

face from him. "I will do my best also to make you happy," he said.

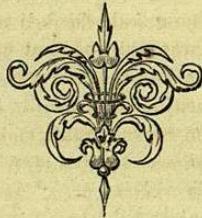
"I am sure you will. I believe you. I know that you are good." There was another pause, during which he stood, still embracing her. "I may go now, may I not?" she said.

"You have not kissed me yet, Marie." Then she kissed him; but the touch of her lips was cold, and he felt that there was no love in them. He knew, though he could hardly define the knowledge to himself, that she had accepted him in obedience to her

uncle. He was almost angry, but, being cautious and even-tempered by nature, he repressed the feeling. He knew that he must take her now, and that he had better make the best of it. She would, he was sure, be a good wife, and the love would probably come in time.

"We shall be together this evening, shall we not?" he asked.

"Oh yes," said Marie, "if you please." It was, as she knew, only reasonable now that they should be together. Then he let her go, and she walked off to her room.



## CHAPTER IX.

"I SUPPOSE it had better be so," Marie Bromar had said to her lover, when in set form he made his proposition. She had thought very much about it, and had come exactly to that state of mind. She did suppose that it had better be so. She knew that she did not love the man. She knew also that she loved another man. She did not even think that she should ever learn to love Adrian Urmand. She had neither ambition in the matter, nor even any feeling of prudence as regarded herself. She was enticed by no desire of position or love of money. In respect to all her own feelings about herself she would sooner have remained at the Lion d'Or, and have waited upon the guests day after day, and month after month. But yet she had supposed that "it had better be so." Her uncle wished it—wished it so strongly that she believed it would be impossible that she could remain an inmate in his house unless she acceded to his wishes. Her aunt manifestly thought that it was her duty to accept the man, and could not understand how so manifest a duty, going hand in hand as it did with so great an advantage, should be made a matter of doubt. She had not one about her to counsel her to hold by her own feelings. It was the practice of the world around her that girls in such matters should do as they were bidden. And then, stronger than all, there was the indifference to her of the man she loved.

Marie Bromar was a fine, high-spirited, animated girl; but it must not be thought that she was a highly educated lady, or that time had been given to her, amidst all her occupations, in which she could allow her mind to dwell much on feelings of romance. Her life had ever been practical, busy, and full of action. As is ever the case with those who have to do chiefly with things material,

she was thinking more frequently of the outer wants of those around her than of the inner workings of her own heart and personal intelligence. Would the bread rise well? Would that bargain she had made for poultry suffice for the house? Was that lot of wine which she had persuaded her uncle to buy of a creditable quality? Were her efforts for increasing her uncle's profits compatible with satisfaction on the part of her uncle's guests? Such were the questions which from day to day occupied her attention and filled her with interest. And therefore her own identity was not strong to her, as it is strong to those whose business permits them to look frequently into themselves, or whose occupations are of a nature to produce such introspection. If her head ached, or had she lamed her hand by any accident, she would think more of the injury to the household arising from her incapacity than of her own pain. It is so, reader, with your gardener, your groom, or your cook, if you will think of it. Till you tell them by your pity that they are the sufferers, they will think that it is you who are most affected by their ailments. And the man who loses his daily wage because he is ill complains of his loss and not of his ailment. His own identity is half hidden from him by the practical wants of his life.

Had Marie been disappointed in her love without the appearance of any rival suitor, no one would have ever heard of her love. Had George Voss married, she would have gone on with her work without a sign of outward sorrow; or had he died, she would have wept for him with no peculiar tears. She did not expect much from the world around her, beyond this, that the guests should not complain about their suppers as long as the suppers provided were reasonably

good. Had no great undertaking been presented to her, the performance of no heavy task demanded from her, she would have gone on with her work without showing even by the altered color of her cheek that she was a sufferer. But this other man had come—this Adrian Urmand—and a great undertaking was presented to her, and the performance of a heavy task was demanded from her. Then it was necessary that there should be identity of self and introspection. She had to ask herself whether the task was practicable, whether its performance was within the scope of her powers. She told herself at first that it was not to be done; that it was one which she would not even attempt. Then, as she looked at it more frequently; as she came to understand how great was the urgency of her uncle; as she came to find, in performing that task of introspection, how unimportant a person she was herself, she began to think that the attempt might be made. “I suppose it had better be so,” she had said. What was she that she should stand in the way of so many wishes? As she had worked for her bread in her uncle’s house at Granpere, so would she work for her bread in her husband’s house at Basle. No doubt there were other things to be joined to her work—things the thought of which dismayed her. She had fought against them for a while; but, after all, what was she, that she should trouble the world by fighting? When she got to Basle she would endeavor to see that the bread should rise there, and the wine be sufficient, and the supper such as her husband might wish it to be.

