

"It is our custom in England," Cuthbert said, "that a new boy always pays his footing; so gentlemen, I hope you will sup with me this evening. I am a stranger and know nothing of Paris; at any rate nothing of your quarter, so I must ask two of you to act as a committee with me, and to tell me where we can get a good supper and enjoy ourselves."

From that time Cuthbert had been one of the brotherhood and shared in all their amusements, entering into them with a gayety and heartiness that charmed them and caused them to exclaim frequently that he could not be an Englishman, and that his accent was but assumed. Arnold Dampierre had been admitted two months later. He had, the master said, distinct talent, but his work was fitful and uncertain. Some days he would work earnestly and steadily, but more often he was listless and indolent, exciting M. Goudé's wrath to fever heat.

Among the students he was by no means a favorite. He did not seem to understand a joke, and several times blazed out so passionately that Cuthbert had much trouble in soothing matters down, explaining to the angry students that Dampierre was of hot southern blood and that his words must not be taken seriously. Americans, he said, especially in the south, had no idea of what the English call chaff, and he begged them as a personal favor to abstain from joking with him, or it would only lead to trouble in the studio.

CHAPTER V.

THERE was no more talk after the master had given the order for work. Most of the easels were shifted round and fresh positions taken up, then there was a little pause.

"She is late," M. Goudé said, with an impatient stamp of the foot. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the door opened and a girl entered.

"Good-morning, messieurs," and she made a sweeping courtesy.

"You are five minutes late, Minette."

"Ma foi, master, what would you have with the Prussians in sight and all Paris in the streets—five minutes mean neither here nor there. I expected praise for having come at all."

"There, there," the artist said hastily, "run into your closet and change, we are all waiting."

She walked across the room to a door in the corner, with an expression of careless defiance in her face, and reappeared in five minutes in the dress of a Mexican peasant girl attired for a fête. The dress suited her admirably. She was rather above the middle height, her figure lithe and supple with exceptionally graceful curves; her head was admirably poised on her neck. Her hair was very dark, and her complexion Spanish rather than French. Her father was from Marseilles and her mother from Arles.

Minette was considered the best model in Paris, and M. Goudé had the merit of having discovered her. Three years before, when passing through a street inhabited by the poorer class of workmen in Montmartre, he had seen her leaning carelessly against a doorway. He was struck with the easy grace of her pose. He walked up the street and then returned. As he did so he saw her spring out and encounter an older woman, and at once enter upon a fierce altercation with her. It was carried on with all the accompaniment of southern gesture and ceased as suddenly as it began; the girl, with a gesture of scorn and contempt turning and walking back to the post she had left with a mien as haughty as that of a Queen dismissing an insolent subject.

"That girl would be worth a fortune as a model," the artist muttered. "I must secure her; her action and gesture are superb." He walked up to her, lifted his broad hat, and said "Mademoiselle, I am an artist. My name is Goudé. I have an academy for painting, and I need a model. The work is not hard, it is but to sit or stand for two or three hours of a morning, and the remuneration I should offer would be five francs a day for this. Have I your permission to speak to your parents?"

There was an angry glitter in her eye—a change in her pose

that, slight as it was, reminded the artist of a cat about to spring.

"A model for a painter, monsieur? Is it that you dare to propose that I shall sit without clothes to be stared at by young men? I have heard of such things. Is this what monsieur wishes?"

"Not at all, not at all," Mr. Goudé said hastily. "Mademoiselle would always be dressed. She would be sometimes a Roman lady, sometimes a Spanish peasant, a Moorish girl, a Breton, or other maiden. You would always be free to refuse any costume that you considered unsuitable."

Her expression changed again. "If that is all, I might do it," she said; "it is an easy way of earning money. How often would you want me?"

"I should say three times a week, and on the other three days you would have no difficulty in obtaining similar work among artists of my own acquaintance. Here is my card and address."

The girl took it carelessly.

"I will speak to my father about it this evening when he comes home from work. You are quite sure that I shall not have to undress at all?"

"I have assured mademoiselle already that nothing of the sort will be required of her. There are models indeed who pose for figure, but these are a class apart, and I can assure mademoiselle that her feelings of delicacy will be absolutely respected."

The next day Minette Dufaure appeared at the studio and had ever since sat for all the female figures required. The air of disdain and defiance she had first shown soon passed away, and she entered with zest and eagerness upon her work. She delighted in being prettily and becomingly dressed. She listened intelligently to the master's descriptions of the characters that she was to assume, and delighted him with the readiness with which she assumed suitable poses, and the steadiness with which she maintained them.

There was nothing of the stiffness of the model in her atti-

tudes. They had the charm of being unstudied and natural, and whether as a bacchanal, a peasant girl, or a Gaulish amazon, she looked the part equally well; her face was singularly mobile, and although this was an inferior consideration to the master, she never failed to represent the expression appropriate to the character she assumed.

