AT CARENTAN

"Oh! my child, my child!" she cried, sobbing, and frantically covering him with kisses.

"Madame——" said the stranger.

"Ah! it is not he!" she cried, recoiling in terror.
ADIEU
"Forward, Deputy of the Centre! It behooves us to go at the double-quick if we wish to be at table at the same time as the others. Up foot! Skip marquis! there you go! good! You cross the furrows like a veritable stag!"

These words were uttered by a huntsman who was seated tranquilly on the outskirts of the forest of Isle-Adam, while smoking a Havana cigar and awaiting his companion, who had evidently been wandering about for a long time in the brushwood. At his side were four panting dogs, looking, as he was, at the person to whom he was speaking. To understand the jocose flavor of these remarks, which were repeated more than once, it should be said that the huntsman to whom they were addressed was a short, stout man, whose prominent paunch was symptomatic of a truly ministerial corpulence. So that he picked his way with difficulty over the rough surface of an extensive field recently mowed, where his progress was considerably embarrassed by the stubble; moreover, to augment his discomfort, the sun’s rays fell obliquely on his face and caused the perspiration to ooze forth in great drops. Engrossed by the task of maintaining his equilibrium, he leaned sometimes forward, sometimes backward, imitating the evolutions of a two-wheeled chaise jolting over a rough road.
It was one of those September days which finish
the ripening of the grapes by equatorial heat. The
weather betokened a storm. Although the great
black clouds near the horizon were still separated by
patches of azure, lighter clouds were rushing up with
terrific velocity, and stretching a light, grayish cur-
tain from west to east. As there was no wind ex-
cept in the upper regions of the air, the atmosphere
held the scorching vapors from the earth stationary
on the lowlands. The valley which the sportsman
was crossing, being surrounded by tall trees which
shut off the air, was as hot as a furnace. The glow-
ing, silent forest seemed to be thirsty. Birds and
insects were mute and the tree-tops hardly swayed.
Those persons who have any remembrance of the
summer of 1819 must feel compassion for the poor
official, who was sweating blood and water to join
his jocose companion. The latter, as he puffed away
at his cigar, had calculated from the sun’s position
that it might be about five in the afternoon.

"Where the devil are we?" growled the stout
huntsman, wiping his forehead, and leaning against
a tree almost opposite his companion; for he felt that
he had not strength enough left to leap the broad
ditch which lay between them.

"Do you ask me that question?" laughingly re-
torted the huntsman, lying in the tall yellow grass
at the top of the bank.

He tossed the end of his cigar into the ditch.

"I swear by Saint Hubert," he cried, "that I will
never again be caught risking my life in a strange
country with a magistrate, even though he be, like
you, my dear D’Albon, an old school-fellow!"

"Why, Philippe, don’t you understand French?
You must have left your wits in Siberia," rejoined
the stout man, with a comically piteous glance at a
sign-post about a hundred yards away.

"I understand," replied Philippe, as he sprang to
his feet, seized his gun, and started off with a leap
toward the sign-post.—"This way, D’Albon! this
way! half wheel to the left!" he cried to his com-
panion, pointing to a broad paved road. "‘Road
from Baillet to Isle-Adam,’" he read; "in this
direction we shall find the road to Cassan, which
must branch off from the Isle-Adam road."

"True, colonel," said Monsieur d’Albon, replace-
ing on his head a cap which he had been
fanning himself.

"Forward, then, my venerable counsellor," re-
plied Colonel Philippe, whistling to the dogs, who
seemed already to obey him more willingly than the
magistrate to whom they belonged.

"Do you know, monsieur le marquis," continued
the facetious soldier, "that we still have more than
two leagues to do? The village we see yonder must
be Baillet."

"Great God!" exclaimed the Marquis d’Albon,
"go on to Cassan, if you choose, but you’ll go
alone. I prefer to wait here, notwithstanding the
storm, until you send me a horse from the château.
You have made a fool of me, Sucy. We were to
have a nice little hunting-party, to beat up places
that I knew, and not go far away from Cassan. Bah! instead of having any sport, you have kept me running like a greyhound since four o'clock in the morning, and we have had no breakfast except two glasses of milk! Ah! if you ever have a suit at court, I'll see that you lose it, though you are in the right a hundred times over."

The discouraged huntsman seated himself on one of the stones at the foot of the sign-post, laid aside his gun and his empty game-bag, and drew a long breath.

"Such men are your deputies, O France!" cried Colonel de Sacy, laughing heartily. "Ah! my poor D'Albon, if you had been, as I have, six years in the heart of Siberia—"

He did not finish his sentence, but raised his eyes as if his misfortunes were a secret between God and himself.

"Come, forward!" he added. "If you remain seated, you are lost."

"What can you expect, Philippe? Sitting is such an invertebrate habit in a magistrate! 'Pon honor, I am played out! If I had only killed as much as a hare!"

The two sportsmen presented an unusually striking contrast. The government official was forty-two years old and seemed no more than thirty, while the soldier, who was only thirty, seemed to be at least forty. Both were decorated with the red rosette, the insignia of an officer of the Legion of Honor. A few scattered locks of hair, partly black and partly white, like a magpie's wing, protruded from beneath the colonel's cap; beautiful blond curls adorned the magistrate's temples. One was tall, spare, gaunt, and nervous, and the wrinkles on his white face denoted terrible passions or frightful misfortunes; the other had a jovial face, beaming with health and worthy of an epicurean. Both were very much burned by the sun, and their long fawn-colored leather gaiters bore the marks of all the ditches and all the swamps they had traversed.

"Come," cried Monsieur de Sacy, "forward! After a short hour's walk, we shall be at Cassan, around a well-laden table."

"It must be that you were never in love," replied the councillor, with a piteous yet comical air, "you are as pitiless as Article 394 of the Penal Code!"

Philippe de Sacy started violently; his broad forehead contracted, and became as dark as the sky was at that moment. Although a horribly bitter memory distorted all his features, he did not weep. Like all men of powerful mind, he was able to force back his emotions into the lowest depths of his heart, and, like many men of pure character, considered it in some sort immodest to lay bare his sorrows when no mortal words can express their depth and when they dread the mockery of those who do not care to understand them. Monsieur d'Albon had one of those delicately sensitive hearts which divine mental suffering and feel keenly the trouble they have involuntarily caused by some ill-judged remark. He respected his friend's silence, forgot his own weariness, rose, and followed him without speaking, deeply
grieved that he had touched a wound which was evidently not cicatrizated.

"Some day, my friend," said Philippe, pressing his hand and thanking him for his unspoken repentance with a heart-rending glance, "some day I will tell you the story of my life. To-day, I could not."

They walked on in silence. When the colonel’s trouble seemed to have disappeared, the councillor remembered his fatigue; and with the instinct, or rather with the determination, of an exhausted man, he peered into the depths of the forest on every side; he questioned the tree-tops, scrutinized the paths, hoping to discover some shelter where he could ask hospitality. On reaching a cross-roads, he fancied that he could see a thread of smoke rising among the trees. He stopped, gazed very attentively in that direction, and discovered the dark, green branches of several pines in the midst of a dense thicket.

"A house! a house!" he cried, with the joy with which a shipwrecked sailor shouts: "Land! land!"

With that, he darted eagerly through some thick underbrush, and the colonel, who had fallen into a deep reverie, followed him mechanically.

"I much prefer to find a chair and an omelet and a slice of home-made bread here, than to go on to Cassan in quest of divans, truffles, and Burgundy!"

Those words were extorted from the councillor by his enthusiasm at sight of a whitewashed wall in the distance, which stood out against the dark background of the gnarled trunks of the forest.

"Aha! this looks to me like some old priory," cried the Marquis d’Albon, with renewed satisfaction, as he arrived at an old-fashioned black-barred gate, from which he could see, in the centre of a park of considerable size, a building in the style formerly employed for monastic monuments.—'How well those rascals of monks knew how to select a location!'"

This last exclamation was called forth by the magistrate’s amazement at sight of the poetic retreat upon which his eyes rested. The house was built half-way up the mountain at the summit of which stands the village of Nerville. The huge primeval oaks of the forest described an immense circle around the habitation and made it a veritable solitude. The building formerly used by the monks had a southern exposure. The park apparently contained about forty acres. Near the house was a green field, charmingly intersected by several limpid streams, with ponds scattered gracefully about, with no appearance of artificiality. Here and there were clumps of shapely trees with foliage of varying shades of green. Then there were grottoes deftly arranged, and massive terraces with their staircases and their rusted rails, which imparted a physiognomy of its own to that wild Thebaid. Art had combined its inventions with the most picturesque natural effects, with charming results. It seemed that human passions must needs die at the foot of those great trees, which protected that shelter from the uproar of the world, even as they tempered the sun’s intense heat.

"What confusion!" said Monsieur d’Albon to himself, admiring the sombre expression imparted by the
ruins to that landscape, which seemed to have been visited by a malediction.

