

traced by the hand of his still faithful and tender Rosalie. She spoke of the persecution she was enduring from her father and the Baron, and of her resolution to withstand them—but entreated him to hasten the completion of his picture, trusting that it would be the means of terminating their separation and reuniting them forever.

This note caused the young artist a sleepless night,—sleepless, through the mingled emotions of joy, anxiety, and hope, which it awoke in his bosom; and when he arose in the morning, he hastened to the dwelling of M. Roussard, to converse with him on the subject nearest his heart.

He found his kind friend at breakfast,—but wifeless and childless though he was, it could not be called a solitary meal—for, on one side of him sat a huge Maltese cat, on the other a noble greyhound, and at his feet, watching for *tit-bits*, crouched a long eared, silky spaniel. Over his head hung a mocking bird, singing its thousand notes in concert with two canaries and a nightingale, whose cages were half hidden among the vines that trellised an open window,—and to complete the coterie, a pugnacious parrot, the noisiest of his species, clamoured with all his might, to drown the other, and more harmonious sounds, with his intolerable jargon. The good broker himself, in his velvet slippers and morning gown of flowered brocade, looked the very personification of comfort—lolling in his capacious arm chair, the daily “*Mercuré*” in one hand, at which he glanced between every sip of the delicious coffee, whose fumes filled the room with fragrance—while the snow white rolls, fresh eggs, and cold *paté* that stood before him, might have tempted an epicure to eat.

He greeted the young artist with a cordial grasp of the hand, and pushing a chair towards the table,

“Thou hast come in time, my prince of artists,” he said, “and just as I predicted, for it needed no soothsayer’s skill to divine that thou wouldst come to share my morning’s meal, and learn the result of my last night’s interview. But wherefore that lugubrious visage, man! She is constant as the sun, and thy Guido wilt not fail to make her thine, spite of the old Count’s haste to wed her to this young gallant whose wealth has won his heart.”

Mignard shook his head with a faint smile, for—why, he knew not—none can account for the fluctuations of a lover’s hopes and fears; but at that moment the latter sentiment predominated over every other in his breast, and he looked sad and dispirited.

“Nay,” resumed his friend, “faint heart never won fair lady—so, courage, Pierre, and sit thee down, thou seest a bachelor’s fare doth not lack comforts. Sit thee down, and taste a cup of this Arabian beverage—it will put new life into thee—albeit, I warrant me, thou wouldst deem even this incomparable extract more delicious, were it poured out for thee by the white hand of thy pretty little Rosalie.

Down, Argus, down—how darest thou thrust thy nose upon the table, sir?—and thou, greedy vagabond,” to the Maltese cat,—“thou hast filched the last morsel of truffled partridge from my plate,—and but now, I cast to thee what might have sufficed a soldier for a day’s ration. Take that, with thy innocent look, and thy thieving paw, and be gone to thee,” and he gave the huge grimalkin a rap on his head, that caused him to dart to a distant corner of the room.

At any other time, the artist would have been amused by this scene; but, under existing circumstances he felt only annoyance at the interruption to their tête-à-tête, caused by the birds and beasts which filled his friend’s apartment, and mechanically he sat down, but with a grave and spiritless air that immediately awakened the sympathy of Roussard.

“In good truth thou art the very image of despondency,” he said; “and wherefore I ask thou lost the self-confidence that upheld thee last night, now that thy task is accomplished?”

“But is it accomplished?” said Pierre, “and if so, will the Count yield me the reward which, doubtless in mockery, he promised to my success?”

“Will he indeed? whether it were meant in mockery or not, dare he do otherwise? Listen, Mignard,—but first, I pray thee, break thy fast with a sip of coffee, and this fresh laid egg; it will put strength in thee to hear that which I have to tell.—Hush, Barbara,” to the parrot; “he makes as much noise as the seven devils that were cast out of thy Magdalen, Pierre,—silence to thee, thou chattering minion, or I will send thee to quarrel with old Ursula for the rest of the day.”

“Que vous êtes aimable?” screamed the parrot, with a saucy laugh, and such an insolent gesture of his gaudy body, as he stood upon his perch, looking down with the utmost sang-froid upon his master, that neither Roussard nor his visitor could refrain from laughter; and, emboldened by their mirth, the bird continued his jests and jeers, till his noise became unbearable, and old Ursula was summoned to execute his sentence of banishment.

“And now Pierre,” said the broker, settling himself again at the breakfast table, “I will tell thee for thy comfort, that thy Magdalen was conveyed to the Count De Clairville last night, and opened in the presence of the guests, who were invited to sup with him—that, further, it was beheld by all with surprise, delight, admiration—and pronounced, without hesitation, an indubitable Guido.”

“Pronounced so by whom?” eagerly inquired the artist, as with irrepressible emotion, he started from his seat.

“By three experienced connoisseurs—nay, hear more, and be satisfied—by no less a judge than Lebrun himself, who confidently declared it, not only