'She is mad!' said Louie, her eyes blazing, when they paused and looked at each other. 'She must be mad. What did she say?'

'What happened?' was all he could reply.

'I threw down that old glass—it wasn't my fault—I didn't see it. It was standing on the floor against a chair. I moved the chair back just a trifle, and it fell. A shabby old thing—I could have paid for another easily. Well, I'm not going there again to be treated like that.'

The girl was furious. All that chafed sense of exclusion and slighted importance which had grown upon her during David's *tête-à-tête* with their strange hostess came to violent expression in her resentment. She opened the door of their room, saying that whatever he might do she was going to bed and to sleep somewhere, if it was on the floor.

David made a melancholy light in the squalid room, and Louie went about her preparations in angry silence. When she had withdrawn into the little cupboard-room, saying carelessly that she supposed he could manage with one of the bags and his great coat, he sat down on the edge of the bare iron bedstead, and recognised with a start that he was quivering all over—with fatigue, or excitement? His chief feeling perhaps was one of utter discomfiture, flatness, and humiliation.

He had sat there in the dark without moving for some minutes, when his ear caught a low uncertain tapping at the door. His heart leapt. He sprang up and turned the key in an instant.

There on the landing stood Elise Delaunay, her arms filled with what looked like a black bearskin rug, her small tremulous face and tear-wet eyes raised to his.

'*Pardon*, Monsieur,' she said hurriedly. 'I told you I was superstitious—well, now you see. Will you take this rug?—one can sleep anywhere with it though it is so old. And has your sister what she wants? Can I do anything for her? No! *Alors*—I must talk to you about her in the morning. I have some more things in my head to say. *Pardon!—et bonsoir.*'

She pushed the rug into his hands. He was so moved that he let it drop on the floor unheeding, and as she looked at him, half audacious, half afraid, she saw a painful struggle, as of some strange new birth, pass across his dark young face. They stood so a moment, looking at each other. Then he made a quick step forward with some inarticulate words. In an instant she was halfway along the corridor, and, turning back so that her fair hair and smiling eyes caught the light she held, she said to him with the queenliest gesture of dismissal:

'*Au revoir*, Monsieur David, sleep well.'

CHAPTER III

DAVID woke early from a restless sleep. He sprang up and dressed. Never had the May sun shone so brightly; never had life looked more alluring.

In the first place he took care to profit by the hints of the night before. He ran down to make friends with Madame Merichat—a process which was accomplished without much difficulty, as soon as a franc or two had passed, and arrangements had been made for the passing of a few more. She was to take charge of the *appartement*, and provide them with their morning coffee and bread. And upon this her grim countenance cleared. She condescended to spend a quarter of an hour gossiping with the Englishman, and she promised to stand as a buffer between him and Dubois' irate landlord.

'A job of work at Brussels, you say, Monsieur? *Bien;* I will tell the *propriétaire*. He won't believe it—Monsieur Dubois tells too many lies; but perhaps it will keep him quiet. He will think of the return—of the money in the pocket. He will bid me inform him the very moment Monsieur Dubois shows his nose, that he may descend upon him, and so you will be let alone.'

He mounted the stairs again, and stood a moment looking along the passage with a quickening pulse. There was a sound of low singing, as of one crooning over some occupation. It must be she! Then she had recovered her trouble of the night before—her strange trouble. Yet he dimly remembered that in the farm-houses of the Peak also the breaking of a looking-glass had been held to be unlucky. And, of course, in interpreting the omen she had thought of her pictures and the jury.

How could he see her again? Suddenly it occurred to him that she had spoken of taking a holiday since the Salon opened. A holiday which for her meant 'copying in the Louvre.' And where else, pray, does the tourist naturally go on the first morning of a visit to Paris?

The young fellow went back into his room with a radiant face, and spent some minutes, as Louie had not yet appeared, in elaborating his toilette. The small cracked glass above the mantelpiece was not flattering, and David was almost for the first time anxious about and attentive to what he saw there. Yet, on the whole, he was pleased with his short serge coat and his new tie. He thought they gave him something of a student air, and would not disgrace even *her* should she deign to be seen in his company. As he laid his brush down he looked at his own brown hand, and remembered hers with a kind of wonder—so small and white, the wrist so delicately rounded.

When Louie emerged she was not in a good temper. She declared that she had hardly slept a wink; that the bed was not fit to sleep on; that the cupboard was alive with mice, and smelt intolerably. David first endeavoured to appease her with the

coffee and rolls which had just arrived, and then he broached the plan of sending her to board with the Cervins, which Mademoiselle Delaunay had suggested. What did she think? It would cost more, perhaps, but he could afford it. On their way out he would deliver the two notes of introduction, and no doubt they could settle it directly if she liked.

Louie yawned, put up objections, and refused to see anything in a promising light. Paris was horrid, and the man who had let them the rooms ought to be 'had up.' As for people who couldn't talk any English she hated the sight of them.

The remark from an Englishwoman in France had its humour. But David did not see that point of it. He flushed hotly, and with difficulty held an angry tongue. However, he was possessed with an inward dread—the dread of the idealist who sees his pleasure as a beautiful whole—lest they should so quarrel as to spoil the visit and the new experience. Under this curb he controlled himself, and presently, with more *savoir vivre* than he was conscious of, proposed that they should go out and see the shops.