Was it not the manifest duty of every girl to act after this fashion? Were not all marriages so arranged in the world around her? Among the Protestants of Alsace, as she knew, there was some greater latitude of choice than was ever allowed by the stricter discipline of Roman Catholic education. But then she was a Roman Catholic, as was her aunt; and she was too proud and too grateful to claim any peculiar exemption from the Protestantism of her uncle. She had resolved during those early hours of the morning that “it had better be so.” She thought that she could go through with it all if only they would not tease her, and ask

her to wear her Sunday frock, and force her to sit down with them at table. Let them settle the day—with a word or two thrown in by herself to increase the distance—and she would be absolutely submissive, on condition that nothing should be required of her till the day should come. There would be a bad week or two then while she was being carried off to her new home; but she had looked forward and had told herself that she would fill her mind with the care of one man’s house, as she had hitherto filled it with the care of the house of another man.

“So it is all right,” said her aunt, rushing up to her with warm congratulations, ready to flatter her, prone to admire her. It would be something to have a niece married to Adrian Urmand, the successful young merchant of Basle. Marie Bromar was already in her aunt’s eyes something different from her former self.

“I hope so, aunt.”

“Hope so! but it is so; you have accepted him?”

“I hope it is right, I mean.”

“Of course it is right,” said Madame Voss.

“How can it be wrong for a girl to accept the man whom all her friends wish her to marry? It must be right. And your uncle will be so happy.”

“Dear uncle!”

“Yes, indeed. He has been so good; and it has made me wretched to see that he has been disturbed. He has been as anxious that you should be settled well as though you had been his own. And this will be to be settled well. I am told that M. Urmand’s house is one of those which look down upon the river from near the church; the very best position in all the town. And it is full of every thing, they say. His father spared nothing for furniture when he was married. And they say that his mother’s linen was quite a sight to be seen. And then, Marie, every body acknowledges that he is such a nice-looking young man!”

But it was not a part of Marie’s programme to be waked up to enthusiasm—at any rate by her aunt. She said little or nothing, and would not even condescend to consider that interesting question of the day of the wedding. “There is quite time enough for all

that, Aunt Josey,” she said, as she got up to go about her work. Aunt Josey was almost inclined to resent such usage, and would have done so, had not her respect for her niece been so great.

Michel did not return till near seven, and walking straight through his wife’s room to Marie’s seat of office, came upon his niece before he had seen any one else. There was an angry look about his brow, for he had been trying to teach himself that he was ill-used by his niece, in spite of that half-formed resolution to release her from persecution if she were still firm in her opposition to the marriage. “Well,” he said, as soon as he saw her. “Well, how is it to be?” She got off her stool, and coming close to him, put up her face to be kissed. He understood it all in a moment, and the whole tone and color of his countenance was altered. There was no man whose face would become more radiant with satisfaction than that of Michel Voss—when he was satisfied. Please him, and immediately there would be an effort on his part to please every body around him. “My darling, my own one,” he said, “it is all right.” She kissed him again and pressed his arm, but said not a word. “I am so glad,” he exclaimed; “I am so glad.” And he knocked off his cap with his hand, not knowing what he was doing. “We shall have but a poor house without you, Marie—a very poor house. But it is as it ought to be. I have felt for the last year or two, as you have sprung up to be such a woman among us, my dear, that there was only one place fit for such a one. It is proper that you should be mistress wherever you are. It has wounded me—I don’t mind saying it now—it has wounded me to see you waiting on the sort of people that come here.”

“I have only been too happy, uncle, in doing it.”

“That’s all very well. That’s all very well, my dear. But I am older than you, and time goes quick with me. I tell you it made me unhappy. I thought I wasn’t doing my duty by you. I was beginning to know that you ought to have a house and servants of your own. People say that it is a great match for you; but I tell them that it is a great match for him. Perhaps it is because you’ve been my own in a way, but

I don’t see any girl like you round the country.”