Her reputation was soon established among the artists who occasionally dropped into Goudé's studio, and her spare time was fully occupied, and that at much higher rates of pay than those she earned with him. After the first two or three months she came but twice a week there, as that amply sufficed for the needs of the studio. On his telling her that he should no longer require her to come three times a week, as his pupils had other things to learn besides drawing the female figure, the master said—

"I must pay you higher in future, Minette. I know that my friends are paying you five francs an hour."

"A bargain is a bargain," she said. "You came to me first, and but for you I should never have earned a penny. Now we have moved into a better street and have comfortable lodgings. We have everything we want, and I am laying by money fast. You have always treated me well, and I like you though your temper is even worse than my father's. I shall keep to my agreement as long as you keep to yours, and if you do not I shall not come here at all."

With the students Minette was a great favorite. In the pause of five minutes every half-hour to allow her to change her position, she chatted and laughed with them with the frankest good temper, more than holding her own in the sallies of chaff. When they occasionally made excursions in a body into the country to sketch and paint, she was always of the party, going in the capacity of comrade instead of that of a model, contributing a full share to the lunch basket, but ready to pose as a peasant girl with a fagot on her head, a gleaner, or a country-woman with a baby on her lap, according to the scene and requirements. It was a matter of course that Minette should be present at every supper party or little fête

among the students, always being placed in the seat of honor at the head of the table, and joining in all the fun of those merry reunions. For a time she treated all alike as comrades, and accepted no compliments save those so extravagant as to provoke general laughter. Gradually, however, it came to be understood among the students that Minette made an exception in the case of Arnold Dampierre, and that on occasions when they happened to break up in pairs he was generally by her side.

"One never can tell what women will do," René Caillard said one evening, when five or six of them were sitting smoking together. "Now, Minette might have the pick of us."

"No, no, René," one of the others protested, "most of us are suited already."

"Well, several of us, then. I am at present unattached, and so are André, and Pierre, and Jean; so is Cuthbert. Now, putting us aside, no woman in her senses could hesitate between the Englishman and Dampierre. He has a better figure, is stronger and better looking. He is cleverer, and is as good-tempered as the American is bad; and yet she takes a fancy for Dampierre, and treats all the rest of us, including the Englishman, as if we were boys."

"I fancy women like deference," Pierre Leroux said. "She is a good comrade with us all, she laughs and jokes with us as if she were one of ourselves. Now the American very seldom laughs and never jokes. He treats her as if she were a duchess and takes her altogether seriously. I believe he would be capable of marrying her."

The others all burst into a laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" Cuthbert asked, as he entered the room at the moment.

"Pierre is just saying that he thinks the American is capable of marrying Minette."

"I hope not," Cuthbert said, more seriously than he generally spoke. "Minette is altogether charming as she is. She is full of fun and life; she is clever and sparkling. There is no doubt that in her style she is very pretty. As to her grace

it needs no saying. I think she is an honest good girl, but the idea of marrying her would frighten me. We see the surface and it is a very pleasant one, but it is only the surface. Do you think a woman could look as she does in some of her poses and not feel it? We have never seen her in a passion, but if she got into one, it would be terrible. When she flashes out sometimes it is like a tongue of flame from a slumbering volcano. You would feel that there might be an eruption that would sweep everything before it. As you know, I gave up painting her after the first two months, but I sketch her in every pose; not always her whole figure, but her face, and keep the sketches for use some day. I was looking through them only yesterday and I said to myself, 'this woman is capable of anything.' She might be a Joan of Arc, or Lucrezia Borghia. She is a puzzle to me altogether. Put her in a quiet, happy home and she might turn out one of the best of women. Let her be thrown into turbulent times and she might become a demon of mischief. At present she is altogether undeveloped. She is two and twenty in years, but a child, or rather a piquant, amusing young girl, in manner, and perhaps in disposition. She is an enigma of which I should be sorry to have to undertake the solution. As she seems, I like her immensely, but when I try to fathom what she really is, she frightens me."

The others laughed.

"Poor little Minette," Pierre Leroux said. "You are too hard upon her altogether, Cuthbert. The girl is a born actress and would make her fortune on the stage. She can represent, by the instinct of art, passions which she has never felt. She can be simple and majestic, a laughing girl and a furious woman, a Christian martyr and a bacchanal, simply because she has mobile features, intelligence, sentiment, emotion, and a woman's instinct, that is all. She is a jolly little girl, and the only fault I have to find with her is that she has the bad taste to prefer that gloomy American to me."

