

ment! The gentleman is here to learn dancing, not to dance for pleasure. *Plus machinalement*, more quietly, more quietly, *comme ça!*"

So we danced to the tune of the violin. But as soon as we danced with more animation than was necessary for the object of instruction, we were restored to propriety by the old gentleman's *plus machinalement*.

At the end of the lesson I told Monsieur Fernand that I should very likely leave town for a few days, and begged him to accept the fee for the lessons.

"But Monsieur forgets," was the reply.—"The courses are not yet finished, therefore there is no need to pay now."

"But you would oblige me very much if you would allow me to do so: for it is unpleasant for me to leave the town without paying my debts."

"*Bien*," answered my instructor; and put the gold pieces, with the greatest *nonchalance*, into his vest pocket. His manner was so dignified, that I could have laughed to myself, if I had not heard Julie's sad story. I left, and watched for a little at the street corner. After a short time the servant left the house of Monsieur Fernand, with a basket, and returned, bringing what I had expected—a basket-full of victuals. I returned home with a light heart, and promised to myself to protect Julie, at least, from hunger.

After about eight days I returned to continue my lessons. The change was remarkable: Julie was a virgin, a blooming virgin. Almost magical was the change which the food had effected. Her dress, too, had been changed, and rendered more suitable to her age. Monsieur Fernand did not show the least change. He was dignified, but affable as ever. When his leg permitted, he instructed, and I fenced with him, while Julie played. Afterwards I danced with Julie, and her father played; but very often we were interrupted by the old gentleman's "*plus machinalement*, Julie!"

In this way a few months passed, till one day Monsieur Fernand said to me: "Sir, you may now discontinue your lessons; for you are an excellent fencer, only you must continue to practise a little for some time; but I cannot take your money any longer; for you can learn nothing more from me." I urged him strongly to give me another course, as I wished to learn

how to disarm an adversary. "Very well, Sir, one course more; but my arm is now as stiff as my leg; Mademoiselle must therefore teach you. Julie's hand is as firm as steel. If you are able to disarm Mademoiselle you are a complete fencer."

I came to my lessons as formerly, but without the old interest. I was entirely changed. How had it happened? Well, the reason was this: one evening while visiting some relations, I had met a young lady, looked too deeply into her brown eyes, and had been caught in her net. I thought of her, and dreamed about her night and day. Fencing and dancing, as well as everything else, lost interest for me. Before the last lesson, I met Monsieur Fernand and his daughter on the street. I bowed in recognition. "Who was that?" said my betrothed, whom I had taken out in that capacity, for the first time.

"My fencing master and his child," I answered.

"His child!" was the somewhat lengthened reply.

"Well then, his daughter. I take my last lesson to-morrow."

"Ah!" said my betrothed, and was unusually quiet during the remainder of the day.

The next day I went to Monsieur Fernand's and met Julie alone. The old gentleman had a visitor. He came in only for a moment, and politely excused himself. Julie had no mask over her face, and stood opposite me, with the rapier in her right hand.

"Well, Julie," said I—we lately had called each other by our Christian names—this is the last lesson."

"My name is Mademoiselle Fernand. Who was that fair haired lady in your company yesterday?"

"Well, a lady," said I, somewhat bewildered, but attempting to laugh, "who in two months will become my wife. But what is the matter, Julie? Are you ill?"

"O, no! Nothing is amiss."

"But why without masks to-day?"

"We do not always fight like children, Monsieur," she answered, with a hard voice.

I threw away my mask. We commenced; I was perfectly collected, but she seemed to be very excited. Her attacks were violent. With eagerness she rushed upon me. In parrying