

My sudden re-appearance at home caused my father to suspect some disagreement had taken place, but he forbore questioning me, and, the following day being Sunday, he went to Auteuil to see his brother.

On his return, my father appeared to be in great consternation. "Do you know, Adrian," said he, "your uncle is set upon this marriage. I fear it will be very unwise to thwart him."

"I am ready to take the consequences," said I.

"You think so just now," said my father; "but only reflect on all that you will lose by displeasing your uncle. Dampierre, as your uncle's old friend, was willing to give you his daughter's hand, while your uncle bound himself to bequeath the bulk of his large fortune to yourself and Mademoiselle Aurelie. Do be reasonable, my dear boy, and don't throw away your only chance in life for some foolish whim. I hear the young lady is charming."

"Not my only chance, father, I hope," said I, with the conscious pride of an artist; "my pencil is left me."

My father shook his head, as though he thought that a very slight tenure; and then my mother and my sisters tried to persuade me I was wrong to displease my uncle; but I thought differently, and, to maintain my independence, I set off for a tour through Holland without even referring to Auteuil.

I had the good luck to sell one or two pictures in the native land of Vandyke and Rembrandt, and even to be employed to paint the portrait of a royal personage; and the winter months passed by before I thought of returning.

Toward the spring, however, I once more set off for Paris. Although I had taken no leave of my uncle before my departure, I had written to him since to say that I hoped he bore me no resentment about my determination, which was irrevocable, and that I trusted the subject would never be mentioned again.

He attended thus far to my request that he never wrote me a line either on that or any other topic, so that on my return I was fain to ask my father how stood the thermometer of my uncle's good graces.

My father replied that he really did not know, for he had not had time to see his brother for several weeks, but that he had received a letter from him no later than the same morning enclosing one to me, which he desired my father to give me the moment I arrived.

I tore it open somewhat hastily, being curious to see what he would say to me, when I learned, to my surprise, that, in consequence of my disobedience to his wishes, he had himself married Mademoiselle Aurelie Dampierre.

I could not help laughing as I handed the letter to my father, saying, "This is a curious piece of news."

But my father turned pale with vexation. "Married!" ejaculated he; "and we knew nothing about it!"

"Married! who is married?" cried my mother, entering the room and catching these words, uttered in a most disconsolate tone.

My father showed her the letter.

"Oh! my poor Adrian, what have you done?" exclaimed she. "Should your uncle have a family, you, children, will be cut off from all hopes of ever inheriting a farthing of his money?"

"I never thought of that," exclaimed I.

"I told you often enough, Adrian, how foolish you were to refuse the marriage your uncle was set upon," said my father; "though I confess I never expected he would go the length of marrying the young lady himself."

"But how, and why, can my brother-in-law have married thus secretly?" resumed my mother. "Was he afraid that we should remonstrate? What can be the meaning of such a proceeding?"

"He might well be ashamed, at his age, of marrying a mere girl like Mademoiselle Aurelie," said my father.

"Stay," said I; "here's a postscript which we overlooked."

And I then read aloud, "As I hear you have acquired great skill in painting portraits, I wish you to take Aurelie's likeness. Of course, I do not ask you to do it as a friend, but as an artist who has plenty of employment for his time. If you can come to-morrow between two and five, Aurelie will give you a sitting."

Of course, I had no objection to go, though I secretly determined I would give him the portrait when finished to his satisfaction.

I was curious to see the young lady who had so quietly taken up with the uncle in the place of the nephew—a proceeding on her part which, had I been disposed to regret my precipitate refusal, would, I confess, have convinced me I had had a good escape; since, with all due respect to my worthy and eccentric uncle, a girl of her age could only have married him from interested motives.

But I harboured not the slightest particle of regret, and as I walked along through Auteuil, the tones of the beautiful voice seemed to be vibrating through my "mind's ear," like an forgotten melody heard in early youth.

If I analyzed the secret feelings of my heart, I could not disguise from myself that I had sacrificed what the world calls an excellent match, to my admiration for a voice belonging to a person I had only dimly seen—without, indeed, having positive proof that the voice and the face belonged to the same person.