Louie, at the mere mention of shops, passed into another mood. After she had spent some time on dressing they sallied forth, David delivering his notes on the way down. Both noticed that the house was squalid and ill-kept, but apparently full of inhabitants. David surmised that they were for the most part struggling persons of small means and extremely various occupations. There were three *ateliers* in the building, the two on their own top floor, and M. Montjoie's, which was apparently built out at the back on the ground floor. The first floor was occupied by a dressmaker, the *propriétaire's* best tenant, according to Madame Merichat. Above her was a clerk in the Ministry of the Interior, with his wife and two or three children; above them again the Cervins, and a couple of commercial travellers, and so on.

The street outside, in its general aspect, suggested the same small, hard-pressed professional life. It was narrow and dull; it mounted abruptly towards the hill of Montmartre, with its fort and cemetery, and, but for the height of the houses, which is in itself a dignified architectural feature, would have been no more inspiriting than a street in London.

A few steps, however, brought them on to the Boulevard Montmartre, and then, taking the Rue Lafitte, they emerged upon the Boulevard des Italiens.

Louie looked round her, to this side and that, paused for a moment, bewildered as it were by the general movement and gaiety of the scene. Then a *lingerie* shop caught her eye, and she made for it. Soon the last cloud had cleared from the girl's brow. She gave herself with ecstasy to the shops, to the people. What jewellery, what dresses, what delicate cobwebs of lace and ribbon, what miracles of colour in the florists' windows, what suggestions of wealth and lavishness everywhere! Here in this world of costly contrivance, of an eager and inventive luxury,

Louise Suveret's daughter felt herself at last at home. She had never set foot in it before; yet already it was familiar, and she was part of it.

Yes, she was as well dressed as anybody, she concluded, except perhaps the ladies in the closed carriages whose dress could only be guessed at. As for good looks, there did not seem to be much of *them* in Paris. She called the Frenchwomen downright plain. They knew how to put on their clothes; there was style about them, she did not deny that; but she was prepared to maintain that there was hardly a decent face among them.

Such air, and such a sky! The trees were rushing into leaf; summer dresses were to be seen everywhere; the shops had swung out their awnings, and the day promised a summer heat still tempered by a fresh spring breeze. For a time David was content to lounge along, stopping when his companion did, lost as she was in the enchantment and novelty of the scene, drinking in Paris as it were at great gulps, saying to himself they would be at the Opera directly, then the Théâtre-Français, the Louvre, the Tuileries, the Place de la Concorde! Every book that had ever passed through his hands containing illustrations and descriptions of Paris he had read with avidity. He, too, like Louie, though in a different way, was at home in these streets, and hardly needed a look at the map he carried to find his way. Presently, when he could escape from Louie, he would go and explore to his heart's content, see all that the tourist sees, and then penetrate further, and judge for himself as to those sweeping and iconoclastic changes which, for its own tyrant's purposes, the Empire had been making in the older city. As he thought of the Emperor and the government his gorge rose within him. Barbier's talk had insensibly determined all his ideas of the imperial régime. How much longer would France suffer the villainous gang who ruled her? He began an inward declamation in the manner of Hugo, exciting himself as he walked—while all the time it was the spring of 1870 which was swelling and expanding in the veins and branches of the plane trees above him—May was hurrying on, and Wörth lay three short months ahead!

Then suddenly into the midst of his political musings and his traveller's ardour the mind thrust forward a disturbing image—the figure of a little fair-haired artist. He looked round impatiently. Louie's loiterings began to chafe him.

'Come along, do,' he called to her, waking up to the time; 'we shall never get there.'

'Where?' she demanded.

'Why, to the Louvre.'

'What's there to see there?'

'It's a great palace. The Kings of France used to live there once. Now they've put pictures and statues into it. You must see it, Louie—everybody does. Come along.'

'I'll not hurry,' she said perversely. 'I don't care *that* about silly old pictures.'

And she went back to her shop-gazing. David felt for a moment precisely as he had been used to feel in the old days on the Scout, when he had tried to civilise her on the question of books. And now as then he had to wrestle with her, using the kind of arguments he felt might have a chance with her. At last she sulkily gave way, and let him lead on at a quick pace. In the Rue Saint-Honoré, indeed, she was once more almost unmanageable; but at last they were safely on the stairs of the Louvre, and David's brow smoothed, his eye shone again. He mounted the interminable steps with such gaiety and eagerness that Louie's attention was drawn to him.

'Whatever do you go that pace for?' she said crossly. 'It's enough to kill anybody going up this kind of thing!'

'It isn't as bad as the Downfall,' said David, laughing, 'and I've seen you get up that fast enough. Come, catch hold of my umbrella and I'll drag you up.'

Louie reached the top, out of breath, turned into the first room to the right, and looked scornfully round her.

'Well I never!' she ejaculated. 'What's the good of this?'

Meanwhile David shot on ahead, beckoning to her to follow. She, however, would take her own pace, and walked sulkily along, looking at the people who were not numerous enough to please her, and only regaining a certain degree of serenity when she perceived that here as elsewhere people turned to stare after her.

David meanwhile threw wondering glances at the great Veronese, at Raphael's archangel, at the towering Vandyke, at the 'Virgin of the Rocks.' But he passed them by quickly. Was she here? Could he find her in this wilderness of rooms? His spirits wavered between delicious expectancy and the fear of disappointment. The gallery seemed to him full of copyists young and old: beardless *rapins* laughing and chatting with fresh maidens; old men sitting crouched on high seats with vast canvases before them; or women, middle-aged and plain, with knitted shawls round their shoulders, at work upon the radiant Greuzes and Lancrets; but that pale golden head—nowhere!

