

ville, that was the widow's name, smiling to the colonel, asked him to take his revenge at her house; and said with an air of equal modesty and frankness, that as I had been the partner of her success, she hoped for the honour of my company, to take the chance of sharing a less favourable fortune.

At first my wife had expressed her satisfaction at my finding amusement in society to relieve the duty of attending her. But when my absence grew very frequent, as indeed I was almost every day at Madame de Trenville's, though her words continued the same, she could not help expressing by her countenance her dissatisfaction at my absence. I perceived this at first with tenderness only, and next evening excused myself from keeping my engagement. But I found my wife's company not what it used to be: thoughtful, but afraid to trust one another with our thoughts, Emilia shewed her unpleasiness in her looks, and I covered mine but ill with an assumed gaiety of appearance.

The day following Delasferre called, and saw Emilia for the first time. He rallied me gently for breaking my last night's appointment, and told of another which he had made for me, which my wife insisted on my keeping. Her cousin applauded her conduct, and joked on the good government of wives. Before I went out in the evening, I came to wish Emilia good night. I thought I perceived a tear on her cheek, and would have staid, but for the shame of not going. The company perceived my want of gaiety, and Delasferre was merry on the occasion. Even my friend the Colonel threw in a little raillery on the subject of marriage. It was the first time I felt somewhat awkward at being the only married man of the party.

We played deeper and sat later than formerly; but I was to shew myself not afraid of my wife, and objected to neither. I lost considerably, and returned home mortified and chagrined. I saw Emilia next morning, whose spirits were not high. Methought her looks reproached my conduct, and I was enough in the wrong to be angry that they did so. Delasferre came to take me to his house to dinner. He observed as he went, that Emilia looked ill. "Going to the country will re-establish her," said I. "Do you leave Paris?" said he. "In a few days." "Had I such motives of remaining in it as you have?" "What motives?" "The attachment of such friends: But friendship is a cool word; the attachment of such a woman as De Trenville."

I know not how he looked, but he pressed the subject no farther: Perhaps I was less offended than I ought to have been.

We went to that lady's house after dinner. She was dressed most elegantly, and looked more beautiful than ever I had seen her. The party was more numerous than usual, and there was more vivacity in it. The conversation turned upon my intention of leaving Paris; the ridicule of country manners, of country opinions, of the intipidity of country enjoyment, was kept up with infinite spirit by Delasferre, and most of the young members of the company. Madame de Trenville did not join in their mirth, and sometimes looked at me as if the subject was too serious for her to be merry on. I was half ashamed and half sorry that I was going to the country; less uneasy than vain at the preference that was shewn me.

I was a coward, however, in the wrong as well as in the right, and I fell upon an expedient to screen myself from a discovery that might have saved me. I contrived to deceive my wife, and to conceal my visits to Madame de Trenville's, under the pretence of some perplexing incidents that had arisen in the management of those affairs with which I was intrusted. Her mind was too pure for suspicion or for jealousy. It was easy even for a novice in falsehood, like me, to deceive her. But I had an able assistant in Delasferre, who now resumed the ascendancy over me formerly possessed, but with an attraction more powerful, from the insatuated attachment which my vanity and weakness, as much as her art and beauty, had made me conceive for Madame de Trenville.

It happened that, just at this time, a young man arrived from our province, and brought letters for Emilia from a female friend of hers in the neighbourhood of Santonges. He had been bred a miniature-painter, and came to town for improvement in his art. Emilia, who doated on her little boy, proposed to him to draw his picture in the innocent attitude of his sleep. The young painter was pleased with the idea, provided she would allow him to paint the child in her arms. This was to be concealed from me, for the sake of surprizing me with the picture when it should be finished. That she might have a better opportunity of effecting this little concealment, Emilia would often hear, with a sort of satisfaction, my engagements abroad, and encourage me to keep them, that the picture might advance in my absence.

She knew not what, during that absence,