On reaching the villa I found my uncle in the garden. He seemed in excellent spirits, and welcomed me without the least shade of resentment. I, on my part, congratulated him on his

marriage, just as cheerfully as if I had nothing to lose by it.

"Is this sincere?" said the eccentric old man, almost looking me through.

"Quite," I replied; "and now pray introduce me to my aunt."

He then led the way into the house. Just as we crossed the threshold a flood of melody came gushing down the staircase from one of the rooms above.

I involuntarily started. It was the voice I had so vainly longed to hear again. Did my uncle know her? Could she be a guest at his home? In a perfect tumult of delightful emotions, I inquired, in as firm a tone as I could muster, whose voice that was.

"It is your aunt's, boy," said the old man, gaily.

"My ———"

No, I couldn't repeat the word, but I stopped short, and turned pale.

"What is the matter, Adrian?" said my unconscious uncle.

"The heat of the day, I believe," murmured I, scarcely knowing what I said.

"You must have got accustomed to heat in Italy, I should think," rejoined my uncle.

"And then music—at least, certain tunes have a thrilling effect upon some organizations," I began, when he interrupted me.

"Fiddlesticks! Don't rhapsodize," he said, "young man. There! Aurelie has done. Now, shall I show you to your old quarters, where you will find all the implements you left on your abrupt departure?"

I followed mechanically, and the moment I entered the studio, busied myself with the material preparations for the sitting, and resumed my painting costume, which I had left with all the rest of my things.

Presently my uncle returned, leading in his bride.

By Jove! how unutterable a pang shot through my heart on recognizing the beautiful "cameo," which I now found to be identical with the exquisite voice, and what was worse still, both the voice and the face belonged to my uncle's bride.

I had not a word to say—I could only bow profoundly.

"Do you believe your aunt will make a good picture?" said my uncle.

To think of that glorious creature being my aunt, when she might have been——But it was maddening to dwell on such reflections!

My uncle had repeated his question before I found presence of mind sufficient to answer, "If there can be found an artist to do her justice."

"This is the first symptom of modesty you ever showed, master painter," said my uncle, smiling, "a pretty compliment for a nephew, is it not, Aurelie?" He actually owns your beauty to be superior to his talent.

Aurelie smiled in turn, and then said, "Your nephew underestimates the one and overrates the other."

She might have said "my nephew"—I thanked her in my heart for saying "your nephew" instead.

She now sat down, and I began sketching; but I could do nothing to satisfy myself.

Presently my uncle was called out of the room to speak to his gardener, and we remained alone.

I felt I ought to have addressed my beautiful original, as a mere matter of courtesy, but for the first time in my life I found nothing to say to a lovely woman.

She now kindly came to my relief.

"You have been in Italy, I hear," said she.

"Yes," replied I; but instead of amplifying on the theme she supplied me, I only relapsed into silence.

"It is the land of beauty, I have been told," added she, "both as to its landscapes and its matchless daughters."

"I once thought so," said I; "but I find I was mistaken."

"Indeed?" said she, with a bewitching smile.

"Can Italy have altered so much? Ah, well! her music is left her still—nothing can rob her of her supremacy in that respect."

"I have heard lovelier voices—at least, a lovelier voice," said I, more as if thinking aloud than actually addressing her, "since I left the classic land of song, than when on the banks of the Tiber."

She coloured slightly, and I resumed my work. My uncle now returned.

"You get on very slowly, boy," said he, on glancing at the canvas; "but I can't spare you the original any longer for to-day, for we have an engagement. Can you come again to-morrow at the same hour?"

This was tantamount to turning me out of the house, where I had expected to dine and spend the evening with my fascinating aunt.

However, I felt it was best I should not remain there any longer than necessary, and concluded my uncle prudently thought the same. Any way, I promised to return on the morrow.

When my family questioned me about Aurelie, I said, as coldly as I could, that she was very handsome, and that my uncle had shown his taste in his choice of a bride, but carefully concealed the bitter feelings fermenting in my heart.

"What a pity!" said my father. "To think she might have been your bride instead, but for your headstrong refusal even to see her—for of course you would have fallen in love with her, if you had."

