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Dr. Wm. H. H. H.
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THE MYSTERY OF

MADELINE LE BLANC

BY
MAX EHRMANN

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TO THE LATE
EUGENE DE CORBIÈRE

bookplate

THE MYSTERY OF

MADELINE LE BLANC.

“She is dead, belike?—Not so ; I think she lives.”

—*The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

THE late M. de Corbière, whom I had the honor to number among my friends, in the year 1885 found himself broken in health, so that he was compelled to retire from his duties at the University of Paris, and seek recuperation in the quiet of some small community. Tired of Paris and the other cities where he had been accustomed to spend his leisure, he migrated to a small town in the south of France. There he remained for seven months, during which time he lodged in an ancient stone house at the northern extremity of the town, with a Madame—Madame—well, since I think of it, he did not tell me her name. In fact, I now re-

member, he told me that he never heard it himself, and that—strange as it may seem—the daughter of the Madame had asked him to let that part of their acquaintance be omitted, and simply address them as Madame and Mademoiselle.

The old stone house stood opposite a cemetery of so ancient a date that the tombstones were decaying. Many years had passed since this abode of the dead finally ceased to be of interest to anybody; and in a few more generations it would again become a grain field, and its monuments serve as doorsteps and Parisian cobblestones. On the north of the house lay a beautiful valley, where flocks and herds grazed, and where my friend lay in the sunshine for hours gazing at the glorious skies of southern France.

The Madame of the house was a small, slender, white-haired woman of over seventy years of age. Her daughter, who was the only other person in the house, passed her fifty-fourth year during M. de Corbière's sojourn there. She was a woman of no little intelligence; and had it not been for the ugly difference in the color of her eyes, might even yet have

been accounted beautiful. One eye—the left—was blue and the other black in such shades as to make one instinctively turn away when both looked into one's face. It soon became evident to my friend that a certain mysterious seclusion hovered about these two women and their odd and ancient abode. They never had any sort of intercourse with anybody ; and when he had become attracted by the seclusion of the house in which they lived and had inquired if he might lodge there for a few months, the first question asked was, "Do you live in the town?" Assured that he was an utter stranger, they welcomed him, and did everything in their power to make him feel at home.

He had resided in the house but a short time when he noticed that he had become an object of public curiosity. He never ventured on the street but that the staring eyes of the townspeople were directed upon him; and more than once he noticed persons who passed him turn and look. It was a curiosity that had no humor in it, but more of awe, as if he held the key to an enigma that was or once had been of no small concern. One Sunday morn-

ing when he went to mass with the aged mother and the daughter, a sort of silent consternation seized the congregation, as would come upon one at the sight of a friend whom one had considered long dead. "This is the last time we shall go to church," said the mother, on the way home; and while M. de Corbière lived with them they did not go again. Several times tradespeople with whom he came in contact asked him questions which he could not answer, and which had the ring of mystery, such as, "Is not this, indeed, the daughter of the famous doctor?" "Has she not the eyes of Satiani?" When he protested that he understood not whereof they spoke, they began to tell him what they meant, and why they asked.

The Madame seldom ventured from the house. She went to church once, for a walk another time, and twice or thrice to the cemetery across the way. Beyond these excursions, her steps did not venture farther than the end of the court; and if any one chanced to be passing, she turned her back. She belonged to a former generation; nearly always she talked

of events twenty, thirty, and sometimes forty years past, especially those which in that time go to make up the history of Paris. For fifteen years she and her daughter had lived here in the stone house, where they had come to await the Madame's death, which at the time of their arrival had seemed probable any day. It was her last and only remaining desire to be buried in a certain spot in the cemetery across the way.

Beyond these facts, which M. de Corbière gathered from their conversation, from them he learned nothing more. Their past and inner lives were closed and sealed. Not that they were unpleasantly glum; for they were, indeed, always polite and accommodating—at times to a degree that was painful; they seemed greatly pleased with his company; and on his departure, bade him return sometime. But from the people of the town into whose confidence and friendship he finally made inroads, M. de Corbière learned of a chain of events concerning the stone house that had come to be a tradition, and that had not only made the house famous, but had given the town

a sort of luster in the country thereabouts.

His interest in this unwritten piece of local history was not small; but being a man of scientific pursuits, he had not the patience to hold a pen for any considerable length of time, or, as he himself confessed, the necessary skill with language to set it down in any systematic way available for reading. Having delighted his scientific nature by collecting the materials—statements, letters, records, etc.—and having no further interest, he placed the matter in my hands, begging me to give it voice in my native tongue, which I have endeavored to do in the following chapters.

I.

It is the year 1830.

"See who is at the door, Madeline."

"Which door, father? I did not hear any knocking."

"I thought it was the front—didn't you, Doctor?"

"I was not listening."

The front door opened, and in walked a young man clad in military uniform.

"Oh! it is Joseph," cried the girl, running into his arms. "But why do you wear your uniform? Surely, you do not drill today. And you have not even one smile for me?" she continued, roguishly looking into his face.

The young man held the girl for a moment, then releasing her, he turned to the two men at the table, and was about to address them, when the father interrupted.

"Come, my lad, and taste the wine

with us." Pouring out the sparkling liquid, and turning to the other gentleman, the father continued: "These young men are very cunning, Doctor. See how they decorate themselves in times of peace; but it is all for the young ladies. It is the principle of the peacock."

"Yes, the peacock," echoed the doctor, draining his glass.

"Lad, this is Doctor Satiani, who is now a resident of our town, and who will henceforth cure us of our ills."

"I am sorry that our acquaintance must be so brief," said the young man, with an expression of terror in his face; "but we must—there is—" he stammered and stopped.

"Joseph, Joseph, what is it?" cried Madeline, growing pale at his appearance and manner.

The father turned toward him, and the sharp eyes of the doctor stared unpleasantly.

"There is war in Paris—an outbreak—'revolution,' they say; and we go thither in an hour. I have come to say good-by."

"You are going to join the king?" de-

manded the father, with gathering indignation and astonishment, while Madeline stood in bewilderment looking at the three men, each of whose faces betrayed a different emotion.

“Never, we join the People against a tyrant!”

“Give me your hand, lad; I should have known you were no traitor to the cause of liberty.”

At these sentiments of the father the doctor's eyes flashed, and his dark-featured face clouded with wrinkles.

“Do not look so, Madeline,” said the young man, trying to comfort the girl; but with poor success, for his own heart was heavy. “It will all be ended soon.” He took her arm, and led her into the garden, but she could not restrain the tears that ran down her face.

“At last the People have come to their senses,” said the father to the doctor. “France must be rid of this monster. It is now fifteen years since Waterloo. And during this time what have we had? Nothing but misrule and conspiracy! What does this mean? It means that France must down with monarchy and

establish a republic. We shall never rest until she does ! ”

Doctor Satiani was silent ; but his countenance showed how painfully these sentences lashed him. Long necessity and bitter disappointments had taught him to control his words ; but could not prevent his blood, which had once been of the chosen few, from rising to his temples.

“What was Louis XVIII. ? ” continued the father. “What is Charles X. but a selfish, grinding cur ? Who knows what this July, 1830, will bring—who knows ! ” and in his ecstasy he arose to his full height, as if to examine his strength and convince himself that he could fight again for the people of his beloved France.

With each sentence Satiani crouched more and more within himself. Each sentence stung him to the quick ; but he was silent, like a whipped beast. At length, without ceremony, he took his hat and walked to the door.

“Do you go so soon ? ” inquired Monsieur Le Blanc, recovering from his temper.

The doctor bowed, made an unintelligible answer, and left.

Joseph and Madeline, arm in arm, were walking in the garden.

It was summer, the month of July. The winter had lingered longer than usual, so that it was really only spring. The apple and pear trees had but shed their blossoms, and the flowers were just beginning to peep from their winter's nest. Except the gathering of the people about the *Hôtel de Ville*, nothing suggested the scenes that were soon to be shifted in Paris. The town, like other small communities, was always quiet enough in its way; even nature here seemed more languid than elsewhere.

Paris was only visited by the young men, for there were, indeed, not many old men left anywhere in France. They had celebrated the beginning of the century for Napoleon. Only a few had come back who had followed the little Corsican in his crusades through Europe. Their tales, and the silent stories of those who never returned, had bred in the hearts of the women a horror for even the name of Paris.

What was in poor Madeline's mind?
 "Don't go, Joseph," she begged.

"I shall come back sooner, perhaps, than you think. See, I have brought you this, Madeline, to pledge my love again," and he placed around her neck a rosary of pearls bearing a golden crucifix. "May I be remembered in your prayers."

"Yes, in every one; but I pray now that you don't go."

"You would not have me stay when it is my duty to go?"

"Yes, yes, I would have you stay. There is always fighting in Paris. Is Paris never satisfied?"

"It is not for Paris, Madeline; it is for The People—for justice and for liberty."

"What shall I do when you are gone! I know you will never come back." She remembered the many stories she had heard from widows and from fatherless playmates of her childhood. Her heart was too heavy to say more; the words would not come. She buried her face on his shoulder and began to cry.

Joseph kissed her hair: they were betrothed.

The roll of distant drums signaled the time for departure.

"Let me take you into the house," said he, "I must be gone."

"No, no, I am going with you to where the company congregates."

"Shall I get your hat?"

"No, of what need is a hat!"

They hurried off in the direction of the drums. Instead of retarding Joseph's steps, Madeline kept steadily by his side, holding his arm with a firm grip. They reached the *Hôtel de Ville*, where people were saying good-by, and last embraces, kisses and farewells were being given, as in the days of the Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. They passed friends and were passed by them, but the excitement was such that nobody knew anybody else. Each one had his burden of sorrow, that after scarcely a generation of peace, the human carnival was again to begin, that the blood of the sons of France was again to be shed in fratricidal strife. Among others they passed Doctor Satiani standing on the outskirts of the crowd.

At the ranks which were now beginning to move away, Joseph took Madeline's

hand, looked a moment into her eyes, kissed her, and said, "Good-by."

