

heads were protruded, and innumerable tongues kept up a low buzzing, which he well knew originated in the curiosity identified with his recent accident. As fast as he reached one floor, the occupants of that below issued from their holds like so many rabbits from their warrens, and trusting their voices to a higher key, conferred among themselves, and indulged in their several witticisms on the occasion. Finally, the marquis, after ascending four more flights of stairs, the uppermost of which was as rough as a butcher's block, and certainly not half so clean, and after submitting himself to the ordeal of encountering the same greeting on each floor, succeeded in gaining the seventh heaven, or, what is nearly as high in some of the old buildings in Paris, the seventh story, or *grenier*, of this enormous structure.

Here, however, he was once more at a loss. There were no less than six doors leading to six apartments, which, judging from their proximity to each other, could not exceed ten feet in length, by as many in breadth. To determine in his choice was almost impracticable, for he fancied that they all bore the same confounding marks of poverty and wretchedness. Three of the number, and these, if a choice could be made, were rather superior to the others, bore cards in lieu of plates, and De Forsac approached to examine them. On the first he saw, "M. Charles Courtois, *poète et écrivain public*." The marquis had nothing to do with poets. He approached the second, and read, "Monsieur Précourt, *ancien militaire*." This was evidently not what he sought, and he hastened to the last of the three *distingués* of the *grenier*, and with some difficulty deciphered, "Mademoiselle Pauline, *figurante à l'Ambigu Comique*." The idea of a *figurante* was enough to set the brain of De Forsac at work. "Is she young?—is she pretty?—is she at home?" were all the thoughts of an instant, and he resolved to ascertain the fact. Just, however, as he was about to knock, it occurred to him that from the proximity of Monsieur Précourt, an-