The next day I resumed my task, well resolved to work vigorously and finish the portrait as soon as possible; for I found it was only in-

creasing my own torment to have to dwell on those exquisite features in the hope of portraying them correctly.

As before, my uncle left us alone a long while, and then came to inspect my work. Aurelie rose, and he sat down in the chair she had quitted, opposite the portrait, to decide if the attitude was natural.

"But the face is not more advanced than it was yesterday," observed he. "How is that, Adrian?"

"I have not been able to satisfy myself," said I. "I have rubbed out—I have altered! I told you it was a difficult task—and now," added I, stooping down to the level of his ear, "I acknowledge it to be impossible."

"So you refuse to paint your aunt?" said he, abruptly.

"It would take too long, I fear," replied I, evasively.

"Then," said my uncle, bursting into a hearty laugh, "I see how it is—I must give you a lifetime to do it; and if you can't paint your aunt, you will perhaps succeed in painting your wife!"

Aunt—wife! What was the meaning of it all?

My brain seemed to reel round, and I believe I grasped the arm-chair to steady myself. But the delightful meaning was at length made clear to my understanding.

My uncle, finding he could not conquer me by threats or by force, had, like a clever general, taken recourse to stratagem—calculating on the perversity of youth, as he since told me, for my falling in love with Aurelie the moment I should think an insuperable obstacle stood between us."

And when the lovely Aurelie consented to act the part of his bride and sit for her portrait, she was actuated by a spice of revenge against the obdurate nephew, who refused even to see her before he declined her hand.

She did not know then what she learned since—that she was her own rival in my heart.

Neither had my uncle the remotest idea, when I questioned him about the house with the green blinds, that I only required a little help just to go the very way he wanted to lead me. For it must be observed that Aurelie was staying a few days at Auteuil at the house of a friend of hers.

However, it was all for the best; and although I suffered enough at both sittings to revenge both Aurelie and my uncle, I should never have relished my subsequent happiness half so well if I had simply and prosaically married Mademoiselle Aurelie Dampierre, instead of falling in love through the Venetian blinds, and at last obtaining my uncle's supposed bride.

THE GLEANER.

NAPOLEON'S diary on St. Helena is to be published shortly.

JEFF DAVIS is described as being very thin, and looking old and broken.

OF 494,424 persons married two years ago in England, 71,326 could not read or write.

Two thousand London preachers preached in favour of war on a recent Sunday.

THE Chinese have a notion that the soul of a poet passes into a grasshopper, because it sings till it starves.

ENGLAND is prepared. Well, so is baking-powder, artist's gelatine, compressed yeast and condensed milk.

BARONESS BURDETT-COUTES has become a governor of Christ's Hospital, being the first lady governor in 400 years.

MEASURES are being taken in Paris with the view of having all the bridges across the Seine illuminated with the electric light instead of gas.

A PARIS journal estimates at 50,000 the number of American visitors who will spend freely the dollars of their daddies at the Paris world's fair.

THE subscription list published by the *Univers* for what it calls "the gift of the joyous accession of his Holiness Leo XIII.," already amounts to nearly 45,000 francs. The gift is to take the form of a tiara.

It has been decided to issue to the men of all cavalry regiments first for service, a new and improved forage cap, the invention of the Duke of Connaught. The cap possesses the advantage of being pliable and easily carried on the person when not in wear.

BEACONSFIELD is one of the best dressers in England; he has on the average a plug hat a month; his trousers are usually of a light lavender, and his coats perfection in fit. His valet is scrupulous about the arrangement of his curls, which are numbered.

THE Confederate soldiers of New Orleans and vicinity have warmly received the proposition to join the Union veterans in a re-union of the blue and gray at Cincinnati in September or October next, and a formal call will probably be issued in the course of a few weeks.

EVERY day a copy of the New York *Herald*, with the name of the writer of each article written across it in blue pencil, is sent to James Gordon Bennett, with copies of each of the other papers. He reads them all carefully, and if there is anything he does not like, over comes a cable-grani.

THERE is said to be an association of rich business men in Philadelphia who, when an old merchant fails, pensions him off liberally for life,

unless there is fraud involved. Their names are kept secret, and they always refuse to start the bankrupt in business again.

