

up the sober grey dress and plain bodice finished with its muslin *fichu*, over the high-bred, regular features, and delicately tinted satin cheek, taking passing toll of the wells in the deeps of the vivacious eyes, still retaining their youthful vigor unimpaired, and on to the luxuriant, silvery hair brushed back from the forehead *à la Pompadour*, the glance swept, and took in the *ensemble* wanting only proper frame to complete some Eighteenth Century portrait of a forgotten ancestor of the old *régime*, then wandered off into space as a faint sigh escaped from beneath the folds of the neckcloth and the dingy black vest.

"And wherefore so, *cheri*? Dost sigh for thy withered hot-house blooms in the city, or some yet undiscovered wood-blossom? Look thee, now, I am scarce *passé*, and not ill-favored."

"I say, 'Toinnette, jest not thus. Thou knowest I have place for none but thee."

"Then why distress thee? Supper is provided, and the winter is far off."

"Ah! but I cannot thus lightly regard. Thou hast *esprit* and canst forget. But me, I think, and fear for thee, when I am gone and the little pittance ceases."

"But do I complain? Tell me, now, all thy black thought, that I may kiss the cloud away!"

"Thou knowest how the *clientèle* fell away. How they wearied of me and would no more of my cultivated art in engrossing a deed, but would employ a new-comer with typewriter and curt phrase. How the children died, or went where money grew more plentiful. How friends moved the Government to pity my need and give me this little *Poste*, with its meagre revenue. How thy savings were all put into this little house and modest furnishings. How rarely the client comes to the desk. How, if *le bon Dieu* should call me first, thou—"