

subtly into friendliness. On the matter of the shipwreck he did not say much. He only told me that it had not occurred in the Mediterranean, but on the other side of Southern France—in the Bay of Biscay. "But this is hardly the place to enter on a story of that kind," he observed, looking round at the room with a faint smile as attractive as the rest of his rustic but well-bred personality.

I expressed my regret. I should have liked to hear all about it. To this he said that it was not a secret and that perhaps next time we met. . . .

"But where can we meet?" I cried. "I don't come often to this house, you know."

"Where? Why on the Cannebière to be sure. Everybody meets everybody else at least once a day on the pavement opposite the *Bourse*."

This was absolutely true. But though I looked for him on each succeeding day he was nowhere to be seen at the usual times. The companions of my idle hours (and all my hours were idle just then) noticed my preoccupation and chaffed me about it in a rather obvious way. They wanted to know whether she, whom I expected to see, was dark or fair; whether that fascination which kept me on tenterhooks of expectation was one of my aristocrats or one of my marine beauties: for they knew I had a footing in both these—shall we say circles? As to themselves they were the bohemian circle, not very wide—half a dozen of us led by a sculptor whom we called Prax for short. My own nick-name was "Young Ulysses." I liked it.

But chaff or no chaff they would have been surprised to see me leave them for the burly and sympathetic Milis. I was ready to drop any easy company of equals to approach that interesting man with every mental deference. It was not precisely because of that shipwreck. He attracted and interested me the more because he was not to be seen.