“You shouldn’t say such things to flatter me, Uncle Michel.”

“I choose to say what I please, and think what I please, about my own girl,” he said, with his arm close wound round her. “I say it’s a great match for Adrian Urmand, and I am quite sure that he will not contradict me. He has had sense enough to know what sort of a young woman will make the best wife for him, and I respect him for it. I shall always respect Adrian Urmand because he has known better than to take up with one of your town-bred girls, who never learn any thing except how to flaunt about with as much finery on their backs as they can get their people to give them. He might have had the pick of them at Basle, or at Strasburg either, for the matter of that; but he has thought my girl better than them all; and I love him for it, so I do. It was to be expected that a young fellow with means to please himself should choose to have a good-looking wife to sit at his table with him. Who’ll blame him for that? And he has found the prettiest in all the country round. But he has wanted something more than good looks, and he has got a great deal more. Yes; I say it, I, Michel Voss, though I am your uncle—that he has got the pride of the whole country round. My darling, my own one, my child!”

All this was said with many interjections, and with sundry pauses in the speech, during which Michel caressed his niece, and pressed her to his breast, and signified his joy by all the outward modes of expression which a man so demonstrative knows how to use. This was a moment of great triumph to him, because he had begun to despair of success in this matter of the marriage, and had told himself on this very morning that the affair was almost hopeless. While he had been up in the wood he had asked himself how he would treat Marie in consequence of her disobedience to him; and he had at last succeeded in producing within his own breast a state of mind that was not perhaps very reasonable, but which was consonant with his character. He would let her know that he was angry with her—very angry with her; that she had half broken

his heart by her obstinacy; but after that she should be to him his own Marie again. He would not throw her off because she disobeyed him. He could not throw her off, because he loved her, and knew of no way by which he could get rid of his love. But he would be very angry, and she should know of his anger. He had come home wearing a black cloud on his brow, and intending to be black. But all that was changed in a moment, and his only thought now was how to give pleasure to this dear one. It is something to have a niece who brings such credit on the family!

Marie as she listened to his praise and his ecstasies, knowing by a sure instinct every turn of his thoughts, tried to take joy to herself in that she had given joy to him. Though he was her uncle, and had in fact been her master, he was actually the one real friend whom she had made for herself in her life. There had been a month or two of something more than friendship with George Voss; but she was too wise to look much at that now. Michel Voss was the one being in the world whom she knew best, of whom she thought most, whose thoughts and wishes she had most closely studied, whose interests were ever present to her mind. Perhaps it may be said of every human heart in a sound condition that it must be specially true to some other one human heart; but it may certainly be so said of every female heart. The object may be changed from time to time—may be changed very suddenly, as when a girl's devotion is transferred with the consent of all her friends from her mother to her lover; or very slowly, as when a mother's is transferred from her husband to some favorite child; but, unless self-worship be predominant, there is always one friend to whom the woman's breast is true, for whom it is the woman's joy to offer herself in sacrifice. Now with Marie Bromar that one being had been her uncle. She prospered if he prospered. His comfort was her comfort. Even when his palate was pleased, there was some gratification akin to animal enjoyment on her part. It was ease to her that he should be at his ease in his arm-chair. It was mirth to her that he should laugh. When he was contented she was satisfied. When he was

ruffled she was never smooth. Her sympathy with him was perfect; and now that he was radiant with triumph, though his triumph came from his victory over herself, she could not deny him the pleasure of triumphing with him.

"Dear uncle," she said, still caressing him, "I am so glad that you are pleased."

"Of course it will be a poor house without you, Marie. As for me, it will be just as though I had lost my right leg and my right arm. But what! A man is not always to be thinking of himself. To see you treated by all the world as you ought to be treated—as I should choose that my own daughter should be treated—that is what I have desired. Sometimes when I've thought of it all when I've been alone, I have been mad with myself for letting it go on as it has done."

"It has gone on very nicely, I think, Uncle Michel." She knew how worse than useless it would be now to try and make him understand that it would be better for them both that she should remain with him. She knew, to the moving of a feather, what she could do with him and what she could not. Her immediate wish was to enable him to draw all possible pleasure from his triumph of the day, and therefore she would say no word to signify that his glory was founded on her sacrifice.