At last!

He hurried forward, and there, in front of a Velazquez, he found her, in the company of two young men, who were leaning over the back of her chair criticising the picture on her easel.

'Ah, Monsieur David!'

She took up the brush she held with her teeth for a moment, and carelessly held him out two fingers of her right hand.

'Monsieur—make a diversion—tell the truth—these gentlemen here have been making a fool of me.'

And throwing herself back with a little laughing, coquettish gesture, she made room for him to look.

'Ah, but I forgot; let me present you. M. Alphonse, this is an Englishman; he is new to Paris, and he is an acquaintance of mine. You are not to play any joke upon him. M. Lenain, this gentleman wishes to be made acquainted with art; you will undertake his education—you will take him to-night to "Les Trois Rats." I promised for you.'

She threw a merry look at the elder of her two attendants, who ceremoniously took off his hat to David and made a polite speech, in which the word *enchanté* recurred. He was a dark man, with a short black beard, and full restless eye; some ten years older apparently than the other, who was a dare-devil boy of twenty.

'*Allons!* tell me what you think of my picture, M. David.'

The three waited for the answer, not without malice. David looked at it perplexed. It was a copy of the black and white Infanta, with the pink rosettes, which, like everything else that France possesses from the hand of Velazquez, is to the French artist of to-day among the sacred things, the flags and battle-cries of his art. Its strangeness, its unlikeness to anything of the picture kind that his untrained provincial eyes had ever lit upon, tied his tongue. Yet he struggled with himself.

'Mademoiselle, I cannot explain—I cannot find the words. It seems to me ugly. The child is not pretty nor the dress. But—'

He stared at the picture, fascinated—unable to express himself, and blushing under the shame of his incapacity.

The other three watched him curiously.

'Taranne should get hold of him,' the elder artist murmured to his companion, with an imperceptible nod towards the Englishman. 'The models lately have been too common. There was a rebellion yesterday in the *atelier de femmes;* one and all declared the model was not worth drawing, and one and all left.'

'Minxes!' said the other coolly, a twinkle in his wild eye. 'Taranne will have to put his foot down. There are one or two demons among them; one should make them know their place.'

Lenain threw back his head and laughed—a great, frank laugh, which broke up the ordinary discontent of the face agreeably. The speaker, M. Alphonse Duchatel, had been already turned out of two *ateliers* for a series of the most atrocious *charges* on record. He was now with Taranne, on trial, the authorities keeping a vigilant eye on him.

Meanwhile Elise, still leaning back with her eyes on her picture, was talking fast to David, who hung over her, absorbed. She was explaining to him some of the Infanta's qualities, pointing to this and that with her brush, talking a bright, untranslatable artist's language which dazzled him, filled him with an exciting medley of new impressions and ideas, while all the time his quick sense responded with a delightful warmth and eagerness to the personality beside him—child, prophetess, egotist, all in one—noticing each characteristic detail, the drooping, melancholy trick of the eyes, the nervous delicacy of the small hand holding the brush.

'David—*David!* I'm tired of this, I tell you! I'm not going to stay, so I thought I'd come and tell you. Good-bye!'

He turned abruptly, and saw Louie standing defiantly a few paces behind him.

'What do you want, Louie?' he said impatiently, going up to her. It was no longer the same man, the same voice.

'I want to go. I hate this!'

'I'm not ready, and you can't go by yourself. Do you see'—(in an undertone)—'this is Mademoiselle Delaunay?'

'That don't matter,' she said sulkily, making no movement. 'If you ain't going, I am.'

By this time, however, Elise, as well as the two artists, had perceived Louie's advent. She got up from her seat with a slight sarcastic smile, and held out her hand.

'*Bonjour*, Mademoiselle! You forgave me for dat I did last night? I ask your pardon—oh, *de tout mon cœur!*'

Even Louie perceived that the tone was enigmatical. She gave an inward gulp of envy, however, excited by the cut of the French girl's black and white cotton. Then she dropped Elise's hand, and moved away.

'Louie!' cried David, pursuing her in despair; 'now just wait half an hour, there's a good girl, while I look at a few things, and then afterwards I'll take you to the street where all the best shops are, and you can look at them as much as you like.'

Louie stood irresolute.

'What is it?' said Elise to him in French. 'Your sister wants to go? Why, you have only just come!'

'She finds it dull looking at pictures,' said David, with an angry brow, controlling himself with difficulty. 'She must have the shops.'

Elise shrugged her shoulders and, turning her head, said a few quick words that David did not follow to the two men behind her. They all laughed. The artists, however, were both much absorbed in Louie's appearance, and could not apparently take their eyes off her.

'Ah!' said Elise, suddenly.

She had recognised some one at a distance, to whom she nodded. Then she turned and looked at the English girl, laughed, and caught her by the wrist.

'Monsieur David, here are Monsieur and Madame Cervin. Have you thought of sending your sister to them? If so, I will present you. Why not? They would amuse her. Madame Cervin would take her to all the shops, to the races, to the Bois. *Que sais-je?*'

All the while she was looking from one to the other. David's face cleared. He thought he saw a way out of this *impasse*.

