

TWILIGHT.

Women, moths, bats, beetles, toads,
Love the passing away of day.
The graying of all colours bodes
To them soft circumstance, fair play
For purposeless activities
And undefined sympathies.

Now one's mind is like his dress—
No one can tell its colour guess—
Now one's heart is like the sky—
Changing, doubtful, rich;
And conscience like the cross-roads sign
That tells not which is which.

I take some vagrant scent for guide—
Sweet-brier, lilac, mignonette,
Woodbine, hawthorn, violet—
And wander far and wide,
Homeless, nameless, with no kin,
Nor law above me nor within.

But way-side things I gladly greet.
As of my blood's most cherished strain.
They feed me with forbidden sweet.
Though drawn apart, I'm theirs again.
I kiss the stars, I kiss the sky,
And with the clouds on hill-tops lie.

For I have loved humanity,
And put a looser vesture on:
Dead things have living tongues for me—
In deserts I am not alone.
Though outcast, rebel, renegade,
Dark nature maketh me amends.
Her spring, taboos, yields me sweet aid,
Her creatures are my secret friends.

POWDER AND GOLD.

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERIOUS FOOTPRINTS.

The night passed without the slightest disturbance. The following morning, after performing all my military duties, waiting for the return of a scouting party which I had sent out under the command of Glauroth, and ascertaining that the river Oignon had no ferry or ford behind Chateau Giron, and that, according to all the reports that could be collected, the Franc-tireurs we had seen yesterday had fled down the bank of the river, the ever-moving clock of military service ran down for me, and I took courage, left my room on the lower floor of Chateau Giron, and told a servant whom I met to announce me to her mistress. The girl stared with wondering eyes at the Uhlan who had the presumptuous idea of paying a visit to the owner of the castle, and replied: "*Mais monsieur, madame ne reçoit pas*—she is an invalid: if it is any business matter, M. l'abbé."

"Then, if Madame cannot receive me, take my card to Mlle. Kuhn."

She left me, and returning in a few moments ushered me into an elegantly furnished, sunny drawing-room looking out upon the gardens: at the back of the apartment was a doorway, concealed by brown velvet curtains; I saw by the waving of the folds that they must have just been drawn over the opening—probably the entrance to the invalid's chamber. Mlle. Kuhn was seated in the drawing-room upon a "dos-a-dos," and on the same piece of furniture sat the able-bodied my card in his hand, and apparently interpreting the name upon it to her "*tout-à-quatre*," as they say in French.

He rose to welcome me, and the young lady motioned me to a chair beside her.

I must confess that I was somewhat embarrassed. I could hardly believe myself to be in the presence of the young girl who had made such a totally different impression upon me yesterday evening in the moonlight; and yet it was the same slender figure, with the beautifully sloping shoulders and the exquisite oval of the head which had so magical a charm for me under the rays of the moon. It was the same clear, musical voice that rang in my ears; and when she pushed aside the embroidery over which she had been leaning, and sat erect, I saw that she was quite as tall as she had appeared the night before. Only her features, which last night had seemed pallid, earnest, and almost stern, bore quite a different expression. She had not much colour, it is true, but there was a delicate tinge of scarlet on her somewhat brunette complexion that betokened perfect health; her features were not modeled according to the French type, but were regular and perfect in outline, while the expression of brightness that sparkled in her large brown eyes and played around her delicate lips certainly betokened no sternness of mood.

I observed that her hands trembled as she threw aside her work and drew on a pair of mitts that lay near her, and therefore concluded that she was of an impressionable temperament; the entrance of an "enemy" as I was, must have excited her, as the performance of the duties demanded by civility towards my involuntary hosts had embarrassed me.

"I hope you will allow me," I began, stammering and hesitating, "to apologize to you in person for the annoyances we have been compelled."

"Ah!" she interrupted, "how could we fear annoyances from persons who only desire to make moral conquests; my cousin, the abbé, has told me of his conversation with you, and thus greatly soothed the anxiety of my mother and myself. My poor mother is an invalid; she could not travel, so we were compelled to remain here on our estates and hold our ground."

"Which I consider a great piece of good fortune for us!" I exclaimed. "But so far as moral victories are concerned, those were most arrogant words, which I should never have uttered if I had previously had the opportunity of meeting you, mademoiselle, which was afterwards afforded me in the garden, when I per-

ceived at once that it was I who incurred the danger of being morally vanquished."