Then again came up the question of her position at supper, but there was no difficulty in the arrangement made between them. The one gala evening of grand dresses—the evening which had been intended to be a gala, but which had turned out to be almost funereal—was over. Even Michel Voss himself did not think it necessary that Marie should come in to supper with her silk dress two nights running; and he himself had found that that changing of his coat had impaired his comfort. He could eat his dinner and his supper in his best clothes on Sunday, and not feel the inconvenience; but on other occasions those unaccustomed garments were as heavy to him as a suit of armor. There was, therefore, nothing more said about clothes. Marie was to dispense her soup as usual—expressing a confident assurance that if Peter were as yet to attempt this special branch of duty the whole supper would collapse—and then she was to



"DEAR UNCLE, I AM SO GLAD THAT YOU ARE PLEASED."

take her place at the table next to her uncle. Every body in the house, every body in Granpere, knew that the marriage had been arranged, and the old lady who had been so dreadfully snubbed by Marie had forgiven the offense, acknowledging that Marie's position on that evening had been one of difficulty.

But these arrangements had reference only to two days. After two days Adrian was to return to Basle, and to be seen no more at Granpere till he came to claim his bride. In regard to the choice of the day, Michel declared roundly that no constraint should be put upon Marie. She showed him her full privileges, and no one should be allowed to interfere with her. On this point Marie had brought herself to be almost indifferent. A long engagement was a state of things which would have been quite incompatible with such a betrothal. Any delay that could have been effected would have been a delay, not of months, but of days—or, at most, of a week or two. She had made up her mind that she

would not be afraid of her wedding. She would teach herself to have no dread either of the man or of the thing. He was not a bad man, and marriage in itself was honorable. She formed ideas also of some future true friendship for her husband. She would endeavor to have a true solicitude for his interests, and would take care, at any rate, that nothing was squandered that came into her hands. Of what avail would it be to her that she should postpone for a few days the beginning of a friendship that was to last all her life? Such postponement could only be induced by a dread of the man, and she was firmly determined that she would not dread him. When they asked her, therefore, she smiled, and said very little. What did her aunt think?

Her aunt thought that the marriage should be settled for the earliest possible day, though she never quite expressed her thoughts. Madame Voss, though she did not generally obtain much credit for clear seeing, had a clearer insight to the state of her niece's mind

than had her husband. She still believed that Marie's heart was not with Adrian Urmand. But, attributing perhaps no very great importance to a young girl's heart, and fancying that she knew that in this instance the young girl's heart could not have its own way, she was quite in favor of the Urmand marriage. And if they were to be married, the sooner the better. Of that she had no doubt. "It's best to have it over always as soon as possible," she said to her husband in private, nodding her head, and looking much wiser than usual.

"I won't have Marie hurried," said Michel.

"We had better say some day next month, my dear," said Madame Voss, again nodding her head. Michel, struck by the peculiarity of her voice, looked into her face, and saw the unaccustomed wisdom. He made no answer, but after a while nodded his head also, and went out of the room a man convinced. There were matters between women, he thought, which men can never quite understand. It would be very bad if there should be any slip here between the cup and the lip; and, no doubt, his wife was right.

It was Madame Voss at last who settled the day—the 15th of October, just four weeks from the present time. This she did in concert with Adrian Urmand, who, however, was very docile in her hands. Urmand, after he had been accepted, soon managed to bring himself back to that state of mind in which he had before regarded the possession of Marie Bromar as very desirable. For some four-and-twenty hours, during which he had thought himself to be ill-used, and had meditated a retreat from Granpere, he had con-

trived to teach himself that he might possibly live without her; but as soon as he was accepted, and when the congratulations of the men and women of Granpere were showered down upon him in quick succession—so that the fact that the thing was to be became assured to him—he soon came to fancy again that he was a man as successful in love as he was in the world's good, and that this acquisition of Marie's hand was a treasure in which he could take delight. He undoubtedly would be ready by the day named, and would go home and prepare every thing for Marie's arrival.

They were very little together as lovers during those two days, but it was necessary that there should be an especial parting. "She is up stairs in the little sitting-room," Aunt Josey said; and up stairs to the little sitting-room Adrian Urmand went.

"I am come to say good-by," said Urmand.

"Good-by, Adrian," said Marie, putting both her hands in his, and offering her cheek to be kissed.

"I shall come back with such joy for the 15th," said he.

