

"When I had attained my sixteenth year, I was installed mistress of an establishment suited to our rank and circumstances. My debut in society was successful: my father was flattered. It was well known that, besides his pay, he possessed some millions of francs in a banking house in the city, the destined dower of his daughter. I was, in consequence, much sought after. Mothers were assiduous in their attentions, for the sake of favourite sons; and fathers, who had spendthrifts to establish, made advances to mine. Many were the offers of marriage addressed to him. He never failed to communicate to me these flattering proofs of my importance, and, to his infinite joy, I steadily rejected all such overtures. My love was as necessary to him as my happiness; and he looked forward to my marriage, as that period when my affections must be divided, if not entirely engrossed, by another. Yet he never sought to influence my decision. In this, as in all other things, I was mistress, to follow my inclinations.

"You will, from this general description of my admirers, suppose me deficient in the sensibility natural to my age; but suspend your judgment. I was early enough conscious I had a heart to bestow; and, before eighteen, it was awaked to a profound attachment. Cupid has discovered two avenues ever open to the youthful breast. The shortest, most common, and easiest of access, is vanity; the more elevated and least likely to afford a retrograde movement, the imagination. Mine was reached by the latter road.

"Enjoying one morning, with some young friends, a walk on the Boulevards, we were alarmed, by seeing the crowd before us turn, and fly in every direction. The panic seized on me and my party. Ignorant of the threatened danger, we did as we saw others do. I was arrested in my wild retreat by a hand on my shoulder, and the most pleasing voice I ever heard, assuring me that the man was secured, and no further danger to be apprehended. I looked to the person addressing me for an explanation. Our eyes met, and I never afterwards forgot the expression that beamed upon me at that moment. In a few words he informed me of the cause of my terror. A lunatic had escaped from confinement, entered an armoureur's boutique, and, seizing a sabre, rushed amongst the crowd. Flourishing the glittering weapon, as a madman would, he threatened indiscriminate destruction, and, naturally enough, he was left a clear field for exercise. With some hazard, the gens-d'armes, assisted by the most resolute amongst the throng, secured him, and we were left free to pursue our course, laughing at the adventure. The interference of the stranger, to stay my rapid progress, was a

trifling courtesy; any one might have done as much, old or ugly, lame or blind, without exciting extraordinary gratitude; yet had he stepped between me and a dreadful death, I could not have felt more deeply grateful. For some weeks after this occurrence, I frequently met him in public: he was always accompanied by persons of distinguished and fashionable appearance. Our recognition was confined to a slight bow on my part, and one of marked courtesy in return from him; but as he made no advances towards a more intimate acquaintance, my demeanour was guardedly formal. He could little judge, by the cold, reserved salute, how much his image occupied my mind; how often, in my dreams, those dark, expressive eyes looked sweetly on me, as they ever did in waking; and how hours and days were consumed in vain conjectures, relating to him. My efforts to ascertain his name and station in life were unsuccessful; but fancy very soon settled that perplexity, by investing him with rank and fame; and for once the ideal painting bore a true resemblance. At length I missed his presence at the promenades, the theatre, and all public resorts, where my eyes vainly wandered in search of their favourite object. Months passed away. Shall I acknowledge it? His image was fading from memory, when a really perilous incident made him more than ever the idol of my imagination. I had joined a pleasure party to Versailles, and was attended by a young gentleman, who would fain be regarded in the light of a lover, and I was really balancing his claims. He was handsome, intelligent, spiritual,—but the worst charioteer in the world. On entering a square, where a military parade was being held, some object startled our horse. He plunged violently—my companion lost his presence of mind—and we would inevitably have been dashed from the vehicle, but for a strong arm that seized on the reins, and restrained the impetuous animal. Imagine my surprise, my emotion, on again, and in such peril, encountering the sweet, I might say fond, expression of those eyes that in a moment of equal terror reassured me on the Boulevards. I alighted from the carriage to join my friends. He offered to be my conductor—restored me to their protection—and, after a few brief words, in reply to the warm acknowledgments made him, he withdrew. Yes! without evincing a desire to profit by the introduction his courage gained him—without a single request, or a hope expressed, of seeing me again—without even enquiring the name of one he had so providentially saved; and yet, the language of his eyes was not that of indifference—far otherwise. There was a tenderness, mingled with respect, in their expression;