

the silence into song, the copper into gold? * * * * I come back from the window and sit at the square centre table. It is rickety and uncomfortable, useless to write on. I kick it. I would kick anything that came in my way to-night. I am savage. Outside, a French piano is playing that infernal waltz. A fair subject for kicking if you will. But, though I would I cannot. What a room! The fire-place is filled with orange peel and brown paper, cigar stumps and matches. One blind I pulled down this morning, the other is crooked. The lamp glass is cracked, my work too. I dare not look at the wall paper nor the pictures. The carpet I have kicked into holes. I can see it though I can't feel it, it is so thin. My clothes are lying all about. The soot of London begrimes every object in the room. I would buy a pot of musk or a silken scarf if I dared, but how can I?

I must get my bread first and live for beauty after. Everything is refused though, everything sent back or else dropped as it were into some bottomless pit or gulf.

Here is my opera. This is my *magnum opus*, very dear, very clear, very well preserved. For it is three years old. I scored it nearly altogether, by *her* side, Hortense, my dear love, my northern bird! You could flush under my gaze, you could kindle at my touch, but you were not for me, you were not for me! * * * * My head droops down, I could go to sleep. But I must not waste the time in sleep. I will write another story. No; I had four returned to-day. Ah! cruel London! To love you so, only that I may be spurned and thrust aside, ignored, forgotten. But to-morrow I will try again. I will take the opera to the theatres, I will see the managers, I will even tell them about myself and about Hortense—but it will be hard. They do not know me, they do not know Hortense. They will laugh, they will say "You fool." And I shall be helpless, I shall let them say it. They will never listen to me, though I play my most beautiful phrase, for I am nobody. And Hortense, the child with the royal air, Hortense, with her imperial brow and her hair rolled over its cushion, Hortense, the *Châtelaine* of *Beau Séjour*, the delicate, haughty, pale and impassioned daughter of a noble house, that Hortense, my Hortense, is nobody!

Who in this great London will believe in me, who will care to know about Hortense or about *Beau Séjour*? If they ask me, I shall say—oh! proudly—not in Normandy nor in Alsace, but