She smiled and kissed his cheek, and still held his hand. "Adrian," she said.

"My love?"

"As I believe in the dear Jesus, I will do my best to be a good wife to you." Then he took her in his arms and kissed her close, and went out of the room with tears streaming down his cheeks. He knew now that he was in truth a happy man, and that God had been good to him in this matter of his future wife.



## CHAPTER X.

"So your cousin Marie is to be married to Adrian Urmand, the young linen merchant at Basle," said Madame Faragon one morning to George Voss. In this manner were the first assured tidings of the coming marriage conveyed to the rival lover. This occurred a day or two after the betrothal, when Adrian was back at Basle. No one at Granpere had thought of writing an express letter to George on the subject. George's father might have done so, had the writing of letters been a customary thing with him; but his correspondence was not numerous, and such letters as he did write were short, and always confined to matters concerning his trade. Madame Voss had, however, sent a special message to Madame Faragon as soon as Adrian had gone, thinking that it would be well that in this way George should learn the truth.

It had been fully arranged by this time that George Voss was to be the landlord of the hotel at Colmar on and from the first day of the following year. Madame Faragon was to be allowed to sit in the little room down stairs, to scold the servants, and to make the strangers from a distance believe that her authority was unimpaired. She was also to receive a moderate annual pension in money in addition to her board and lodging. For these considerations, and on condition that George Voss should expend a certain sum of money in renewing the faded glories of the house, he was to be the landlord in full enjoyment of all real power on the 1st of January following. Madame Faragon, when she had expressed her agreement to the arrangement, which was indeed almost in all respects one of her own creation, wept and wheezed and groaned bitterly. She declared that she would soon be dead, and so trouble him no more. Nevertheless, she especially

stipulated that she should have a new arm-chair for her own use, and that the feather-bed in her own chamber should be renewed.

"So your cousin Marie is to be married to Adrian Urmand, the young linen merchant at Basle," said Madame Faragon.

"Who says so?" demanded George. He asked his question in a quiet voice; but, though the news had reached him thus suddenly, he had sufficient control over himself to prevent any plain expression of his feelings. The thing which had been told him had gone into his heart like a knife; but he did not intend that Madame Faragon should know that he had been wounded.

"It is quite true. There is no doubt about it. Stodel's man with the roulage brought me word direct from your step-mother." George immediately began to inquire within himself why Stodel's man with the roulage had not brought some word direct to him, and answered the question to himself not altogether incorrectly. "Oh yes," continued Madame Faragon; "it is quite true—on the 15th of October. I suppose you will be going over to the wedding." This she said in her usual whining tone of small complaint, signifying thereby how great would be the grievance to herself to be left alone at that special time.

"I shall not go to the wedding," said George. "They can be married, if they are to be married, without me."

"They are to be married; you may be quite sure of that." Madame Faragon's grievance now consisted in the amount of doubt which was being thrown on the tidings which had been sent direct to her. "Of course you will choose to have a doubt, because it is I who tell you."

"I do not doubt it at all. I think it is

very likely. I was well aware before that my father wished it."

"Of course he would wish it, George. How should he not wish it? Marie Bromar never had a franc of her own in her life, and it is not to be expected that he, with a family of young children at his heels, is to give her a *dot*."

"He will give her something. He will treat her as though she were a daughter."

"Then I think he ought not. But your father was always a romantic, headstrong man. At any rate, there she is—bar-maid, as we may say, in the hotel—much the same as our Floschen here; and, of course, such a marriage as this is a great thing; a very great thing indeed. How should they not wish it?"

"Oh, if she likes him—"

"Like him? Of course she will like him. Why should she not like him? Young and good-looking, with a fine business, doesn't owe a sou, I'll be bound, and with a household of furniture? Of course she'll like him. I don't suppose there is much difficulty about that."

"I dare say not," said George. "I believe that women's likings go after that fashion, for the most part."

Madame Faragon, not understanding this general sarcasm against her sex, continued the expression of her opinion about the coming marriage. "I don't suppose any body will think of blaming Marie Bromar for accepting the match when it was proposed to her. Of course she would do as she was bidden, and could hardly be expected to say that the man was above her."

"He is not above her," said George, in a hoarse voice.

"Marie Bromar is nothing to you, George; nothing in blood; nothing beyond a most distant cousin. They do say that she has grown up good-looking."

