

with those of the nobility, who could sustain one, had a spacious hotel, was detained in the Metropolis by a prolonged suit at law, relative to some portion of her property at Rheims; but that she had written to her nephew in Africa, he had no doubt, for he had himself posted a letter with his address which must have, doubtless, miscarried.

De Louvencourt was satisfied. "But have you heard any thing of young De Rance, since his disappearance from Rheims?"

Gautier's under lip became unusually contracted, and his features assumed a most forbidding aspect. "Not a word has been heard of him," he replied. "And his father," continued De Louvencourt, "so kind and amiable—respected by all at Rheims, for so many long years. Who would have supposed that *he* could ever have been convicted of a base crime like forgery; much less that it could have even been laid to his charge. You were most intimate with him, I believe, M. Gautier, and even when his absence required it, conducted his business for him." Gautier's agitation became strong but natural, considering his former intimacy with De Rance. "But his son," continued De Louvencourt, "whom we all esteemed no less for his talents than for his amiability and modesty—whose nature glowed with the warmth of true friendship for me, and for all those, who alas! now too vainly mourn for his loss—poor fellow! he loved and was beloved." Gautier's agitation increased. "Can it be possible that Adèle's affection could have been diverted from him on his father's downfall, and have contributed with his other woes, to drive him, perhaps, to the commission of suicide! I myself loved Adèle before I knew of their mutual affection. That knowledge stifled it, and though I feel the loss of De Rance most powerfully tempting me to love her again, I shall stifle that love once more, for I feel that she cannot but be his, as she ought to be inalienable." "And I feel," replied Gautier, with a demoniacal sneer, that Mademoiselle de Colmar can never be the inalienable bride of the son of a Galley Slave! Good bye, M. de Louvencourt, I shall see you again, doubtless, at the Hotel de Commènes," said he, as he seized up his hat and departed from the Café, with a familiar *au revoir*.

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#### CHAPTER VII.

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"There is something about that Gautier I could never like," said De Louvencourt to his friend, after the first had departed from the Café. "At times he has all the appearance of a most malignant *Scapin*. I wonder how my Aunt could have ever reposed confidence in him. But habit habituates. Come, let us go—I suppose we part for the present—you for the Chaussée d'Antin, on the affair of M. Berryer, and I for the Hotel de Commènes."