

of time upon the four great divisions of the globe. A hooded and winged sphinx reclined upon an elevated pedestal of dark Egyptian stone, at the side of which stood Time, represented as the typical old man with scythe and hour-glass. The square, an entirely unornamental pedestal, rested upon a base of the same sort of stone, at the corners of which were draped female figures, representing Europe, Asia, Africa and America. Europe was represented by a Caucasian, Africa by a negro, America by an Indian and Asia by a Mongolian. At the feet of the latter there was an enormous elephant's head. Each of the figures was *en gala*. The border of the float was ingeniously arranged and made to represent a massive base of Egyptian granite.

In memory of Lafayette and other distinguished foreign generals who fought for the liberty of America and in honour of their illustrious descendants who are now the honored guests of the whole nation, an appropriate tableau of statuary was arranged. It represented general Lafayette thanking the ladies of Baltimore for clothing for his destitute army. The float was twenty-four feet long, twelve wide, and eighteen high. On the extreme front, at both sides, were two thrones, seated on which were young women representing the goddesses of France and America. At their feet were the *insignia* of both countries—the American shield and *leur de lis* shield. Between these two figures stood a soldier in Continental dress keeping guard. On an elevation higher than this portion of the tableau, and a little in the rear, was a group of soldiers, poorly dressed, lounging around a camp-fire, portraying the condition of Lafayette's army during the Continental war. Surmounting the whole was a magnificent top, in crimson and gold, finished inside in pale-blue silk, studded with stars. The flags of France and America were displayed on each side of a large eagle with outstretched wings. Beneath the canopy stood Lafayette attired in his Court dress, and standing in a graceful position, with his right hand extended in the act of thanking the ladies of Baltimore, who are represented by a female figure dressed in oriole colors and seated on the throne. In the background were stands of arms, ammunition, cannon-balls, drums and other materials of war.

## NEMOROSA.

### III.

Through forty years of ever-increasing prosperity it had been Madame Vanne's rule to sell her poultry, fruit and vegetable at a stall in Fontainebleau market. Some of her friends and neighbours thought this practice a little beneath the dignity of a well-to-do person; but she said that what had been good enough for her mother and grandmother before her was good enough for her, and she clung to the old custom partly because it was an old custom, but principally because she loved noise and bustle, chaffering and haggling, and because the delight of driving a hard bargain was a pure delight to her still. Sometimes Marguerite used to accompany and assist her, standing in the background among the heaped-up melons and figs, while the old woman shrieked at her customers and shook her fingers in their faces; but latterly Madame Vanne had had to get through the business as best she could by herself.

To Fontainebleau Marguerite would not go. In vain she was entreated and appealed to; she was determined that nothing should induce her to run the risk of an encounter with De Valmy. Also she dreaded being seen in public, for she had a morbid impression that everybody must know or guess at her secret. Nevertheless, there came a time—September being on the wane and business at Franchard showing signs of approaching slackness—when she saw fit to modify her resolution. M. de Valmy had evidently forgotten her, if indeed, as seemed highly probable, he had not gone away altogether; and even if he should be still in the place, and she should see him, what had she to fear? It was he, not she, who ought to be embarrassed by such a meeting. Besides, her imprisonment was fast becoming intolerable to her, and she yearned to escape from it, were it only for a few hours. Influenced by these considerations she informed her aunt that she would meet her at Fontainebleau on the following Saturday; and Madame Vanne, delighted at this good news, which she took to be the first step toward a capitulation, immediately decided in her own mind that Victor Berthon should be there too.

Not a word did this wily old woman say to the young man about her niece; but when, in answer to her question, he confessed that he had never been to the market in Fontainebleau in his life, she threw up her wrinkled hands in mingled amazement and indignation. Never been to Fontainebleau market! And he an artist! But he ought to be ashamed of himself! Certainly he could have no idea of how picturesque it was. Purple grapes and white grapes, melons yellow and green, and bright red tomatoes and pumpkins and cucumbers—not to speak of the great umbrellas, some crimson, some striped, and the women with their blue gowns and checked kerchiefs, and the soldiers with their scarlet trousers. "Colours! Why, there are colours enough in our market to make a dozen pictures!" cried Madame Vanne, whose notion of the Alpha and Omega of art was the assembling together of as many brilliant hues as could be crowded upon a canvas.

