang and ordered his niece to be brought thither immediately. Blanche entered, pale, her eyes red. She looked as if riven by too strong emotions.

On perceiving Marin, she trembled.

"Mademoiselle," said her uncle coldly, "is a gentleman who formally asks for your hand in the name of the infamous wretch whom I forbear to mention elsewhere in your presence. Tell the scoundrel what you told me yesterday."

Blanche wavered. She dared not look at Marin. With eyes fixed upon her uncle, all in a tremble, she murmured, in a sitting and feeble voice:

"I did not know that I was seduced by violence, and forced into a marriage, and that I would see every effort of my punishment for the odious wrong of which I was the victim."

"If you were seduced like a honest girl, following the example of St. Peter Blanche denied her Lord."

M. de Cazalis had not lost his time. He meant his niece was in his power. He ought to bear upon her all his prejudice and all his pride. He realized that she alone could make him win the game. It was impossible for the young girl to resist, and the cries of her heart, that she could be yielding and passive in a moment in his hands.

For four hours he poured cold and sharp words into her ears. He did not commit the imprudence of showing anger. He spoke with crushing haughtiness, reminding her of the antiquity of her race, talking of his power and his fortune. He displayed exquisite cunning, stretching on one side the picture of a rich and great marriage. He attacked the young girl through her coquetry, her vanity, her appetite for luxury and her love of life; he fatigued her, broke her spirit, and rendered her what he wished her to be—supple and inert.

After this long interview, this long war of wits, Blanche was completely prostrated, under her uncle's overwhelming words, her patrician blood as last reared at the remembrance of Philippe's brutal caresses, perhaps, her childish vanity was aroused at the mention of luxuriant toiles, honors of all kinds and worldly delights. Besides, her husband was weak, her heart too cowardly, to resist the deputy's terrible will. Each phrase uttered by M. de Cazalis had struck her, crushed her, filled her with dolorous anxiety. She had loved, followed and married Philippe through weakness now she had turned against him also through weakness; she was still the same timid and inexperienced one. She had accepted everything. She had signed everything. She had been eager to escape from the suffocating weight which her uncle's discourse had heaped upon her.

When Marin heard her make her strange declaration, he stood stupefied, filled with horror. He recalled the young girl's attitude at the house of the gardener Arasse, he saw her hanging about Philippe's neck, faint, trusting, and loving.

"Ah! Mademoiselle," cried he, bitterly, "the odious wrong of which you were the victim appeared to exasperate you less the day you begged me with clasped hands to implore your uncle's pardon and consent. Have you reflected that your falsehood will cause the ruin of the man whom, perhaps, you still love and who is your husband in the sight of God?" Blanche, rigid, her lips pressed together, stared vaguely before her.

"I know not what you mean," answered she, hesitatingly, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

ing like a leaf, he resumed:

"That child is innocent, I pardon her weakness. But you, Monsieur, you are a crafty man; you protect maidens by making them liars and cowards; you are indeed a noble son of your fathers. If now you were to offer me for my brother your sanction to this marriage with Mademoiselle Blanche de Cazalis, I would refuse it, for I have never had, I have never committed an evil action, and I should blush to ally myself with such people as you."

M. de Cazalis bent beneath the young man's fury. At the first instant, he had assumed a tall devil of a lackey, who was standing on that threshold of the door. As the deputy signed to him to throw Marin into the street, the latter continued with a terrible burst of anger:

"I swear to you that I will cry murder if that man take a step. Let me pass. Some day Monsieur, I may, perhaps be able to hunt into your face before everybody the truth I have just spoken in this salon."

And he departed with a deliberate and sinister smile. He no longer saw Philippe's guilt; in his eyes his brother had become a victim whom he wished to save null at any cost. In his upright and honest duty alone dictated to me the offer of reparation which you refuse. Permit me only to add that your niece is not, without doing me wrong upon a different course, if I had the honor of addressing myself to her."

"Do you think so?" said M. de Cazalis, in a strong tone.

He rang and ordered his niece to be brought thither immediately. Blanche entered, pale, her eyes red. She looked as if riven by too strong emotions.

On perceiving Marin, she trembled.

"Mademoiselle," said her uncle coldly, "is a gentleman who formally asks for your hand in the name of the infamous wretch whom I forbear to mention elsewhere in your presence. Tell the scoundrel what you told me yesterday."

Blanche wavered. She dared not look at Marin. With eyes fixed upon her uncle, all in a tremble, she murmured, in a sitting and feeble voice:

"I did not know that I was seduced by violence, and forced into a marriage, and that I would see every effort of my punishment for the odious wrong of which I was the victim."

"If you were seduced like a honest girl, following the example of St. Peter Blanche denied her Lord."

M. de Cazalis had not lost his time. He meant his niece was in his power. He ought to bear upon her all his prejudice and all his pride. He realized that she alone could make him win the game. It was impossible for the young girl to resist, and the cries of her heart, that she could be yielding and passive in a moment in his hands.

For four hours he poured cold and sharp words into her ears. He did not commit the imprudence of showing anger. He spoke with crushing haughtiness, reminding her of the antiquity of her race, talking of his power and his fortune. He displayed exquisite cunning, stretching on one side the picture of a rich and great marriage. He attacked the young girl through her coquetry, her vanity, her appetite for luxury and her love of life; he fatigued her, broke her spirit, and rendered her what he wished her to be—supple and inert.

After this long interview, this long war of wits, Blanche was completely prostrated, under her uncle's overwhelming words, her patrician blood as last reared at the remembrance of Philippe's brutal caresses, perhaps, her childish vanity was aroused at the mention of luxuriant toiles, honors of all kinds and worldly delights. Besides, her husband was weak, her heart too cowardly, to resist the deputy's terrible will. Each phrase uttered by M. de Cazalis had struck her, crushed her, filled her with dolorous anxiety. She had loved, followed and married Philippe through weakness now she had turned against him also through weakness; she was still the same timid and inexperienced one. She had accepted everything. She had signed everything. She had been eager to escape from the suffocating weight which her uncle's discourse had heaped upon her.

When Marin heard her make her strange declaration, he stood stupefied, filled with horror. He recalled the young girl's attitude at the house of the gardener Arasse, he saw her hanging about Philippe's neck, faint, trusting, and loving.

"Ah! Mademoiselle," cried he, bitterly, "the odious wrong of which you were the victim appeared to exasperate you less the day you begged me with clasped hands to implore your uncle's pardon and consent. Have you reflected that your falsehood will cause the ruin of the man whom, perhaps, you still love and who is your husband in the sight of God?" Blanche, rigid, her lips pressed together, stared vaguely before her.

"I know not what you mean," answered she, hesitatingly, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish me to accompany you to his home?" asked he, suddenly.

"I have no objection," said the old man, hesitating, "I have told no falsehood. I yielded to force. That man deceived and wronged me, and my uncle will avenge the honor of our family."

"Do you wish