It was like a place of ill-omen, abandoned by mankind. The ivy had spread its twisted tendrils and its rich green cloak over everything. Brown, green, yellow, red mosses displayed their romantic hues on trees, benches, roofs, and stones. The worm-eaten windows were time-worn and weather-beaten; the balconies were broken, the terraces in ruins. Some of the blinds hung by a single hinge. The disjointed doors seemed in no condition to resist an assailant. The branches of the fruit-trees, laden with glistening bunches of mistletoe, extended far, but bore no fruits. Tall weeds flourished in the paths. This utter disorder imparted a charmingly poetic effect to the picture, and sowed dreamy thoughts in the mind of the spectator. A poet would have tarried there, plunged in melancholy meditation, admiring that harmonious confusion, that desolation in which there was no lack of charm. At that moment, a sunbeam forced its way through the gullies in the clouds and illuminated that half-uncivilized scene with rays of countless colors. The brown roof-tiles gleamed, the mosses shone resplendent, fantastic shadows played over the fields and under the trees; dead colors awoke, piquant contrasts contended for mastery, the foliage was sharply outlined in the light. Suddenly the light disappeared. That landscape, which seemed to have spoken, held its peace, and once more became gloomy, or, rather, soft as the softest tint of an autumn twilight.

"This is the palace of the Sleeping Beauty," said the councillor to himself, already looking upon the house with the eye of a landowner. "Whom can it belong to? A man must be a great fool not to occupy such a charming property!"

At that instant, a woman darted from beneath a walnut-tree at the right of the gate, and flitted before the councillor without a sound, as swiftly as the shadow of a cloud; the vision struck him dumb with surprise.

"Well, D'Albon, what's the matter with you?" queried the colonel.

"I am rubbing my eyes to find out whether I am asleep or awake," was the magistrate's reply, as he put his face close to the bars to try to obtain another glimpse of the phantom.—"She is probably under that fig-tree," he said, calling Philippe's attention to the foliage of a tree which rose above the wall at the left of the gate.

"Who may she be?"

"What! as if I knew!" replied Monsieur d'Albon.

"A strange woman just rose here before me," he added in a low voice; "she seemed to belong rather to the family of ghosts than to the world of the living. She was so slender, so light, so vapor, that she must have been transparent. Her face was as white as milk. Her clothes, her hair, her eyes, were black. She looked at me as she passed, and although I am not easily frightened, her cold, fixed stare froze the blood in my veins."

"Was she pretty?" queried Philippe.
ADIEU

"I don't know. I saw nothing of the face but the eyes.'"

"The deuce take the dinner at Cassan!" cried the colonel. "Let us stay here. I have a childish longing to go into this strange place. Do you see those window-sashes painted red, and those red lines on the mouldings of the doors and windows? Doesn't it seem as if it must be the devil's house? Perhaps he inherited from the monks. Come, let us run after the black and white lady! Forward!" cried Philippe, with assumed gaiety.

At that moment, the two sportsmen heard a cry not unlike that of a bird caught in a trap. They listened intently. The foliage of a clump of shrubbery rustled in the silence, like the plashing of waves on the beach; but, although they strained their ears to detect some further sounds, the earth remained silent and kept the secret of the unknown woman's footsteps, if indeed she had walked.

"This is very strange!" cried Philippe, following the circular course described by the walls of the park.

The two friends soon reached a path through the forest leading to the village of Chauvry. Having followed that path as far as the Paris road, they found themselves in front of a great iron gate, and could see the principal façade of the mysterious dwelling. On that side, the disorder had reached its climax. There were three buildings, forming three sides of a square, their walls seamed by huge cracks. Broken tiles and slates heaped on the ground, and dilapidated roofs, denoted absolute neglect. Fruit

lay under the trees, rotting ungathered. A cow was grazing on the bowling-green and trampling through the flower-beds, while a goat browsed on the green grapes on a trellised vine.

"Here everything is harmonious, and the confusion is systematized, so to speak," said the colonel, pulling a bell-pull.

But the bell had no tongue. The two sportsmen heard nothing save the peculiarly shrill sound of a rusty spring. Although sadly dilapidated, the small door in the wall near the iron gate resisted all their efforts to open it.

"Well! this is becoming very interesting," said Philippe to his companion.

"If I were not a magistrate, I should believe that that black woman was a witch," replied Monsieur d’Albon.

He had hardly spoken the last word when the cow came to the gate and offered them her warm nose, as if she felt the need of seeing human beings. Thereupon a woman, if that name can be applied to the indescribable being who rose from beneath a clump of shrubbery, pulled the cow by her rope. This woman wore on her head a red handkerchief, from beneath which protruded stray locks of light hair not unlike flax on a distaff. She had no neckerchief. A coarse woollen skirt, with alternating black and gray stripes, several inches too short, allowed her legs to be seen. One might readily have believed that she belonged to one of the tribes of Redskins made famous by Cooper, for her legs and her bare neck and arms
seemed to have been painted a brick-red. No gleam of intelligence illuminated her dull face. Her light-blue eyes were cold and lifeless. A few scattered white hairs served as eyebrows. Her mouth was so misshapen that one could see her teeth, which were irregular in shape and arrangement, but as white as a dog's.

"Holla, my good woman!" cried Monsieur de Sucy.
She walked slowly to the gate, looking stupidly at the two huntsmen, at sight of whom a painful, forced smile came to her lips.

"Where are we? What house is this? To whom does it belong? Who are you? Do you belong here?"

To these questions and a multitude of others with which the two friends plied her in turn, she replied only by guttural grunts which seemed more appropriate to an animal than to a human creature.

"Don't you see that she is deaf and dumb?" said the magistrate.

"Bons-Hommes!" cried the woman.

"Ah! to be sure. This must be the old convent of the Bons-Hommes," said Monsieur d'Albon.
They renewed their questions. But the peasant woman, like a wilful child, blushed, played with her wooden shoe, twisted the rope attached to the cow who had returned to her grazing, stared at the two Nimrods, and examined every part of their outfit; she whined, groaned, and clucked, but did not speak.

"What's your name?" demanded Philippe, gazing intently at her as if he would bewitch her.

"Geneviève," she replied, with an idiotic laugh.
"Thus far the cow is the most intelligent creature we have seen," said the magistrate. "I propose to fire my gun, and see if somebody won't come."
As he raised his weapon, the colonel checked him with a gesture, and pointed to the strange woman who had so keenly stirred his curiosity at first. She seemed absorbed in profound meditation as she approached slowly along a path some distance away, so that the two friends had ample time to examine her. She was dressed in a much worn black satin dress. Her long hair fell in countless curls over her forehead and about her shoulders, reaching to her waist, so that it served her as a shawl. Doubtless she was accustomed to that condition of affairs, for she brushed the hair away from her temples very rarely; but on those occasions she moved her head so suddenly and sharply that she had not to do it twice to free her forehead and her eyes from that thick veil. Her movements, like those of an animal, were marked by an admirable confidence in her physical mechanism and by an agility which might well seem prodigious in a woman. The two sportsmen were amazed beyond words to see her spring up to a branch of an apple-tree and cling to it as lightly as a bird. She picked some apples and ate them, then dropped to the ground with the graceful ease which we admire in the squirrel. Her limbs possessed an elasticity which took away from all her movements the slightest trace of awkwardness or effort. She gambolled over the turf, rolled upon it
as a child might have done; then abruptly threw her feet and hands forward and lay stretched out on the grass with the unconstraint, the natural grace, of a cat sleeping in the sun. Hearing the thunder rumble in the distance, she turned and crouched on all-fours with the marvellous grace of a dog who hears a stranger approaching. As a result of that curious attitude, her black hair suddenly separated into two broad bands which fell on each side of her face, and enabled the two spectators of that strange scene to admire her shoulders, whose white skin shone like daisies in the field, and a neck whose perfect shape prefigured the perfection of all her bodily proportions.

She uttered a cry of pain, and sprang suddenly to her feet. Her successive movements were so graceful, they were executed so swiftly, that she seemed not to be a human creature, but one of the maidens of the air of whom Ossian sings. She walked toward a sheet of water, shook one of her legs slightly to get rid of her shoe, and seemed to enjoy dipping her alabaster foot in the water, admiring, doubtless, the undulations it produced, which resembled necklaces of brilliants. Then she knelt on the brink of the pool, and amused herself, like a child, by dipping her long tresses and suddenly taking them out, to watch the water with which they were drenched fall, drop by drop, forming rosaries of pearls, as it were, in the sunbeams.

“That woman is mad!” cried the councillor.

Geneviève uttered a hoarse cry, apparently addressed to the unknown, who rose hastily, throwing the hair back from her face. At that moment, the colonel and D’Albon were able to see the woman’s features distinctly. She, when she saw the two friends, bounded to the gate with the speed and lightness of a roe.

“Aie!” she said, in a sweet, melodious voice; but that melody, impatiently awaited by the two huntsmen, did not disclose the slightest feeling or the slightest idea.

Monsieur d’Albon gazed admiringly at her long eyelashes, her dense black eyebrows, a skin of dazzling whiteness without the slightest trace of red. Tiny blue veins alone marred its whiteness. When the councillor turned to his friend to share with him the wonder aroused by the sight of that strange woman, he found him stretched out on the grass, apparently dead. Monsieur d’Albon discharged his gun in the air to summon assistance, and shouted: “Help!” as he tried to raise his friend. At the report, the unknown, who had hitherto stood like a statue, fled with the velocity of an arrow, uttering frightened cries like a wounded animal, and ran round and round the open field, with every indication of profound terror.

Monsieur d’Albon heard the wheels of a calèche on the Isle-Adam road, and sought assistance from its occupants by waving his handkerchief. The carriage at once drove toward the Bons-Hommes, and Monsieur d’Albon recognized his neighbors Monsieur and Madame de Granville, who at once alighted and offered the magistrate their carriage. Madame
de Granville happened to have a bottle of salts, which they put to Monsieur de Sucy’s nose. When the colonel opened his eyes, he looked toward the field where the unknown was still running to and fro, shrieking, and uttered an indistinct exclamation, marked by an accent of horror; then he closed his eyes again, entreating his friend, with a gesture, to remove him from that spectacle. Monsieur and Madame de Granville left their carriage at the councillor’s disposal, obligingly saying to him that they would continue their expedition on foot.