'Louie, come here a moment. I want to speak to you.'

And he carried her off a few yards, while the Cervins came up and greeted the group round the Infanta. A powerfully built, thickset man, in a grey suit, who had been walking with them, fell back as they joined Elise Delaunay, and began to examine a Pieter de Hooghe with minuteness.

Meanwhile David wrestled with his sister. She had much better let Mademoiselle Delaunay arrange with these people.

Then Madame Cervin could take her about wherever she wanted to go. He would make a bargain to that effect. As for him, he must and would see Paris—pictures, churches, public buildings. If the Louvre bored her, everything would bore her, and it was impossible either that he should spend his time at her apron-string, flattening his nose against the shop-windows, or that she should go about alone. He was not going to have her taken for 'a bad lot,' and treated accordingly, he told her frankly, with an imperious tightening of all his young frame. He had discovered some time since that it was necessary to be plain with Louie.

She hated to be disposed of on any occasion, except by her own will and initiative, and she still made difficulties for the sake of making them, till he grew desperate. Then, when she had pushed his patience to the very last point, she gave way.

'You tell her she's to do as I want her,' she said, threateningly. 'I won't stay if she doesn't. And I'll not have her paid too much.'

David led her back to the rest.

'My sister consents. Arrange it if you can, Mademoiselle,' he said imploringly to Elise.

A series of quick and somewhat noisy colloquies followed, watched with disapproval by the *gardien* near, who seemed to be once or twice on the point of interfering.

Mademoiselle Delaunay opened the matter to Madame Cervin, a short, stout woman, with no neck, and a keen, small eye. Money was her daily and hourly preoccupation, and she could have kissed the hem of Elise Delaunay's dress in gratitude for these few francs thus placed in her way. It was some time now since she had lost her last boarder, and had not been able to obtain another. She took David aside, and, while her look sparkled with covetousness, explained to him volubly all that she would do for Louie, and for how much. And she could talk some English too—certainly she could. Her education had been *excellent*, she was thankful to say.

'*Mon Dieu, qu'elle est belle!*' she wound up. 'Ah, Monsieur, you do very right to entrust your sister to me. A young fellow like you—no!—that is not *convenable*. But I—I will be a dragon. Make your mind quite easy. With me all will go well.'

Louie stood in an impatient silence while she was being thus talked over, exchanging looks from time to time with the two artists, who had retired a little behind Mademoiselle Delaunay's easel, and from that distance were perfectly competent to let the bold-eyed English girl know what they thought of her charms.

At last the bargain was concluded, and the Cervins walked away with Louie in charge. They were to take her to a restaurant, then show her the Rue Royale and the Rue de la Paix, and, finally—David making no demur whatever about the expense—there was to be an afternoon excursion through the Bois to Longchamps, where some of the May races were being run.

As they receded, the man in grey, before the Pieter de Hooghe,

looked up, smiled, dropped his eyeglass, and resumed his place beside Madame Cervin. She made a gesture of introduction, and he bowed across her to the young stranger.

For the first time Elise perceived him. A look of annoyance and disgust crossed her face.

'Do you see,' she said, turning to Lenain; 'there is that animal, Montjoie? He did well to keep his distance. What do the Cervins want with him?'

The others shrugged their shoulders.

'They say his Mænad would be magnificent if he could keep sober enough to finish her,' said Lenain; 'it is his last chance; he will go under altogether if he fails; he is almost done for already.'

'And what a gift!' said Alphonse, in a lofty tone of critical regret. 'He should have been a second Barye. *Ah, la vie Parisienne—la maudite vie Parisienne!*'

Again Lenain exploded.

'Come and lunch, you idiot,' he said, taking the lad's arm; 'for whom are you posing?'

But before they departed, they inquired of David in the politest way what they could do for him. He was a stranger to Mdlle. Delaunay's acquaintance; they were at his service. Should they take him somewhere at night? David, in an effusion of gratitude, suggested 'Les Trois Rats.' He desired greatly to see the artist world, he said. Alphonse grinned. An appointment was made for eight o'clock, and the two friends walked off.

CHAPTER IV

David and Elise Delaunay thus found themselves left alone. She stood a moment irresolutely before her canvas, then sat down again, and took up her brushes.

'I cannot thank you enough, Mademoiselle,' the young fellow began shyly, while the hand which held his stick trembled a little. 'We could never have arranged that affair for ourselves.'

She coloured and bent over her canvas.

'I don't know why I troubled myself,' she said, in a curious irritable way.

'Because you are kind!' he cried, his charming smile breaking. 'Because you took pity on a pair of strangers, like the guardian angel that you are!'

The effect of the foreign language on him leading him to a more set and literary form of expression than he would have naturally used, was clearly marked in the little outburst.

Elise bit her lip, frowned and fidgeted, and presently looked him straight in the face.

'Monsieur David, warn your sister that that man with the Cervins this morning—the man in grey, the sculptor, M. Montjoie—is a disreputable scoundrel that no decent woman should know.'

David was taken aback.

'And Madame Cervin—'

Elise raised her shoulders.

'I don't offer a solution,' she said; 'but I have warned you.'

'Monsieur Cervin has a somewhat strange appearance,' said David, hesitating.

And, in fact, while the negotiations had been going on there had stood beside the talkers a shabby, slouching figure of a man, with longish grizzled hair and a sleepy eye—a strange, remote creature, who seemed to take very little notice of what was passing before him. From various indications, however, in the conversation, David had gathered that this looker-on must be the former *prix de Rome*.

