A
Woman of Thirty

By

Honore de Balzac

A Woman of Thirty -Chapter I

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Chapter I

Early Mistakes

t was a Sunday morning in the beginning of April 1813,a morningwhich gave promise of one of those bright days when Parisians,for thefirst time in the year,behold dry pavements underfoot and a cloudlesssky overhead.It was not yet noon when a luxurious cabriolet,drawn bytwo spirited horses,turned out of the Rue de Castiglione into the Ruede Rivoli,and drew up behind a row of carriages standing before thenewly opened barrier half-way down the Terrasse de Feuillants.Theowner of the carriage looked anxious and out of health;the thin hairon his sallow temples,turning gray already,gave a look of prematureage to his face.He flung the reins to a servant who followed onhorseback,and alighted to take in his arms a young girl whose daintybeauty had already attracted the eyes of loungers on the Terrasse.Thelittle lady,standing upon the carriage step,graciously submitted tobe taken by the

waist,putting an arm round the neck of her guide,whoset her down upon the pavement without so much as ruffling thetrimming of her green rep dress.No lover would have been so careful.

The stranger could only be the father of the young girl,who took hisarm familiarly without a word of thanks,and hurried him into theGarden of the Tuileries.

The old father noted the wondering stare which some of the young mengave the couple,and the sad expression left his face for a moment.

Although he had long since reached the time of life when a man is fainto be content with such illusory delights as vanity bestows,he beganto smile.

"They think you are my wife,"he said in the young lady's ear,and heheld himself erect and walked with slow steps,which filled hisdaughter with despair.

He seemed to take up the coquette's part for her;perhaps of the two,he was the more gratified by the curious glances directed at thoselittle feet,shod with plum-colored prunella;at the dainty

figureoutlined by a low-cut bodice,filled in with an embroideredchemisette,which only partially concealed the girlish throat.Herdress was lifted by her movements as she walked,giving glimpseshigher than the shoes of delicately moulded outlines beneath open-worksilk stockings.More than one of the idlers turned and passed the pairagain,to admire or to catch a second glimpse of the young face,aboutwhich the brown tresses played;there was a glow in its white and red,partly reflected from the rose-colored satin lining of her fashionablebonnet,partly due to the eagerness and impatience which sparkled inevery feature.A mischievous sweetness lighted up the beautiful,almond-shaped dark eyes,bathed in liquid brightness,shaded by thelong lashes and curving arch of eyebrow.Life and youth displayedtheir treasures in the petulant face and in the gracious outlines ofthe bust unspoiled even by the fashion of the day,which brought thegirdle under the breast.

The young lady herself appeared to be insensible to admiration.Hereyes were fixed in a sort of anxiety on the Palace of the Tuileries,the goal,doubtless,of her petulant promenade.It wanted but fifteenminutes of noon,yet even at that early hour several women in galadress were coming away from the

Tuileries,not without backwardglances at the gates and pouting looks of discontent,as if theyregretted the lateness of the arrival which had cheated them of alonged-for spectacle.Chance carried a few words let fall by one ofthese disappointed fair ones to the ears of the charming stranger,andput her in a more than common uneasiness.The elderly man watched thesigns of impatience and apprehension which flitted across hiscompanion's pretty face with interest,rather than amusement,in hiseyes,observing her with a close and careful attention,which perhapscould only be prompted by some after-thought in the depths of afather's mind.

It was the thirteenth Sunday of the year 1813.In two days'timeNapoleon was to set out upon the disastrous campaign in which he wasto lose first Bessieres,and then Duroc;he was to win the memorablebattles of Lutzen and Bautzen,to see himself treacherously desertedby Austria,Saxony,Bavaria,and Bernadotte,and to dispute thedreadful field of Leipsic.The magnificent review commanded for thatday by the Emperor was to be the last of so many which had long drawnforth the admiration of Paris and of foreign visitors.For the lasttime the Old Guard would execute their scientific military

manoeuvreswith the pomp and precision which sometimes amazed the Giant himself.

