

after the second. . . . His love had increased wonderfully between the 16th and 17th!

Trembling with agitation she cried: "What is this? Oh! what is this?"

She sinks down quite overcome. . . . He gets up, raises her in his arms; she, weeping bitterly, utters these words interrupted with sobs:

"16th of June: I love her! 17th of June: I love her!! and to-day is the 19th of June! You love another! Ah! this is unbearable!"

He, soothing her with caresses, said: "Look, little goose; look there." He opened the notebook at the first page, which bore in large printed figures: "1879."

"Ah!" cried she, joyously, in the midst of her sobs. . . . "It was I! It was I!"

Then she added with imprudent ingenuousness, "You keep a journal, you too?"

"What! I too? . . . Then it seems that you? . . ."

She was then obliged to confess that if he had written some "I loves!" in his little notebook of black morocco, she also had done the same thing in her little blue book. . . . Then she said to her husband: "Show me the notebook, till I see if there are three points of exclamation after the 18th and four after the 19th."

"Very well, very well," he replied. "Go, bring your little notebooks, and we will compare them together. We shall see which of us has the most points of exclamation."

The temptation was too great. She went to find hers of the year 1879, and returned with three very good-sized notebooks.

"Three volumes!" he exclaimed.

"Yes; three first quarters only, and you, for all the year, have but one miserable little notebook about nothing at all!"

"One can say a great deal in a very few words. . . . You will see. . . . Come here beside me. . . . There is plenty of room for two in this armchair."

"Yes, I suppose so, on your lap. . . . But that is quite out of the question, I assure you."

"Why?"

"Because there may be things in my book I do not care for you to see." She showed her dainty volumes, and he, his memorandum book.

"I dare say you are quite right. Let us sit down opposite one another. We will read only what we wish."

"One can make abridgments, you know."

"That is understood," said he, "begin."

"No, you begin, so as to give me courage."

"Well, where am I to begin?"

"Where I do, of course."

"No, I must commence a little before you, where Jupiter first makes his appearance."

"That is quite fair. . . . Look then where we first hear of Jupiter."

"Wait. . . . That must be in the first two weeks of May. . . . Yes, here it is."

"Thursday, 15th of May, went to see Jupiter at Chère's, a bay horse, seventeen hands high. Indications of the catalogue: Excellent horse, high action, jumps well, and has been ridden by a lady. For sale the 21st of May. Very well recommended by d'Estilly. And two pages further on: 'Saturday, the 17th of May, saw Jupiter. The horse seemed very good. He is worth 2,500 francs.' Then again, farther on: 'Wednesday, the 21st of May. . . .'"

"The day we met in the train. I recall the date."

"Yes, you are quite right. . . . 'Wednesday, the 21st of May. Went to see the Minister of War.—To my sister's.—Bought Jupiter, for 1,900 francs. . . . Coming back, saw a beautiful girl opposite to me in the train.'"

"There now . . . you are changing. I know it."

"No, I am not changing anything."

"Let me see."

"Well, look for yourself."

"Yes. Yes, I really see the word 'beautiful.' . . ."

"Now it is your turn. Let me see what you have written on the 21st of May. There must be something on that date."

"Indeed, I hope not! What would you have me write? 'Opposite to me in the train a beautiful young man?' No, indeed; I have not written any such thing; but you may look all the same. It is just as well to be honest about it. Let us see, 'Wednesday, 21st of May, went to the Louvre.—Saw my Aunt.—Went to the Salon.' There is nothing, I tell you. Oh! just wait a moment, I see something."

"I was quite sure you had been looking at me in the train."

"Now see what it is. . . . 'Coming home, on the cars from Paris, a young man sat opposite to me. He kept staring at me all the way. . . . Every time I looked up his ardent gaze met mine, and I was obliged to lower my eyes till we got off at Châton; I dared not raise them again. . . . I had an English novel in my satchel; but in the evening I found I was obliged to read again that part which I thought I had finished on the train.'"

"That is not all. . . . I think there must be something else. . . ."

"Yes . . . but of not the least importance to you."

"Oh! very well, go on."

"I tell you again I have read everything. It is your turn to go on. I know very well you have nothing but short notes, while I have gone into particulars, and I will tell you the reason why, too. . . . When my governess was leaving, she said, 'My dear, you do not write at all badly, but you must still practise to obtain a good style; as one must practise scales to obtain execution on the piano. Every evening you should write

three or four pages on any subject at all . . . on the occupations of the day, the visits received or paid, etc.' Now, you see, I have done what she said."

"Very good, very good."