Elise explained that Monsieur Cervin was the wreck of a genius. In his youth he had been the chosen pupil of Ingres and Hippolyte Flandrin, had won the *prix de Rome*, and after his three years in the Villa Medicis had come home to take up what was expected to be a brilliant career. Then for some mysterious reason he had suddenly gone under, disappeared from sight, and the waves of Paris had closed over him. When he reappeared he was broken in health, and married to a retired modiste, upon whose money he was living. He painted bad pictures intermittently, but spent most of his time in hanging about his old haunts—the Louvre, the Salon, the various exhibitions, and the dealers, where he was commonly regarded by the younger artists who were on speaking terms with him as a tragic old bore, with a head of his own worth painting, however, if he could be got to sit—for an augur or a chief priest.

'It was *absinthe* that did it,' said Elise calmly, taking a fresh charge into her brush, and working away at the black trimmings of the Infanta's dress. 'Every day, about four, he disappears into the Boulevard. Generally, Madame Cervin drives him like a sheep; but when four o'clock comes she daren't interfere with him. If she did, he would be unmanageable altogether. So he takes his two hours or so, and when he comes back there is not much amiss with him. Sometimes he is excited, and talks quite brilliantly about the past—sometimes he is nervous and depressed, starts at a sound, and storms about the noises in the street. Then she hurries him off to bed, and next morning he is quite meek again, and tries to paint. But his hand shakes, and he can't see. So he gives it up, and calls to her to put on her things. Then they wander about Paris, till four o'clock comes round again, and he gives her the slip—always with some elaborate pretence or other. Oh! she takes it quietly. Other vices might give her more trouble.'

The tone conveyed the affectation of a complete knowledge of the world, which saw no reason whatever to be ashamed of itself. The girl was just twenty, but she had lived for years, first with a disreputable father, and then in a perpetual *camaraderie*, within the field of art, with men of all sorts and kinds. There are

certain feminine blooms which a *milieu* like this effaces with deadly rapidity.

For the first time David was jarred. The idealist in him recoiled. His conscience, too, was roused about Louie. He had handed her over, it seemed, to the custody of a drunkard and his wife, who had immediately thrown her into the company of a man no decent woman ought to know. And Mademoiselle Delaunay had led him into it. The guardian angel speech of a few moments before rang in his ears uncomfortably.

Moreover, whatever rebellions his young imagination might harbour, whatever license in his eyes the great passions might claim, he had maintained for months and years past a practical asceticism, which had left its mark. The young man who had starved so gaily on sixpence a day that he might read and learn, had nothing but impatience and disgust for the glutton and the drunkard. It was a kind of physical repulsion. And the woman's light indulgent tone seemed for a moment to divide them.

Elise looked round. Why this silence in her companion?

In an instant she divined him. Perhaps her own conscience was not easy. Why had she meddled in the young Englishman's affairs at all? For a whim? Out of a mere good-natured wish to rid him of his troublesome sister; or because his handsome looks, his *naïveté*, and his eager admiration of herself amused and excited her, and she did not care to be baulked of them so soon? At any rate, she found refuge in an outburst of temper.

'Ah!' she said, after a moment's pause and scrutiny. 'I see! You think I might have done better for your sister than send her to lodge with a drunkard—that I need not have taken so much trouble to give you good advice for that! You repent your little remarks about guardian angels! You are disappointed in me!—you distrust me!'

She turned back to her easel and began to paint with headlong speed, the small hand flashing to and fro, the quick breath rising and falling tempestuously.

He was dismayed—afraid, and he began to make excuses both for himself and her. It would be all right; he should be close by, and if there were trouble he could take his sister away.

She let her brushes fall into her lap with an exclamation.

'Listen!' she said to him, her eyes blazing—why, he could not for the life of him understand. 'There will be no trouble. What I told you means nothing open—or disgusting. Your sister will notice nothing unless you tell her. But I was candid with you—I always am. I told you last night that I had no scruples. You thought it was a woman's exaggeration; it was the literal truth! If a man drinks, or is vicious, so long as he doesn't hurl the furniture at my head, or behave himself offensively to me, what does it matter to me! If he drinks so that he can't paint, and he wants to paint, well!—then he seems to me another instance of the charming way in which a kind Providence has arranged this world. I am sorry for him, *tout bonnement!* If I could give the

poor devil a hand out of the mud, I would; if not, well, then, no sermons! I take him as I find him; if he annoys me, I call in the police. But as to hiding my face and canting, not at all! That is your English way—it is the way of our *bourgeoisie*. It is not mine. I don't belong to the respectables—I would sooner kill myself a dozen times over. I can't breathe in their company. I know how to protect myself; none of the men I meet dare to insult me; that is my idiosyncrasy—everyone has his own. But I have my ideas, and nobody else matters a fig to me.—So now, Monsieur, if you regret our forced introduction of last night, let me wish you a good morning. It will be perfectly easy for your sister to find some excuse to leave the Cervins. I can give you the addresses of several cheap hotels where you and she will be extremely comfortable, and where neither I nor Monsieur Cervin will annoy you!'

David stared at her. He had grown very pale. She, too, was white to the lips. The violence and passion of her speech had exhausted her; her hands trembled in her lap. A wave of emotion swept through him. Her words were insolently bitter. Why, then, this impression of something wounded and young and struggling—at war with itself and the world, proclaiming loneliness and *Sehnsucht*, while it flung anger and reproach?