Napoleon was nearly ready for his duel with Europe.It was a sadsentiment which brought a brilliant and curious throng to theTuileries.Each mind seemed to foresee the future,perhaps too inevery mind another thought was dimly present,how that in the future,when the heroic age of France should have taken the half-fabulouscolor with which it is tinged for us to-day,men's imaginations wouldmore than once seek to retrace the picture of the pageant which theywere assembled to behold.

"Do let us go more quickly,father;I can hear the drums,"the younggirl said,and in a half-teasing,half-coaxing manner she urged hercompanion forward.

"The troops are marching into the Tuileries,"said he.

"Or marching out of it--everybody is coming away,"she answered inchildish vexation,which drew a smile from her father.

"The review only begins at half-past twelve,"he said;he had

fallenhalf behind his impetuous daughter.

It might have been supposed that she meant to hasten their progress bya movement of her right arm,for it swung like an oar blade throughthe water.In her impatience she had crushed her handkerchief into aball in her tiny,well-gloved fingers.Now and then the old mansmiled,but the smiles were succeeded by an anxious look which crossedhis withered face and saddened it.In his love for the fair young girlby his side,he was as fain to exalt the present moment as to dreadthe future."She is happy to-day;will her happiness last?"he seemedto ask himself,for the old are somewhat prone to foresee their ownsorrows in the future of the young.

Father and daughter reached the peristyle under the tower where thetricolor flag was still waving;but as they passed under the arch bywhich people came and went between the Gardens of the Tuileries andthe Place du Carrousel,the sentries on guard called out sternly:

"No admittance this way."

By standing on tiptoe the young girl contrived to catch a glimpse of acrowd of well-dressed women,thronging either side of the old marblearcade along which the Emperor was to pass.

"We were too late in starting,father;you can see that quite well."Alittle piteous pout revealed the immense importance which she attachedto the sight of this particular review.

"Very well,Julie--let us go away.You dislike a crush."

"Do let us stay,father.Even here I may catch a glimpse of theEmperor;he might die during this campaign,and then I should neverhave seen him."

Her father shuddered at the selfish speech.There were tears in thegirl's voice;he looked at her,and thought that he saw tears beneathher lowered eyelids;tears caused not so much by the disappointment asby one of the troubles of early youth,a secret easily guessed by anold father.Suddenly Julie's face flushed,and she uttered anexclamation.Neither her father nor the sentinels understood themeaning of the cry;but an officer within the barrier,who sprangacross the court towards the staircase,heard

it,and turned abruptlyat the sound.He went to the arcade by the Gardens of the Tuileries,and recognized the young lady who had been hidden for a moment by thetall bearskin caps of the grenadiers.He set aside in favor of thepair the order which he himself had given.Then,taking no heed of themurmurings of the fashionable crowd seated under the arcade,he gentlydrew the enraptured child towards him.

"I am no longer surprised at her vexation and enthusiasm,if /you/arein waiting,"the old man said with a half-mocking,half-serious glanceat the officer.

"If you want a good position,M.le Duc,"the young man answered,"wemust not spend any time in talking.The Emperor does not like to bekept waiting,and the Grand Marshal has sent me to announce ourreadiness."

As he spoke,he had taken Julie's arm with a certain air of oldacquaintance,and drew her rapidly in the direction of the Place duCarrousel.Julie was astonished at the sight.An immense crowd waspenned up in a narrow space,shut in between the gray walls of thepalace and the limits marked out by chains round the

great sandedsquares in the midst of the courtyard of the Tuileries.The cordon ofsentries posted to keep a clear passage for the Emperor and his staffhad great difficulty in keeping back the eager humming swarm of humanbeings.

"Is it going to be a very fine sight?"Julie asked (she was radiantnow).

"Pray take care!"cried her guide,and seizing Julie by the waist,helifted her up with as much vigor as rapidity and set her down beside apillar.