“In Heaven’s name, who is that woman?” the magistrate asked, indicating the unknown.

“It is supposed that she comes from Moulins,” replied Monsieur de Granville. “Her name is Comtesse de Vandières; she is said to be mad, but as she has been here only two months, I cannot warrant the accuracy of all the gossip.”

Monsieur d’Albon thanked Monsieur and Madame de Granville, and started for Cassan.

“It is she!” cried Philippe, when he recovered his senses.

“Whom do you mean by she?” queried D’Albon. “Stéphanie— Ah! dead and alive, alive and mad—I thought that I was dying.”

The judicious magistrate, realizing the gravity of the crisis through which his friend was passing, carefully avoided questioning him or irritating him; he was intensely impatient to reach the château, for the change in the colonel’s features and his whole person made him fear that the countess might have communicated her terrible disease to him. As soon as the carriage reached Avenue de l’Isle-Adam, D’Albon sent the footman for the village physician; so that he was at the colonel’s bedside as soon as he was in bed.

“If monsieur le colonel had not been some time without food, he would have died,” said the doctor. “His exhaustion saved him.”

Having given orders as to the precautions to be taken, he went out to prepare a soothing potion with his own hands. The next morning, Monsieur de Sucy was better; but the doctor had thought it best to pass the night with him.

“I will tell you frankly, monsieur le marquis,” he said to Monsieur d’Albon, “that I feared a lesion of the brain. Monsieur de Sucy received a very violent shock. His passions are strong; but, in his case, the first blow dealt is the decisive one. Tomorrow I think he will be out of danger.”

The doctor was not mistaken, and the next day he allowed the magistrate to see his friend.

“My dear D’Albon,” said Philippe, pressing his hand, “I look to you to do me a service! Go at once to the Bons-Hommes, find out all that you possibly can concerning the lady that we saw, and hurry home, for I shall count the minutes.”

Monsieur d’Albon leaped upon a horse and galloped to the old abbey. When he arrived, he saw at the gate a tall, thin man with an attractive face, who answered in the affirmative when the magistrate asked him if he lived in that ruined house. Monsieur d’Albon told him the reasons for his call.
"What, monsieur," cried the stranger, "are you the man who fired that fatal shot? You nearly killed my poor patient."
"But I fired in the air, monsieur."
"You would have injured madame la comtesse less if you had hit her."
"At all events, we have no right to reproach each other, for the sight of your countess nearly killed my friend Monsieur de Sucy."
"Can it be that you refer to Baron Philippe de Sucy?" cried the doctor, clasping his hands. "Was he in Russia at the passage of the Beresina?"
"Yes," replied D'Albon, "he was captured by Cossacks and taken to Siberia, whence he returned about eleven months since."
"Come in, monsieur," said the stranger, ushering the magistrate into a salon on the ground-floor of the building, where everything bore the marks of unreasoning devastation.
Broken vases of priceless porcelain stood beside a clock, whose globe was untouched. The silk curtains at the windows were torn, while the double one of muslin was intact.
"You see," he said to Monsieur d'Albon, as they entered, "the ravages committed by the charming creature to whom I have devoted my life. She is my niece; despite the impotence of my skill, I hope some day to restore her reason by a method which, unfortunately, only the rich can adopt."
Then, like all persons who live in solitude, being constantly preyed upon by his grief, he told the magistrate at great length the following adventure, which is here set forth in more concise form and shorn of numerous digressions in which both the narrator and the councillor indulged.
When Maréchal Victor, about nine o'clock in the evening of the 28th of November, 1812, left the heights of Studzianka, which he had stubbornly defended throughout that day, he left there about a thousand men whose orders were to defend until the last gasp that one of the two bridges recently thrown over the Bérésina which was still in existence. That rear-guard had devoted itself to the task of saving a terribly large number of stragglers, benumbed by the cold, who obstinately refused to leave the baggage-train of the army. The heroism of that noble band was destined to be of no avail. The soldiers who rushed down in vast numbers to the banks of the Bérésina found there, unfortunately, the immense quantity of wagons, caissons, impedimenta of all descriptions, which the army had been obliged to abandon when effecting its passage of the stream during the 27th and 28th of November. Inheritors of incredible treasures, those hapless creatures, turned into brutes by the cold, took up their quarters in the deserted camp, broke up the baggage of the army to build cabins, made fires of anything that came to hand, cut up horses for food, tore the canvas tops from the wagons for bedclothes, and went to sleep instead of continuing their journey and crossing unharmed during the night that river which a most extraordinary fatality had already made so disastrous
to our army. The apathy of those poor soldiers can be understood only by those who can remember traversing those boundless deserts of snow, with nothing to drink but the snow, no bed but the snow, no outlook but a horizon of snow, no food but the snow, with now and then a frozen beet, a handful of flour, or a bit of horseflesh. Dying with hunger, thirst, fatigue, or want of sleep, those unfortunates came to a river bank where they spied wood, fire, provisions, innumerable abandoned wagons, tents, in short, a whole improvised city. The village of Studzianka had been entirely cut up and parcelled out, and transplanted from the heights to the plain. Melancholy and perilous as that city was, its miseries and its dangers attracted those people, who saw naught before them save the terrifying deserts of Russia. In a word, it was a vast hospital, which existed less than twenty hours.

Utter weariness, or an unexpected sense of comfort, rendered that body of men inaccessible to any other thought than that of repose. Although the artillery on the Russian left wing kept up an unmitting fire upon the mass, which stood out distinctly against the snow like a great stain upon it, now black, now flame-colored, the unting cannon-balls seemed to the drowsy multitude simply an additional inconvenience. It was like a storm, whose thunder and lightning were disregarded by all, because it was not likely to strike anybody save a few sick or dying or, perhaps, dead men here and there. Fresh groups of stragglers arrived every moment.

These walking corpses, if we may call them so, separated at once and went about from fire to fire, begging room to lie down; as they were generally repulsed singly, they would join forces anew to obtain by force the hospitality which was denied them. Deaf to the voices of the few officers who told them that they would be dead men on the morrow, they expended the courage and strength they would have required to cross the river in constructing a shelter for one night, in preparing a meal often attended with evil results; the death which awaited them no longer seemed to them an evil, since it allowed them an hour's sleep. They applied the name of evil to hunger, thirst, and cold alone. When wood, fire, canvas, shelter, were all preempted, horrible conflicts took place between those who arrived late, absolutely denuded, and those who were rich and possessed an abiding-place for the night. The weaker succumbed. There came a time at last when a number of men driven in by the Russians had only the snow for a camping-ground, and lay down upon it to rise no more.

That mass of almost lifeless human beings gradually became so compact, so deaf, so stupid, or it may be so happy, that Maréchal Victor, who had heroically defended them by holding back twenty thousand Russians under Wittgenstein, was obliged to open a passage by actual force through that forest of men in order to lead his five thousand brave fellows across the Béréina. Those unfortunate creatures allowed themselves to be trampled to death rather than
budge, and died in silence, smiling at their smouldering fires and without a thought of France.

Not until ten o'clock at night did the Duc de Bellune reach the other bank of the river. Before venturing on the bridges which led to Zembin, he intrusted the fate of the rear-guard at Studzianka to Eblé, the savior of all those who survived the disasters of the Bérézina. It was about midnight that that great general, followed by an officer of tried courage, left the little hut which he occupied near the bridge, and gazed upon the spectacle presented by the camp which lay between the bank of the Bérézina and the road leading from Borzof to Studzianka. The Russian guns had ceased firing; innumerable fires, which, in the midst of that wilderness of snow, had a pale look, and seemed to cast no light, shone here and there upon faces in which there was nothing human. Ill-fated mortals, to the number of thirty thousand, belonging to all the nations Napoleon had hurled upon Russia, were lying there, throwing their lives away with brutal indifference.

"Let us save this mob," said the general to his officer. "To-morrow morning the Russians will be masters of Studzianka. We must burn the bridge, therefore, the moment they appear; so, courage, my friend! Make your way through them up to the heights. Tell General Fourrier that he has barely time to evacuate his position, force his way through yonder mass, and cross the bridge. When you have seen him start, do you follow him. With the assistance of a few staunch men, you must burn pitilessly all the tents, wagons, caissons, everything! Drive those fellows yonder onto the bridge! Compel every two-legged creature to take refuge on the other bank. Fire is our last and only resource now. If Berthier had let me destroy those damned baggage-trains, not a soul would have been swallowed up by the river except my poor pontonniers, those fifty heroes who saved the army and who will be forgotten!"

The general put his hand to his face, and was silent. He felt that Poland would be his grave, and that no voice would be raised in favor of those sublime men who threw themselves into the water—the water of the Bérézina!—and remained there to drive in the supports of the bridges. A single one of them still lives, or, to be more exact, suffers, in an obscure village, unknown!

The aide de camp galloped away. That noble-hearted officer had hardly gone fifty paces toward Studzianka, when General Eblé aroused several of his suffering pontonniers and began his charitable task of burning the tents pitched near the bridge, thus compelling the sleepers in the vicinity to cross the Bérézina. Meanwhile, the young aide de camp had found his way, not without difficulty, to the only wooden house still standing in Studzianka.

"Is this old barrack very full, comrade?" he said to a man whom he saw standing outside.

"If you go in, you will be a clever fellow," replied the officer, without turning his head or ceasing to demolish the woodwork of the house with his sword.
"Is that you, Philippe?" said the aide, recognizing the voice of one of his friends.