"Good-by," she called, running by his side, "Good-by!" A change had come over her. She had the pallor of a marble figure, and her eyes fairly glared.

"Why," inquired her friends of one another, "what does Madeline Le Blanc mean, running and calling so."

"Good-by," she called again, loud enough for hundreds to hear, "Kill the King for The People!" She stopped suddenly, threw her arms into the air and sank to the ground, almost at the feet of Doctor Satiani, with the words "Kill the King!" on her lips.

Joseph saw nothing of what had happened, but marched on to await the arbitraments of war.

The crowd gathered round Madeline and raised her from the ground.

"Who is this girl?" was the inquiry.

The question was asked Doctor Satiani.

"How should I know? I have no rebels among my friends," he growled in reply.

"Rebels, Rebels!" the men and boys shouted, "He calls us rebels!" and sev-

eral seized him, while one dealt a vicious stroke on his chin.

Satiani extricated himself from the grasp of his assailants ; at the same moment, while some women were holding the unconscious girl, a voice shouted, "It is Monsieur Le Blanc's daughter." At this the crowd turned its attention toward Madeline, and Doctor Satiani disappeared.

Still unconscious, she was carried home. The father had followed the company of soldiers, so that there was no one at the cottage save Madeline's mother. She fell to weeping bitterly, as she caressed the white, corpse-like figure.

"It was as the soldiers were marching away," said Irène, a girl with eyes and hair as black as a raven's wing, who had followed the sorrowful burden from the *Hôtel de Ville*. Everything was told the mother, but she would not be comforted ; the father had not yet returned, and poor Madeline's face, which had never very much color, lay white and smooth like the face of a wax figure, amid her curly tresses that looked all the more golden by the awful contrast.

Several women of the neighborhood

came in, and the strangers disappeared. Some began to rub her wrists; others tried to comfort the mother, who was almost overcome. Madeline was her only child, and had been something like an angel in a house where the father was not always as gentle as he might have been. The mother, who had watched and cared for her all through the uncertainties of childhood, and who was soon to see her married to the noble young Joseph, could not bear up under the terror of the motionless sight of what had been her greatest comfort through the years of her life since she herself had grown from girlhood into the meridian of maternity. "Madeline, Madeline," she cried, wringing her hands, "wake up, Madeline! It is I who call you!"

But Madeline did not wake up.

Amid all the confusion, Irène thought to go in search of the father. She ran after the soldiers; but they had been marching for some time, and were far advanced. Her determination was as strong as her well-knit figure was able to hasten along. She passed out of the main thoroughfare of the town, and began to ascend

a hill to the south. The soldiers could not be seen ; they had gone down the other side, yet on she sped. Presently, she caught sight of the men returning who, in their enthusiasm for the cause of The People, had followed the company. One of these was Monsieur Le Blanc, toward whom she directed her steps.

II.

WHILE the crowd was dispersing, Doctor Satiani stole to his office, which was a short distance from the *Hôtel de Ville*. He had not been frightened at the possibility of being beaten by the men who had taken offense at his words. Fear was hardly an ingredient in his character. He had had too many disappointments to care much what became of him; and he had been further schooled by the sight of bravery and death on more than one battle-field. Though bearing an Italian name, his ancestors had been French for many generations.

Born in 1780, of noble blood, the son of a viscount, he had lived through a variety of scenes not to be found in the same number of years in any other period of history. At the outbreak of the Revolution he was living in the manner of a prince with his parents near Versailles.

The ambition of the father's life was that the son should become important in the affairs of France ; but assuredly not as a republican, whose hideous voices had been for some time filling the air with a miasma that choked the breath of royalty. After the storming of the Bastile in July, 1789, while the coils were twining around Louis XVI., Viscount Satiani and his family fled over the frontiers with the Count of Artois, the young brother of the King, and the Charles X. of a later age. Before young Satiani saw France again there had been a States General, a Republic, a King and Queen guillotined, a Reign of Terror, pillage and massacre, a Directory, and from the ashes and smoke of desolation had risen the figure of Napoleon.

The father having meanwhile died in poverty, and the mother having been conveyed to an alms hospital in Coblenz, where she still lay, young Satiani returned to France in 1800, under an assumed name. Under Napoleon's extension of amnesty to certain classes of nobles, he had detached himself from the Bourbon cause and assumed his real name, hoping to regain his father's possessions under

the new dynasty that was forming. He made claims for these ; but after so many years, and under so many different forms of government, they had changed hands not less than twenty times ; and south of Versailles, on the very spot where in his boyhood stood the Château de Satiani, an old peasant had this year planted a field of grain. One could never have told that a château had once stood there.

Stricken with poverty, desolation and misanthropy, he had wandered afoot to Paris ; where, by all sorts of labor, from the most menial to the occupation of copyist, he was able to keep from starvation. In 1806 he was forced into the army and fought at Jena and at Auerstadt. In the latter battle he was wounded in the right breast, and by a saber cut on the hip. He was taken from the field, and finally, when nearer dead than alive, removed to a hospital at Tours ; whence they took him to Paris. After about eight months he was able to move about again, and assisted in taking care of the other patients ; but the right lung was gone. Unfit to go back into the army, it was in this way that he began the study of medicine.

By the year 1811 he had fairly recovered; and by his application to study was entitled to practise anywhere in France. In 1814, at the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, his last hope of regaining any of his father's former possessions was shattered. For the next sixteen years he wandered from place to place, practising his profession.

He never stayed long anywhere; and wherever he had been, there always remained after his departure a sort of mysterious haze. No one knew him well; yet in the small communities where he had remained for any length of time, everybody knew him by sight, and respected his mysterious austerity. He was now, in the year 1830, fifty years of age. In appearance, he was of rough and wrinkled countenance, wore a copious gray mustache and a sharp chin-beard. His small eyes—one of which was blue and the other black—were set deep in his head, environed by coarse eyebrows and fleshy creases at the base of the lids. Though years had wrenched his form and features, so long as he kept his ugly eyes out of one's face, there was something stately in his appearance. Whether it

was hidden power that still abode with him, or whether it was only the majestic ruins of what once had been, one could not tell by looking at him. Every feature showed his consciousness of noble lineage; and the disgust he manifested at anything democratic was equally innate with him; for to his mind it had been just such popular fanaticism that had made France bleed and Europe restless for a quarter of a century, and had dispossessed him of his rightful inheritance.

He now sat in his office (three o'clock in the afternoon) writing chemical formulæ on a sheet of paper that lay before him. Now and then he would go to the bookshelves, finger a volume for a few moments, and then return to the formulæ. Still somewhat agitated with indignation at what had happened a few hours before, at the departure of the town company of soldiers, he was trying to dissipate the feeling by applying himself to his science, which in the years gone by had pleasantly absorbed many of his hours that might otherwise have been wretched. Not infrequently, when thus at work, he would

talk to himself. "C H C 1 3 — —," he was just saying, "that will do it," when there came a knocking at the door.

"Come in."

Irène entered, her hair down her back, flushed and out of breath from running.

"Is this—is this the doctor?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"Would you be kind enough to come at once to Monsieur Le Blanc's house?"

The pleasure he had had at seeing the pretty Irène disappeared at the name "Le Blanc." "Rebels," he muttered to himself. "Who is sick?"

"Mademoiselle."

"Very sick?"

"Yes, yes, indeed, she fainted at the *Hôtel de Ville*, as the soldiers were marching away."

"These and their like," he said beneath his breath, "have bereft me of everything, and yet I am to go among them like a ministering angel." Then aloud, "Was it she who said, 'Kill the King'?" There was bitterness in his voice.

"I do not know, monsieur—doctor. She was calling aloud; but I do not know what she said."

He seated himself again at the chemical formulæ, indifferent to the anxiety of the girl that stood before him.

"Will you be kind enough to come at once?" pleaded Irène. "Mademoiselle is unconscious."

At the word "unconscious" Doctor Satiani seemed to awaken from his indifference.

"Mademoiselle may die if you do not come."

After a pause, he said, without enthusiasm, "Go and say that I am coming."

Irène flitted out; and the doctor, after gathering together the sheets of paper he had been studying, also left.

The cottage where Madeline lived was a modest wooden structure, a story and a half high, three rooms long, with a side room to the left. It was set back in a spacious garden that was generously shaded by massive oak trees, and screened here and there by nooks of shrubbery and sweet-scented flowers, about which curled a well-kept walk. Here she had played and read every summer of her life.

The anxiety on the interior of the house was in great contrast to the calm of the

garden. The stricken girl lay on a couch in the center of the middle room. The mother had retired up-stairs, where she was being attended by some neighbors. The father and the others had tried everything they knew to restore Madeline, but all in vain. She lay like dead ; and but for a feeble pulsation of the heart, gave no sign of life.

"Here comes the doctor," some one said, looking out the window.

"Thank God," whispered the father, sitting beside the couch, holding her hand, and saying tender things that he had forgotten to say when she could understand.

Poor Madeline !

"Well !" said Satiani under his breath, as he entered the house and saw the consternation.

The father arose and gave him his hand. "What can you do for her, doctor ? It must be done at once—or can this sort of thing continue long ?"

The doctor made no reply but proceeded to examine the girl. There was that silence that there is in a court of justice when the judge is about to render a

verdict of life or death. Some of the women who had seen Madeline every day of her life, and who had something of the feeling of a mother for her, began to weep at the sight of this living death ; and when the doctor turned away from the couch, they looked beseechingly at him, as if he were to decide according to his pleasure whether or not Madeline should be restored.

"I shall do what I can," said Satiani, answering their looks.

"What is it ?" asked the father.

"If there is anything beyond suspension of consciousness, it cannot yet be told. Allow her to lie undisturbed where she is." And with these words, he began to rub her forehead and wrists with a fluid that he took from his medicine case. But few minutes elapsed when Doctor Satiani took his hat and bade the father good evening, saying, as he went, "Send for me to-morrow if she does not awaken."

III.