So Victor went to market on Saturday morning; and by a somewhat strange coincidence, it

chanced that Madame de Valmy, who had been out riding with her husband and M. de Chaulnes, in the early morning selected that day of all others to dismount as she passed the busy scene, and to make herself acquainted with what she had been informed was one of the prettiest sights to be witnessed in Fontainebleau. Victor did not at first recognize the lady in the dark green riding-habit whom he accidentally jostled and apologized to in the throng; but she remembered him, and after a few words of very amiable greeting introduced him to her husband. Victor bowed to the pale, weary-looking man with the lack-lustre eyes, and scowled at the hussar, who smiled pleasantly in return; and the whole party moved on slowly together.

Either to serve some purpose of her own, or out of sheer caprice, Madame de Valmy chose to be exceedingly gracious to the young artist—so gracious indeed that after a time M. de Chaulnes grew uneasy and jealous, and showed his jealousy so plainly that even Berthon could not but notice it. In this unexpected fashion the respective attitudes of the two young men became inverted; and Victor, for the first time surmising the true position of affairs as regarded the countess and her attendant cavalier, felt his heart throb with a delicious hope. What if he had made a stupid mistake, after all! What if the Némorosa of his dreams were Némorosa still! On a sudden, as if in answer to his questions, there was Marguerite before him, dressed all in white, as she had been when he had first seen her in the woods. She was standing in the shade of a rough wooden booth; in front of her were piles of fruit and vegetables; her face was as white as her dress, and she was gazing at him with an odd, fixed stare. Was she gazing at him, or at some one beyond him! His haste and confusion prevented him from taking in such details. He removed his hat, stammering out something about his joy at seeing her again; and she answered him scarcely less incoherently.

Madame de Valmy meanwhile was ordering supplies of grapes and peaches which caused Madame Vanne to open round eyes of astonishment. M. de Valmy, standing a few paces off, with eyes cast down, was tracing semi-circles in the dust with the tip of his riding-whip.

"You are still at Franchard, are you not?" asked Victor a little tremulously. "If I walked out there to-morrow morning, might I hope to see you?"

"You would certainly see me," answered Marguerite, who was now almost herself again; "but I should hardly be able to speak to you. I am very busy all day. The evening is my free time; and then I generally walk to the Roche qui Pleure and refresh myself with a little pure air. Have you ever seen the Gorges de Franchard by moonlight?" she continued with a touch of her old animation. "You ought to see that. Sometimes I think the forest is even more beautiful by night than by day."

"Moonlight!" cried Madame de Valmy, who had caught the last words; "how lovely these woods must be by moonlight! I must positively make an expedition into the forest the next time there is a full moon. M. de Chaulnes, when will there be a full moon?"

De Chaulnes answered something in a low voice, and the two strolled on. "Shall you go to the Roche qui Pleure to-night?" Victor asked hesitatingly.

"I go there every night," answered Marguerite.

And then De Valmy looked up suddenly, and as their eyes met a faint tinge of colour spread itself over Marguerite's pale cheeks. De Valmy moved away instantly; but that one glance had sufficed to throw Marguerite into a state of agitation which she was powerless to conceal. What could he have thought of her! she wondered. Now that it was too late, she would have given anything to recall her thoughtless speech. At the moment she had only intended to say something kind to that poor M. Berthon, and to create an opportunity for the renewal of their intimacy upon altered terms; but M. de Valmy could not be expected to have understood that; and, although she might have been willing enough to let that gentleman see that his approval or disapproval was a matter of indifference to her, she did not exactly wish him to think that she was one of those persons who console themselves for the loss of an admirer by promptly putting another in his place.

Victor, not unpardonably, accepted the blush and the subsequent confusion as tributes to himself; and murmuring "Till this evening, then," passed on with the crowd in a jubilant frame of mind. It is needless to say that he walked all the way from Montigny to Franchard that night; nor is it necessary—except for the benefit of such persons as may be wholly unacquainted with the ways of lovers—to mention that he reached his destination a full hour before the moon rose. He knew he would have to wait; but under some circumstances the delight of anticipation is so great that waiting itself becomes almost an enjoyment; and it was very pleasant among those still, fragrant groves in the darkness. All those small noises which belong to the woodlands—whisperings in the branches overhead, stirrings in the dead leaves underfoot, and subdued creakings of the old elm-boughs—fell soothingly upon Victor's ear as he paced to and fro building all manner of airy castles. The frogs on the brink of the adjacent pool favoured him with a subdued, snoring accompaniment, and, every now and again, the harsh cry of a night-bird sounded from afar. After a long time spent in this idle fashion, he

left covert, and emerging upon an open space of rocks and juniper bushes, cast about him till he struck the sandy track which leads to the Roche qui Pleure and the jutting promontory whence the far-famed Gorges de Franchard can be surveyed in all their length and breadth. The moon was not yet visible; but upon the hill-tops, and on the level open country in the distance, there was a silvery haze, showing that she was already above the horizon and would soon illumine the shadowy depths upon the verge of which Victor had taken up his station.