"Yes,—Aha! it's you, is it, old fellow?" replied Monsieur de Sacy, looking up at the aide de camp, who was, like himself, no more than twenty-three.

"I thought you were on the other side of this infernal river. Have you come to bring us some cakes and sweets for our dessert? You will be warmly received," he continued, finally detaching the bark from the wood and giving it, by way of provender, to his horse.

"I am looking for your commanding officer, with a message to him from General Eblé to fall back on Zembin. You have barely time to wade through that mass of corpses whom I am going to set on fire in a moment to make them march."

"You almost warm my blood! your news makes me sweat. I have two friends to save! Ah! old fellow, I should be dead now if it weren't for those two marmots. It's for their sake that I am feeding my horse at this moment, instead of eating him. In pity's name, have you a crust of bread? It's thirty hours since I have put anything in my bread-basket, and I have been beating myself like a madman to retain what little warmth and courage I still have."

"Nothing, my poor Philippe! nothing! But isn't your general here?"

"Don't try to go in! This barn contains our wounded. Go farther on! You will find a sort of pig-sty on your right, and the general is there.

Adieu! my boy. If ever we dance the polka on a Paris floor—"

He did not finish, for there came such a treacherous blast of the north wind at that moment that the aide de camp moved on to avoid freezing, and Major Philippe's lips grew stiff. Soon silence reigned. It was broken only by the groans that came from the house and by the dull noise made by Monsieur de Sacy's mare as she gnawed with frantic hunger the frozen bark from the trees of which the house was built. The major replaced his sword in its sheath, suddenly seized the bridle of the precious animal he had succeeded in preserving, and tore her away, despite her resistance, from the pitiful provender for which she seemed so greedy.

"Forward, Bichette, forward! You are the only one who can save Stéphanie, my beauty. Later on, we shall be allowed to rest and to die, I doubt not."

Wrapped in a cloak to which he owed his life and his energy, Philippe began to run, stamping his feet on the hard snow to keep the blood in circulation. He had gone barely five hundred paces when he saw a large fire on the spot where he had left his carriage since the morning, in charge of an old soldier. A horrible feeling of anxiety took possession of him. Like all those who, during that disastrous retreat, were dominated by some powerful sentiment, he had at his command, when it was a question of saving his friends, forces which he could not have commanded to provide for his own safety. He soon arrived within a few steps of a depression in the
ground, in which he had bestowed, out of reach of cannon-balls, a young woman who was the friend of his childhood and his dearest treasure.

A few steps from the carriage, some thirty or more stragglers were collected about a huge fire which they fed with planks, caisson bodies, and carriage-wheels and panels. They were, doubtless, the latest comers of all those who formed, as it were, an ocean of faces and fires and huts, a living sea kept in commotion by almost insensible movements, which extended from the broad tract of rolling ground at the foot of Studzianka to the fatal river, and from which there escaped a dull, rustling sound, sometimes mingled with terrible outbursts. Impelled by hunger and desperation, those wretched creatures had evidently taken forcible possession of the carriage. The old general and the young woman whom they found there, lying on piles of clothes, wrapped in cloaks and furs, were at that moment crouching in front of the fire. One of the doors of the carriage was broken. As soon as the men about the fire heard the steps of the horse and the major, there arose a fierce cry inspired by hunger:

“A horse! a horse!”

The voices formed but a single voice.

“Stand back! look out for yourself!” cried two or three soldiers, taking aim at the mare.

Philippe placed himself squarely in front of her, saying:

“Knaves! I'll throw you all into your fire! There are dead horses up yonder: go and get them!”

“This officer’s a joker! Once, twice, will you stand out of the way?” retorted a colossal grenadier.

“No? As you please, then!”

A woman’s shriek rang out above the report. Philippe luckily was not hit; but Bichette had fallen, and was struggling against death; three men ran to her and finished her with their bayonets.

“Cannibals! let me have my blanket and my pistols,” said Philippe, in despair.

“Take your pistols,” said the grenadier. “As for the blanket, here’s an infantryman who’s had nothing to drink for two days, and is shivering to death in his wretched thin coat. He’s our general.”

Philippe said no more when his attention was called to a man whose shoes were worn out, whose trousers were torn in ten places, and who had nothing on his head but a wretched forage-cap covered with frost. He made haste to take his pistols. Five men dragged the mare in front of the fire and began to cut her up as skillfully as any butcher’s apprentice in Paris could have done. The pieces were snatched up and thrown on the coals as if by magic. The major took his place beside the woman who had uttered a shriek of terror on recognizing him; he found her sitting motionless on a cushion from the carriage, warming herself; she gazed at him silently, without a smile. Philippe then saw near at hand the soldier to whom he had intrusted the defence of the carriage; the poor man was wounded. Overwhelmed by numbers, he had yielded at last to the stragglers who attacked him; but, like the dog who
has defended his master's dinner to the last moment, he had accepted his share of the booty, and had made himself a sort of cloak with a white sheet. At that moment, he was engaged in cooking a piece of the mare's flesh, and the major read on his face the joy aroused by the preparations for the feast.

The Comte de Vandières, who had fallen in a senile condition three days before, lay on a cushion beside his wife, and gazed with staring eyes at the flames whose warmth was beginning to conquer his numbness. He had shown no more emotion at Philippe's arrival and danger than at the combat which had resulted in the pillaging of the carriage. First of all, Sucy grasped the young countess's hand as if to testify to his affection and to express the grief he felt in seeing her reduced thus to the last straits; but he said nothing as he seated himself beside her on a mound of snow, which was rapidly melting, and himself yielded to the bliss of feeling warm, forgetting the danger, forgetting everything. His face involuntarily assumed an expression of almost stupid joy, and he waited impatiently until the piece of horseflesh given to his trooper should be cooked. The odor of that burning meat irritated his hunger, and his hunger imposed silence on his heart, his courage, and his love. He contemplated without anger the results of the pillage of his carriage. The men who sat around the fire had divided the blankets, the cushions, the cloaks, the dresses, the male and female clothing belonging to the count, the countess, and the major. Philippe turned to see if anything could still be recovered from the box. By the firelight he saw gold, diamonds, silverware, scattered about; evidently it had not occurred to anyone to appropriate anything of the sort.

Every one of the persons assembled by chance about that fire maintained a silence in which there was something ghastly, and did only what he deemed essential to his own comfort. There was a touch of the grotesque in that misery. The faces, distorted by cold, were overlaid with a coating of mud upon which tears traced from the eyes to the lower part of the cheeks a furrow whose depth showed the thickness of the mask. The filthy condition of their long beards made the soldiers still more hideous. Some were wrapped in women's shawls; others wore saddle-cloths, muddy horse-blankets, rags streaked with melted frost; some had one foot in a boot, the other in a shoe; in fact, there was not one of them whose costume was not laughable in some respect. In presence of such amusing sights, those men remained gloomy and solemn. The silence was broken only by the snapping of the wood or the cracking of the flame, by the far-off murmur of the camp, and by the blows of the swords with which the hungriest were hacking at Bichette's body, trying to obtain the best pieces. A few poor wretches, more exhausted than the rest, were sleeping, and if one of them happened to roll into the fire, no one pulled him out. These strict logicians thought that if he were not dead, his burns would warn him to lie in a safer place. If the poor devil woke in the fire and died,
no one pitied him. Some of the soldiers looked at one another as if to justify their own indifference by the indifference of the others. Twice the young countess witnessed that spectacle and said nothing. When the various pieces that had been placed on the embers were cooked, everyone satisfied his hunger with the gluttony which we consider disgusting when we see it in animals.

"This is the first time you ever saw thirty foot-soldiers on one horse!" cried the grenadier, who had shot the mare.

That was the only jest which afforded a glimpse of the national wit.

Ere long, the majority of the poor fellows rolled themselves in their coats, lay down on boards, on anything that would keep them from touching the snow, and fell asleep, heedless of the morrow. When the major was thoroughly warm and had satisfied his hunger, an irresistible longing for sleep weighed upon his eyelids. During the brief duration of his struggle against that longing, he gazed at the young woman; and as she had turned her face toward the fire to sleep, he could see her closed eyes and a part of her forehead; she was wrapped in a fur-lined pelisse and a heavy dragoon's cloak; her head rested on a pillow spotted with blood; her astrakhan cap, held in place by a handkerchief tied under her chin, protected her face from the cold as far as it was possible to do so; she had hidden her feet in her cloak. Thus rolled into a ball, she really resembled nothing at all. Was this the last of the vieandières? was this that fascinating woman, a lover's crown of glory, the queen of Parisian balls? Alas! even the eye of her most devoted friend could discover nothing feminine in that mass of rags and wraps. Love had succumbed to the cold in a woman's heart. Through the thick veils which irresistible drowsiness stretched before the major's eyes, the husband and wife appeared simply as two specks. The flame of the fire, those recumbent figures, that terrible, icy wind roaring within three steps of an ephemeral warmth, all was a dream. An importunate thought filled Philippe with terror.

"We shall all die if I fall asleep! I will not sleep!" he said to himself.

He slept. A terrible uproar and an explosion aroused him when he had slept an hour. The idea of duty, of his friend's peril, fell suddenly on his heart. He uttered a cry like a roar. He and his soldier alone were on their feet. They saw a sea of flame devouring tents and huts, and sharply outlined against it, in the shadow of the night, a mass of men; they heard outrages, howls of despair; they saw thousands of despondent and frantic faces. In the midst of that hell, a column of soldiers was breaking out a path to the bridge through two rows of corpses.