"Well, I hope you are right, Pierre, though I hold my own opinion unchanged—at any rate I sincerely trust that Dampierre will not make a fool of himself with her. You men do

not like him because you don't understand him. You are gay and light-hearted, you take life as it comes. You form connections easily and lightly, and break them off again a few months later just as easily. Dampierre takes life earnestly. He is indolent, but that is a matter of race and blood. He would not do a dishonorable action to save his life. I believe he is the heir to a large fortune, and he can, therefore, afford to work at his art in a dilettante sort of manner, and not like us poor beggars who look forward to earning our livelihood by it. He is passionate, I grant, but that is the effect of his bringing up on a plantation in Louisiana, surrounded by his father's slaves, for though they are now free by law the nature of the negro is unchanged, and servitude is his natural position. The little white master is treated like a god, every whim is humored, and there being no restraining hand upon him, it would be strange if he did not become hasty and somewhat arrogant.

"Not that there is any arrogance about Dampierre—he is unaffected and simple in his tastes, except in the matter of his lodgings. I question if there is one of us who spends less than he does, but he no more understands you than you understand him; he takes your badinage seriously, and cannot understand that it is harmless fun. However, he is better in that respect than when he first came over, and in time, no doubt, his touchiness will die out. God forbid that he should ever spoil his life by such a hideous mistake as marrying Minette. Except on the principle that people are always attracted by their opposites, I can't account for his infatuation for this girl, or for her taking up with him. He has never alluded to the subject to me. I don't know that her name has ever been mentioned between us. I agree with you that I think he is in earnest about her, but my conclusion is certainly not formed on anything he has ever said himself. I have often thought that a good deal of his irritability arises from his annoyance at her fun and easy way with us all. He never comes to any of our little meetings. If he is really in earnest about her, I can understand that it would be a terrible annoyance to him to see her taking a lead in such meetings and associating so freely with your, let us say,

temporary wives. I have seen him on some of our sketching excursions walk away, unable to contain his anger when you have all been laughing and joking with her."

"I consider that to be an insolence," René said hotly.

"No, no, René, imagine yourself five years older, and making a fortune rapidly by your art, in love with some girl whom you hope to make your wife. I ask you whether you would like to see her laughing and chatting *en bonne camarade* with a lot of wild young students. Still less, if you can imagine such a thing, joining heart and soul in the fun of one of their supper parties. You would not like it, would you?"

"No," René admitted frankly. "I own I shouldn't. Of course, I cannot even fancy such a thing occurring, but if it did I can answer for it that I should not be able to keep my temper. I think now that you put it so, we shall be able to make more allowances for the American in future."

To this the others all agreed, and henceforth the tension that had not unfrequently existed between Dampierre and his fellow-students was sensibly relaxed.

"You were not here last week, Minette," M. Goudé said, as he went up on to the platform at the end of the room to arrange her pose.

"I did not think that you would expect me, master," she said, "but even if you had I could not have come. Do you think that one could stand still like a statue for hours when great things were being done, when the people were getting their liberty again, and the flag of the despot was being pulled down from the Tuileries. I have blood in my veins, master, not ice."

"Bah!" M. Goudé exclaimed. "What difference does it make to you, or to anyone as far as I see, whether the taxes are levied in the name of an Emperor or of a Republic? Do you think a Republic is going to feed you any better and reduce your rents, or to permit Belleville and Montmartre to become masters of Paris? In a short time they will grumble at the Republic just as they grumble at the Emperor. It is folly and madness. The Emperor is nothing to me, the Government is

nothing to me. I have to pay my taxes—they are necessary—for the army has to be kept up and the Government paid; beyond that I do not care a puff of my pipe what Government may call itself."

"You will see what you will see," said the girl, sententiously.

"I dare say, Minette, as long as I have eyes I shall do that. Now don't waste any more time."

"What am I to be, master?"

"A Spanish peasant girl dancing; hold these slips of wood in your hand, they are supposed to be castanets; now just imagine that music is playing and that you are keeping time to it with them, and swaying your body, rather than moving your feet to the music."

After two or three changes she struck an attitude that satisfied the master.

"That will do, Minette, stand as you are; you cannot improve that. Now, gentlemen, to work."

She was standing with one foot advanced, as if in the act of springing on to it; one of her arms was held above her head, the other advanced across her body; her head was thrown back, and her balance perfect.

Cuthbert looked up from his work, took out a note-book, and rapidly sketched the figure; and then, putting his book into his pocket again, returned to his work, the subject of which was a party of Breton mobiles, with stacked arms under some trees in the Champs Elysée. He had taken the sketch two days before and was now transferring it on to canvas.

"I should not be surprised," he thought to himself, "if the girl is right, and if there is not serious trouble brewing in the slums of Paris.