She opened her eyes as if in astonishment, but there was an expression of indignation in the amazed glance she flashed upon me.

I felt that I had said something which she had utterly misunderstood, and the consciousness made me blush. No lady in Germany would ever have supposed that a young man, who was a perfect stranger, an enemy quartered in her house, would presume to enter at once upon a sort of declaration of love, but this French girl had evidently given me credit for such an intention, and vexed by the thought, I added quickly and somewhat harshly: "For if you continue to defeat all my arguments so eloquently and prove what wicked Huns or Goths we are to break into poor, peaceful France, and intercept the rays of civilization streaming from that great light of the world over the nations of the earth, I shall undoubtedly be disarmed and permit you to convert!"

Her face brightened, and apparently not at all annoyed by my sarcasm, she replied laughing: "It seems that my assertions have angered you a little, therefore they must be true, since truth alone makes an impression upon our minds."

"Will you pardon my incivility, mademoiselle," I replied, "if I contradict you? In France it is not the truth that makes an impression, but appearances. We Germans, with our simple, sober judgment, are amazed, perfectly bewildered, in presence of this psychological enigma: 'How is it possible that a great and polished nation can be so utterly blinded to the truth?'"

"Indeed, and what is this truth?" she asked somewhat scornfully.

"That France is vanquished, and will not perceive how much better it would be to end the spectacle of these continuous defeats by a speedy peace; that she so obstinately persists in indefinitely prolonging the tragedy of her humiliation—it is a policy which our minds cannot comprehend."

"And do our hopes that the fortune of war may change, afford no explanation of it?" now interrupted the priest.

"These hopes depend solely upon that reluctance to own the truth which is so mysterious to us. However," I continued, "I would venture to make an explanation of it, if I should not thereby fall into too great disfavour with you as a heretic."

"Pray, go on," said the priest, with an indulgent smile.

"France is educated in the dogma that she is invincible and superior to all other nations, as well as to believe in the infallibility of her church; these two principles are the foundations of her faith. But where dogma rules, all questions of what, why, and wherefore are sins; faith is right, doubt wrong; criticism of the pulpit is the work of the devil. If we read the history written by the church, she is always in the right; if we hear—I have heard from you, mademoiselle, how France gives her history, she is always right, and victorious. None doubt it, save the profane and treasonable! By this ecclesiastical and political orthodoxy, this dogma of superiority to other churches and nations, France is ruined."

The young lady looked at me in the utmost astonishment; she was evidently much perplexed by my words, and then exclaimed earnestly: "I cannot answer all this, I am not sufficiently learned in historical matters—you must reply, Etienne," she cried, turning to the priest.

The latter had been sitting motionless, watching me from under his drooping eyelids; at this appeal, the pale ascetic features, surmounted by the priestly shaven crown, assumed a more animated play of expression.

"Good heavens! what reply can I give!" said he. "These gentlemen, it seems, wish to rob France of her church, as they have already deprived her of her emperor, and we must wait patiently until they have accomplished the undertaking."

"I assure you that my words had no such meaning, reverend sir; we are very far from cherishing such evil designs; we desire only moral conquests, as I told you, not dogmatical ones!"

"Have you read Michelet's 'History of France?'" asked the young lady.

"No," I replied.

"I should like to know what you would say about it."

"Oh! how can you recommend such an abominable book?" cried the priest, casting a flashing glance at Mademoiselle Kuhn.

"I don't recommend it; I merely said that I should like to know what this gentleman would say to it. Many parts of the book charm me, while others are repulsive. Is it not natural that I should like to hear some one talk of it whose opinions are different from mine, and totally opposite to yours?"