"It's the retreat of our rear-guard!" exclaimed the major. "No more hope!"

"I have spared your carriage, Philippe," said a friendly voice.

Sucy turned and recognized the young aide de camp by the light of the fire.
"Ah! all is lost," the major replied. "They have eaten my horse. How, in Heaven's name, can I make that stupid general and his wife walk?"

"Take a firebrand, Philippe, and threaten them!"

"Threaten the countess?"

"Adieu!" cried the aide de camp. "I have just time to cross this cursed river, and I must be off: I have a mother in France. What a night! That mob prefers to remain on the snow, and the majority of the wretches would let themselves burn rather than get up. It's four o'clock, Philippe! In two hours the Russians will begin to stir. I promise you that you will see the Béréaîna filled with corpses again. Think of yourself, Philippe! You have no horses, you cannot carry the countess; so come with me," he said, taking him by the arm.

"Abandon Stéphanie, my dear fellow!"

He seized the countess, placed her on her feet, shook her with the roughness of a man at his wits' end, and forced her to wake; she stared at him with a fixed, lifeless eye.

"We must go on, Stéphanie, or we shall die here!"

The countess's only reply was to slide to the ground once more, to sleep. The aide de camp seized a firebrand and waved it in front of her face.

"Let us save her in spite of herself!" cried Philippe, lifting the countess and carrying her to the carriage.

He returned and besought his friend's assistance. Between them they took the old general, not knowing whether he was dead or alive, and placed him beside his wife. The major rolled over with his foot some of the men who were lying near, recovered what they had stolen, heaped all the clothes on the husband and wife, and tossed some roasted strips of his mare's flesh into a corner of the carriage.

"What do you propose to do?" inquired the aide de camp.

"Drag it!" replied the major.

"You are mad!"

"That is true!" cried Philippe, folding his arms across his breast.

Suddenly a plan born of despair seemed to suggest itself to him.

He seized his trooper's uninjured arm.

"I intrust her to you for an hour," he said.

"Remember that you had better die than let anyone approach this carriage."

The major seized the countess's diamonds in one hand, drew his sword with the other, and began to use the flat of it fiercely on those of the sleeping men whom he judged from their appearance to be men of courage; he succeeded in arousing the colossal grenadier and two other men, whose rank it was impossible to distinguish.

"We are in a desperate fix!" he said.

"I know it," replied the grenadier, "but it's all the same to me."

"Well, death for death, isn't it better to sell one's life for a pretty woman and have a chance of seeing France once more?"

"I'd rather sleep," said one of the men, rolling
over the snow, "and if you bother me any more, major, I'll stick my sabre into your belly."

"What is that you want done, my officer?" said the grenadier. "That man's drunk! He's a Parisian, and likes to take things easy."

"This shall be yours, my gallant grenadier," cried the major, handing him a necklace of diamonds, "if you will follow me and fight like a madman. The Russians are within ten minutes' walk, and they have horses. We will steal up to their first battery and bring off two."

"But the sentinels, major?"

"One of us three—" he began.

He interrupted himself, and glanced at the aide de camp:

"You will come, won't you, Hippolyte?"

Hippolyte assented with a nod.

"One of us," continued the major, "will take charge of the sentinels. Perhaps the infernal Russians are asleep."

"Major, you're a brave man! But you'll take me in your carriage, eh?" said the grenadier.

"Yes, if you don't leave your skin up yonder.—If I should fall, do you, Hippolyte, and you, grenadier," said the major, "promise to devote yourself to the countess's deliverance?"

"Agreed!" cried the grenadier.

They started toward the Russian line, toward the batteries which had so pitilessly assailed the mass of unhappy wretches lying on the river bank. A few moments after their departure, the galloping of two horses on the snow made itself heard, and the rudely awakened battery discharged volley after volley which passed over the heads of the sleepers; the horses were going at such breakneck speed that their hoof-beats sounded like farriers hammering iron. The generous aide de camp had fallen. The sturdy grenadier was safe and sound. Philippe had received a bayonet-thrust in his shoulder while defending his friend; nevertheless, he clung to the horse's mane, and pressed him so tightly with his legs that the animal was caught in a vise, as it were.

"God be praised!" cried the major, when he found his trooper and the carriage in the same place.

"If you act fairly, officer, you will get the Cross for me. We played a pretty game with the musket and the sword, eh?"

"We have done nothing as yet! Let us harness the horses. Take these ropes."

"There aren't enough."

"Very good, grenadier, just roll these sleeping fellows over, and use their shawls and their linen."

"Ah! this rascal's dead!" cried the grenadier, stripping the first one he touched. "What a game! they're all dead!"

"All of them?"

"Yes, all! It seems that horse-meat is indigestible when you eat it served on snow."

The words made Philippe shudder. The cold had become much more severe.

"O God! to think of losing a woman whom I have already saved twenty times!"
He shook the countess once more, crying:
“Stéphanie! Stéphanie!”
The young woman opened her eyes.
“Madame, we are saved!”
“Saved!” she repeated, falling back.
The horses were harnessed to the carriage after a
fashion. The major, holding his sword in his best
hand and the reins in the other, and with his pistols
in his belt, mounted one horse, the grenadier the
other. The old soldier, whose feet were frozen,
had been thrown into the carriage across the gen-
eral and the countess. Maddened by blows with
the sword, the horses rushed furiously down into the
level plain where innumerable difficulties awaited
the major. It soon became impossible to go forward
without danger of crushing men, women, and even
sleeping children, one and all of whom refused to
stir when the grenadier aroused them. In vain did
Monsieur de Sucy seek the lane which the rear-
guard had lately made through that mass of men; it
was effaced as completely as the wake of a ship at
sea; he could move no faster than a walk, and was
frequently brought to a standstill by soldiers who
threatened to kill his horses.
“Do you want to reach the river?” said the gren-
adier.
“At the cost of all my blood! at the cost of the
whole world!” replied the major.
“Forward, then!—You can’t make an omelet
without breaking eggs.”
And the grenadier of the Guard drove the horses
upon the men in their path, stained the wheels with
blood, overturned tents, cutting a double furrow of
dead bodies across that field of heads. But let us do
him the justice to say that he never forgot to shout
in a voice of thunder:
“Out of the way, carrion!”
“Poor devils!” said the major.
“Pshaw! it was either the frost or the cannon!”
said the grenadier, urging on his horses by pricking
them with the point of his sword.
A catastrophe which might well have happened to
them much sooner, but from which fabulous good
luck had hitherto preserved them, suddenly arrested
their progress. The carriage tipped over.
“I expected it,” cried the imperturbable grena-
dier. “Aha! our comrade is dead.”
“Poor Laurent!” said the major.
“Laurent! Wasn’t he of the Fifth Chasseurs?”
“Yes.”
“He was my cousin. Bah! this devil of a life
isn’t happy enough for one to regret the loss of it in
these days.”
The carriage was not righted and the horses set
free without an immense and irreparable loss of time.
The shock was so severe that the young countess,
awakened and aroused from her benumbed state by
the commotion, threw off her coverings, and rose.
“Where are we, Philippe?” she asked in a sweet
voice, looking about her.
“Within five hundred yards of the bridge. We
are going to cross the Béresina. When we are on
the other side, Stéphanie, I won't torment you any
more, I will let you sleep; we shall be safe then, and
can go quietly on to Vilna. God grant that you may
never know what your life will have cost!"
"Are you wounded?"
"It is nothing."

The hour of the catastrophe had arrived. The
guns of the Russians announced the approach of day.
They had taken possession of Studzianka, and were
sweeping the plain; and by the first gleams of dawn
the major saw their columns in motion and forming
on the heights. A shout of alarm arose from the dis-
orderly multitude, which was on its feet in an in-
stant. One and all instinctively realized the danger,
and they crowded toward the bridge with a wave-
like movement. The Russians came down with the
velocity of fire. Men, women, children, horses, all
were moving toward the bridge. Luckily, the major
and the countess were still at some distance from the
bank. General Eblé had set fire to the piers of the
bridge on the other side. Notwithstanding the warn-
ings shouted at those who were swarming upon that
plank of salvation, not one would turn back. Not
only did the bridge go down laden with people, but
the impetus of that great multitude of men rushing
toward the fatal bank was so violent that a mass of
humanity was hurled into the stream like an ava-
lanche. Not a cry was heard, but a dull splash as
if made by an enormous stone falling into the water;
then the Bérézia was covered with dead bodies. The
retrograde movement of those who drew back upon

the plain to avoid that horrible death was so violent,
and the shock with which they collided with those
who were still moving forward was so terrible, that
a great number died of suffocation. The Comte and
Comtesse de Vandières owed their lives to their car-
riage. The horses, after having crushed and tramped
a mass of dying men, were themselves crushed and
trampled to death by the human deluge rushing to-
ward the shore. The major and the grenadier found
their salvation in their strength. They killed to
avoid being killed. That hurricane of human faces,
that ebb and flow of bodies moved by the same im-
pulse, resulted in leaving the bank of the Bérézia
deserted for a few moments. The multitude had
turned back into the plain. Some few men who
threw themselves into the river from the bank, did
so less in the hope of reaching the other bank, which
to them meant France, than to avoid the deserts of
Siberia. Despair became an aegis for some coura-
geous men. One officer leaped from one piece of
floating ice to another to the other bank; a soldier
crawled up upon a heap of dead bodies and cakes of
ice, as if by a miracle. That immense horde realized
at last that the Russians would not kill twenty thou-
sand unarmed, dazed, benumbed men, who did not
defend themselves, and they awaited their fate with
horrible resignation. Thereupon, the major, the
grenadier, the old general, and his wife were left
alone, a few steps from the spot where the bridge
had been. They stood there silent, dry-eyed, sur-
rounded by a wilderness of corpses. A few uninjured
soldiers, a few officers whose energy was fully restored by the emergency, were near them. There were about fifty men in all. About two hundred yards away, the major spied the ruins of the bridge built for vehicles, which had been destroyed the night before.