AT the northern limit of the town, some distance from the *Hôtel de Ville*, where the soldiers had congregated, there stood a rough story-and-a-half stone house, built probably about the middle of the last century. It was the last house on the street, and looked westward, toward the town cemetery across the way. Three windows on the north side faced a valley that descended somewhat abruptly, forming at the lower extremity a channel through which a rapid creek wound its way. So far as anybody knew the house was empty, as it had been within the memory of the oldest citizen. If it was regarded by anybody, it was as an old and useless landmark designating the northern limit of the town, and one which should have been destroyed and removed but for the fact that nobody wanted the piece of ground, much less the heap of stone. If it had an owner, no one

knew who he was; but it was generally believed that the old house was a worthless something which had been left either for posterity or time to demolish. It was a dark, low, squatty structure that looked at the cemetery across the way through three small front windows, one above and two below, shaded by large eaves that time had curled and twisted out of shape. The doors were low, broad, and looked dark and heavy like iron. To the front and sides of the house clung coarse vines bearing scrofulous looking leaves that gave it an even more sinister appearance. What little wood there was had been gnawed and rotted by rain and sunshine; and the roof which once had been steep and proud lay bent and leaning. The shutters opened and closed as it pleased the wind; and the silence of the isolation was never broken save by the flutter of birds and the whining of an occasional stray dog that sheltered there.

The section of the town in which this house was situated had fallen into degeneration, and was only frequented by occasional funeral processions and mourners who visited the graves of the departed.

The cemetery was hardly more desolate than the dark and gloomy old house. Thus it had lived on, almost unknown, and entirely unmolested, through the many little revolutions in the town, and the greatest revolutions in the history of man, from Louis XV. to Charles X. Now it was the year 1830.

At nightfall on this day, Doctor Satiani wandered in this direction ; and when it was dark, he entered the court and rapped lightly at the side door. It was presently opened by a small, slender figure, but no light appeared, and he entered. The door was quietly closed and locked after him.

"Monsieur," said the small, dark figure, "will you descend at once?"

"Yes."

"Will you have a light?"

"No." Feeling his way, he walked toward the wall between the room he had entered and a smaller room behind. Here he opened a door at right angles with the partition, and descended into the cellar.

Before long, some rays of light mingled with muttering, inarticulate talk and odious chemical fumes ascended from below through the cracks in the old floor.

Presently the small figure, who had gone out at the back door of the room, re-entered ; and after listening for a moment with his ear to the floor, he walked to the cellar door, opened it, and said, "Monsieur."

There was no answer.

"Monsieur."

"What is it ?" came from below.

"Did you call ?"

"No. You must be quiet."

The small figure closed the cellar door, busied himself for a time about the room in the dark, and disappeared again through the rear door.

There was no change for several hours : the dim light, the chemical fumes, and the mysterious muttering talk continued ; the small dark person did not enter again, but lay asleep on a couch in the back room ; and from without, in the shadow of the starless night, the old stone house looked as dark, gloomy and lifeless as ever.

At about two o'clock the dwarfish person rolled on his bed, rubbed his eyes and sat up, for he thought that something had awakened him. He listened, but

could hear nothing except his own breathing. "It must have been a bad dream," he said to himself, and lay down again, when there came to his ear unmistakable sounds that filled him with terror, that froze his thin blood, and made him shake like one facing impending death. The noises were not loud, but continuous—a mingling of heavy steps, heaving moans, and hideous giggles.

"We are caught," he thought, springing to his feet and going to the window to look out. But the night was calm and the sound came not from without. He hurried to the room above the cellar. At every step he came nearer the horrible sounds that became louder with every succeeding gasp. Some one was choking; one by one, heavy steps came thumping up the stairs; and now and then, piercing the other noises, came a shrill laugh. A heavy figure fell upon the floor, knocking him against the wall; and from the throat of the fallen came the words, in a strange voice, "I have found it," then all was silent.

"Monsieur!" cried the dwarf, going half-way down the cellar.

He almost leaped down the remaining steps, and amid suffocating odors, lighted a candle. But no one was there. The smells rendered him almost unconscious, as he made his way up the stairs. Flashing the candle into the face of the figure on the floor, he saw the pale distorted features of an unknown person—but resembling Doctor Satiani.

There was at that moment a noise in the front part of the house. The bewildered dwarf went stealthily in that direction, when he distinctly heard keys rattling in the front door. He ran noiselessly into the half-story overhead ; and looking out the window, in the darkness of the night, saw a man bending over the lock.

The only night officer in the town had by accident wandered in this direction ; and when before the stone house, about to turn back, he had been attracted by the strange noises. He was trying to enter the front door ; but finding that impossible, he walked around the house and tried the side entrance. He succeeded in prying it open, and as he stepped noiselessly into the room, fell over the body on the floor. Lowering his lantern, he beheld the same

pale and distorted visage that the dwarf (now hiding in the half-story above) had seen a few moments before. "Foul play," he said to himself ; and thinking the man dead, he made a hasty search of the lower floor. He stopped at the stairs and encountered by the opinion that he would do better not to waste time, but go at once to notify the other officers, who might remove the body and then assist in making a systematic search for the perpetrator of the crime. He went half-way up the stairs, and feeling some fear creep over him, easily convinced himself that he had better notify the other officers without further delay.

In less than an hour four of them were within the court of the stone house. But when they opened the side door, the body was not there, nor anywhere to be found.

IV.

POOR Madeline hadn't changed by the next morning. She lay as motionless as when first brought into the house. If there were any change, it was that she was beginning to look like one who had been dead for some time : heavy shadows lay under her eyes, her cheeks and temples began to sink, and there was but feeble respiration. Irène had stayed up all night, and with the mother had watched and prayed. The good father confessor had been sent for, in the hope that, if Madeline were not to get well, she would at least not depart without the ministration of extreme unction. One hour of the night after the other had drawn along ; but she did not awake. At daybreak the mother, again overcome by bereavement and fatigue, was put to bed.

"Monsieur," said Irène to the father, who sat with his forehead resting on

Madeline's couch, "I am going for the doctor. It is daybreak, and we must wait no longer."

"Very well," replied the father.

"Poor Madeline!" murmured the faithful Irène, as she kissed her silent companion's face, upon which a tear dropped from her own—"Poor Madeline!" Irène was one of those abiding creatures who are only to be found, perhaps, in her own sex, to whom vicissitude is a power that strengthens devotion and love. She would have given her life for Madeline. There was no red in her cheeks now as she hastened through the deserted streets toward the doctor's office; the watching of the night had paled her face, but had not weakened her spirit.

She soon arrived at the office, and knocked; but there came no answer. She tried the door, but it was locked. Unwilling to return without that which she hoped would bring help, she looked through the keyhole, hoping to find the doctor, who had been somewhat sullen on her first visit, and she thought might perhaps be so again. Her eyes were met by sharp eyes gleaming at her from within.

"Open, open," she cried in a determined voice, twisting the doorknob.

The door sprang ajar, and she was confronted by a dwarfish person of gaunt and nervous countenance.

"Where is the doctor?" she asked, shrinking from the ugly sight.

"I do not know," replied the small man, trembling from head to foot, and stepping back, as if in fear.

"When will he be here?"

"I do not know. Come back in an hour," he said, walking toward the open door, and looking at her, as much as to plead, "Go, go at once!"

Irène stood still for a moment, then taking a chair before the table on which the chemical formulæ had lain, she said, "I shall wait till he comes."

The anxiety of the dwarf grew intolerable to behold. He did not close the door, and walked nervously from one side of the room to the other, pausing now and then to listen or look out the window or door. His face was smooth, and so thin that the cheek-bones, chin and eye-sockets protruded like the knuckle on a skinny hand. When he spoke, and at

times when silent, his chin fell, as if it were no natural part of his face, but something artificially fastened on; and his voice was weak and rasping. He looked like one who all his life had been imprisoned in the dark, and now being turned loose in the light, did not know what to do with his freedom and seemed pained by the brightness.

"Where can I find Doctor Satiani?" asked Irène.

"I do not know, I do not know."

"Are you one of his patients?" inquired the girl, beginning to sympathize with the object that her innocence prevented her from greatly fearing.

He cast a glance at her, his eyes growing red and moist, and for a moment he stopped pacing the floor and stood as if in reverie. He did not make any verbal reply, and what his expression said was too mysterious to be understood.

"I shall go to Doctor Satiani's *pension*, perhaps he is there," said Irène, arising.

"Yes, perhaps."

"I shall return shortly; and if he comes, tell him to wait."

"Yes, I will tell him to wait," mechanically echoed the dwarf.

Irène went to a public *pension* where she had once seen Doctor Satiani. Though he boarded there, he had not been seen that morning.

"It is yet early," observed the Madame of whom inquiry was made. "Come in and wait, likely he will be here soon."

Irène entered the house and waited until all the boarders had come and gone; but Doctor Satiani was not among them. Although it still looked early on account of a storm that was beginning to gather in the clouds, darkening the morning light, Irène felt that it was growing late, and that something had to be done at once.

"He has never yet missed a meal," said the Madame.

"I can wait no longer," and arising, she left instructions as to where the doctor should be sent if he came for his breakfast. She was undecided whether to return to the office or to the house where poor Madeline lay. "What good to go back without help," she said to herself, and turned in the direction of the

office, hoping with every step that the doctor had come by this time, for it was no longer early.

The door of the office was open, but no one was within; the dwarfish person had disappeared. What was to be done? Nothing but wait. So she seated herself at the table and waited. After the lapse of about twenty minutes, Doctor Satiani entered. He was pale, had a fresh red scar on his left cheek, and looked fully ten years older.

"O doctor, come to Monsieur Le Blanc's at once! Madeline is no better. Will you come now? Be so good. All night she lay without moving a muscle."

The doctor, who had removed his hat, took it from the table, and placing several vials in his pocket, said, "Come, I will go with you this minute."

As they left the office it grew darker. For the time of year, the early morning had been close and sultry; and from the preparation the clouds, winds and thunder were making, it was evident there would soon be a storm. Irène walked a few steps ahead of the doctor, and turned now and then to see if he were catching up, that

she might walk more rapidly, so anxious was she to bring aid. By the time they came in sight of the house, it had grown almost dark as night, and began to rain.

