

The strife still continued at the theatre—the execrations and noise of the infuriated crowd reached us at a distance—the sounds became fainter and more indistinct—we hurried on, and in a few moments more, I was clasped to my father's breast. An account of the *émeute* had already reached him through one of the domestics, and, in a state of mind bordering on distraction, he was departing in search of me when I arrived. An instant was yielded to the emotions of filial love—an instant to paternal joy—ere I named my preserver. 'He is here,' I whispered; 'my father, he is here—my deliverer, thrice my deliverer—will you not thank him?' I drew the old man to the stranger; he could not utter his thanks; but the tears that coursed down the veteran's cheek, as he pressed him to his heart, were more eloquent of gratitude than words. At last I learned his name—a name I had ardently longed to hear, that I might associate it with my father's, in supplications to heaven for blessings on those I loved.

"In my day-dreams, when fancy's enchanted wand was freely at command, it was a favourite amusement of mine to bestow the dignity of a foreign prince, a French marshal, or some equally imposing title, upon my hero; for my father was an imperialist, and loved such sounds. Yet when he announced himself simply as M. de V., I felt neither disappointment nor regret; in truth, I forgot I had ever raised him in my mind to other dignity than that of the best, the bravest, and the most gifted of mankind. It is easy for the mind, in its ideal delineations, to portray personal beauty, physical bravery, the symmetry that delights the eye, the wit that charms the ear and understanding—to surround this shadow of fancy with scenes of gorgeous splendour befitting a high estate. This the imitative faculty can pencil at will upon the memory, and youth will readily shed its *couleur de rose* tint over the picture; but, to personify the high intellectual powers—to compass, to give existence, and clothe an object with the emanations of the divinity, with sentiments that exalt, with eloquence that fascinates, with that courage of the soul that braves the scorn of the world, and is happy in conscious rectitude—this was a conception of character beyond the grasp of an enthusiast of eighteen, and it was in these gifts my living hero excelled the ideal I had dreamed.

"His introduction on this eventful night removed the barrier his reserve had placed between us. The next day he came—and the next, and every succeeding one, saw him an expected or welcomed guest at my father's. I was happy as a summer bird—happy in the present—regardless of the future. Yet he never spoke of love—

not once; but what need of it—I never wished he would. It was enough that he sought a place beside me; that his voice took a softer tone—his eyes a deeper, a more tender shade, when he addressed me. Seated between him and my father—listening to the conversation of these idolized beings—I had no earthly wish ungratified.

"Politics was the engrossing theme of every circle—none were so elevated, none so low in the scale of society, as not to take a part in the exciting subject. The palace and the cottage, the bureau of the wealthy *commerciant* and the *atelier* of the humblest tradesman, were alike familiar with the complaints of a discontented people; even my favourite boudoir was not held sacred from these noisy debates. Politics apart, with what tender recollections that little apartment is associated! It was there I used to indulge in the sweet reveries of youth, before sorrow and care flung their dark shadows over the future—there every object spoke to my heart of the affection of a fond father, from the *petit jou-jou* of childhood to the tasteful decorations and expensive souvenirs suited to a more elevated rank than ours; but when did affection ever stop to measure its gifts by the cold standard of prudence? There I would sit in the twilight hour, when the spirit loves to retire within itself, and revel in its own creations—when it delights to shape out worlds so airy, that the attempt to colour them in language dissolves the visionary outline—these fleeting glances of our destined state, that in the fading light of the material world will sometimes steal upon the soul, and, with celestial brightness, shows us earth is not our home. From such visionary musings the voice of M. de V. oftentimes recalled me to the bliss of actual existence; but his presence never destroyed the sweet illusions of fancy—far otherwise; he was the mystic link that bound me to the ideal world—from him I caught that exaltation of soul that bore me from earth—and wherever my thoughts wandered his image was the leading star.

"Wrapped thus in the elysium of my own feelings, I was insensible to the approaches of the social tornado, that swept over society with fatal effect, to me and thousands beside. My father and M. de V. were not exactly of the same party; but there was a point of union in their mutual contempt for the reigning family. My father hated with all his soul the whole race of Bourbons; M. de V. was warmly attached to the Orleans branch. Their disputes on this subject gave but little messiness; and the startling changes in the state, which I sometimes heard discussed, still less.