All of a sudden he became conscious of the unwelcome fact that he was not alone in his vigil. A red spark, which could be nothing but the end of a cigar, showed itself a few yards away from him; and closer inspection revealed the presence behind it of a dark form which was evidently that of a fellow-creature. Victor promptly placed a large rock between himself and the intruder; but presently, curiosity overcoming caution, he put his head out from his hiding-place just in time to see the head with the cigar attached to it protruding from behind block of sand-stone corresponding to his own. Both heads were instantly withdrawn; and both, after a short interval, popped out again simultaneously. This was undignified and ridiculous; and Victor, having no cause to feel ashamed of himself, stepped boldly forth. A similar view of the situation apparently presented itself at the same moment to the other dissembler; for he also emerged from his concealment; and a stray moonbeam falling upon the silver lace of his uniform, his identity was no longer a secret.

De Chaulnes at Franchard! And obviously waiting for somebody too! Victor's heart died within him. His first impulse was to spring at his supposed rival's throat; but nobody, who has not altogether lost his head, obeys his first impulse; and Victor acted in accordance with his second, which was to retire into the wood again, prop himself up against a tree, and think. His thoughts did not bring him much comfort. There was indeed little room in his mind for anything but profound amazement at Marguerite's audacity and his own simplicity. She had told him to his face, almost boastfully, that she walked to the Roche qui Pleure every night; and he—idiot that he was!—had believed that she walked hither by herself. He was debating whether vengeance or silent contempt would best become him, when the rustling of a woman's dress caught his ear. The sound drew nearer and nearer, and Victor's heart began to thump. Doubtless his most dignified course would be to let her pass on to her rendezvous unmolested; but one can't be forever thinking of one's dignity, and it is not every day that a man finds it in his power to effect a really telling *coup de théâtre*. Victor was unable to withstand the temptation that presented itself to him. He waited until Marguerite was close to the tree behind which he was concealed, and then sprang out and faced her with folded arms.

Alas! it was not Marguerite at all, but Madame de Valmy; and Victor, apologizing profusely, hat in hand, wished that the earth would open and swallow him. He was so confused, and knew so little what he was saying, that he actually blurted out the whole story of his unfounded suspicions before he could stop himself. And to crown all, he wound up with a piece of awkwardness of which he certainly would not have been guilty, had he been in full possession of his senses. "If you are in search of M. de Chaulnes, madame, you will find him close to the Roche qui Pleure; and you may rely upon my—my discretion. I will not intrude upon you a second time."

"I assure you, monsieur," answered the lady gravely, but with a sound of suppressed laughter in her voice, "that I am in search of nothing but fresh air and moonlight. You, as I understand, have more exciting anticipations. Do not let me detain you from gratifying them."

Victor had no time to make any rejoinder; for now the silence of the woods was once more broken; and this time it was undoubtedly Marguerite's voice, raised in accents of distress, that reached the listeners. Every word that she said was distinctly audible.

"I will not listen to you any longer! If there is any meaning in all that you have said, you must know that the only kindness in the world that you can do me is to go away and never see me again. Why do you persecute me like this?"

"Persecute you?" answered a man's voice, which Victor did not at once recognize; "was it persecution to leave you for all these weeks without a word or a sign? I tell you I have done my best. I have tried to forget you; I have tried to live without you; and I find it is impossible. Némorosa, the Fates are too strong for us; why should we go on striving against them, only to give in in the end? You confess that you love me, and in the same breath you tell me never to see you again! What sort of a love is that?"

"What sort of a love is yours?" cried Marguerite weeping. "You make me despise you. Go!"

"Not until you have heard me out. Listen, Némorosa—"

"Monsieur, if you do not leave me I will call for help."

"Help from what? Besides, the whole world is asleep."