"At last," exclaimed the father to the doctor, as they entered the house. "We had given you up. She is no better."

Satiani was taciturn, avoided the father, and walked directly to the couch. At length, after some examination, he turned to Monsieur Le Blanc, the few neighbors who were there, and Madeline's father confessor, and said, "I must be alone with her."

"What did you say?" asked the father. He had not understood, for the clatter of the falling rain and the rolling thunder were deafening.

"I must be alone with her," he repeated. "When I call, I will tell you what can be done."

One after another they left the room.

"Oh! make Madeline well," pleaded Irène, taking hold of the doctor's arm.

"It is with you, my friend Satiani," said Monsieur Le Blanc.

The good father confessor, who was

very old, knelt beside the couch and prayed while the last person passed out. Presently he arose, and departed.

It was as dark as night in the room. The wind hurled the rain against the house and rustled the foliage of the hoary trees in the garden ; and at short intervals the thunder rolled and crashed. " She is mine ; she will die, but she will come to me," muttered Satiani to himself, as his lips curled in an ugly smile. There was the expression of a felon in his face ; and his small, dissimilar eyes emitted the glare of a beast. His shoulders bent, his neck protruded, and every step was taken with an elasticity that deadened sound and caused no motion in the room. He locked the doors, drew the curtains and lighted a candle at Madeline's head. As he leaned over her, rubbing her gums with the contents of a phial he had taken from his pocket, the speck of candle-light shone on a decrepit soul that had come to the surface of his face. He chuckled to himself as a miser when recounting his gold, showing yellow tushes instead of teeth, and a forehead arched with sinister wrinkles. His blue and black eyes blinked glassily

in the light, and in respiration his mouth opened and closed. A monstrous uncanny shadow arose and fell on the wall as he writhed at his unholy task. After a moment, while still rubbing the gums of the death-like figure, there came a crash of thunder over the house that nearly threw him from his feet ; and like a beaten dog he skulked into the dark of the room, while the candle shed its glimmer over bewildered tresses amid which lay the waxen face of Madeline. Satiani, trembling in the corner, fastened his ugly eyes upon the white figure. Every stroke of lightning that sent its flash upon the darkened windows and every rumble of thunder, struck him to the quick. He had no fear of man ; but before God he was a coward. It was the struggle for a soul. The white visage beneath the candle he watched with the eyes of an eagle. It moved.

"I am not beaten—" he muttered, as another crash of thunder choked the sentence in his throat.

The lower lip began to quiver, and the knees to tremble. The arms—the head—the body began to straighten. There was

life ! She tried to speak. Then all relapsed into rest again.

"Madeline," said Satiani, leaning over her face, "Madeline."

"Joseph," she whispered, "Joseph."

"Joseph is not here."

"Where is he ?"

"I do not know."

"Where am I ?"

"In Paris."

The eyelids moved as if to open, and Satiani quickly laid pieces of coin upon them.

"Madeline, listen," and he grasped both her hands, which he held firmly on each side.

"What is this noise ? I hear cannon."

"It is thunder. Listen, Madeline."

"I listen. I feel so weak."

"You must die."

"Let me live ! Let me live !"

"On one consideration. Do you understand ?" A pause. "Madeline."

"I cannot see."

"No, you are blind."

"Who speaks to me ?"

"It does not matter. Do you understand that you are dying ?"

"O let me live !"

"It is in my power."

"Let me live."

"On one condition, that you give me your body ; or if you refuse, you shall be buried forever to-morrow, and molder in the ground as do the dead, worms shall gnaw your cheeks—here—and your mouth shall be a grinning doorway to the palace of living, creeping vermin."

"O God !"

"There is no God. Do you agree ?"

"O let me live !"

"It is done," and Satiani poured the contents of a phial between her lips, and at the same instant pressed a sponge over her face.

There was knocking on the doors at which the father, priest and others had gone out.

Stealthily Satiani unlocked them, and, falling on his knees by the couch, cried, "O God, take this soul unto Thyself !" loud enough to be heard by the impatient ears without the room. One sentence after another of this mockery of prayer came from his diabolical throat ; and in less than ten seconds, amid the roaring of

thunder, the flashing of lightning, the hissing rain, and the knocking at the door, there lay before him what seemed to be a corpse, white, still, silent, with purple lips. All the while, kneeling beside the couch, louder and louder did he pray. The doors broke open ; the father, priest, and others entered.

“ O Madeline ! ” cried the father.

“ She is dying,” said Satiani.

The women began to cry and the priest to pray. The father ran to the wife, who was lying in an up-stairs room ; and Irène helped Satiani from his knees and led him to a seat, where he lay seemingly exhausted. Another candle was placed beside Madeline's head, and before long there was no other sound in the darkened room save the prayer of her good father confessor and the echoes of thunder from the vanishing storm.

V.

"HERE is a message," said Irène to Madame Le Blanc, at two o'clock in the afternoon.

The mother sat, pale and motionless, in a large armchair near the door that faced the garden. It had stopped raining and the sun was out.

"Read it to me," she said.

"It is from Doctor Satiani." Irène read :—

"Monsieur Le Blanc, I advise you to have your child interred today. Decay having set in a day ago, it would be unwise to keep her until to-morrow. Nothing can be done for her ; and you must protect yourselves against the danger of keeping her in the house another night.

"In deepest sympathy,

"DOCTOR SATIANI.'"

The poor mother relapsed into silence. She had wept until there were no more tears; and now resigned herself to what she considered the will of God. Her face was that of Madeline's, but thinner, and furrowed with the cares of time; and her hair, that had been once of the same golden color, was now fading into a silvery gray.

"Where is Monsieur?"

"He has gone to make arrangements for the funeral," answered the heroic Irène, who bore sorrow like a man. "Is there anything Madame wants?" she continued, kneeling beside her.

"No, nothing," answered the mother, as she raised her hands to the head of the faithful girl and pressed it against her breast.

It did not take long for the news of the death to spread over the town. A good many people knew Madeline, either familiarly or at least by sight, for from her earliest childhood she had gone out much with her father, holding his hand when she was small, as they walked along; and when she grew older she took his arm. Then Joseph succeeded the father in her affections; and by the time it was known that

they were betrothed, Madeline's beauty, simplicity and goodness had made her admired by many. "Poor Madeline," everybody said, instinctively.

A number of persons was now in the front room of the house, where she lay in her shroud of spotless white. The mother and father of Joseph had come ; and with their deep sympathy they tried to comfort those in bereavement. They hardly dared to think what the news would mean to their son, who had long ago confided his love to them.

"I am going to find Monsieur, and give him the letter," said Irène.

Just then Monsieur Le Blanc came, and the letter was read to him.

"The arrangements are already made. We shall bury our child this afternoon," he said. "We shall take her to the chapel at four o'clock."

"I wish Joseph could have seen her once more," said the mother of the young soldier.

"It is impossible. Who knows where he is !" responded Monsieur Le Blanc.

"How are we to let him know ?" asked the lad's father. "For such a journey,

at such a time, I am too old ; and it would be no easy task to find him ; Paris is no village."

" But it is only right that we should let our poor son know. It would kill him to think that she had been dead a long time before he knew it, for I know he thinks of her every hour," said the mother, bursting into tears.

" Don't weep ; we will follow very soon," observed the father of the dead girl, his heart softening in this great affliction. " We will send some one to tell Joseph ; but whom I do not know."

The mother sitting in the armchair mentioned several names. But there was some objection to ask or expect any one of them to go. The young men were already all in Paris ; and there was an outbreak—nay, a revolution, expected any hour.

" Send me !" said Irène, suddenly stepping among them, her face aglow as she met the eyes of Joseph's and Madeline's parents.

" *You ?*" said the men, simultaneously.

" O Irène, you would be killed !" observed Joseph's mother.

"Irène has a great spirit," whispered the other mother. "Come here, my girl," and she put her arms about her and caressed her as she was wont to do her own child, now so still and cold. "No, we cannot let you go."

Irène was ready for any task. She was one of those creatures whom want had taught appreciation ; and was, therefore, willing at any time to undertake anything that her friends wished to be done. Her father had fallen at Waterloo, and her mother had died of a broken heart. Irène had been the only offspring of an alliance that had been so sweet to the young mother that its termination was too much for her, and before long she too had gone into the eternal land, leaving this single child, who found her means of subsistence in whatever haphazard way destiny saw fit. Now that she was grown, she was willing to do anything for those who had been kind to her.

The parents came to no conclusion as to who should be asked to carry the unhappy news to Paris. It would have been useless to send a letter, for a soldier has not a permanent address, much less a rebel soldier.

At four o'clock the body was followed to the chapel by a goodly number of friends ; among them, with bent head and saddened countenance, walked Doctor Satiani. At the chapel, a few psalms, the *Libera*, and *De Profundis* were chanted ; for some time the holy fathers continued to administer the last services to the departed soul ; and for the last time the friends viewed the body. From the folds of the white shroud protruded the wax-like hands, folded upon the golden cross of a pearl rosary.

By five o'clock the funeral line marched northward toward the cemetery. It was a sad procession. It is not so melancholy a thing to follow the remains of an aged person to the tomb, for however dear the departed may be, he had mounted a good score of years—he had fulfilled his task—he had lived. But to follow the bier of youth—hopeful, bright, ambitious youth, that was yet to flower and diffuse its fragrance ; that had not yet had life and experience, but was just looking out toward them with the wistful eyes of innocent desire—to follow such to their last abode is indeed a solemn thing. " O mock-

ery," one feels like crying, "what possibilities lie buried in the tombs of youth!"

The first shadows of the coming night mingled with the brightness of the day, as the procession came in view of the cemetery. It was a desolate, old and endless place, dotted with a few bright and many darkened monuments. The ancient gate through which the procession passed had long ago lost its doors. The straw of withered weeds lay profusely about, and with the coarse grass hid many of the only surviving testimonials of the dead and forgotten. Nature here seemed ruder than elsewhere, spreading oblivion and forgetfulness alike over the humblest headstones and the proudest monument.