"Yes; she is a handsome girl."

"When I remember her as a child she was broad and dumpy, and they always come back at last to what they were as children. But, of course, M. Urmand only looks to what she is now. She makes her hay while the sun shines; but I hope the people won't say that your father has caught him at the Lion d'Or, and taken him in."

"My father is not the man to care very much what anybody says about such things."

"Perhaps not so much as he ought, George," said Madame Faragon, shaking her head.

After that George Voss went about the house for some hours, doing his work, giving his orders, and going through the usual routine of his day's business. As he did so no one guessed that his mind was disturbed. Madame Faragon had not the slightest suspicion that the matter of Marie's marriage was a cause of sorrow to him. She had felt the not unnatural envy of a woman's mind in such an affair, and could not help expressing it, although Marie Bromar was in some sort connected with herself. But she was sure that such an arrangement would be regarded as a family triumph by George—unless, indeed, he should be inclined to quarrel with his father for over-generosity in that matter of the *dot*. "It is lucky that you got your little bit of money before this affair was settled," said she.

"It would not have made the difference of a copper sou," said George Voss, as he walked angrily out of the old woman's room. This was in the evening, after supper, and the greater part of the day had passed since he had first heard the news. Up to the present moment he had endeavored to shake the matter off from him, declaring to himself that grief—or at least any outward show of grief—would be unmanly and unworthy of him. With a strong resolve he had fixed his mind upon the affairs of his house, and had allowed himself to meditate as little as might be possible. But the misery, the agony, had been then present with him during all those hours, and had been made the sharper by his endeavors to keep it down and banish it from his thoughts. Now, as he went out from Madame Faragon's room, having finished all that it was his duty to do, he strolled into the town, and at once began to give way to his thoughts. Of course he must think about it. He acknowledged that it was useless for him to attempt to get rid of the matter and let it be as though there were no such persons in the world as Marie Bromar and Adrian Urmand. He must think about it; but he might so give play to his feelings that no one should

see him in the moments of his wretchedness. He went out, therefore, among the dark walks in the town garden, and there, as he paced one alley after another in the gloom, he reveled in the agony which a passionate man feels when the woman whom he loves is to be given into the arms of another.

As he thought of his own life during the past year or fifteen months, he could not but tell himself that his present suffering was due in some degree to his own fault. If he really loved this girl, and if it had been his intention to try and win her for himself, why had he taken his father at his word and gone away from Granpere? And why, having left Granpere, had he taken no trouble to let her know that he still loved her? As he asked himself these questions, he was hardly able himself to understand the pride which had driven him away from his old home, and which had kept him silent so long. She had promised him that she would be true to him. Then had come those few words from his father's mouth—words which he thought his father should never have spoken to him—and he had gone away, telling himself that he would come back and fetch her as soon as he could offer her a home independently of his father. If, after the promises she had made to him, she would not wait for him without further words and further vows, she would not be worth the having. In going, he had not precisely told himself that there should be no intercourse between them for twelve months, but the silence which he had maintained, and his continued absence, had been the consequence of the mood of his mind and the tenor of his purpose. The longer he had been away from Granpere without tidings from any one there, the less possible had it been that he should send tidings from himself to his old home. He had not expected messages. He had not expected any letter. But when nothing came, he told himself over and over again that he too would be silent, and would bide his time. Then Edmond Greisse had come to Colmar, and brought the first rumor of Adrian Urmand's proposal of marriage.

The reader will perhaps remember that George, when he heard this first rumor, had at once made up his mind to go over to Granpere, and that he went. He went to

