

who will carry you to their hut and nurse you, and when you are recovered you must return to your friends in Paris. You can have no difficulty in finding another service, and will be happier in your own country than in England, where everything would seem to you so strange. Take care of him," I continued, turning to the woodman: "take care of him, for the love of charity," and to enforce my words I slipped a louis-d'or into his hand.

The old peasant's manner changed at the sight of gold; he showed it furtively to his wife, and they both became very attentive to poor Henri, raising him from the ground, and placing him between them to lead or drag him to their hut. While they were thus engaged, I waved to them a hasty farewell, and started at a quick pace to overtake the coach. They shouted after me that I had left behind me my vinaigrette, and this gave me a good idea of their honesty, but I dared not delay myself by returning for it, though I discovered that I had, while drawing it out of my pocket, dropped a small English Testament which had been for years my constant companion. That Testament had belonged to my departed father, and under any other circumstances, I should have felt extremely sorry to lose it, but now I had to think first of my own safety, for darkness was closing in, and I had much difficulty in ploughing my way through the thick snow. The heavy shower was over, but everything around me looked weird and strange, and unreal as a dream. The tall poplar trees that lined the road, stood up white against the leaden sky, and although not a single human being was in sight, I heard some drunken Revolutionists singing in the far distance, and was afraid lest I should come upon them by-and-by, when they, out of pure hatred of a well-dressed woman, or for the sake of my gold watch and chain, would murder me perhaps as ruthlessly as poor M. de Lemours had been murdered in his own courtyard.

But just as my strength was beginning to fail, I was hailed through the growing darkness by the outrider. A slight accident had delayed the coach, and he, at Madame's desire, had ridden back to meet me. He took me in charge, and I was soon safe among my friends, who though willing to sacrifice me in case of extremity, were evidently very glad to see me again. I think they were rather ashamed of the risk they had suffered me to run, for they asked no questions about Henri, apparently quite forgetting I might have had money to spend on his behalf. But I did not care about that, nor regard the severe cold I caught through exposure to the snow. I had done my duty, and this was enough.

The rest of our journey was accomplished without misadventure, and sooner than we had dared to hope. We arrived in London, where we were kindly received and entertained by an English lady of rank, who had known the Comte and Comtesse in former years. On quitting her hospitable roof, we went to reside in Cavendish-square, which seemed to Madame de Valois very *triste* after the elegancies of her Parisian residence, and the princely splendours of her chateau in Berri. As a worldly-minded woman, she could only solace herself by engaging in a whirl of gaiety, and by reflecting, rather selfishly, perhaps, that compared with those of many of her intimate friends, her misfortunes were light indeed.

Not long after my return to my native country, I might have changed my position advantageously, but I could not resolve to marry without love, and therefore stayed on very quietly with my old pupils, over whom I was exercising, I trusted, some good influence. By degrees I was treated less as a governess, and more as a companion and friend, being included occasionally in the family counsels, and sometimes invited to sit in the drawing-room of an evening, if there chanced to be but little company.

On one of these occasions the Comte, who, like many French people, was fond of surprises, came into the room and told his wife that he had fallen in with a distinguished *emigre*, whom he begged to introduce to her. With her usual stately artifice, she was rising to receive him, when a startled exclamation broke from her lips, and at the same moment my eyes fell on the murdered man—M. de Lemours! It was not my place to turn pale, but I did so, I know, though my agitation, I hoped, was wholly covered by Madame's amazed bewilderment.

"The dead come to life!" she cried. "Oh, how can it be? We all thought you had been murdered, Monsieur. Ah, is it you, or do my eyes deceive me?"

He smiled that old frank smile which I remembered so well. "My house was sacked," he said, "and they vowed they

would carry me *d la lanterne*, but I escaped and hid myself in a garret. An old fishwoman befriended me—the grandmother of one of your lacqueys, Madame."

"Not that young man?" she said. "Oh, what was he called? I have forgotten entirely—Henri?"

"Henri Vermont. Yes, I am speaking of him. I have to ask your pardon for a great liberty, Madame. I changed clothes with him, and escaped from Paris, behind your coach."

"What, was it you then, Monsieur; you who dropped upon the road? You might have died! But the disguise was so complete you really must pardon us. We all of us thought you were only a lacquey."

"Yes, Madame, I understand perfectly, and I am sorry for the trouble my fainting caused you. Having to fly from the mob, I had been very long without rest, and possibly, as you say, I might have died from pure exhaustion, but, you see, I was not left in the snow. A good angel came to my succour, although that she thought I was only a lacquey."

And I had thought so most completely. Struck as I had been by the lacquey's voice and manner, no suspicion of the truth had crossed my mind, and now, at this allusion to myself, I hung down my head like a simpleton, feeling abashed, I hardly knew why. Madame, from a different reason, seemed likewise a little confused, and I fancy we were equally obliged to the Comte for beginning to speak of M. de Lemours' adventures. "He tells me," he said, "that he remained for a week in the woodman's hut, being looked upon as a mere serving-man. He had a little money about him, and when well enough to travel again, he managed to escape across the frontier into Holland. Since then he has been to the West Indies."

"The West Indies?" said the Comtesse, in surprise.

"Yes, to St. Pierre," replied the Marquis. "I had an estate there, which fortunately I was able to sell."

"And so he has secured a pretty little property; lucky fellow!" said the Comte. "He is coming to settle in this country. Is it not so, my friend? He has been looking out for us, Madame, or, at least, for a pair of blue eyes, whose match he has not until this moment been able to find, even in England," and he laughed a fat laugh as he spoke.

At first I did not comprehend his meaning, but it dawned upon me, and set my heart beating quickly, when the Marquis, coming towards me, placed a small packet in my hand. "Your vinaigrette, Mademoiselle," he said. "You left it behind you, do you remember? I have long waited for an opportunity of returning it."

"But this is not mine," I exclaimed, glancing at it hurriedly. "Mine was of silver merely—not gold. Pray take it back. It is too handsome for me. If you have my own, indeed—but even that I do not care about."

"You do not care for it?" he repeated. "Then I shall keep it with a peaceful conscience. But deign to accept this one in its stead."

I glanced at Madame, and receiving from her a look which seemed to say that I was making a fuss about nothing, I accepted the gold vinaigrette. Doubtless she thought, as I did also, that it was the simplest, easiest, most graceful way of ending the matter.

It was absurd of me, I told myself, to think anything more about M. de Lemours, and I tried honestly to put him out of my head; but what was my astonishment on receiving from him, a few days later, a letter containing an offer of marriage! I was used to Frenchmen, and their extravagance of expression, but to be told, as he told me, that he had long admired me, and now loved me to distraction, seemed at first almost overpowering. Quite apart from the honour he had conferred upon me, I liked, nay, loved him, and my heart stood up against my better judgment, and wrestled for him stoutly. Nevertheless, I did not believe that with the difference existing between us on religious matters we could ever be happy together, and, after many prayers and tears, I sent to him a refusal, very respectful, but, as I imagined, very firm and decided in its tone.

I suppose I must, however, have been mistaken as to its firmness, for, on the evening of the next day, I, through some stratagem on the part of M. de Valois, was left suddenly *leu-à-leu* with the Marquis. He pleaded his own cause then with many very eloquent words, but I still hung back, and answered, "No, it could not be."

"Do you think you can never learn to love me?" he said, his dark eyes looking full into mine.