Irène had not been in the chapel, nor was she now in the cemetery; but in the mother's sorrow she was not missed; and who else would think of her?

The friends gathered round a newly made grave, almost in the northwest corner, between a rude fence, which divided the cemetery from the valley, and a thick, brown, old monument, from which time had effaced every inscription save a date early in the last century. The

mother, sustained by the father, stood near the grave ; behind them a few relatives ; and all around a circle of solemn faces, as the aged priest offered the last prayer, and Madeline was lowered into the earth.

The sun stood low in the western horizon, the verdure of the valley was tinged with the gloaming of eventide, and the flocks and herds wandered homeward, as one by one the shovelfuls of earth enclosed again in their thralldom a cold and silent form of clay. Homeward moved the mourners, and before long the earth was shrouded in the mystery of night. Madeline Le Blanc was no more.

On a table in the cottage beside the garden lay this note, awaiting the mother and father's return :—

“ Dear Monsieur and Madame, I have gone to Paris.

“ IRÈNE.”

VI.

No sooner had the night come to its full darkness than some one rapped lightly at the side door of the old stone house. For a long time there was silence, then the rapping continued. Presently, the door was opened by the same dwarfish creature.

"Why do you keep me waiting? Notwithstanding this is my house, our presence here must be kept a secret. You keep me waiting, and everything will become public—what I am doing—that this is my house—everything! Then I will have to explain what happened last night."

"Oh! it is Monsieur," shrieked the creature, in a loud whisper.

"Of course, who else? Did not I give the proper raps? or are you losing your hearing? or can it be that you are unfaithful to me, and expect some one else?"

"No, no, I did not expect to see Monsieur alive again."

"You are losing your reason, creature."

"Who was it that came out of the cellar last night and dropped here where you are now standing?" asked the dwarf.

"It was I."

"No, it was too pale and ugly a face ; no, it was somebody else's visage whom I never saw before," said the creature, trembling in the dark.

"It was I ! and it was fortunate for me that I came to myself in time to avoid the police, whom I saw come and inspect the house. You unfaithful dog, why did you leave me ?" hissed Satiani into the face of the dwarf.

"No, no ; call me not that ; I am not unfaithful. The noise you made coming out of the cellar attracted a passer-by's attention ; and I was too weak to carry you away, Monsieur. I hid when the police entered, and when I left, I ran to your office for safety, and waited until day. The face and body did not look like you at all."

"I have at last made the discovery," said Satiani, feeling his way to the door of the cellar.

"The smell nearly choked me when I went below. What was it?"

"A fume that will produce a catalepsy like death," answered the doctor, cautiously opening the door. "I tried it on myself last night. So strong was the fume that I felt myself going down into a deadly sleep before I could do more than ascend the stairs. My tongue cleaved stiffly to the roof of my mouth, I felt my jaws lock, and consciousness dwindled to nothing save a sense of terror that I had gone a step too far with myself, and a kind of joy that I had at last found that for which I had searched so long. You should have dragged me to the air; it was air that I was gasping for. You say my face was distorted?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Do not move from this door, and be ready to answer my call," said Satiani, descending into the cellar. "It remains now to be seen whether or not I can restore life from the effect of my discovery, or whether death must follow." The door closed cautiously behind him, and there was absolute silence.

The light shone again through the

cracks in the floor ; and soon the chemical fumes and muttering talk began. The dwarfish person lay down before the entrance to the cellar, and slept, as the hours of the first half of the night wore on.

The cellar into which Doctor Satiani had descended and now sat, was a perfect square of about thirteen feet, walled with unhewn stone, and pierced by three openings. On two opposite sides, extending about three feet from the floor, were shelves supporting bottles, jars and pots. Along the full length of another side stood a table confusedly laden with papers, small packages, and the candle that sent its rays through the floor of the upper room. Against the remaining wall stood a clean white couch, folded up. From the massive rafters of the ceiling hung dried vegetable growths, roots, herbs and barks ; and in the center descended an ancient iron candle rack. About the middle of the floor lay two heavy rings fastened by iron bands welded into the stone. Of the three narrow arches in the walls, the one beside the bottles and pots led to the stairs which

Satiani had descended ; the other two, in the walls corresponding to the front and back of the house, led into narrow passages that ended in arched stone chambers exactly alike. An iron door closed a passage that led from each of these—but whither Satiani did not know. He had not had time to explore. Once he had opened one of these, and found that indeed it led somewhere ; but it was too dark to see.

As it now approached the hour of eleven, he sat crouched before the table, babbling to himself and watching the steaming and bubbling in an iron pot that was perched on a tripod above the blue flame of a spirit lamp. Presently he arose, walked to the stairs, and made a hissing noise.

"Yes," answered the dwarf, who was on his feet in an instant.

"Go round the house and see if all is clear." Satiani returned to the table, extinguished the flame of the spirit lamp, and poured the contents of the iron pot into a broad vessel. He was nervous and looked frequently at his watch.

In a short time the dwarf returned, and

said : " I have walked around the house. It is so dark that I could not see my hand before my face. I listened every few minutes, and found everything quiet."

" Very well," answered Satiani. " Now bring the shovel to the head of the stairs." He looked at his watch once more, walked to the other side of the cellar, placed the couch in the center of the floor, blew out the candle, and ascended the stairs.

" Monsieur," said the dwarf, " where are you ? I have the shovel."

" Here at the outer door," answered Satiani ; and taking the shovel, he added, abusively. " Obey me implicitly—do you understand ? "

" Yes, Monsieur ; do I not always try to ob——"

" Never mind about what you always try to do. Keep your wits now, and don't be a coward. I hate a coward. If you hear a shot, or a cry, somebody has intercepted me, and has fallen. If you hear nothing, I shall be here in thirty minutes with a body. Lie in the front of the court ; and when I come, go ahead and open this door. We shall enter here. If anybody approaches the house, you will throw a

stone toward the thick brown monument. You know the direction. In case anything happens to me, you know my voice, and will come at once, for you do not want to live longer than I—do you, midget? Come."

They passed the door and stood in the outer night, which was even of a thicker darkness than that within.

"Hold! what is this?" asked Satiani, brushing against something, after they had advanced a short distance.

"The first bramble between the front door and the hedge, I think," answered the dwarf.

"True, I had forgotten it. You will lie here. I shall descend into the valley, and enter the cemetery from the north. Remember to throw the stone, if you hear anything about the house, as I told you." So saying, he left the dwarf, and started northward down the valley, the shovel on his back. After descending for a distance he turned west, and walked at right angles with the inclined plane. It was the difficult part of his task to know exactly how far westward to go, in order not to lose the general notion of his whereabouts with

respect to the situation of the grave. He counted his steps to the number that he had calculated would make about three hundred yards, and stopped to listen. Everything was as silent as the dead sleeping in their tombs. He turned and ascended directly toward the cemetery, which, if his calculations had been accurate, he would reach about the place of the newly-made grave. If a light could have been thrown into that face as it climbed the hill, there would have been seen a combination of expressions, including joy and expectation, tintured with the nervous uncertainty of a criminal and the strength of something almost superhuman. "Once," he was thinking, as he climbed, "I could have loved such a girl. I will be good enough to her, but she shall be mine. I will enjoy what was denied my youth ; and the murderers of Louis XVI. shall pay me in this generation. My science—if it fail not ! Madeline ! I will teach you to serve a soldier of a king," and then he called himself a fool. "Ten chances to one she is dead. Can I revive her ? I fear there was too much carbon. My science—my science !"

He encountered an obstacle—the fence—and climbing over, his hand met, as high as his own head, a smooth cold face. It was only a marble figure, as dead and silent as the earth beneath his feet; but it reminded him that he was still capable of fear. He was now in the cemetery; and, according to his calculation, not far from the grave. But which way to turn he knew not. He laid the shovel against the fence, in order not to lose the knowledge of where he had entered, for by feeling along the fence he might return to it at any time. Absolutely nothing could be seen except some gray spots that lay scattered through the darkness. To move with any speed was impossible; for the mounds and monuments were so profusely and irregularly crowded that he might be at any instant precipitated to the ground. Crawling on his hands and knees, never more than two steps from the fence, he felt for fresh earth. The green and the withered grass and weeds were wet with dew; the slabs that lay on the ground felt cold; the monuments and headstones continually intercepted his progress; and an occasional

human sentiment, that he was crawling amid the bones and decayed flesh of the dead, unconsciously caused him to halt, until he cursed himself for cowardice, and proceeded. There was that horrible stillness that made the sound of his own creeping and breathing roar in his ears like the crashing of billows on a stony beach. He thought a thousand eyes were fastened upon him and that he was being followed.

Earth—fresh earth ! His hand sank into it, with the other he could reach the fence, along which he walked to the shovel, counting his steps ; and in a few minutes he was back on the spot. After feeling the dimensions of the mound, he began to dig. Each shovelful of earth that fell to the ground roared like the discharge of a cannon between intervals of death-like silence in the still night. The dead awaked in their graves ; and some came and stood by his side ; yet he did not stop digging. A hand descended slowly upon him, and when it touched his shoulder, it broke and fell to the ground, he thought. The figure moved away, and the hand lay squirming like a snake amid

his digging. "Ugh! my thoughts," he muttered, half aloud, picking up the hand, but in his grasp there was nothing save earth. All around, those long dead turned in their graves; the later ones arose, sat on their tombs, and moved about; but none spoke or smiled. Some came and watched the digging from sockets that had no eyes, their bones rattling with every step. A few only had withered hearts, the rest had none. A mourning sound now issued from their lips and tongueless mouths. Satiani stopped, looked about, and the dead shrank back. He descended into the grave, and continued to dig. Presently he struck the box, which he pulled partially out of the hole, and, breaking off a board, felt the folds of a shroud. "Oh, oh, oh!" echoed the dead, coming in swarms. He laid the motionless form on the ground, and filled up the grave. Covered with a cold perspiration, and trembling in physical exhaustion, he bore his burden down the valley, across to the stone house, where at the entrance to the court he was met by the dwarfish person.

