

instruct you," said Monsieur Fernand while he buckled her shield, and tied the mask before her face. "Now in position! Julie, in position! So!" Julie acted with great ease and gracefulness. She seemed to have inherited this from her father. "Now, will you please, look at *Mademoiselle's* hand, not at her eyes. That you may do, when you are more proficient. Now, on your guard. Well done! *Quarte*, so, *tierce*! Not so high. That is too high. That is too high. Now, thrust!" I did so as skilfully as possible, while Julie, the foil in her left hand, let the fingers of her right glide along on my sword to support the crossing of the blades, just like an old fencer. "*Ah bah! Monsieur!*" said the old gentleman, "you are not so expert yet as to be dangerous to *Mademoiselle*. Once more now! More force with the upper part of the body. *Mademoiselle* will save herself. So! Now *quarte*! Thrust! Parry! That's better. Once more!"

It was very disagreeable for me to strike forcibly against the breast of a girl, but she was my instructor, and I could do nothing else.

We went through all the *passades*, Julie always in the right position, always parrying with grace and skill, so that I soon discovered Julie could fence just as well as her father, Monsieur Fernand.

The old gentleman's leg had not improved during the next week, and Julie gave me my lessons. My eyes soon began to seek hers behind the wire mask. I had improved under her instructions so far as to be able to cross blades in a regular attack. And I noticed, in these encounters, the childlike, careless expression of her face vanished, and that an expression of womanhood came over her countenance. The eye had not the staring inquisitiveness of the child, or the steady glance of the trained fencer, but that strange restlessness sometimes seen in a deep, glittering, dark eye.

One day the old gentleman himself instructed me. It chanced that I had brought with me a little box of chocolate, which I gave to Monsieur Fernand. He ate a few pieces and handed the box to his daughter, while he gave me my fencing lesson. Julie remained in the room to be in readiness for the dancing lesson. When the fencing was over, "Now for my chocolate," said my instructor. At these words Julie started as if she had been in a deep dream. "But,

child," said her father, laughing, and looking into the box, "you have eaten all the chocolate! *Coquine!* What a little epicure you are."

She blushed; the tears came into her eyes; but she uttered not a word.

"There! I have broken a string," said the old man, tuning his violin. "Julie, go and fetch me a string. No—I will go myself. You would not find them. I beg your pardon a minute, Sir, *Mademoiselle* will play a piece on the piano till I return."

The old gentleman left us, and Julie sat down at the piano. When I opened it, she said to me with tears in her eyes, "You must think me very fond of dainties."

I answered laughing: "Did you finish the whole box?"

"It is true," said she, hesitating; "but I have not eaten anything else since Sunday, but a small piece of bread; and yesterday I ate nothing at all."

"For Heaven's sake, child, what do you say? Nothing to eat since Sunday! You'll destroy yourself! at your age!"

"At my age? We had nothing to eat; for after the servant had done, nothing was left!"

"Poor, poor child! and I, the wretch, have not paid your father yet. Why did your father not tell me he was——!"

"Monsieur Fernand would sooner die of hunger," she replied, with the air of a princess.

"I will pay your father immediately, fool that I am! I might have read it in your face."

"Do I look so starved?" she said, with a sad look.

"Poor child!" said I embarrassed. "Poor child!"

"Child? I am seventeen, Monsieur."

"Really? How sorry I am. But I'll speak to you——"

"For heaven's sake, not now," she cried. "I never would have said a word, but I could not bear your regarding me as a greedy child.— Promise never to say a word about this to my father. He would never forgive me."

"You may rely upon me, *Mademoiselle*," I answered.

Monsieur Fernand returned. A new string had been supplied, and he played with the usual kindly expression on his face. Julie and I danced.

"One, two, three! Julie! *plus machinale-*