"Let us build a raft!" he cried.

The words were barely out of his mouth when the whole party hurried toward the ruins. The men began to collect iron clamps, pieces of wood, ropes,—in a word, all the materials necessary for the construction of a raft. A score of soldiers and officers, well armed and commanded by the major, formed a guard to protect the workers against the desperate attacks which the mob might make on detecting their plan. The longing for liberty which animates prisoners and enables them to perform miracles cannot be compared with the feeling which inspired those hapless Frenchmen at that moment.

"Here come the Russians! here come the Russians!" the defending party shouted to the raft-builders.

And the wood cried aloud, the raft increased in width and length and depth. Generals, colonels, privates, all bent beneath the weight of wheels, iron bars, ropes, and planks: it was a reproduction in real life of the building of Noah's Ark. The young countess, sitting beside her husband, looked on at the spectacle with a feeling of regret at her inability to help on the work; she did, however, assist in making knots to strengthen the ropes. At last, the raft was finished. Forty men thrust it into the river, while some ten or twelve soldiers held the ropes by which it was to be made fast to the bank. As soon as the builders saw their craft fairly afloat on the Beresina, they threw themselves from the bank with horrible selfishness. The major, dreading the frenzy of that first impulse, held Stéphanie and the general by the hand; but he shuddered when he saw that the raft was black with people, and that men were crowded upon it like spectators in the pit at a theatre.

"Savages!" he cried, "it was I who suggested the idea of building a raft; I am the one who saved you, and you refuse me a place!"

A confused murmur was the only reply. The men on the edges of the raft were provided with poles which they placed against the bank and pushed vigorously in order to give the frail craft an impetus that would send it across the river through the dead bodies and the floating ice.

"Tonnerre de Dieu! I'll pitch you into the water if you don't take on the major and his two friends," cried the grenadier, and he raised his sword, prevented their leaving the bank, and made them crowd closer together, disregarding their horrible cries.

"I am falling!—I am falling!" his companions yelled. "Let us go! push off!"

The major glanced dry-eyed at his mistress, who raised her eyes heavenward in sublime resignation.

"To die with you!" she said.

There was something comical in the plight of the men on the raft. Although they uttered frightful
howls of rage, not one of them dared resist the grenadier; for they were so crowded, that to push anyone of them would have been enough to upset them all. In that perilous condition of affairs, a captain tried to rid them of the grenadier, who detected his hostile movement, seized him, and threw him into the water, saying:

"Ah! my duck, so you want to drink, do you?—There you go!—Here is room for two!" he cried.

"Come, major, throw us your little woman, and come yourself! Leave that old dotard, he'll be dead by to-morrow."

"Make haste!" cried a voice composed of a hundred voices.

"Come on, major! These fellows are growling, and they're right."

The Comte de Vandières threw off his rags, and stood erect in his general's uniform.

"Let us save the count," said Philippe.

Stéphanie pressed her lover's hand, threw herself upon him, and strained him to her heart in a desperate embrace.

"Adieu!" she said.

They had understood each other.

The Comte de Vandières recovered his faculties and his presence of mind sufficiently to leap aboard the raft, whither Stéphanie followed him after a last glance at Philippe.

"Will you take my place, major?" cried the grenadier. "I don't care a fig for my life; I have neither wife nor child nor mother."

"I place them in your care," cried the major, indicating the count and his wife.

"Never fear, I will take care of them as of my own eye."

The raft was impelled so fiercely toward the bank opposite that on which Philippe stood motionless, that it struck with a force which shook it from stern to stern. The count, who was on the edge, rolled into the river. As he fell, a piece of floating ice cut off his head, and whirled it away like a cannon-ball.

"Look, major!" cried the grenadier.

"Adieu!" cried a woman's voice.

Philippe de Sucy fell to the ground, horror-stricken, overwhelmed by cold, by regret, and by fatigue.
"My poor niece had gone mad," said the doctor, after a moment's silence.—"Ah! monsieur," he added, grasping Monsieur d'Albon's hand, "what a terrible burden life has been to that little woman, so young and so delicately nurtured! Having been separated, by incredible ill-fortune, from the grenadier of the Guard,—his name was Fleuriot,—she was dragged about for two years in the wake of the army, the plaything of a crowd of miserable knaves. She went about barefooted and half-clothed, so I was told, and for whole months at a time was entirely without care or proper sustenance; sometimes kept in the hospitals, sometimes driven out like a wild beast. God alone knows the miseries which that unfortunate creature lived through. She was in a small town in Germany, confined with lunatics, while her parents, who believed her dead, divided up her property here. In 1816, Fleuriot, the grenadier, recognized her in an inn at Strasbourg, whither she had gone after escaping from her prison. Some peasants told the grenadier that the countess had lived a whole month in the woods, and that they had tracked her about, trying to catch her, but without success. I was at that time within a few leagues of Strasbourg. Hearing some talk about a wild girl, I had a desire to ascertain the exact facts which had given rise to the absurd fables then current. Imagine
my feelings when I recognized the countess! Fleuriot told me all that he knew of her pitiful story. I took the poor man with my niece to Auvergne, where I had the misfortune to lose him. He had some little influence over Madame de Vandières. Nobody but he could induce her to dress. Adieu! the one word which is to her the whole language, she used to say very rarely. Fleuriot undertook to rouse some ideas in her mind, but he failed; the only result was to make her say that melancholy word a little oftener. The grenadier was able to divert her mind and to interest her by playing with her, and I hoped great things from him; but—"

Stéphanie’s uncle was silent for a moment.

"Here," he continued, "she has found another creature whom she seems to understand. It is an idiot peasant woman, who, notwithstanding her stupidity and her ugliness, once loved a mason. This mason was willing to marry her because she owned a few rods of land. Poor Geneviève was the happiest creature on earth for a year. She wore her best clothes and danced with Dallot on Sundays; she understood what love meant; there was room in her heart and her mind for sentiment. But Dallot thought better of it. He found a girl who has her senses and a little more land than Geneviève. So Dallot left Geneviève. The poor creature lost what little mind love had developed in her, and no longer knows how to do anything more than watch cows and trim grass. My niece and the poor girl are united in a certain sense by the invisible chain of their common

destiny, and by the sentiment which caused their madness.—Look!" said Stéphanie’s uncle, leading Monsieur d’Albon to the window.

The magistrate saw the pretty countess sitting on the ground between Geneviève’s legs. The peasant, armed with an enormous horn comb, was devoting her undivided attention to the task of untangling Stéphanie’s long black hair, upon which the countess allowed her to work her will, uttering stifled cries in a tone which denoted instinctive enjoyment. Monsieur d’Albon shuddered when he observed the unconstraint and the animal nonchalance which betrayed an entire absence of mental power.

"O Philippe! Philippe!" he cried, "your past misfortunes are nothing.—Is there no hope?" he asked.

The doctor raised his eyes to heaven.

"Adieu, monsieur," said Monsieur d’Albon, pressing the old man’s hand. "My friend awaits my return; you will soon see him."

"So it is really she?" cried Sucy, when he had heard the Marquis d’Albon’s first words. "Ah! I thought as much!" he added, while the tears gathered in his black eyes, which were usually so stern.

"Yes, she is the Comtesse de Vandières," replied the magistrate.

The colonel suddenly sprang out of bed, and dressed himself in haste.

"Well, well, Philippe," said the wondering magistrate, "are you going mad, too?"
“Why, I am no longer ill,” replied the colonel, simply. “This news has allayed all my pains, and what disease could make itself felt when I am thinking of Stéphanie? I am going to the Bons-Hommes, to see her, to speak to her, to cure her. She is free: you will see that happiness will smile upon us, or else there is no Providence. Do you really believe that that poor woman can hear my voice and not recover her reason?”

“She has already seen you without recognizing you,” rejoined the magistrate, gently; for, when he observed his friend’s extravagant hope, he tried to inspire a salutary doubt in his mind.

The colonel started; but the next moment he began to laugh with an incredulous gesture. No one dared to oppose his plan. In a few hours he was settled at the old priory with the physician and Comtesse de Vandières.

“Where is she?” he cried, when he arrived.

“Hush!” replied Monsieur Fanjat, Stéphanie’s uncle. “She is asleep. See, there she is.”

Philippe saw the poor madwoman lying on a bench in the sunlight. Her head was protected from the intense heat by a forest of hair scattered over her face; her arms were hanging gracefully, and her hands touched the ground; the pose of her body was as graceful as that of a deer; her feet were bent under her without effort; her bosom rose and fell regularly; her skin, her complexion, had that porcelain-like whiteness which so arouses our admiration in children. Geneviève sat quietly beside her, holding a twig which Stéphanie had probably broken from the topmost branch of some poplar, and waving it softly over her sleeping companion’s face, to drive away the flies and cool the air. The peasant glanced at Monsieur Fanjat and the colonel; then, like an animal who has recognized its master, she slowly turned her head toward the countess and continued to watch over her, without having given the least sign of surprise or intelligence. The air was intensely hot. The stone bench seemed to glow, and the open field sent skyward those sportive vapors which flutter and flash above the grass like golden dust; but Geneviève seemed unconscious of the consuming heat. The colonel grasped the doctor’s hands fiercely in his. Tears started from his eyes, rolled down his virile cheeks, and fell upon the grass at Stéphanie’s feet.