"Monsieur."

"Yes."

"I thought you were never coming. You have been long," cried the creature.

"No, not thirty minutes."

"Yes, you have been hours."

"Impossible," replied Satiani. There was a tremor in his voice. "What is that light yonder?" and he pointed toward the east.

"Monsieur, that is the dawn."

They hastened into the house and felt their way down into the cellar. Satiani laid the body on the couch and fell exhausted to the floor. The dwarf lighted a candle in the iron rack, and the glimmers fell upon two faces of deadly pallor.

"Monsieur!" cried the dwarf; but there was no reply.

VII.

IN the morning this conversation took place at the *Hôtel de Ville* :—

“Well, what did you see?” asked a stout man sitting behind a desk, in the lower office. He was the prefect of the police.

“It was too dark a night to see anything,” replied an individual, bespattered with mud, standing before the desk.

“Was the house quiet?”

“No. I lay all night beneath the grating of a cellar window, on the north side of the house. The window was nailed up from the inside, so that I could see absolutely nothing. Until almost midnight, I could hear faint murmuring sounds coming from somewhere beneath me; I think perhaps from the very room in the cellar beside which I lay. Once or twice I thought I heard talking on the ground floor; but being some feet below the

ground, I could not be sure. That the house is occupied is positive."

"Did you learn nothing more?" asked the prefect.

"Yes. As I said, until about the middle of the night I heard sounds in the cellar, and then for a long time everything was silent. I thought the person or persons must have gone to bed. There was nothing for me to gain by getting out of the hole in which I lay, so I determined to stay until daylight at least. It must have been several hours before there was so much as the sound of a breath. At length I heard footsteps mixed with some talk—from how many different persons I have no idea. It seemed that but one person spoke, but perhaps there were two. Presently I heard something thump upon the cellar floor, and a ragged voice cried, 'Monsieur'—that I heard clearly enough. It was perhaps half an hour before there was any other sound that I could hear. Then it seemed that two voices began to talk. Sometimes it sounded like only one; and again, later, *I thought I could hear a third.*"

"Do you think any of the voices could have been that of the man found on the

floor night before last?" asked the prefect.

"I could not hear them plainly enough. That man I think was dead, although, as I reported, he was still warm. The voice that I heard last night say 'Monsieur' would not probably belong to a man of that size. It was not clear, and seemed weak.—But let me finish about last night."

"Certainly, go on."

"I could see from the hole in which I lay that the day was breaking. Presently I heard scuffling sounds over the floor. They must have been pretty loud for that kind of noise else I could not have heard them. There was no conversation now, and I could only hear low monotonous sounds at about the interval of one's breathing. At length the talk began again, almost all coming from one voice; but I feel nearly certain that in this last conversation two persons were speaking; neither voice, however, sounded like the one that had called 'Monsieur.' Occasionally, I heard a noise as if some one were pounding or drumming on an iron door or wall; but this stopped soon; and that is all I

heard. I crawled out of the hole about daybreak."

"We are warranted now in breaking into the house ; and we shall do so to-night," said the prefect, dismissing the officer.

The news had come that there was fighting in Paris, that the People were bombarding the city from behind ramparts and barricades, and that the King remained in retreat at Saint Cloud. In vain had Marshal Marmont sent courier after courier asking the monarch to pacify the people. He did nothing. The Marshal went himself. The King listened patiently, then said calmly, "Then it is really a revolt?"

"No, sir," replied Marmont, "it is not a revolt, but a revolution!"

Then everything turned to confusion in the royal house.

The police officers of the town from which Joseph's company had marched were supposed to be supporters of the existing *régime* ; but in their hearts they were glad that the People were tearing the royal robes. Fifteen years had passed since Waterloo, and the desire for some

kind of excitement burned in nearly every Frenchman's breast. The five police who proceeded by separate paths to the old stone house at nine o'clock that night, were anxious, therefore, to satisfy a little of their aroused spirit by the adventure which the present expedition afforded. The night was favorable. Though somewhat misty, it was not as dark as the night before.

At half-past nine the officer in citizen's dress crept up the valley from the north, and crawling through the wild hedges, descended into the hole of the cellar window. By ten o'clock the other officers lay behind thick shrubbery on every side of the house. It was their plan that no one should be permitted to leave the house, and the entrance of no one was to be impeded. At a low whistle from the officer in the hole, the house was to be entered at every door simultaneously. The signal was to be given sufficiently long after the sound of talking had ceased in the cellar to allow the inmates to retire and fall asleep. So far as the officers lying about the house knew, this might be at any minute. Consuming with im-

patience, they lay several hours; but no signal came, and no one tried to enter the house or to leave it. Probably the situation was such that the officer in the hole thought it unwise to make the attack with so small a force; but they had made no provisions for retreat, and it was their understanding that the house *was* to be entered. Could it be that their fellow by the cellar window had been discovered and rendered helpless? At a little after two o'clock one of the officers crept to the hole and whispered his name.

"Yes, who is it?"

The first speaker crawled into the hole, and said, "Why don't you give the signal?"

"The cellar is silent."

"Then it is time."

"Don't be hasty."

"How long has it been since the talking stopped?"

"I have not heard a sound all the evening."

"Then I think we should all enter at one door, for perhaps we are expected, and can accomplish most by the kind of entrance that will make the least possible

noise, which would be to open but one door instead of all."

After this conversation, which was with mouth to ear, they separated.

One officer was placed before the house to watch the front and side, while the other four collected at the back door. One began at once to work quietly with a bunch of keys. All knew the dimensions of the house, upon which knowledge they had now to depend, for it was too dark to see much. Disguised as peasants or drovers, at one time or another during the day they had studied the house from a distance. Presently, the lock yielded to a key, and in their stocking-feet they entered. There was that dead silence that makes one nervous and feel that somebody is in hiding. They proceeded into the next room; while one remained, flashing his lantern about, but saw nothing save a coat, some old cooking utensils, and a low wooden bench on which lay a few dry crusts of bread. The next room was absolutely barren, and so the next. The officers were as noiseless as the night, and as cunning as any of their kind. After everything had been searched and

nothing found, they turned toward the cellar. The door was easily opened, and three descended; but the door at the bottom of the stairs, which was the last between them and the cellar, was made of iron and baffled every key. Thrice the officer operating with the keys made some noise; and they decided that the door must be broken open. From within there came no sound except the echo of their pounding. The officer who had been stationed outside and the one at the head of the stairs now also descended. Presently the door sprang open, and in an instant all were within. But besides them no one was there.

The room was as already described; except that on the couch, which still stood in the center of the floor, were a few stains of blood. The two narrow arches at once attracted the officers. Two entered one, and two the other, while one remained within the square room. Nothing was found in either, except in the front arched chamber lay a small heap of light ashes, from the edge of which protruded a piece of white satin, unburned. One of the officers was working at the cross bar which

closed the iron door that led from this room, while two others held their lanterns close by. At length the door turned on its hinges, and from within came a puff of suffocating odor that cut their throats like glass; and for an instant their lanterns shone on the dead figure of the dwarf, crouched close to the wall.

* * * * *

A week passed. Joseph had returned home. He had not had the heart to stay in Paris and take enough interest in anything to fight for it. Irène had found him almost immediately in a hazardous barricade between the Pont des Arts and the Louvre. She did not return with him, but remained with a distant relative in Paris. The world was dark to young Joseph. His bravery did not deprive his nature of a pure emotion; and though for his age he had been much among men, he had not become worldly in the sense that he could outwit his purer feelings by dissipation, temporary attachments, or any other device in that category, to which many another would have appealed to suppress his sorrow.

Tall, slender, of dark complexion, with large deep eyes that carried the wistful look of a child mingled with the unconscious strength and power of youth, he was that type of man that women instinctively love. Had not it been for the extreme stereotyped manner in which he dealt with the people about him, he might have been a hero to more than one heart. If he ever showed any side of his nature, it was the majestic that appeared, and that resented pressing familiarity. But before one person he had been unarmed of all save the emotional youth. His fellows and Madeline's friends had thought him proud, but he cared not; it was sufficient for him that one person had not thought him so. He and Madeline were soon to have been married. Their approach to this great event had opened a world of thought that neither dreamed existed within them. But now a great shadow had settled over the brightness of the vista that had lain before him. His taciturnity was of the kind that carried with it a restless inner grief that made those who loved him fearful of his actions.

One morning his father said : " Joseph, you must try to take interest in something ; you must try to forget."

He made no reply. Though grateful for his father's good intentions, the expression in his face showed that he knew how little his grief was understood. He had never thought it possible for devotion to exist to the extent that this sad event had made manifest : he had thought that Madeline could get on alone easily enough without him. And to think that it had been for him ; and that his lack of appreciation of its intensity had put it aside forever ! He understood now that Madeline's love had been greater than he had thought ; and that she had silently restrained herself, hoping to delight him with her boundless devotion in the long years that she imagined lay before them. Morning after morning he walked to the cemetery, sometimes with flowers, and often with a book from which in the days gone by he was wont to read to her. Thus, like many another in the veering world, he worshiped where there was naught save dumb earth.

" Don't go thither this morning," begged

his mother, kissing him. "Will you not—please—for me?"

For her sake he did not go; but wandered down side streets toward Madeline's home.

It was a summer morning as balmy as nature affords; the warm sun gently smote the new-born flowers, the growing foliage of the trees thickened the shadows that wavered on the grass, and the birds and bees went gaily about the season's business. Beside the cottage, in the garden, sat Monsieur Le Blanc, reading a newspaper; and Madame, who was somewhat recovered, went quietly about her household affairs. The house was gloomy within; it was no more the abode of enchantment and delight; but like a sea-beach in winter, cold, dark, and linked with memories. Joseph did not enter, but sat on a garden-seat near Monsieur.

"My lad, how are you?"

"Well, I thank you."

"Have you heard from Irène?"

"No."

"When do you think she will come back?"