"As soon as these fellows find out that they are no better off for the change, and that a Republic does not mean beer and skittles, or, as they would like, unlimited absinthe and public workshops, with short hours and high pay, they will begin to get savage, and then there will be trouble. The worst of it is one can never rely upon the troops, and discipline is certainly

more relaxed than usual now that the Emperor has been upset, and every Jack thinks himself as good as his master. Altogether I think we are likely to have lively times here before long. I am not sure that the enemies within are not likely to prove as great a danger to Paris as the foe without. It was a happy idea of mine to come to Paris, and I am likely to get subjects enough to last for a life-time, though I don't know that battle scenes are altogether in my line. It does not seem to me that I have any line in particular yet. It is a nuisance having to decide on that, because I have heard Wilson say an artist, like a writer, must have a line, and when he has once taken it up he must stick to it. If a man once paints sea pieces the public look to get sea pieces from him, and won't take anything else. It is the same thing if he accustoms them to Eastern, or Spanish, or any other line.

"It may be that this war will decide the matter for me, which will be a comfort and relief, though I doubt if I shall ever be able to stick in one groove. Goudé said only yesterday that I had better go on working at both figure and landscape. At present he could not give an opinion as to which I was likely to succeed in best, but that he rather fancied that scenes of life and action, combined with good backgrounds, were my forte, and battle scenes would certainly seem to come under that category."

After work was over Cuthbert went out by himself and spent the afternoon in sketching. He was engaged on a group of soldiers listening to one of their number reading a bulletin of the latest news, when his eye fell on a young lady walking with a brisk step towards him. He started, then closed his note-book suddenly, and as she was on the point of passing, turned to her and held out his hand.

"Have you dropped from the skies, Miss Brander?"

There was surprise, but neither embarrassment nor emotion on her face as she said, frankly—

"Why, Cuthbert Hartington, this is a curious meeting. I did know you were in Paris, for I had heard as much from my father, but I had no idea of your address and I have wondered many times since I came here, five weeks ago, whether we should run

against each other. No, I have not dropped from the clouds, and you ought to have known I should be here; I told you that I was going to have a year in Germany and then a year in France. My year in Germany was up two months ago. I went home for a fortnight, and here I am as a matter of course."

"I might have known you would carry out your programme exactly as you had sketched it, but I thought that the disturbed state of things over here might have induced you to defer that part of the plan until a more appropriate season. Surely Paris is not just at present a pleasant abode for a young lady, and is likely to be a much more unpleasant one later on."

"I think there could hardly be a more appropriate time for being here, Mr. Hartington; one could have no better time for studying social problems than the present when conventionalities have gone to the winds and one sees people as they are; but this is hardly the place to talk. I am boarding with a family at No. 15 Avenue de Passy. Will you come and see me there?"

"Certainly I will, if you will allow me. What will be a convenient time?"

"I should say three o'clock in the afternoon. They are all out then, except Madame Michaud and her little daughter, and we shall be able to chat comfortably, which we could not do if you came in the evening, when the father is at home and two boys who are away at school during the day. Will you come to-morrow?"

"Yes, my afternoons are free at present."

She held out her hand and then walked away with a steady business-like step. Cuthbert stood watching her till she had disappeared in the crowd.

"She has no more sentiment in her composition at present," he said to himself with a laugh that had some bitterness in it, "than a nether millstone. Her mind is so wrapped up in this confounded fad of hers that there is no room in it for anything else. I might have been a cousin, instead of a man she had refused, for any embarrassment or awkwardness she felt at our sudden meeting. It clearly made no impression at all upon her. She remembers, of course, that she met me at Newquay. I don't

suppose she has really forgotten that I asked her to be my wife, but it was a mere incident, and affected her no more than if I had asked her to buy a picture and she had refused. I wish to goodness I had not met her again. I had got fairly over it, and was even beginning to wonder how I ever could have wanted to marry anyone so different in every way from the sort of woman I fancied I should have fallen in love with. How foolish of her coming over to Paris at this time. Well, I daresay it has all saved a lot of trouble. I suppose at that time Brander would have been delighted at the prospect, but it would have been a very different thing after the failure of the bank. I don't think he would have made a pleasant father-in-law under the present circumstances. He is an old fox. I always thought so, and I think so more than ever now. It has been a queer affair altogether. I wonder what Mary thinks of it all. I suppose she will talk to me about it to-morrow afternoon. By the way, I have to go this evening with René and the others to be sworn in or attested, or whatever they call it, at the Mairie. Their report as to the officers is satisfactory. I have heard that Longfranc was an excellent officer before he came into some money, cut the army and took up art. I have no doubt he will make a good major, and he understands the men better than most army men would do. They say the Colonel is a good man, too, and was very popular with his regiment before he retired from the service."

CHAPTER VI.

ON inquiry of the concierge at No. 15 Avenue de Passy, Cuthbert was informed that Madame Michaud lived on the third floor. On ascending and ringing the bell the door was opened by an elderly servant.

"I have called to see Mademoiselle Brander, is she at home?"

"She is, sir."

"Would you give her my card, if you please?"

"Mademoiselle is expecting you," the servant said, and led the way at once into a sitting-room.