WHEN asked for their signatures in autograph albums, it is said that Messrs. Moody and Sankey never fail to write them, Mr. Moody adding to his a text or reference to a text, while Mr. Sankey does the same, but selects only verses of Scripture having reference to the praise of God.

THE young Spanish King, being separated from his bride by the rigid court etiquette and public affairs for several days each week, had his private apartments connected with her palace by a telephone, through which the royal lovers communicated without interference or annoyance.

THE Dutch, if a pauper who is able refuses to work, put him into a deep cistern and let in a sluice of water. It comes in just so fast that by briskly plying a pump with which the cistern is furnished he keeps himself from drowning. Wonder that our philanthropists have not thought of this in considering the tramp question.

THE Germans have discovered a new mental malady, which they call *Grubelsucht*, or "the metaphysical mania." Dr. Oscar Berger writes learnedly on the subject in one of their scientific serials, and it would seem, according to him, that the symptoms of this disorder "consist in an irresistible current of ideas taking the form of useless inquiries as to the how and why of everything."

DURING the past thirty-seven years fifty-six Atlantic steamers have been lost. The number of British vessels was forty-two; American, five; French, four; German, four; Belgian, one. The causes of disaster are given as follows: Wrecked, thirty; burned, four; collision with other vessels, five; collision with icebergs, two; foundered, two; lost in fog, two; never heard from, nine. No less than 4,430 persons lost their lives in consequence of these disasters.

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

"I AM so happy!" said a little French girl on her seventh birthday. "Why so?" "Oh, to-day I am 7; my sins begin to count."

FELT gray is a popular colour for ladies' spring suits. Felt blue is the popular colour for the husbands who have to pay the bills.

WOMAN consumes thirty-six buttons on her single pair of kid gloves, whereas man buttons his suspenders with a shingle-nail.

THE Wisconsin legislature has refused to make insanity a cause for divorce. It believes if ever a man wants a wife it is when he is crazy, or words to that effect.

THE women still strive to appear as manly as possible in Derby hats, cut-away coats, waistcoats and Stanley cravats. Small walking-sticks will be the next feminine eccentricity.

A WOMAN will face a frowning world and cling to the man she loves through the most bitter adversity, but she wouldn't wear a hat three weeks behind the style to save the government.

A CAPTIOUS Chicago lover wrote letters to his sweetheart in ink that would speedily fade out, so that when she desired to use them in a breach of promise suit they were only blank paper.

MRS. DENISON, says an exchange, has made enough money out of "That Husband of Mine" to purchase a Washington residence. It's not strange; many a woman has made enough money out of that husband of hers to go into all sorts of extravagances.

A LADY who objects to profanity because it is both wicked and vulgar, writes to know what she ought to say when a clothes line breaks and lets a week's washing fall into the mud. She ought to say: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" but probably she will not think of it.

BEFORE THE FOOTLIGHTS.

With the return of spring, comes the prospect of a musical and artistic revival in our midst. It is only right that the opening of the flowers and the first song of the birds should be acclaimed by the glad poetry of men who love the beautiful and good. This week there is the second concert of the Mendelssohn Choir, which offers a programme of rare excellence. M. Lavallée has in rehearsal all of the sweetest of French light operas, *La Dame Blanche*, which I recommended to him one year ago, when he first produced *Jeanne D'Arc*. I shall have more to say about this opera later. Another novelty is an eloquent monologue, entitled *The Passions*, texts from Collins' Ode, and illustrations from Shakespeare. I have assisted at a rehearsal of this composition, and predict for it a legitimate success, if properly mounted and interpreted. The author is Mr. T. D. King, and the presentation is entrusted to Mr. Neil Warner. The idea is a new one—a merit in itself—and the elaboration appears to have been done with conscientious labour and ability. Judging from my own experience in hearing it, I am prepared to say that nowhere else have I met with a more striking exemplification of Shakespeare's miraculous versatility in the reading of the human heart. As an analysis, therefore, of the great dramatist, the study will of itself be important, while the graduated manifestations of the different passions, in the hands of an artist like Mr. Warner, must prove a popular attraction.

Piccoto.