"I do not think she will come back at

all. She will like Paris ; and the last thing she said as I asked her to return with me, was, ' No ; now that Madeline is gone, I have no desire.' "

" She loved our child," said Monsieur.

" Yes, she must have. As I turned away she broke into tears. It was the only time I ever saw Irène cry."

Presently Madame came from the house, and sat with Joseph. She looked pale, and had fallen away since their great sorrow. Her attachment to the young man was not weak ; and it grew stronger now that she saw how deep his affection really was.

There was not much conversation. Of what should they talk ? It was as if the flowers had gone from the earth, the light from the sun, the soul from the body. Monsieur was himself again more than either of the others. For them the great veil had not yet lifted. Their words had no deep meaning, but each understood the other's sorrow, and thus what was lacking in verbal intercourse was supplied by a communication more subtle than that of language.

" Joseph," said the mother, " will you come often ? "

"Yes, Madame."

"There isn't much here to interest you now," said Monsieur ; "but it will do us good to have you come. Sooner or later you will forget the past, my lad ; life will open to you again ; and other attractions will solicit and win your attention. But come to see us often, since for us the sun is already in the western sky, and it is backwards that we look."

It had been a long time since he had spoken with such kindness ; and when he had finished, he arose and kissed the pale face of his wife ; but he saw not her pallor, remembering only how beautiful she had been when first he had pressed his lips to her cheek, long years ago.

For a time no one spoke, Monsieur was again reading his paper, and Madame and Joseph were looking at the flowers in the beds near by.

"Here is some strange news," said the father, to whom the other two turned. "Some secret discoveries were made about a week ago ; and the police, hoping to make more, have kept the matter to themselves until now."

He read the account of the finding of

the body that disappeared from the stone house when the police had returned ; also the account of the discovery of the occupied cellar, and of the finding of the dead dwarf, of whom a vivid description was given. Among the last paragraphs of the article was the following: "In the front arched chamber of the cellar was found a heap of ashes from the corner of which protruded a piece of white satin."

Madame buried her face in her hands, and began to cry.

"What is it?" asked Monsieur.

He received the same answer that she had made recently so often, to similar questions, when she had burst into tears by being suddenly reminded of her departed child. "I was only thinking of Madeline," she said. "Her shroud was white."

VIII.

THE next evening, when the night had covered the town in darkness, and when each person was within his own precinct, Monsieur and Madame Le Blanc sat quietly in their abode, in the second room from the front. The side door, which was seldom closed in summer, save when all had retired, stood open as usual ; and through it the lamp on the table sent its rays out into the garden.

"It is a beautiful night," said Monsieur, taking a seat in the doorway, as the moon began to brighten, darkening the shadows of the trees that oscillated in the evening breeze. It was as quiet as the country ; only now and then some distant vehicle or a coach arriving at the *Hôtel de Ville* broke the absolute stillness. Sorrow had again joined their hearts ; and now they sat quietly together and alone, as they had done when they were first married, before

Madeline had come into the world. That was twenty years ago; and now, for the first time, they retraced the past step by step. It was like the opening and closing of a volume, each chapter having its joys and sorrow and commonplaces. In all these years their greatest happiness had been the little girl that grew up between them, giving them a common interest, and thus binding them more closely together.

"What hour does it strike?" asked Madame, as a bell began to toll.

"Nine."

At that instant, light but rapid footsteps were heard running on the sidewalk toward the house. The garden gate sprang open, and what looked like the figure of a woman rushed impetuously into the yard.

"Who is this?" said Monsieur, rising in the doorway, and looking toward the gate.

"Indeed, I know not," replied Madame, also rising.

The figure came running, and in an instant stood before them, in the light shining through the door.

"You see it is I," she said, breathless.

"Irène!" exclaimed Monsieur.

"Yes, only I, no other."

"Why have you run so? you gasp for breath," said Madame, throwing her arms about her neck.

"You will also gasp in a moment. I will tell you. Let me sit down."

"Yes, come here, my child," said Madame, leading her into the house, and kissing her again and again.

Irène sat down. "Give me a drink of water," she said, nervously trying to fasten up her hair, which had fallen over her shoulders.

"You are not well," said Monsieur, as the water was being brought. "You look so pale, and stare so. What has befallen you?"

"No, no, I am not sick; I will tell you when I get some water and my breath."

"Here is water, my child."

Irène took a few swallows between breaths, and holding her sides, said, "Now sit down, both of you; I have something to say."

Monsieur and Madame obeyed, looking at each other and then at the breathless, pale, nervous and staring Irène. She was greatly changed.

"I have come all the way from Paris today," she began. "I ran here from the *Hôtel de Ville* where the coach stopped. It seemed as though I could not get here soon enough. I should have flown, if I had had wings. You know I have been living with my aunt since I went away? She is not really my aunt, but then——"

"Yes, we know," said Monsieur, eagerly. "Joseph told us where you were staying."

"Ah! Joseph, yes—where is he?" she asked, staring about, as if she thought that he was in hiding.

"At home, of course," answered Monsieur. "What were you going to tell us?"

Tossing her hat to the table, opening her dress at the throat and beginning to fan herself, she ignored Monsieur's question, and said: "Joseph—he will be glad to see me and hear what I will say. Could he be sent for?"

A pause.

"You can see him to-morrow."

"Yes, to-morrow; but he should know to-night. If he died meanwhile, he would remain in ignorance."

"What are you talking about, child?"

said Madame Le Blanc, trying to caress her.

"No, you must not disturb me until I have finished. I hardly know how to begin. I do not want to blurt it out. You must not take it strangely."

"Well, well!" commanded Monsieur, anxiously.

"Where did I leave off?"

"About living with your aunt."

"Yes—I told you with my aunt. She was very good to me; but that is not what I have come to tell you. I thought I should stay with her; but I had to come here first; we shall all go back to Paris to-morrow—Monsieur, Joseph and I—to-morrow, by the first stage." She paused again as if trying to collect her thoughts. Monsieur arose and placed his hand on her forehead.

"No, no, I have no fever. Now listen. Take your seat, Monsieur. I will just tell as it happened; I can think of no other way. Last night as we sat down to supper, my aunt asked her husband to take us for a walk later in the evening. 'Very well,' he said; and after we had finished our meal, the three of us left the house,

and went toward the Rue Saint Honoré. The streets were crowded with people. The pavements were still torn up from the dreadful war. I saw the barricades where men killed one another. I had never dreamed of such things in my life. My aunt said that everybody seemed happy ; but I thought they seemed frightened. My uncle tried to explain things to me about the king and the government that I could not understand. I walked between them. We turned into the Rue Saint Honoré and stopped at the great market and drank from the fountain. There were so many people that I had now to walk in front. The Rue Saint Honoré was brilliantly lighted—almost like day ;—for the first time, my uncle said, since the soldiers had broken all the street lamps. I saw many faces. I never dreamed there were so many people on earth—thousands ! I felt bewildered. Lights, rolling carriages, brilliant windows, horses, people—it was like a dream. Now I come to the point ! [She grew almost white in the face, arose, and walked to the center of the room.] As I stand here now, my aunt and uncle behind me, so we

walked along. Presently there was a clear place on the sidewalk ; and from the crowd going before us—God forbid me from saying falsely !—what do you think I saw emerge ? [She stares sharply into their faces.] Monsieur, Madame ! what do you think I saw ?”

“ Irène !” cried Monsieur, “ what does all this mean ? What are you talking about ?”

“ Child,” said Madame, going toward her, frightened at her actions.

“ No, no, sit down. You think I am beside myself. But listen ! As sure as it is now night, and we are three, I saw emerge from the darkness of that crowd, and look into my very eyes—Madeline ! Madeline !”

Madame fell to weeping bitterly ; and Monsieur, leading Irène to a seat, said : “ You would do better not to excite yourself further. It was some one else you saw. Your imagination deceived you. We shall not talk of these things again.”

“ I thought you would say something like that, Monsieur. I thought you would say that I was dreaming, and that I had lost my mind. Do you think that I do

not know Madeline when I see her? Did not we grow up together? Was not I her first playmate and her last? Do you think that I know not those eyes the like of which look from no other face? Will the——"

"Why didn't you stop her?" interrupted the father, hoping to bring Irène to her senses.

"I could not; I fell back into my uncle's arms; my throat was choked and I could not speak. It was too much for me thus to see the dead walk the streets again."

It was fully an hour before Monsieur succeeded in pacifying Irène; and then only after she had extracted from him a promise to return with her to Paris in the morning. At eleven o'clock all retired; but for some time only Irène, overcome by physical exhaustion, slept. Monsieur Le Blanc knew human nature well enough to understand that such certainty and persistence are not often born of illusion. "The body can be disinterred," he thought, "that would satisfy all doubt." But he could not do it himself. He did not wish to look again upon the icy face of the

dead ; he wished to remember his child only as she had been in life. And then he thought himself foolish for the ray of hope he was beginning to entertain that she might still be among the living ; for had not he seen her laid away in the tomb ! and with these thoughts he fell asleep.

* * * * *

At ten o'clock the next day Monsieur Le Blanc sat again in his garden ; Madame was about her work as usual ; and Irène was busying herself in Madeline's old room in the manner that one does who is expecting a guest. She had succeeded in having Joseph sent for ; she had repeated her story ; and now all were awaiting the return of the latter and the old sexton, who had gone to exhume the remains. When Monsieur and Joseph had protested, she said, " Then I'll go myself and dig." There was nothing to do but obey. It was to be done without attracting any attention ; and now at ten o'clock, Joseph's return was awaited.

At half-past ten, the father, going into the house, was met at the door by Madame, who said, " It is time Joseph had come back."

"Yes, it is time ; but in case he found her, he said he would go directly home and come this evening. Perhaps he has not restrained himself, has looked at her, and now—well, who knows what effect that might not have upon him. But he promised me that only the sexton should look."

There was an expression in his countenance, as he spoke these words, as if he were becoming wearied of Irène's hallucinations. He walked into the room facing the front of the garden and beckoned his wife to follow. When they were within he closed the door and said : "Do you know what I think ? Does not all this seem strange to you ?"