But for his prompt action,his gazing kinswoman would have come intocollision with the hindquarters of a white horse which Napoleon'sMameluke held by the bridle;the animal in its trappings of greenvelvet and gold stood almost under the arcade,some ten paces behindthe rest of the horses in readiness for the Emperor's staff.

The young officer placed the father and daughter in front of the crowdin the first space to the right,and recommended them by a sign to thetwo veteran grenadiers on either side.Then he went

on his way intothe palace;a look of great joy and happiness had succeeded to hishorror-struck expression when the horse backed.Julie had given hishand a mysterious pressure;had she meant to thank him for the littleservice he had done her,or did she tell him,"After all,I shallreally see you?"She bent her head quite graciously in response to therespectful bow by which the officer took leave of them before hevanished.

The old man stood a little behind his daughter.He looked grave.Heseemed to have left the two young people together for some purpose ofhis own,and now he furtively watched the girl,trying to lull herinto false security by appearing to give his whole attention to themagnificent sight in the Place du Carrousel.When Julie's eyes turnedto her father with the expression of a schoolboy before his master,heanswered her glance by a gay,kindly smile,but his own keen eyes hadfollowed the officer under the arcade,and nothing of all that passedwas lost upon him.

"What a grand sight!"said Julie in a low voice,as she pressed herfather's hand;and indeed the pomp and picturesquesness of thespectacle in the Place du Carrousel drew the same

exclamation fromthousands upon thousands of spectators,all agape with wonder.Anotherarray of sightseers,as tightly packed as the ranks behind the oldnoble and his daughter,filled the narrow strip of pavement by therailings which crossed the Place du Carrousel from side to side in aline parallel with the Palace of the Tuileries.The dense living mass,variegated by the colors of the women's dresses,traced out a boldline across the centre of the Place du Carrousel,filling in thefourth side of a vast parallelogram,surrounded on three sides by thePalace of the Tuileries itself.Within the precincts thus railed offstood the regiments of the Old Guard about to be passed in review,drawn up opposite the Palace in imposing blue columns,ten ranks indepth.Without and beyond in the Place du Carrousel stood severalregiments likewise drawn up in parallel lines,ready to march inthrough the arch in the centre;the Triumphal Arch,where the bronzehorses of St.Mark from Venice used to stand in those days.At eitherend,by the Galeries du Louvre,the regimental bands were stationed,masked by the Polish Lancers then on duty.

The greater part of the vast graveled space was empty as an arena,ready for the evolutions of those silent masses disposed

with thesymmetry of military art.The sunlight blazed back from ten thousandbayonets in thin points of flame;the breeze ruffled the men's helmetplumes till they swayed like the crests of forest-trees before a gale.

The mute glittering ranks of veterans were full of bright contrastingcolors,thanks to their different uniforms,weapons,accoutrements,and aiguillettes;and the whole great picture,that miniaturebattlefield before the combat,was framed by the majestic toweringwalls of the Tuileries,which officers and men seemed to rival intheir immobility.Involuntarily the spectator made the comparisonbetween the walls of men and the walls of stone.The spring sunlight,flooding white masonry reared but yesterday and buildings centuriesold,shone full likewise upon thousands of bronzed faces,each onewith its own tale of perils passed,each one gravely expectant ofperils to come.

The colonels of the regiments came and went alone before the ranks ofheroes;and behind the masses of troops,checkered with blue andsilver and gold and purple,the curious could discern the tricolorpennons on the lances of some half-a-dozen indefatigable Polishcavalry,rushing about like shepherds'dogs in

charge of a flock,caracoling up and down between the troops and the crowd,to keep thegazers within their proper bounds.But for this slight flutter ofmovement,the whole scene might have been taking place in thecourtyard of the palace of the Sleeping Beauty.The very springbreeze,ruffling up the long fur on the grenadiers'bearskins,borewitness to the men's immobility,as the smothered murmur of the crowdemphasized their silence.Now and again the jingling of Chinese bells,or a chance blow to a big drum,woke the reverberating echoes of theImperial Palace with a sound like the far-off rumblings of thunder.