It was of the usual type of such room—of good size but bare, with bee's-waxed flooring, plainly frescoed walls, and a ceiling colored gray and bordered with painted arabesques. Two or three small rugs relieved the bareness of the floor. An oval table on very thin legs stood in the middle; the chairs and couch seemed to have been made to match it, and had an eminently bare and uncomfortable appearance; a vase of flowers stood on a spindle-legged little table in front of one of the windows which opened down to the ground. Some colored prints in frames of stained wood hung on the walls, and some skimpy curtains draped the windows.

Mary Brander was seated with a writing-pad on her knee at the window unoccupied by the vase and its support. She put the writing-pad and a book, evidently a large diary, down on the floor.

"You are punctual to the minute, Mr. Hartington. I should never have credited you with that virtue."

"Nor with any other virtue, I imagine, Miss Brander," he said, with a smile.

"Oh, yes, I do. I credit you with numbers of them. Now draw that chair up to the window—it is not comfortable, but it is the best of them—and let us talk. Now, in the first place you don't know how sorry, how dreadfully sorry I have been about what has happened at home. I was shocked, indeed, at the news of the sudden death of your dear father. He was always so kind when he came to see us, and I liked him so much, I felt for you deeply. It must have been an awful shock for you. I heard it a few days after I got to Dresden. Then came the other news about that terrible failure and its consequences. It seemed too shocking altogether that you should have lost the dear old place, but I do think I was most shocked of all when I heard that my father had bought it. Somehow it did not seem to be right. Of course it must have been, but it did not seem so to me. Did it to you, Cuthbert?" and she looked at him wistfully.

"I have no doubt it was all right," he said, "and as it was to be sold, I think I preferred it should be to your father rather than anybody else. I believe I rather liked the thought that as it was not to be my home it would be yours."

She shook her head.

"It does not seem to me to be natural at all, and I was miserable all the time I was there the other day."

"Your father respected my wishes in all respects, Mary. I believe he kept on all the old servants who chose to stay. He promised me that he would not sell my father's hunters, and that no one should ride them, but that they should be pensioners as long as they lived; and the same with the dogs, and that at any time, if I moved into quarters where I could keep a dog or two, he would send up my two favorites to me."

"Yes, they are all there. I went out and gave cakes to the dogs and sugar to the horses every day, and talked to them, and I think regularly had a cry over them. It was very foolish, but I could not help it. It did all seem so wrong and so pitiful. I could not learn much about you from father. He said that you had only written once to him on business since things were finally settled; but that you had mentioned that you were going to Paris, and he said, too—" and she hesitated for a moment, "that although you had lost Fairclose and all the property, you had enough to live upon in a way—a very poor way—but still enough for that."

"Not such a very poor way," he said. "There is no secret about it. I had five thousand pounds that had been settled on my mother, and fortunately that was not affected by the smash, so I have two hundred a year, which is amply sufficient for my wants."

"It is enough, of course, to live upon in a way, Cuthbert, but so different from what you were accustomed to."

"I don't suppose you spend two hundred a year," he said, with a smile.

"Oh, no, but a woman is so different. That is just what I have, and of course I don't spend anything like all of it; but

as I said, it is so different with you, who have been accustomed to spend ever so much more."

"I don't find myself in any way pinched. I can assure you my lodgings in the Quartier Latin are not what you would call sumptuous, but they are comfortable enough, and they do not stand me in a quarter of what I paid for my chambers in London. I can dine sumptuously on a franc and a half. Another franc covers my breakfast, which is generally *café au lait* and two eggs; another franc suffices for supper. So you see that my necessaries of life, including lodgings and fuel, do not come to anything like half my income, and I can spend the rest in riotous living if I choose."

The girl looked at him earnestly.

"You are not growing cynical, I hope, Cuthbert?"

"I hope not. I am certainly not conscious of it. I don't look cynical, do I?"

"No," she said, doubtfully. "I do not see any change in you, but what do you do with yourself?"

"I paint," he said.

"Really!"

"Really and truly, I have become what you wanted me to become, a very earnest person indeed, and some day people may even take to buying my pictures."

"I never quite know when you are in earnest, Cuthbert; but if it is true it is very good news. Do you mean that you are really studying?"

"I am indeed. I work at the studio of one M. Goudé, and if you choose to inquire, you will find he is perhaps the best master in Paris. I am afraid the Prussians are going to interrupt my studies a good deal. This has made me angry and I have enlisted—that is to say, been sworn in as a member of the *Chasseurs des Écoles*, which most of the students at Goudé's have joined."

"What! You are going to fight against the Germans!" she exclaimed, indignantly. "You never can mean it, Cuthbert."

"I mean it, I can assure you," he said, amused at her indig-

nation. "I suppose you are almost Germanized, and regard their war against the French as a just and holy cause."