“Monsieur,” said the uncle, “for two years my heart has been broken every day. Soon you will be like me. If you do not weep, you will feel your grief none the less.”

“You have cared for her!” said the colonel, whose eyes expressed no less jealousy than gratitude.

The two men understood each other; and again they grasped each other’s hand in a firm grasp, and stood, without speaking or moving, gazing at that charming creature, so beautifully placid and calm in sleep. From time to time, she uttered a sigh, and that sigh, which had every appearance of rationality, made the poor colonel tremble with gladness.

“Alas!” said Monsieur Fanjat, softly, “do not
deceive yourself, monsieur; at this moment, she is in full possession of her reason."

Those persons who have stood enraptured for hours watching the slumber of one dearly loved, whose eyes were certain to smile upon them when they awoke, will, doubtless, comprehend the sweet yet agonizing emotion which stirred the colonel. To him, that sleep was an illusion; the awakening would be death, and the most horrible of all deaths. Suddenly a young kid came bounding toward the bench and sniffed at Stéphanie, who was awakened by the sound; she sprang lightly to her feet, a movement which did not frighten the capricious creature; but when her eyes fell upon Philippe, she ran away, followed by her four-footed companion, to a hedge of elder-trees; then she uttered once more the cry like that of a frightened bird which the colonel had heard near the gate when the countess first appeared to Monsieur d'Albon. At last, she climbed a laburnum-tree, seated herself amid the green foliage, and began to stare at the stranger with the eager scrutiny of the most inquisitive nightingale in the forest.

"Adieu! adieu! adieu!" she said, but the mind did not communicate the slightest significant inflection to the word.

She was as impassive as a bird whistling his only melody.

"She does not recognize me!" cried the colonel, in despair. "Stéphanie, it is Philippe, your Philippe!—Philippe!"

The poor fellow walked toward the laburnum; but when he was within a few feet of the tree, the countess glared at him as if to defy him, although a sort of fearful expression crept into her eye; then, with a single spring, she passed from the laburnum to an acacia, and thence to a northern fir, where she swung from branch to branch with incredible agility.

"Don't chase her," said Monsieur Fanjat to the colonel. "You will place between yourself and her an aversion which may become an insurmountable barrier; I will help you to make yourself known to her and to tame her. Come and sit on this bench. If you pay no heed to the poor creature, you will soon see her coming nearer and nearer to examine you."

"To think that she should fail to recognize me and should fly from me!" exclaimed the colonel, seating himself with his back against a tree whose dense foliage shaded a rustic bench.

His head fell forward on his breast. The doctor did not speak. Soon the countess descended slowly from the topmost branches of her fir-tree, fluttering about like a will-o'-the-wisp, sometimes stopping to swing on the branches with the wind. She stopped on each branch to watch the stranger; but, seeing that he did not move, she leaped lightly to the grass at last, stood erect, and walked slowly toward him across the field. When she had taken her position against a tree about ten feet from the bench, Monsieur Fanjat whispered to the colonel:
"Take some lumps of sugar quietly from my pocket and show them to her; she will come to you; I will gladly renounce in your favor the pleasure of giving her sweets. With the aid of sugar, of which she is passionately fond, you can accustom her to come to you and recognize you."

"When she was a woman," said Philippe, sadly, "she had no taste for sweet things."

When the colonel held out a lump of sugar to Stéphanie between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand, she uttered her savage cry anew and ran eagerly toward him; then she stopped, paralyzed by the instinctive fear he caused her; she looked at the sugar and turned her head away alternately, like an unfortunate dog whose master forbids him to touch a piece of meat until he has reached the last letter of the alphabet, which he recites with great moderation. At last, animal passion triumphed over fear: Stéphanie rushed at Philippe, timidly put out her little brown hand to grasp her prey, touched her lover's fingers, seized the sugar, and disappeared in a clump of trees. That frightful scene was too much for the colonel, who burst into tears and fled to the salon.

"Pray, is love less courageous than friendship?" said Monsieur Fanjat. "I have hope, monsieur le baron. My poor niece has been in a much more deplorable condition than this in which you see her."

"Is it possible?" cried Philippe.

"She used to remain naked," continued the doctor.

The colonel turned pale, and made a horrified gesture; the doctor thought that he recognized in

that pallor some ominous symptoms; he felt his pulse, and found him in a violent fever; by persist-ent urging, he succeeded in inducing him to go to bed, and prepared a slight dose of opium to insure him a quiet night's sleep.

A week passed away, during which Baron de Suyer was constantly in the throes of the most intense mental anguish; and soon his tears were exhausted. His sorely bruised heart could not accustom itself to the spectacle presented by the countess's malady; but he compromised, so to speak, with his painful situation, and found compensations in his suffering. His heroism knew no bounds. He had the courage to try to tame Stéphanie, by selecting the choicest sweetmeats for her; he took so much pains about bringing them to her, he showed so much tact in adapting the modest conquests that he tried to make over his mistress's instinct, that last remaining shred of her intelligence, that he succeeded in making her tamer than she had ever been. He went down into the park every morning; and if, after a long search for the countess, he could not fix on the tree in which she was gently swinging, or the nook wherein she had lain down to play with a bird, or upon what part of the roof she had perched, he would whistle the famous air Partant pour la Syrie, which was con-nected with the memory of one of their love-scenes. Stéphanie would at once come running to him with the grace and lightness of a swan. She had be-come so accustomed to the colonel's presence that he no longer frightened her; soon she ventured
to sit on his knee, to throw her slender, nervous arm around his neck. In that attitude, so dear to lovers, Philippe would give the dainty countess sweetmeats one by one. And after she had eaten them all, she would frequently search her friend's pockets with movements as rapid and as mechanical as those of a monkey. When she was sure that he had nothing more, she would gaze at him with a limpid eye in which there was no trace of ideas or of recognition; then she would play with him; she would try to take off his boots to see his feet, she would tear his gloves, put on his hat; but she allowed him to pass his hands through her hair, to take her in his arms, and received from him burning kisses with no sign of pleasure; she gazed at him in silence when he shed tears; she understood the whistling of Partant pour la Syrie, but he could not succeed in making her utter her own name, Stéphanie. Philippe was sustained in his heart-rending undertaking by a hope which never forsook him. If, on a lovely autumn morning, he spied the countess sitting quietly on a bench beneath a yellowing poplar, the unhappy lover would lie at her feet and gaze into her eyes as long as she would look at him, hoping that the light which came from them would become the light of intelligence; sometimes he would delude himself with the thought that those rigid, impassive gleams began to vibrate once more, changed to softer, living rays, and he would cry:

"Stéphanie! Stéphanie! you hear me, you see me!"

But she listened to that voice as she listened to any noise, to the rustling of the wind among the trees, to the lowing of the cow on whose back she climbed; and the colonel would wring his hands in despair, despair constantly renewed. The lapse of time and these fruitless experiments served only to augment his suffering. One calm evening, amid the silence and peace of that country retreat, Monsieur Fanjat spied the baron in the distance loading a pistol. The old doctor understood from that that Philippe had lost hope; he felt all his blood rush back to his heart, but he conquered the fit of dizziness which assailed him, because he preferred to see his niece alive and insane rather than dead. He hurried to the colonel's side.

"What are you doing?" he said.

"That is for myself," the colonel replied, pointing to a loaded pistol on the bench; "and this is for her!" he added, as he rammed the charge home in the weapon he held in his hand.

The countess was lying on the ground, playing with a ball.

"You do not know, it seems," rejoined the doctor, coolly, dissembling his alarm, "that last night in her sleep she said: 'Philippe.'"

"She called my name!" said the baron, dropping his pistol, which Stéphanie picked up; but he snatched it from her hands, seized the one that lay on the bench, and rushed away.

"Poor darling!" cried the doctor, delighted with the success of his stratagem.
He pressed the mad girl to his bosom, and continued:

"He would have killed you, the selfish creature! He wants to kill you, because he is unhappy. He doesn't love you for your own sake, my child! We will forgive him, won't we? He is mad, and you are only foolish. God alone, I tell you, has the right to call you to Him. We fancy that you are unhappy because you no longer share in our miseries, fools that we are! But," he said, taking her on his knee, "you are happy, nothing troubles you; you live like the bird, like the deer."

She pounced on a young blackbird which was leaping from twig to twig, seized it with a little shriek of delight, wrung its neck, saw that it was dead, and left it at the foot of a tree without another thought.

The next day, at dawn, the colonel went down into the garden, looking for Stéphanie, believing that happiness was at hand; not finding her, he whistled. When his mistress had come, he took her arm, and they walked together for the first time, entering an arbor formed by arching trees whose fading leaves were falling in the morning breeze. The colonel sat down, and Stéphanie, of her own motion, took her place on his knee. Philippe trembled with excitement.

"My love," he said, kissing her hands ardently,

"I am Philippe—"

She looked at him with interest.

"Come," he added, embracing her. "Do you feel my heart beat? It never beat for any other than you. I love you still. Philippe is not dead, he is here, you are sitting on his knee. You are my Stéphanie, and I am your Philippe!"

"Adieu!" she said, "adieu!"