"It is strange, indeed," answered the wife.

"I believe that Irène has lost her reason."

"No !"

"Yes, I believe it. Now what are we to do with her ?"

"But she says that she will be satisfied if Madeline is still in her grave." There was a short pause, during which the wife walked to the window. "What—who is

this that runs so madly?" she cried, looking into the garden. "Joseph comes hastening down the path. See, we mistake!"

"In an instant he was in the house, calling, "Monsieur! Madame!"

"Here, here," they answered, coming to him, followed by Irène from the side room.

"She is gone!" cried Joseph; and for a moment the four stood like stone, staring into one another's faces. Madame sank into a chair, Monsieur and Joseph were speechless, Irène alone was self-possessed.

"*En route tout le monde pour Paris,*" she called, with joy in her voice. "Madeline still lives!"

* * * * *

At nightfall while the strange news was being told under every roof in the town, Monsieur Le Blanc, Joseph and Irène were approaching Paris.

"See the lights," cried the girl, as their eyes discerned the first glimmer of the city. "What is that humming noise?"

"That is everything—wagons, voices,

workshops,—in short, the city breathing," answered Joseph.

Monsieur had not spoken for some time, and seemed occupied with his own thoughts. Presently he said: "Listen to me a moment. What does that piece of white satin found in the cellar of the old stone house have to do with Madeline?"

"Her shroud was white," answered Joseph.

"What satin—what cellar—what stone house—what do you talk about?" inquired Irène.

Monsieur then related to her the discoveries of the police at the old stone house, which had been made while she was in Paris, of the finding of the body that had disappeared, of the heap of ashes, the piece of white satin, and of the dead dwarf.

"I saw this very small, ugly person in Doctor Satiani's office the morning of the day that we thought Madeline died," said Irène.

"In Satiani's office!" echoed Monsieur.

"Yes."

"I have not seen Satiani since my return," observed Joseph.

"No, nor I," said Monsieur.

The *diligence* had rolled along through Fontainebleau, across the Seine at Melan, through Gros-bois (where many a noble has found refuge in stormy times at the metropolis) over the Marne by way of the ancient bridge at Charenton, and entered Paris from the southeast. The night had already come to its fullness, and it was very dark.

IX.

THEY lodged in a *pension* in the Rue Mouffetard, a few squares south of the Seine, near the Halle aux Vins. The place had been recommended by the *cocher* who brought them from Gros-bois. When they arrived it was much too dark to tell what it looked like. Irène, gathering a handful of newspapers as she passed through the hall, retired to her room at once. Monsieur and Joseph sat up to discuss plans of procedure.

The two rooms they occupied were on the third story facing the north, and commanded a magnificent view of Paris for many squares beyond the Seine. Although it was late, many lights besides the rows of street lamps still dotted the darkness of the night. Beyond the river the lights grew smaller, but increased immensely in numbers. There seemed to be an uncommon activity for the late.

ness of the hour ; but that was easily accounted for ; since the public nervousness before and after short and decisive revolutions always manifested itself in crowded streets of staring people who wandered everywhere and nowhere.

"What is to be done now that we are here ? " said Monsieur Le Blanc, looking out the open window at Paris in her gala evening dress, that he had not seen for years—but once since he had taken away his young wife, and that was when Madeline was a little girl. "Does she now flaunt somewhere amid this invisible throng ? " the father was asking himself.

"Don't you think we ought to notify the police ? " asked Joseph, leaning on his elbows at the table.

"We shall go to the prefecture to-morrow—and then ? " said the father, looking at a light a little west of Notre Dame that was growing larger with the lapse of every moment.

Joseph made no reply, but sat in deep meditation.

Presently Monsieur said : "Come here. What do you think this can be ? "

"Fire—perhaps revolution ! Listen—

hear the clamor. Could it be Notre Dame "

"No, that is Notre Dame just to the east. It must be near the Rue St. Honoré or the Rue St. Denis, if I remember the streets rightly."

They stood for some time and watched the magnificent flames in the black background of the night.

"Are you making plans there at the window?" said Irène, thrusting her head from behind the door that led into her room.

Both men turned.

"See what I have found—here," and she handed Monsieur a newspaper—the morning edition of the *Moniteur*—marked by the pressure of her finger in a lower corner of the page. "Read, Monsieur, read aloud!" she demanded, triumphantly.

Monsieur Le Blanc took the paper, and read :—

"The body of the unknown person who led for a few hours with such brilliancy the straggling forces of the Swiss and Royal guards at the Louvre last Thursday was buried today. He was seen to fall

near the statue of Henry IV., and from that moment the vicinity of the Louvre and the Palais Royal were wrenched from the tyrant's forces. The body has lain in the morgue since Friday. The only document of identity found upon his person was an empty envelope bearing the name Doctor Satiani, and addressed to "The southwest corner of the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue du Roule."'"

The first thing that Monsieur said, laying aside the paper, was, "Then it was to fight for the King that Doctor Satiani came to Paris. Irène, again I say, it was a vision that you saw on Rue—Rue——"

"St. Honoré," answered the girl, "perhaps in the very vicinity of the address on the envelope. Where is the Rue du Roule?"

"I do not know," replied Monsieur.

"Nor I," said Joseph.

"Well, good night again," said Irène. "In the morning we shall find out, and go thither."

They retired for the night; and owing to the fatigue of the day's journey, slept soundly.

Irène was awake with the first murmurs

of the city's business ; and pounding stoutly on the door between the rooms, she aroused Monsieur and Joseph, who arose immediately. They had not the enthusiasm in this present business that animated Irène. Though neither expressed himself, both believed that she was laboring under delusions not far from unsoundness. It had been her persistence that brought them to Paris ; and despite their melancholy, her hope spurred them on.

After they had breakfasted she said : "Now for the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue du Roule. Which way ?"

Monsieur made some inquiries and they started out, passed the Halle aux Vins, crossed the Seine at the Isle St. Louis by way of the Pont de la Tournelle and the Pont Marie, thence north-westward until they reached the Rue St. Denis at the Marche des Innocentes, where everything was astir.

"Here," said Irène, pointing to the great Marché, "is where my uncle, aunt and I stopped to drink at the fountain before we passed down this way," and she pointed into the Rue St. Honore. "This

way—down this way is where we saw her," she continued, almost dragging Monsieur along.

Joseph asked a man who was standing near where the Rue du Roule was.

"It's all out," said the stranger, "and they are already clearing it away."

The men stared at each other.

"I do not know what you are talking about," said Joseph. "Can you tell me where the Rue du Roule is?"

"Certainly. Go but a short distance," replied the stranger, pointing westward into the Rue St. Honoré. "I thought you were speaking of last night's fire."

Irène, nervous with excitement, walked before. She stared into every face that passed, and often looked around and across the street.

Monsieur shook his head.

As they proceeded the crowd became denser; until, a short distance ahead, it became a great mass hovering around the corner of a street.

"See! that is the Rue du Roule, where the crowd is. The name is on the building this way," cried Irène.

They approached the southward cor-

ner, which was surrounded by a mass of people, and, working their way forward, at length they stood before heaps of ruins and ashes, which were being cleared away by some workmen.

"It was in this vicinity that I saw her, and this is the address on the envelope," said Irène, looking into Monsieur's face, and taking hold of his hand.

"When was this fire?" asked Joseph of one next to him.

"Last night," replied the stranger.

In silence, they watched the workmen for a while, when Monsieur turned and said, "What fools we are for wandering here in Paris!"

"No, no," begged Irène, gripping his hand, "we will hunt elsewhere."

"Ha, ha! *Ave Maria!*" cried a laborer, not far from where they were standing, as he drew from the wet ashes and held high into the air a pearl rosary bearing a golden crucifix. And not far away lay some fragments of charred bones.

Irène sank into Monsieur's arms and was borne away from among the wondering crowd; Joseph relapsed again into silence; and the father began imme-

diately to busy himself with the prefecture of police.

On the second day after, they started home, arriving at their native town at night-fall. Monsieur wandered alone to the cottage beside the garden, where there awaited one to hear what he had to tell ; and Joseph walked home with Irène. He had bought the rosary of the laborer, and as he was about to turn away to his own abode, he gave it to her, saying : " You keep it. It can remind me of nothing save what I must forget in order to live."

" I feel sorry for you, Joseph," whispered Irène, " I did what I could."

" Yes," replied the young soldier, and out of the sorrow and gratitude of his heart, he bowed and kissed her hand.

* * * * *

Two years after, Joseph and Irène were married.

* * * * *

In 1870, forty years later, when nearly all the persons who figured in this brief

episode had died, and when the old stone house had sunk further into the earth and become to several generations of children the abode of the evil spirit, and when fragments of the foregoing narrative had become a tradition, and time had spread oblivion over what once seethed and throbbed with human interest, there came to the town two women : one, small, slender and white with age ; the other, younger, but already passed the meridian of life. They had in their possession a deed to the old stone house ; into which, after some repairs were made, they moved. They turned a deaf ear to every admonition that the house had been many years ago the abode of sinister deeds, and also baffled every effort of inquisitive persons to disclose their identity.

If anybody of the town ever saw squarely into the face of the older of these two women, it was never known ; for with such studied care did she avoid the gaze of any passer-by that nothing save her small dark figure and snow-white hair were ever seen. Occasionally, she wandered in the cemetery across the way ; but beyond this her steps rarely went further than the hedge that

surrounded the court of the old stone house. In 1887 she died, and was interred in the ancient cemetery, near a tomb bearing the name of "Joseph Collot." A few weeks later, the younger woman disappeared, and was never again seen.

There was enough difference in the ages of these two women to be mother and daughter ; for the older at the time of her death must have been not far from eighty, and the younger perhaps about sixty. In appearance they were not unlike ; except that the eyes of the younger woman were horribly dissimilar, one being blue and the other black. And it was of her that the townspeople asked M. de Corbière such questions as " Is not this, indeed, the daughter of the famous doctor ? " " Has not she the eyes of Satiani ? "