"Certainly I do," she said, "though of course, I should not say so here. I am in France and living in a French family, and naturally I would say nothing that would hurt the feelings of the people round me, but there can be no doubt that the French deserve all the misfortunes that have fallen upon them. They would have invaded Germany, and all these poor young Germans have been torn away from their friends and families to fight."

"So have these young Frenchmen. To my mind the war was deliberately forced upon France, but I think we had better agree to differ on this subject. You have been among Germans and it is not unnatural that you should have accepted their version. I have been living among Frenchmen, and although I do not say that it would not have been much wiser if they had avoided falling into the pit dug for them, my sympathies are wholly with them, except in this outburst of folly that has resulted in the establishment, for a time at any rate, of a Republic. Now, I have no sympathy whatever with Republics, still less for a Republic controlled by political adventurers, and like many Frenchmen I am going to fight for France, and in no way for the Republic. At any rate let us agree to avoid the subject altogether. We shall never convince each other however much we might argue it over."

The girl was silent for two or three minutes, and then said—

"Well, we will agree not to quarrel over it. I don't know how it is that we always see things so differently, Cuthbert. However, we may talk about your doings without arguing over the cause. Of course you do not suppose there will be much fighting—a week or two will see the end of it all."

"Again we differ," he said. "I believe that there will be some sharp fighting, and I believe that Paris will hold out for months."

She looked at him incredulously.

"I should have thought," she said, after a pause, "you were the last person who would take this noisy shouting mob seriously."

"I don't think anything of the mob one way or the other," he said. "I despise them utterly; but the troops and the mobiles are sufficient to man the forts and the walls, and I believe that middle-class corps, like the one I have entered, will fight manfully; and the history of Paris has shown over and over again that the mob of Paris, fickle, vain-headed, noisy braggadocios as they are, and always have been, can at least starve well. They held out against Henry of Navarre till numbers dropped dead in the streets, and until the Spaniards came at last from the Netherlands and raised the siege, and I believe they will hold out now. They have courage enough, as has been shown over and over again at the barricades, but they will be useless for fighting because they will submit to no discipline. Still, as I said, they can starve, and it will be a long time indeed before the suffering will become intense enough to drive them to surrender. I fear that you have altogether underrated the gravity of the situation, and that you will have very severe privations to go through before the siege is over."

"I suppose I can stand it as well as others," she laughed, "but I think you are altogether wrong. However, if it should come it will be very interesting."

"Very," he said, shortly, "but I doubt if you will see it quite in the same light when it comes to eating rats."

"I should not eat them," she said, decidedly.

"Well, when it comes to that or nothing, I own that I myself shall eat rats if I can get them. I have heard that the country rat, the fellow that lives in ricks, is by no means bad eating, but I own to having a doubt as to the Paris rat."

"It is disgusting to think of such a thing," she said, indignantly, "the idea is altogether ridiculous."

"I do not know whether you consider that betting is among the things that woman has as much right to do as man; but if you do, I am ready to wager it will come to rats before Paris surrenders."

"I never made a bet in my life," she said, "but I will wager five francs with you that there will be nothing of the sort. I do not say that rats may not be eaten in the poor quarters. I do

not know what they eat there. I hear they eat horse-flesh, and for anything I know they may eat rats; but I will wager that rats will never be openly sold as an article of food before Paris surrenders."

"It is a bet," he said, "and I will book it at once," and he gravely took out a pocket-book and made an entry. "And now," he said, as he replaced the book in his pocket, "how do you pass your time?"

"I spend some hours every day at the Bibliothèque. Then I take a walk in this quarter and all round the Boulevards. One can walk just as freely there as one could in Germany, but I find that I cannot venture off them into the poorer quarters; the people stare, and it is not pleasant."

"I certainly should not recommend you to make experiments that way. In the great thoroughfares a lady walking by herself passes unnoticed, especially if she looks English or American. They are coming to understand that young women in those countries are permitted an amount of freedom that is shocking to the French mind, but the idea has not permeated to the lower strata of society."

"If you are really desirous of investigating the ways of the female population of the poorer quarters, I shall be happy to escort you whenever you like, but I do not think you will be altogether gratified with the result of your researches, and I think that you would obtain a much closer insight into French lower class life by studying Balzac and some of the modern writers—they are not always savory, but at least they are realistic."

"Balzac is terrible," she said, "and some of the others I have read a little of are detestable. I don't think you can be serious in advising me to read them."

"I certainly should not advise you to read any of them, Miss Brander, if you were a young lady of the ordinary type; but as you take up the cause of woman in general it is distinctly necessary that you should study all the phases of female life. How else can you grapple with the question?"