The colonel shuddered, for he thought he could see that his excitement was infecting his mistress. His heart-rending cry, inspired by hope, that supreme effort of an undying love, of a frantic passion, awakened his mistress's reason.

"Ah! Stéphanie, how happy we will be!"

She uttered an exclamation of satisfaction, and there was a vague gleam of intelligence in her eyes.

"She knows me! Stéphanie!"

He felt that his heart was swollen to bursting, his eyes became moist. But suddenly the countess held up a tiny piece of sugar which she had found by searching him while he talked. So he had taken for a human thought that degree of intelligence which a monkey's mischief presupposes.—Philippe swooned. Monsieur Fanjat found the countess sitting on his body. She was nibbling her sugar, displaying her pleasure by antics which would have been voted charming, if, when she had her reason, she had jokingly attempted to imitate her parrot or her cat.

"Ah! my friend," cried Philippe, when he recovered consciousness, "I die every day, every moment! I love her too dearly! I could endure anything if she had a single feminine characteristic in her madness. But to find her always like a wild woman, even without a trace of modesty; to see—"
“So you would have preferred an operatic madness,” said the doctor, bitterly, “and your loving devotion is subject to worldly prejudices? Why, monsieur, I have renounced in your favor the melancholy pleasure of feeding my niece, I have abandoned to you the joy of playing with her, I have kept for myself only the heaviest burdens.—While you sleep, I keep watch over her, I—Come, monsieur, give her up. Leave this depressing retreat. I know how to live with the dear little creature, I understand her madness, I watch her every movement, I am in her secrets. Some day you will thank me.”

The colonel left the Bons-Hommes, to return but once. The doctor was shocked at the effect he had produced on his guest, for he was beginning to love him as dearly as he loved his niece. If either of the two lovers were deserving of pity, it certainly was Philippe: he had to bear alone the burden of a most terrible sorrow! The doctor made inquiries concerning him, and learned that the poor fellow had fled for refuge to an estate that he owned near Saint-Germain. On the faith of a dream, the colonel had formed a plan to restore the countess’s reason. Without the doctor’s knowledge, he employed the rest of the autumn in making his preparations for that tremendous undertaking. A small stream ran through his park, and in winter overflowed a large swamp not unlike that which extended along the right bank of the Bérésina. The village of Satout, situated on a small hill, overlooked the swamp, and completed the framework of this scene of horror, as Studzianka overlooked the plain of the Bérésina.

The colonel hired men to dig a canal to represent the greedy stream in which the treasures of France, Napoléon and his army, were lost. With the assistance of his memory, Philippe succeeded in reproducing in his park the bank from which General Eblé had built his bridges. He planted piers and burned them, so as to represent the blackened, half-burned timbers on either side of the river, which had told the stragglers that the road to France was closed to them. The colonel caused a mass of débris to be brought thither, similar to that which his companions in misfortune had used to build their raft. He ruined his park in order to perfect the illusion upon which he founded his last hope. He ordered a quantity of dilapidated uniforms in which to array several hundreds of peasants. He built cabins, erected tents and batteries, and set fire to them. In short, he omitted nothing which could help to reproduce the most ghastly of scenes, and he accomplished his object. In the early days of December, when the snow had covered the earth with a thick white mantle, he fancied that he had the Bérésina before him. That false Russia was so startlingly true to life, that several of his companions in arms recognized the scene of their former miseries. Monsieur de Sucy kept the secret of this tragic performance, which several different social circles in Paris discussed as a proof of madness.

One day, early in January, 1820, the colonel entered a carriage similar to that in which Monsieur
and Madame de Vandières had travelled from Moscow to Studziana, and drove toward the forest of Isle-Adam. It was drawn by horses closely resembling those he had brought away from the Russian camp at the risk of his life. He wore the outlandish, travel-stained clothing, the hat, and the weapons which he wore on the 29th of November, 1812. He had even allowed his beard and hair to grow, and neglected his face, so that no element of the ghastly truth might be lacking.

"I guessed your plan," cried Monsieur Fanjat, when the colonel alighted from his carriage. "If you wish it to succeed, don't show yourself in this equipage. To-night I will give my niece a little opium. While she is asleep, we will dress her as she was dressed at Studziana, and put her in this carriage. I will follow you in a berlin."

About two in the morning, the young countess was taken to the carriage and laid upon cushions, with a coarse blanket thrown over her. Several peasants held torches to light this strange kidnapping. Suddenly a piercing shriek rang out in the silence of the night. Philippe and the doctor turned, and saw Geneviève, half-naked, coming from the room on the ground-floor, in which she slept.

"Adieu, adieu, it's all over! adieu!" she cried, weeping bitterly.

"Why, what's the matter, Geneviève?" said Monsieur Fanjat.

Geneviève shook her head despairingly, threw up her hands, looked at the carriage, uttered a long howl, with visible symptoms of profound terror, and silently returned to the house.

"That is a good omen!" cried the colonel. "That girl regrets the loss of her companion. Perhaps she sees that Stéphanie is going to recover her reason."

"God grant it!" said Monsieur Fanjat, who seemed much affected by the incident.

Since he had devoted himself exclusively to the study of madness, he had fallen in with several examples of the prophetic spirit and gift of second-sight of which insane persons have given proof, and which are found, according to some travellers, among savage tribes.

As the colonel had calculated, Stéphanie crossed the fictitious plain of the Bérésina about nine in the morning; she was awakened by a bomb which exploded about a hundred paces from the spot where the tragedy was to be enacted. That was the signal. A thousand peasants set up a frightful outcry, like the roar of despair which appalled the Russians when twenty thousand stragglers found themselves by their own fault doomed to death or slavery. At that explosion, at that outcry, the countess leaped out of the carriage, ran with frantic excitement about the snow-covered field, saw the burned huts, and the fatal raft being launched on the icy Bérésina. Major Philippe was there, brandishing his sword amid the throng. Madame de Vandières uttered a cry which made all hearts stand still, and took her place in front of the colonel, whose blood surged madly through his veins. She seemed to be collecting her
thoughts, and gazed, vaguely at first, at that strange picture. For one instant, as brief as the lightning-flash, her eyes had the unintelligent lucidity which we admire in the eyes of a bird; then she passed her hand across her forehead with the intense expression of a person in meditation, she gazed upon that living memory, that episode of her past reproduced before her, turned her face quickly toward Philippe, and saw him! An awful silence reigned amid that crowd. The colonel gasped for breath and dared not speak, the doctor wept. Stéphanie's lovely face flushed slightly; then, by slow degrees, it resumed at last the brilliant coloring of a young girl in the bloom of youth. Her cheeks were tinged with a lovely, rich shade of red. Life and happiness, kindled by ebullient intelligence, crept nearer and nearer, like a conflagration. A convulsive trembling spread from her feet to her heart. And these phenomena, which appeared in an instant, had, as it were, a common bond of union when Stéphanie's eyes flashed forth a celestial ray, a living spark. She lived, she thought! She shivered, perhaps with terror. God himself set free a second time that lifeless tongue and cast anew His fire into that extinct mind. Human will returned with its magnetic torrents, and vivified that body from which it had been absent so long.

"Stéphanie!" cried the colonel.

"Oh! it is Philippe!" said the poor countess.

She threw herself into the trembling arms which the colonel held out to her, and the embrace of the two lovers struck awe to the hearts of the spectators.

Stéphanie burst into tears. Suddenly her tears ceased to flow, she became as like a corpse as if the lightning from heaven had struck her, and said in a feeble voice:

"Adieu, Philippe!—I love you. Adieu!"

"Oh! she is dead!" cried the colonel, opening his arms.

The old doctor received his niece's lifeless body, kissed her as a young man would have done, lifted her, and carried her to a pile of wood, where he sat down. He examined her carefully, and placed a feeble, convulsively trembling hand upon her heart. That heart had ceased to beat.

"Can it be true?" he said, glancing from the colonel's motionless form to Stéphanie's face, to which death imparted that resplendent beauty, a fleeting halo, the pledge, perhaps, of a glorious future.—"Yes, she is dead!"

"Ah! that smile!" cried Philippe. "See that smile! Is it possible?"

"She is already cold," replied Monsieur Fanjat.

Monsieur de Sucy walked away a few steps, as if to tear himself from that horrible sight, but stopped, whistled the air that the madwoman understood, and, finding that his mistress did not run to him, staggered away like a drunken man, still whistling, but did not turn again.

General Philippe de Sucy was considered in society a very amiable man, and especially a very jovial spirit. A few days ago a lady complimented him on his good humor and his even disposition.
"Ah! madame," he said, "I pay very dearly for my jests at night, when I am alone."
"Why, are you ever alone?"
"No," he replied, with a smile.
If a judicious observer of human nature had seen the expression on Sucy's face at that moment, he would have shuddered; I doubt not.
"Why don't you marry?" continued the lady in question, who had several daughters at a boarding-school. "You are rich, titled, of the very oldest nobility; you have talents, brilliant prospects, everything smiles upon you."
"Yes," he replied, "but it is a smile that is killing me."
The next day the lady was surprised to learn that Monsieur de Sucy had blown out his brains during the night. The first society took diverse views of that extraordinary event, and everyone tried to ascertain the motive. Gambling, love, ambition, hidden dissipation, explained the catastrophe, the last scene of a drama begun in 1812, according to the taste of each searcher for light. Two men only, a magistrate and an old doctor, knew that Monsieur de Sucy was one of those strong men to whom God gives the unfortunate power of coming forth triumphant day after day from a frightful combat with some unknown monster. Let God withdraw His powerful hand from them but a moment, and they succumb.

Paris, March 1832.