"I wish to explain very clearly, as I said before, I know what is going to happen . . . I suppose you expect to find a great deal of sentiment and bursts of enthusiasm, while, really, they are only exercises in order to obtain a good style; so do not be disappointed . . . but what comes after: 'He stared at me the whole way?'"

"Nothing at all about you. . . . Stop, listen: 'Is it quite true what grandmamma said about me the other day: "It is most surprising, . . . our little Marguerite has become quite a beauty."'"

"Then followed quite a conversation between mamma and grandmamma; mamma reproached grandmamma for saying such things before me, she said it would make me very vain, etc., etc. Quite uninteresting, as I said to you before. . . . Now you."

"I wrote nothing on the 22nd of May."

"Neither did I."

"23rd of May. Jupiter arrived. I tried him on the road and in the forest. I found him excellent."

"And about me, have you nothing about me?"

"Nothing."

"Ah! that is very humiliating, as I have written something about you on the 23rd. 'The young man who stared at me on the train is a military man. He has just passed on horseback in his uniform. He had three rows of silver braid on his sleeves. I have said that he passed; he did more than that. . . . It is quite ridiculous what I am going to write, but it is only for myself, so I write it. . . . I wonder if it is really true he noticed me in the train? I wonder if he knows I live here? Was he trying to show off before me? He stayed at least a quarter of an hour on the road, between the Pavilion and Henry IV.'s Gate, pacing his horse, putting him through his facings, etc., etc., hoping to attract my attention by such means. He must be extremely vulgar.'"

"What injustice! You see there in my notebook: 'Tried Jupiter. I tried him and found he had been very well trained.' . . . But go on."

"Very well. 'In the evening, after dinner, I said to George, who, although he is twelve years of age, still plays with lead soldiers, and is pretty well up in military affairs: "George, how does an officer rank who has three rows of silver braid on his sleeves?"—"He is a captain."—"Is it a great thing to be a captain?"—"That depends; it is a great thing to be a captain at twenty-five, but it is nothing much at fifty." Twenty-five years old, perhaps he is that, but not much more. Grandmamma, who hears everything, heard my remarks to George, and said: "You do not know what has happened? Marguerite has just been asking information about the officers.'"

"I got as red as a peony. Then began a long discussion. Grandmamma declared she loved military men; but mamma exclaimed she would never give me up to a man who would drag me about from garrison to garrison. I ask myself now, why I ever wrote such nonsense. It was to carry out my governess's instructions. Now you know all. . . . It is your turn now; I have finished."

"The 24th of May, two lines only! . . . 'Met on horseback in the forest the young girl I saw last Wednesday. She certainly is very pretty, and does not ride badly.'"

"That is all. . . . It is concise! It would require a little commentary."

"Here it is, my love, the little commentary. You are right; . . . my notes are really very dry; . . . but I was afraid of appearing poetical. . . . Don't be afraid, though. All that is not written in my book is here . . . in my heart. That May morning, that meeting in the forest, . . . is as fresh in my memory to-day as if two years had not already elapsed. We drilled for five or six hours, on the camp ground, in a terrible dust. I brought back my company to the barracks; . . . changed my horse for Jupiter."

"Dear Jupiter!"

"A quarter of an hour later I was galloping up a long slope, quite near Val. I saw coming towards me a little cavalcade: you were on Jenny, your black mare; George, on his roan pony; and old Lewis, behind on his gray nag. . . . You see . . . I remember quite well the colour of the horses. I was quite surprised to recognize you at such a distance. . . . I made poor Jupiter go as fast as he could, and the little cavalcade passed by me. . . . I see you now with your gray habit, black hat and golden curls which shone through your veil. . . . As you were passing, I said: 'Surely there is nothing in the world so lovely as that young girl!' And you—what did you say?"

"What I said? . . . I do not remember, more than what is written here."

She commenced with rather a shaky voice, for she was much moved by the little commentary, and read the following:

"I met him this morning near Val. He came up at full gallop, and on seeing me he stopped his horse. . . . I saw it all very plainly. I know what it is to stop a horse at full gallop. . . . I have done it myself. . . . He checked his horse with a jerk, that brought it almost on its haunches. . . . He passed quite close to us. I did not dare to look at him, as he stared so. He was only a few paces off when that stupid George said to me: "Oh! Marguerite, did you see? How funny he looked with all that dust on him! He looked like a clown! He is captain of the 21st Chasseurs. He had '21' on the collar of his uniform." . . . I was furious at George, . . . although he could not have heard."

"But I did hear. . . . I remember it quite well."

[To be continued.]