"You will not go, then?"

"Not yet, certainly."

Instantly there rang through the woods a shrill cry—"Help! help!" Outdashed Victor from his thicket, out dashed M. de Chaulnes

from the shelter of the rock; Madame de Valmy followed more leisurely; and presently four out of a group of five persons, facing one another in a bright patch of moonlight, had assumed attitudes expressive of extreme discomfiture and dismay. The fifth remained mistress of the situation.

"Would one not say," she remarked, with a short laugh, "that we were rehearsing the garden scene from the 'Barbier de Séville'?" We have all been playing at cross purposes, and apparently it falls to me to furnish explanations and set matters straight. Happily that is not difficult. M. de Valmy—who I am sorry to say has the defect of being a jealous husband—sees my carriage waiting in the road; he forms his own conclusions, plunges into the wood, catches sight of Mademoiselle, whom in the darkness he supposes to be his wife, and loads her with reproaches she naturally does not understand; so that she just as naturally shrieks for assistance. In the meantime monsieur here has likewise done me the honour to mistake me for a person much younger and more beautiful than myself, and has frightened me out of my wits by springing upon me from an ambush. As for M. de Chaulnes, I cannot explain to myself his presence here; but I have observed that it is a peculiarity of M. de Chaulnes' to be present at times when nobody wants him. It only remains," concluded Madame de Valmy, "for us to wind up the drama after the approved fashion." She seized Victor's hand, placed it in Marguerite's and with a rapid movement gaining possession of her husband's arm, "Come, mon ami," said she; "it is time for us to leave the hero and heroine in sole occupancy of the stage. I regret that there is not room for three persons in my little carriage; but no doubt M. Chaulnes will enjoy his walk home this night. It was thus that Madame de Valmy took vengeance upon a clumsy admirer who had very nearly led her into a compromising situation. De Chaulnes has never been forgiven, and if Madame de Valmy's name is mentioned in his presence now-a-days he pulls a wry face and changes the subject.

It may be supposed that Victor and Marguerite did not long remain hand in hand. When they were alone he asked, in a hoarse voice:

"Was it true what that man said—that you love him?"

She hesitated for a moment and then answered, "Yes."

"I am sorry for you," said Victor, simply, after a pause.

"It is kind of you to say that. You do not blame me, do you? It was not my fault; I did not know who he was when he—when I—"

"I understand. No; I do not blame you. Marguerite, you know why I came here to-night. I will not say anything about that now; of course there can be no hope for me. But some day it will be different. I shall go away from Montigny at once, so that you will not be annoyed with the sight of me; but I give up nothing. Time is on my side, and I shall come back again when I can do so without fearing to offend you."

She shook her head. "Come back when you are married," she said, "and let me be your wife's friend."

"There is only one woman in the world who can ever be my wife," he answered.

And so, after a few more last words, they parted.

### IV.

The winter of 1878-79 was a memorable one for the inhabitants of Fontainebleau. It began early and lasted late; it was signified by an intensity of cold which went far beyond the ordinary experience of even the dwellers in that high-lying region where all winters are hard, and in the midst of it there occurred a phenomenon so extraordinary that those who witnessed it will remember it to their dying day, and that the traces left by it may be expected to be visible long after they and their children shall have been laid in their grave.

One bitter January morning, when the ground was frozen as hard as iron, and the sky was low and gray and there was a feeling of snow in the air, it suddenly began to rain—a slow, chilly rain, which froze as it fell, and remained in a crystal fringe of icicles upon the eaves of the houses, upon the telegraph wires, upon the umbrellas of the foot-passengers and even upon the beards and whiskers of such as possessed these adornments. This was about ten o'clock in the morning, and by mid-day the streets were converted into a solid sheet of ice. Traffic of all kinds was suspended; for no horse could have kept his legs upon a surface so slippery that a man had much ado to maintain an upright attitude upon it. Travellers who had arrived by train found themselves unable to reach the town and had to make the best of blazing fires and a state of siege at the railway station; peasants who had come in from the country in the early morning abandoned all hope of returning home that day; and no one, except a few adventurous spirits, who put on skates and enjoyed the novel pastime of cutting figures in the middle of the highway, thought of stirring beyond his own threshold. The people congregated at the windows and in the doorways, watching what looked like a rapid return of the ice age, shouting to one another across the streets and finding the whole thing a capital joke, after the manner of their cheery nation.