He dropped on one knee, hardly knowing what he did. Most of the students about had left their work for a while; no one was in sight but a *gardien*, whose back was turned to them, and a young man in the remote distance. He picked up a brush she had let fall, pressed it into her reluctant hand, and laid his forehead against the hand for an instant.

'You misunderstand me,' he said, with a broken, breathless utterance. 'You are quite wrong—quite mistaken. There are not such thoughts in me as you think. The world matters nothing to me, either. I am alone, too; I have always been alone. You meant everything that was heavenly and kind—you must have meant it. I am a stupid idiot! But I could be your friend—if you would permit it.'

He spoke with an extraordinary timidity and slowness. He forgot all his scruples, all pride—everything. As he knelt there, so close to her delicate slimness, to the curls on her white neck, to the quivering lips and great, defiant eyes, she seemed to him once more a being of another clay from himself—beyond any criticism his audacity could form. He dared hardly touch her, and in his heart there swelled the first irrevocable wave of young passion.

She raised her hand impetuously and began to paint again. But suddenly a tear dropped on to her knee. She brushed it away, and her wild smile broke.

'Bah!' she said, 'what a scene, what a pair of children! What was it all about? I vow I haven't an idea. You are an excellent *farceur*, Monsieur David! One can see well that you have read George Sand.'

He sat down on a little three-legged stool she had brought

with her, and held her box open on his knee. In a minute or two they were talking as though nothing had happened. She was giving him a fresh lecture on Velazquez, and he had resumed his *rôle* of pupil and listener. But their eyes avoided each other, and once when, in taking a tube from the box he held, her fingers brushed against his hand, she flushed involuntarily and moved her chair a foot further away.

'Who is that?' she asked, suddenly looking round the corner of her canvas. '*Mon Dieu!* M. Regnault? How does he come here? They told me he was at Granada.'

She sat transfixed, a joyous excitement illuminating every feature. And there, a few yards from them, examining the Rembrandt 'Supper at Emmaus' with a minute and absorbed attention, was the young man he had noticed in the distance a few minutes before. As Elise spoke, the new-comer apparently heard his name, and turned. He put up his eyeglass, smiled, and took off his hat.

'Mademoiselle Delaunay! I find you where I left you, at the feet of the master! Always at work! You are indefatigable. Taranne tells me great things of you. "Ah," he says, "if the men would work like the women!" I assure you, he makes us smart for it. May I look? Good—very good! a great improvement on last year—stronger, more knowledge in it. That hand wants study—but you will soon put it right. Ah, Velazquez! That a man should be great, one can bear that, but so great! It is an offence to the rest of us mortals. But one cannot realise him out of Madrid. I often sigh for the months I spent copying in the Museo. There is a repose of soul in copying a great master—don't you find it? One rests from one's own efforts awhile—the spirit of the master descends into yours, gently, profoundly.'

He stood beside her, smiling kindly, his hat and gloves in his hands, perfectly dressed, an air of the great world about his look and bearing which differentiated him wholly from all other persons whom David had yet seen in Paris. In physique, too, he was totally unlike the ordinary Parisian type. He was a young athlete, vigorous, robust, broad-shouldered, tanned by sun and wind. Only his blue eye—so subtle, melancholy, passionate—revealed the artist and the thinker.

Elise was evidently transported by his notice of her. She talked to him eagerly of his pictures in the Salon, especially of a certain 'Salome,' which, as David presently gathered, was the sensation of the year. She raved about the qualities of it—the words colour, poignancy, force recurring in the quick phrases.

'No one talks of your *success* now, Monsieur. It is another word. *C'est la gloire elle-même qui vous parle à l'oreille!*'

As she let fall the most characteristic of all French nouns, a slight tremor passed across the young man's face. But the look which succeeded it was one of melancholy; the blue eyes took a steely hardness.

'Perhaps a lying spirit, Mademoiselle. And what matter, so long as everything one does disappoints oneself? What a tyrant is art!—insatiable, adorable! You know it. We serve our king on our knees, and he deals us the most miserly gifts.'

'It is the service itself repays,' she said, eagerly, her chest heaving.

'True!—most true! But what a struggle always!—no rest—no content. And there is no other way. One must seek, grope, toil—then produce rapidly—in a flash—throw what you have done behind you—and so on to the next problem, and the next. There is no end to it—there never can be. But you hardly came here this morning, I imagine, Mademoiselle, to hear me prate! I wish you good day and good-bye. I came over for a look at the Salon, but to-morrow I go back to Spain. I can't breathe now for long away from my sun and my South! Adieu, Mademoiselle. I am told your prospects, when the voting comes on, are excellent. May the gods inspire the jury!'

He bowed, smiled, and passed on, carrying his lion-head and kingly presence down the gallery, which had now filled up again, and where, so David noticed, person after person turned as he came near with the same flash of recognition and pleasure he had seen upon Elise's face. A wild jealousy of the young conqueror invaded the English lad.

'Who is he?' he asked.

Elise, womanlike, divined him in a moment. She gave him a sidelong glance and went back to her painting.

