

daughter of the minister of a village an hour's ride from my home, and but little out of my way there, I soon set the matter right. The lady, after some hesitation, (I told her where I was going, and who I was,) yielded to my request, and became my companion.

On the way there was much conversation. She had a sweet, soft voice, the purest, most angelic innocence in all her looks. In my whole life no ideal pictured beauty had I ever seen with such loving, kind and trusting eyes. I learnt she was called Adela. Her brother, two weeks before, had carried her to a small town where she had been visiting at the Burgomaster's, her father's brother. A misunderstanding had doubtless arisen in giving the directions to the stage-coachman, to which I was indebted for a very pleasant day. Adela with all her good humor appeared to have much natural wit. She was, however, rather too timid. When I reached her father's village, and I gave her to him, a stout, active old man, with what ecstasy did she throw her arms about his neck. I almost wished myself her father. Then appeared for the first time her natural and true manner. I was not able to stay long, notwithstanding the worthy pastor besought me to do so. I promised, however, to renew my visit; which, however, I did not very soon. I forgot it between business and amusement.

At a ball, about half a year after, I saw among the dancers another lady,—for in the thirty-first year of an unmarried man, ladies become of the greatest importance, one trembles more and more at the number of years,—I saw, as I remarked, a dancer that might be called incontestably the queen of all the beauties present. The young men fluttered like butterflies about her. It warmed my heart, if the eyes of the pretty Sylphide sometimes turned toward me; and to my astonishment that happened often. But at last it seemed to me as if I had seen this lovely figure in some company before, perhaps in the city, at Augustina's. I asked my neighbor who she was.—Heavens! it was Adela! very different, certainly, in her ball dress from herself in her riding veil. As she went to rest after the last dance, I, a butterfly of thirty-one, approached the young lady, and she was so kind as to recognize her travelling companion. We danced. I inquired after the health of her father, regretted that business had prevented me from visiting him,—an exaggeration, perhaps, but before such an angel one must wash himself clean. I promised myself soon the pleasure of a visit, with a pleasant freedom. She assured me a visit from me would give her father great pleasure.

The ball caused a great revolution in me. The President of the Criminal Court became again a poet. I could not sleep for the whole night long; I saw nothing but celestial glances, dancing seraphim, and Adela floating between them. I wondered that so lovely, so amiable, so bewitching a maiden had not yet found a husband. Her father, they say, is as worthy as she is beautiful: but, alas, he has not much wealth! Oh, the fools! After a few days I went to visit the minister,—repeated the visit from week to week. Soon I was considered as a friend of the family; Adela would even reproach me if I staid away beyond the usual day, and once the tears came into her eyes when I pretended that she would prefer I should not come so often. We quarrelled sometimes, for the sake of making up again, and once in the course of the reconciliation I gave her a kiss, which did not renew the quarrel. She was silent and her cheeks glowed with the deepest red. In short, I loved and was beloved. The worthy father shrugged his shoulders, and said “You have no treasure with her but love, virtue and economy; but he who knows how to value these, has more than a ton of gold.”

With the first flowers of spring, I wove the bridal wreath for my Adela. Her father himself blessed our union before the altar of his village church. And now, by the side of my noble little wife, I was the happiest of the happy.

In time we saw ourselves surrounded by blooming children,—angels of love,—who united us more tenderly to each other. Adela became more and more lovely every day; a young mother is certainly more lovely than the most beautiful girl. The pure soul of Adela elevated my own ideas to a point they had never reached before. Man is never entirely happy, until he has the courage to be virtuous. Before my marriage, I had only thought of saving and amassing wealth; but when some years of our wedded life had passed, Adela's excellent management had made me feel that if I were to lose all I was worth, I could never be unhappy while Adela and my children were left to me.

I now found that my departed father was entirely right in what he said when dissuading me from my pursuit of Augustina, in regard to the relative age of a husband and wife. For, when I had reached my fortieth year, and Adela her thirtieth, and we had children of six and eight years old frolicking about us, Adela was still a handsome woman, who might have made conquests. Augustina, on the contrary, had arrived at a matrimonial age.

I seldom heard from the latter. We ourselves