Granpere partly believing and partly disbelieving Edmond's story. If it were untrue, perhaps she might say a word to him that would comfort him and give him new hope. If it were true, she would have to tell him so; and then he would say a word to her that should tear her heart, if her heart was to be reached. But he would never let her know that she had torn his own to rags! That was the pride of his manliness; and yet he was so boyish as not to know that it should have been for him to make those overtures for a renewal of love which he hoped that Marie would make to him. He had gone over to Granpere, and the reader will perhaps again remember what had passed then between him and Marie. Just as he was leaving her he had asked her whether she was to be married to this man. He had made no objection to such a marriage. He had spoken no word of the constancy of his own affection. In his heart there had been anger against her because she had spoken no such word to him—as, of course, there was also in her heart against him, very bitter and very hot. If he wished her to be true to him, why did he not say so? If he had given her up, why did he come there at all? Why did he ask any questions about her marriage, if on his own behalf he had no statement to make—no assurance to give? What was her marriage, or her refusal to be married, to him? Was she to tell him that, as he had deserted her, and as she could not busy herself to overcome her love, therefore she was minded to wear the willow forever? "If my uncle and aunt choose to dispose of me, I can not help it," she had said. Then he had left her, and she had been sure that for him that early game of love was a game altogether played out. Now, as he walked along the dark paths of the town garden, something of the truth came upon him. He made no excuse for Marie Bromar. She had given him a vow, and should have been true to her vow, so he said to himself a dozen times. He had never been false. He had shown no sign of falseness. True of heart, he had remained away from her only till he might come and claim her, and bring her to a house that he could call his own. This also he told himself a dozen times. But, nevertheless, there was a very agony of remorse, a

weight of repentance, in that he had not striven to make sure of his prize when he had been at Granpere before the marriage was settled. Had she loved him as she ought to have loved him, had she loved him as he loved her, there should have been no question possible to her of marriage with another man. But still he repented, in that he had lost that which he desired, and might perhaps have then obtained it for himself.

But the strong feeling of his breast, the strongest next to his love, was a desire to be revenged. He cared little now for his father, little for that personal dignity which he had intended to return by his silence, little for pecuniary advantages and prudential motives, in comparison with his strong desire to punish Marie for her perfidy. He

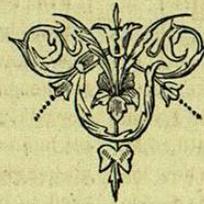
would go over to Granpere, and fall among them like a thunder-bolt. Like a thunder-bolt at any rate he would fall upon the head of Marie Bromar. The very words of her love-promises were still firm in his memory, and he would see if she also could be made to remember them.

"I shall go over to Granpere the day after to-morrow," he said to Madame Faragon, as he caught her just before she retired for the night.

"To Granpere, the day after to-morrow? And why?"

"Well, I don't know that I can say exactly why. I shall not be at the marriage, but I should like to see them first. I shall go the day after to-morrow."

And he went to Granpere on the day he fixed.



## CHAPTER XI.



"PROBABLY one night only, but I won't make any promise," George had said to Madame Faragon when she asked him how long he intended to stay at Granpere. As he took one of the horses belonging to the inn and drove himself, it seemed to be certain that he would not stay long. He started all alone, early in the morning, and reached Granpere about twelve o'clock. His mind was full of painful thoughts as he went, and as the little animal ran quickly down the mountain road into the valley in which Granpere lies, he almost wished that his feet were not so fleet. What was he to say when he got to Granpere, and to whom was he to say it?

When he reached the angular court along two sides of which the house was built he did not at once enter the front-door. None of the family were then about the place, and he could, therefore, go into the stable and ask a question or two of the man who came

to meet him. His father, the man told him, had gone up early to the wood-cutting, and would not probably return till the afternoon. Madame Voss was, no doubt, inside, as was also Marie Bromar. Then the man commenced an elaborate account of the betrothals. There never had been at Granpere any marriage that had been half so important as would be this marriage; no lover coming thither had ever been blessed with so beautiful and discreet a maiden, and no maiden of Granpere had ever before had at her feet a lover at the same time so good-looking, so wealthy, so sagacious, and so good-tempered. The man declared that Adrian was the luckiest fellow in the world in finding such a wife, but his enthusiasm rose to the highest pitch when he spoke of Marie's luck in finding such a husband. There was no end to the good with which she would be endowed; "linen," said the man, holding up his hands in admiration, "that will last out all her grandchildren at least!" George listened to it all, and smiled, and said a word or two—was it worth his while to come all the way to Granpere to throw his thunder-bolt at a girl who had been captivated by promises of a chestful of house linen!

George told the man that he would go up to the wood-cutting after his father; but before he was out of the court he changed his mind and slowly entered the house. Why should he go to his father? What had he to say to his father about the marriage that could not be better said down at the house? After all, he had but little ground of complaint against his father. It was Marie who had been untrue to him, and it was on Marie's head that his wrath must fall. No doubt his father would be angry with him when he should have thrown his thunder-bolt. It could not, as he thought, be