He shrugged his shoulders, and I expressed a wish to read the book which was so interesting to Mademoiselle Kuhn. She had a copy, and proposed to send it to my room. We then spoke—I took advantage of the opportunity to enter upon some harmless neutral ground—of other works. She was familiar with many German books, but only the older authors, principally Schiller's dramas, Callot, Hoffman, of course, Topfer. She had become acquainted with a few German plays during a journey that she had taken with her father through Southern Germany, and talked about them all so animatedly, gaily, and with so much originality—often very paradoxically and strangely, to be sure, but with a secret sympathy and cordial warmth that

proved how keen an interest such things possessed for her—that it was impossible not to feel the contagion of her earnestness, not to become excited also and betray an earnest zeal to correct these paradoxical ideas, to place things in their true light; and thus it happened that the conversation was prolonged and became more and more earnest. The priest, who spoke only in monosyllables, appeared to be greatly annoyed; it may be that my heresies angered him less than the thought that Mademoiselle Kuhn was not only listening, but receiving them, would perhaps be affected by them and he might have a difficult task to remove the impression and purify her soul from these abominations! Sometimes there was an expression of bitter indignation in the wrathful glances cast upon her; sometimes—and then he raised his drooping lids and fixed his eyes upon her face—there was a dreamy softness in them, almost a languor in their gaze, as if he were drinking in her beauty without hearing what she said, without noticing anything but the echo of her musical voice. The idea entered my mind that the poor abbé was so unfortunate as to cherish a hopeless love for his beautiful cousin, or whatever the relationship might be.

I was so much fascinated, and the young girl appeared to be so little wearied by the conversation, that I was compelled to fairly tear myself away; I took leave, but had the satisfaction of being granted permission to return the following morning, to bring Mademoiselle Kuhn the copy of Faust that I always carried in my knapsack, in exchange for the promised loan of Michelet.

I felt as if I had been intoxicated by the conversation, so gay were my spirits when I returned to my room and took up Faust. I turned its leaves, thinking of all the opportunities for numerous interviews which this marvellous book would afford, of all the explanations and illustrations which the young lady would be compelled to ask from me, if she only began to read it attentively. Just at that moment my "Putzkamerad" entered.

"The people here must be very unwilling to have us occupy these rooms, sergeant," said he; "a very neat-looking servant-girl, who speaks a little German, came to me just now and said that they had much handsomer guest chambers in the story above, which we might take. I replied that we could not think of doing so, that you must remain below, to be at hand in case of an alarm; and besides, we did not wish to disturb the owners of the chateau and the sick lady; but she said that they would not be disturbed, and if I would go up I should not lose by it, for they would give me a handsome 'pour boire.' The ladies did not like to have these rooms occupied because his Reverence the Bishop of Autun always slept here when he came to visit."

"And therefore," I interrupted, laughing, "no heretics can be permitted to remain."

"I don't think that was the true reason," replied Friedrich, shaking his head, and then added in a lower tone, "they have something in that room."

"In what room?"

"The one adjoining my chamber. A curtain door leads into it, but it is fastened with a strong, heavy padlock; and when I waked up this morning, and remained a few moments lying in the nice warm bed, I looked lazily at every piece of furniture in my room, and then saw on the floor the marks of dirty feet, which must have walked from your room through mine to the curtain door; and they must have been dirty feet to leave such traces. It must have been yesterday evening, too, just before we took up our quarters in this room, that they passed through; otherwise the marks would have been swept away; everything else in the house is perfectly clean, and there are servants enough. Do not say that I made the dirty spots myself, that can't be; for we did not take our boots out of the stirrups all day yesterday, and before I went into the room I rubbed my feet on the scraper in the hall; so who can have been here yesterday evening with these muddy feet, and walked into the room behind the curtain, padlocked door? Have the servants dragged anything there, or did the Franc-tireurs conceal the contents of the wagon in that chamber?"

Friedrich showed his quick observation, and the keen sagacity aroused in all our soldiers during this war, in these references; and that he understood how to put events together he plainly proved by adding: "I thought nothing of it at first, but when the pretty waiting-maid came to me with such pleasant smiles, tossing her head like a little cross-bill in its nest, and proposed that we move from the room—you know, sergeant, they are by no means accustomed to make themselves agreeable—I suspected something."

"It is possible," said I, "that they may be keeping something there which they do not wish us to discover. Who knows what treasures they may be! Perhaps their wine, or their silver. What does it matter to us? So long as you see the huge padlock hanging there, you may be perfectly sure that nothing can burst out of the ambush to harm you."

"I have already wondered whether the Franc-tireurs might not have concealed their weapons there!"