"You are laughing at me again, Mr. Hartington," she said, somewhat indignantly.

in thinking me lazy, but I don't think you have any right in considering me a reed to be shaken by every passing wind. I can assure you that I am very fixed in my resolves. I was content to be lazy before simply because there was no particular reason for my being otherwise, and I admit that constitutionally I may incline that way; but when a cataclysm occurred, and, as I may say, the foundations were shaken, it became necessary for me to work, and I took a resolution to do so, and have stuck to it. Possibly I should have done so in any case. You see when a man is told by a young lady he is a useless idler, who does but cumber the earth, it wakes him up a little."

"I am sure I didn't say that," Mary said, indignantly, but with a hot flush on her cheeks.

"Not in those precise words, but you spoke to that effect, and my conscience told me you were not far wrong in your opinion. I had begun to meditate whether I ought not to turn over a new leaf when I came in suddenly for Fairclose; that of course seemed to knock it all on the head. Then came what we may call the smash. This was so manifestly an interposition of Providence in the direction of my bestirring myself that I took the heroic resolution to work."

Mary felt that it was desirable to avoid continuing the subject. She had long since come to regard that interview in the garden as a sort of temporary aberration on his part, and that although, perhaps, sincere at the moment, he had very speedily come to laugh at his own folly, and had recognized that the idea was altogether ridiculous. Upon her it had made so little impression that it had scarcely occurred to her when they met, that any passage of the sort had taken place, and had welcomed him as the lad she had known as a child, rather than as the man who had, under a passing impulse, asked her to marry him.

"I think," she said suddenly, "I will fetch Madame Michaud in. It will be nice for you to come here in the evening sometimes, and it would be better for her to ask you to do so than for me. These French people have such funny ideas."

"It would certainly be more pleasant," he agreed, "and even-

ing will be the time that I have most leisure—that is to say, when we do not happen to be on duty, as to which I am very vague at present. They say the sailors will garrison the forts and the army take the outpost duty; but I fancy, when the Germans really surround us, it will be necessary to keep so strong a force outside the walls, that they will have to call out some of us in addition. The arrangement at present is, we are to drill in the morning and we shall paint in the afternoon; so the evening will be the only time when we shall be free."

"What do you do in the evening generally? You must find it very lonely."

"Not at all. I have an American who is in our school, and who lodges in the same house as I do. Then there are the students, a light-hearted, merry set of young fellows. We have little supper-parties and go to each other's rooms to chatter and smoke. Then, occasionally, I drop into the theatre. It is very much like the life I had in London, only a good deal more lively and amusing, and with a great deal less luxury and a very much smaller expenditure; and—this is very serious I can assure you—very much worse tobacco."

The girl laughed merrily.

"What will you do about smoking when you are reduced to the extremity you prophesy?"

"That point is, I confess, troubling me seriously. I look forward with very much greater dread to the prospect of having to smoke dried leaves and the sweepings of tobacco warehouses, than I do to the eating of rats. I have been making inquiries of all sorts as to the state of the stock of tobacco, and I intend this evening to invest five pounds in laying in a store; and mean to take up a plank and hide it under the floor, and to maintain the most profound secrecy as to its existence. There is no saying whether, as time goes on, it may not be declared an offence of the gravest character for any one to have a private store of any necessary. If you have any special weaknesses, such as chocolate or tea, or anything of that sort, I should advise you not to lose a moment in laying in a good stock. You will see in another week, when people begin to

recognize generally what a siege means, that everything eatable will double in price, and in a month only millionaires will be able to purchase them."

"I really will buy some tea and chocolate," she said.

"Get in a good stock," he said. "Especially of chocolate. I am quite serious, I can assure you. Unfortunately, you have no place for keeping a sheep or two, or a bullock; and bread, at the end of a couple of months, could scarcely be eaten; but, really, I should advise you to invest in a dozen of those big square boxes of biscuits, and a ham or two may come in as a welcome addition some day."

Mary laughed incredulously, but she was much more inclined than before to look at matters seriously, when, on fetching Madame Michaud in, that lady, in the course of conversation, mentioned that her husband had that morning bought three sacks of flour and a hundred tins of preserved meats.

"He is going to get some boxes," she said, "and to have the flour emptied into them, then the baker will bring them round in a cart, so that no one will guess it is flour. He says it is likely that there will be an order issued that everything of that sort is to be given into a public store for general distribution, so it must be brought here quietly. He tells me that every one he knows is doing the same thing. My servant has been out this morning eight times and has been buying eggs. She has brought a hundred each time, and we are putting them in a cask in salt."

"Do you really think all that is necessary, madame?" Mary asked, doubtfully.

"Most certainly I do. They say everything will go up to such prices as never were heard of before. Of course, in a month or two the country will come to our rescue and destroy the Prussians, but till then we have got to live. Already eggs are fetching four times as much as they did last week. It is frightful to think of it, is it not, monsieur?"