'That,' she said quietly, 'is Henri Regnault. Ah, you know nothing of our painters. I can't make you understand. For me he is a young god—there is a halo round his head. He has grasped his fame—the fame we poor creatures are all thirsting for. It began last year with the Prim—General Prim on horseback—oh, magnificent!—a passion!—an energy! This year it is the "Salome." About—Gautier—all the world—have lost their heads over it. If you go to see it at the Salon, you will have to wait your turn. Crowds go every day for nothing else. Of course there are murmurs. They say the study of Fortuny has done him harm. Nonsense! People discuss him because he is becoming a master—no one discusses the nonentities. *They* have no enemies. Then he is sculptor, musician, athlete—well-born besides—all the world is his friend. But with it all so simple—*bon camarade* even for poor scrawlers like me. *Je l'adore!*'

'So it seems,' said David.

The girl smiled over her painting. But after a bit she looked up with a seriousness, nay, a bitterness, in her siren's face, which astonished him.

'It is not amusing to take you in—you are too ignorant. What do you suppose Henri Regnault matters to me? His world is as far above mine as Velazquez' art is above my art. But how can a foreigner understand our shades and grades? Nothing but *success*, but *la gloire*, could ever lift me into his world. Then

indeed I should be everybody's equal, and it would matter to nobody that I had been a Bohemian and a *déclassée*.'

She gave a little sigh of excitement, and threw her head back to look at her picture. David watched her.

'I thought,' he said ironically, 'that a few minutes ago you were all for Bohemia. I did not suspect these social ambitions.'

'All women have them—all artists deny them,' she said, recklessly. 'There, explain me as you like, Monsieur David. But don't read my riddle too soon, or I shall bore you. Allow me to ask you a question.'

She laid down her brushes and looked at him with the utmost gravity. His heart beat—he bent forward.

'Are you ever hungry, Monsieur David?'

He sprang up, half enraged, half ashamed.

'Where can we get some food?'

'That is my affair,' she said, putting up her brushes. 'Be humble, Monsieur, and take a lesson in Paris.'

And out they went together, he beside himself with the delight of accompanying her, and proudly carrying her box and satchel. How her little feet slipped in and out of her pretty dress—how, as they stood on the top of the great flight of stairs leading down into the court of the Louvre, the wind from outside blew back the curls from her brow, and ruffled the violets in her hat, the black lace about her tiny throat. It was an enchantment to follow and to serve her. She led him through the Tuileries Gardens and the Place de la Concorde to the Champs-Elysées. The fountains leapt in the sun; the river blazed between the great white buildings of its banks; to the left was the gilded dome of the Invalides, and the mass of the Corps Législatif, while in front of them rose the long ascent to the Arc de l'Etoile set in vivid green on either hand. Everywhere was space, glitter, magnificence. The gaiety of Paris entered into the Englishman, and took possession.

Presently, as they wandered up the Champs-Elysées, they passed a great building to the left. Elise stopped and clasped her hands in front of her with a little nervous, spasmodic gesture.

'That,' she said, 'is the Salon. My fate lies there. When we have had some food, I will take you in to see.'

She led him a little further up the Avenue, then took him aside through cunningly devised labyrinths of green till they came upon a little café restaurant among the trees, where people sat under an awning, and the wind drove the spray of a little fountain hither and thither among the bushes. It was gay, foreign, romantic, unlike anything David had ever seen in his northern world. He sat down, with Barbier's stories running in his head. Mademoiselle Delaunay was George Sand—independent, gifted, on the road to fame like that great *déclassée* of old; and he was her friend and comrade, a humble soldier, a camp follower, in the great army of letters.

Their meal was of the lightest. This descent on the Champs-Elysées had been a freak on Elise's part, who wished to do nothing so *banal* as take her companion to the Palais Royal. But the restaurant she had chosen, though of a much humbler kind than those which the rich tourist commonly associates with this part of Paris, was still a good deal more expensive than she had rashly supposed. She opened her eyes gravely at the charges; abused herself extravagantly for a lack of *savoir vivre;* and both with one accord declared it was too hot to eat. But upon such eggs and such green peas as they did allow themselves—a *portion* of each, scrupulously shared—David at any rate, in his traveller's ardour, was prepared to live to the end of the chapter.

Afterwards, over the coffee and the cigarettes, Elise taking her part in both, they lingered for one of those hours which make the glamour of youth. Confidences flowed fast between them. His French grew suppler and more docile, answered more truly to the individuality behind it. He told her of his bringing up, of his wandering with the sheep on the mountains, of his reading among the heather, of 'Lias and his visions, of Hannah's cruelties and Louie's tempers—that same idyll of peasant life to which Dora had listened months before. But how differently told! Each different listener changes the tale, readjusts the tone. But here also the tale pleased. Elise, for all her leanings towards new schools in art, had the Romantic's imagination and the Romantic's relish for things foreign and unaccustomed. The English boy and his story seemed to her both charming and original. Her artist's eye followed the lines of the ruffled black head and noted the red-brown of the skin. She felt a wish to draw him—a wish which had entirely vanished in the case of Louie.

'Your sister has taken a dislike to me,' she said to him once, coolly. 'And as for me, I am afraid of her. Ah! and she broke my glass!'

She shivered, and a look of anxiety and depression invaded her small face. He guessed that she was thinking of her pictures, and began timidly to speak to her about them. When they returned to the world of art, his fluency left him; he felt crushed beneath the weight of his own ignorance and her accomplishment.