"If so we may be perfectly at ease since they are under lock and key." Here the conversation ended. When I crossed the courtyard a short time after to see that the horses were properly cared for, I cast a glance at the row of windows in the apartments occupied by Fried-

rich and myself, and saw that next the windows in the chamber where I had lodged my "Putzkamerad," there was another, the last of the row, which was grated. It must therefore be a corner room, and had probably served either as a treasure chamber or a prison for a lunatic.

When I went up stairs the following morning with my little copy of Faust in my hand, I found no one in the room but the abbé.

He received me with formal civility, and to my great disappointment said that Mademoiselle Kuhn would not be able to appear—she was with her mother, who had had a bad night. He then asked, offering me a chair: "You have brought one of Goethe's books—I believe you spoke of it yesterday—for Mademoiselle Kuhn?"

"Yes, 'Faust,' which Mademoiselle Kuhn has never read."

"Faust—ah, yes—I have heard of it; he sold himself to the devil and then invented the art of printing—there is a good moral in the story; but can Mademoiselle Kuhn keep the book, which I see is no very short story, long enough to read it? She enters into such things with such enthusiasm, that it is a positive torment to be unable to finish!"

"I can set you at ease on that score," I replied, "or, to speak more correctly, I must unfortunately disturb you by the information that I have every reason to suppose our stay here will be long enough to afford Mlle. Kuhn plenty of leisure to read not only the first but the second part of Faust, and also to study it a little—for it certainly requires some little study, especially from a lady, a young girl."

The face of the reverend gentleman became by no means brighter at my reply. His question was evidently designed to obtain some information in regard to the length of our stay. Yet he continued instantly:

"Is it written for young girls?"

"For one like Mademoiselle Kuhn, why not?"

"You are right," replied the priest. "My cousin has claimed the privilege of reading almost anything. Good Heavens! what is to be done about it! The library cannot be locked upon her; and she is so alone here—the long winter nights must be spent in solitude on her mother's account. If she would only occupy herself with her music! but she declares she has no talent for it. She is an excellent house-keeper—the whole household is under her direction; she oversees the management of the estates, overlooks the steward, has her sick and poor, aids with counsel and money all the concerns of the parish—our steward is mayor, and it is just about the same thing as if she held the place; but all this does not occupy her time during the winter evenings she has whole hours to devote to reading which makes us none the better."

"If she gains information it is surely an advantage!"

"Perhaps so, from your point of view, but not from mine. But since you are a species of savant, and, as you have just assured me, your stay here will be so prolonged as to make it desirable to have some source of amusement, let me offer you the use of the library. If you will allow me I will show it to you."

He rose and I followed him. As we left the drawing-room he added:

"The library adjoins our usual guest chambers. I will show them to you also, for I am sure you would prefer to have quarters there, where the best possible means of entertainment would be close at hand. The rooms are handsomely furnished and very pleasant; they not only overlook the courtyard, so that you can keep your men in view, but also afford a charming prospect of the gardens, the park, and the lovely valley of the Oignon. There is a small room adjoining for your soldier servant."

"I am very much obliged to you," I interrupted, "and thank you for your kindness, but I will not disturb you by moving up to this floor."

"Oh! you will not disturb us in the least," he exclaimed eagerly; "I will show you the rooms, and I am sure."

"I have private reasons for preferring to remain in down stairs."

"Private reasons?" he cried, looking earnestly into my face, as if to read my very thoughts.

There was evidently something in my words that had startled or perplexed him.

"When on the lower floor I am nearer to the door of the house and my men, and therefore prefer those rooms," I said.

"Oh! just as you please, of course!" he replied, pushing back a pair of folding doors and admitting me into a large, airy hall, lighted by a large stained-glass window directly opposite the entrance. Under the window was a heavy round table, and beside it, bending over an open map, stood Mademoiselle Kuhn. The sun poured a flood of rainbow hues through the coloured panes, over her gray silk dress. She was really a "dazzling apparition" at that moment, and this must be the sole apology I can offer for the sudden confusion and embarrassment which I betrayed when I saw her so unexpectedly before me.

She could not help noticing it, my greeting was faltered out so hesitatingly. I had entirely forgotten my copy of "Faust," and left it in the drawing-room. She was very kind to relieve my embarrassment at once, by the words:

"So you do not disdain to visit our little library, although you must enter the very heart of France; all these are French books"—she waved her hand towards the dark oaken shelves that lined the walls; "the heart of France is