"If I were in your place, madame, I would not reckon too surely on relief in a month. I think that there is no doubt that, as you say, there will be a prohibition of anyone keeping

provisions of any sort, and everything will be thrown into the public magazines. Likely enough every house will be searched, and you cannot hide your things too carefully."

"But why should they insist on everything being put in public magazines?" Mary asked. "It will not go further that way than if people keep their own stocks and eat them."

"It will be necessary, if for nothing else, to prevent rioting when the pinch comes, and people are starving in the poorer quarters. You may be sure if they have a suspicion that the middle and upper classes have food concealed in their houses, they will break in and sack them. That would only be human nature, and therefore in the interest of order alone a decree forbidding anyone to have private stores would have to be passed; besides it would make the food go much further, for you may be sure that everything will be doled out in the smallest quantities sufficient to keep life together, and before the end of the siege comes each person may only get two or three ounces of bread a day."

Madame Michaud nodded as if prepared to be reduced even to that extremity.

"You are right, monsieur, I am going to get stuff and to make a great number of small bags to hold the flour; then we shall hide it away under the boards in many places, so that if they find some they may not find it all."

"The idea is a good one, madame, but it has its disadvantages. If they find one parcel they will search so closely everywhere that they will find the rest. For that reason one good hiding-place, if you could invent one, would be better than many."

"One does not know what is best to do," Madame Michaud said, with a gesture of tragic despair. "Who could have thought that such a thing could happen to Paris!"

"It is unexpected, certainly," Cuthbert agreed, "but it has been foreseen, otherwise they would never have taken the trouble to build this circle of forts round Paris. They are useful now not only in protecting the city but in covering a wide area, where the cattle and sheep may feed under the protection of

the guns. I don't think we are as likely to be as badly off for meat as for bread, for after the flocks and herds are all eaten up there are the horses, and of these there must be tens of thousands in Paris."

"That is a comfort, certainly," the Frenchwoman said, calmly, while Mary Brander made a little gesture of disgust.

"I have never tried horseflesh myself, at least that I know of, but they say it is not so bad; but I cannot think that they will have to kill the horses for food. The country will not wait until we are reduced to that extremity."

"Mr. Hartington has joined one of the regiments of volunteers, Madame Michaud."

"That is good of you, monsieur; my husband is in the National Guard, and they say every one will have to take up a musket; but as you are a foreigner, of course this would not apply to you."

"Well, for the time being I consider myself a Parisian, and as a German shell is just as likely to fall on the roof of the house where I live as on any other, I consider myself to be perfectly justified in doing my best in self-defence."

"I trust that you will call whenever you are disposed in the evening, monsieur," Madame Michaud said, cordially; "it will give my husband pleasure to meet an English gentleman who is voluntarily going to fight in the cause of France."

"Thank you, madame. I shall be very glad to do so. Mademoiselle's father is a very old friend of our family, and I have known her ever since she was a little child. It will be pleasant to me to make the acquaintance of monsieur. And now, Miss Brander, I must be going."

CHAPTER VII.

As he sauntered back into the city, Cuthbert met an English resident with whom he had some slight acquaintance.

"So you are not among the great army of deserters, Mr. Phipson?"

"No, I thought it better to stay here and see it out. If the Germans come in I shall hang out the English flag and I have no doubt that it will be all right. If I go away the chances are that I should find the place sacked when I return."

"Then, of course, you will keep your place open."

"It will be closed to the public to-morrow—to the public, mind you. My English customers and friends, if they come to the little door in the Arcade, and give two knocks, and then three little ones with their knuckles on the door, will find it open, and can be served as long as there is any liquor left; but for the last three days I have been clearing out nearly all my stock. The demand has been tremendous, and I was glad enough to get rid of it, for even if the place isn't looted by the mob all the liquors might be seized by the authorities and confiscated for public use. I shall be glad when the doors are closed, I can tell you, for these people are enough to make one sick. The way they talk and brag sets my fingers itching, and I want to ask them to step into the back room, take off their coats, those uniforms they are so proud of, and stand up for a friendly round or two just to try what they are made of.

"I reckon if a chap can't take one on the nose and come up smiling, he would not be worth much when he has to stand up against the Prussians. I thought I understood them pretty well after having been coachman here for over twenty years, but I see now that I was wrong altogether. Of course I knew they were beggars to talk, but I always thought that there was something in it, and that if it came to fighting they would show up pretty well; but to hear them going on now as to what France will do and doing nothing themselves, gives one a sickener. Then the way as they blackguard the Emperor, who wasn't by any means a bad chap, puts my monkey up I can tell you. Why there is not one in fifty of them as is fit to black his boots. He had a good taste in horses too, he had; and when I hear them going on, it is as much as I can do not to slip in to them.

"That is one reason why I am stopping. A week ago I had pretty well made up my mind that I would go, but they made me so mad that I says to myself, I will stop and see it out, if it