'Come and see them!' she said, springing up. 'I am tired of my Infanta. Let her be awhile. Come to the Salon, and I will show you "Salome." Or are you sick of pictures? What do you want to see? *Ça m'est égal.* I can always go back to my work.'

She spoke with a cavalier lightness which teased and piqued him.

'I wish to go where you go,' he said flushing, 'to see what you see.'

She shook her little head.

'No compliments, Monsieur David. We are serious persons, you and I. Well, then, for a couple of hours, *soyons camarades!*'

Of those hours, which prolonged themselves indefinitely, David's after remembrance was somewhat crowded and indistinct. He could never indeed think of Regnault's picture without a

shudder, so poignant was the impression it made upon him under the stimulus of Elise's nervous and passionate comments. It represented tne daughter of Herodias resting after the dance, with the dish upon her knee which was to receive the head of the saint. Her mass of black hair—the first strong impression of the picture—stood out against the pale background, and framed the smiling sensual face, broadly and powerfully made, like the rest of the body, and knowing neither thought nor qualm. The colour was a bewilderment of scarlets and purples, of yellow and rose-colour, of turtle-greys and dazzling flesh-tints—bathed the whole of it in the searching light of the East. The strangeness, the science of it, its extraordinary brilliance and energy, combined with its total lack of all emotion, all pity, took indelible hold of the English lad's untrained provincial sense. He dreamt of it for nights afterwards.

For the rest—what whirl and confusion! He followed Elise through suffocating rooms, filled with the liveliest crowd he had ever seen. She was constantly greeted, surrounded, carried off to look at this and that. Her friends and acquaintances, indeed, whether men or women, seemed all to treat her in much the same way. There was complete, and often noisy, freedom of address and discussion between them. She called all the men by their surnames, and she was on half mocking, half caressing terms with the women, who seemed to David to be generally art students, of all ages and aspects. But nobody took any liberties with her. She had her place, and that one of some predominance. Clearly she had already the privileges of an eccentric, and a certain cool ascendency of temperament. Her little figure fluttered hither and thither, gathering a train, then shaking it off again. Sometimes she and her friends, finding the heat intolerable, and wanting space for talk, would overflow into the great central hall, with its cool palms and statues; and there David would listen to torrents of French artistic theory, anecdote, and *blague*, till his head whirled, and French cleverness—conveyed to him in what, to the foreigner, is the most exquisite and the most tantalising of all tongues—seemed to him superhuman.

As to what he saw, after 'Salome,' he remembered vividly only three pictures—Elise Delaunay's two—a portrait and a workshop interior—before which he stood, lost in naïve wonder at her talent; and the head of a woman, with a thin pale face, reddish-brown hair, and a look of pantherish grace and force, which he was told was the portrait of an actress at the Odéon who was making the world stare—Mademoiselle Bernhardt. For the rest he had the vague, distracting impression of a new world—of nude horrors and barbarities of all sorts—of things licentious or cruel, which yet, apparently, were all of as much value in the artist's eye, and to be discussed with as much calm or eagerness, as their neighbours. One moment he loathed what he saw, and threw himself upon his companion, with the half-coherent protests of an English idealism, of which she scarcely understood a word;

the next he lost himself in some landscape which had torn the very heart out of an exquisite mood of nature, or in some scene of peasant life—so true and living that the scents of the fields and the cries of the animals were once more about him, and he lived his childhood over again.

Perhaps the main idea which the experience left with him was one of a goading and intoxicating *freedom*. His country lay in the background of his mind as the symbol of all dull convention and respectability. He was in the land of intelligence, where nothing is prejudged, and all experiments are open.

When they came out, it was to get an ice in the shade, and then to wander to and fro, watching the passers-by—the young men playing a strange game with disks under the trees—the nurses and children—the ladies in the carriages—and talking, with a quick, perpetual advance towards intimacy, towards emotion. More and more there grew upon her the charm of a certain rich poetic intelligence there was in him, stirring beneath his rawness and ignorance, struggling through the fetters of language; and in response, as the evening wore on, she threw off her professional airs, and sank the egotist out of sight. She became simpler, more childish; her variable, fanciful youth answered to the magnetism of his.

At last he said to her, as they stood by the Arc de l'Etoile, looking down towards Paris:

'The sun is just going down—this day has been the happiest of my life!'

The low intensity of the tone startled her. Then she had a movement of caprice, of superstition.

'*Alors—assez!* Monsieur David, stay where you are. Not another step!—*Adieu!*'

Astonished and dismayed, he turned involuntarily. But, in the crowd of people passing through the Arch, she had slipped from him, and he had lost her beyond recovery. Moreover, her tone was peremptory—he dared not pursue and anger her.

Minutes passed while he stood, spell- and trance-bound, in the shadow of the Arch. Then, with the long and labouring breath, the sudden fatigue of one who has leapt in a day from one plane of life to another—in whom a passionate and continuous heat of feeling has for the time burnt up the nervous power—he moved on eastwards, down the Champs-Elysées. The sunset was behind him, and the trees threw long shadows across his path. Shade and sun spaces alike seemed to him full of happy crowds. The beautiful city laughed and murmured round him. Nature and man alike bore witness with his own rash heart that all is divinely well with the world—let the cynics and the mourners say what they will. His hour had come, and without a hesitation or a dread he rushed upon it. Passion and youth—ignorance and desire—have never met in madder or more reckless dreams than those which filled the mind of David Grieve as he wandered blindly home.