An indescribable,unmistakable enthusiasm was manifest in theexpectancy of the multitude.France was about to take farewell ofNapoleon on the eve of a campaign of which the meanest citizen foresawthe perils.The existence of the French Empire was at stake--to be,ornot to be.The whole citizen population seemed to be as much inspiredwith this thought as that other armed population standing in serriedand silent ranks in the enclosed space,with the Eagles and the geniusof Napoleon hovering above them.

Those very soldiers were the hope of France,her last drop of

blood;

and this accounted for not a little of the anxious interest of thescene.Most of the gazers in the crowd had bidden farewell--perhapsfarewell for ever--to the men who made up the rank and file of thebattalions;and even those most hostile to the Emperor,in theirhearts,put up fervent prayers to heaven for the glory of France;andthose most weary of the struggle with the rest of Europe had lefttheir hatreds behind as they passed in under the Triumphal Arch.Theytoo felt that in the hour of danger Napoleon meant France herself.

The clock of the Tuileries struck the half-hour.In a moment the humof the crowd ceased.The silence was so deep that you might have hearda child speak.The old noble and his daughter,wholly intent,seemingto live only by their eyes,caught a distinct sound of spurs and clankof swords echoing up under the sonorous peristyle.

And suddenly there appeared a short,somewhat stout figure in a greenuniform,white trousers,and riding boots;a man wearing on his head acocked hat well-nigh as magically potent as its wearer;the broad redribbon of the Legion of Honor rose and fell

on his breast,and a shortsword hung at his side.At one and the same moment the man was seen byall eyes in all parts of the square.

Immediately the drums beat a salute,both bands struck up a martialrefrain,caught and repeated like a fugue by every instrument from thethinnest flutes to the largest drum.The clangor of that call to armsthrilled through every soul.The colors dropped,and the men presentedarms,one unanimous rhythmical movement shaking every bayonet from theforemost front near the Palace to the last rank in the Place duCarrousel.The words of command sped from line to line like echoes.

The whole enthusiastic multitude sent up a shout of "Long live theEmperor!"

Everything shook,quivered,and thrilled at last.Napoleon had mountedhis horse.It was his movement that had put life into those silentmasses of men;the dumb instruments had found a voice at his coming,the Eagles and the colors had obeyed the same impulse which hadbrought emotion into all faces.

The very walls of the high galleries of the old palace seemed to cryaloud,"Long live the Emperor!"

There was something preternatural about it--it was magic at work,acounterfeit presentment of the power of God;or rather it was afugitive image of a reign itself so fugitive.

And he the centre of such love,such enthusiasm and devotion,and somany prayers,he for whom the sun had driven the clouds from the sky,was sitting there on his horse,three paces in front of his GoldenSquadron,with the grand Marshal on his left,and the Marshal-in-waitingon his right.Amid all the outburst of enthusiasm at hispresence not a feature of his face appeared to alter.

"Oh!yes.At Wagram,in the thick of the firing,on the field ofBorodino,among the dead,always as cool as a cucumber he is!"saidthe grenadier,in answer to the questions with which the young girlplied him.For a moment Julie was absorbed in the contemplation ofthat face,so quiet in the security of conscious power.The Emperornoticed Mlle.de Chatillonest,and leaned to make some brief remark toDuroc,which drew a smile from the

Grand Marshal.Then the reviewbegan.

If hitherto the young lady's attention had been divided betweenNapoleon's impassive face and the blue,red,and green ranks oftroops,from this time forth she was wholly intent upon a youngofficer moving among the lines as they performed their swiftsymmetrical evolutions.She watched him gallop with tireless activityto and from the group where the plainly dressed Napoleon shoneconspicuous.The officer rode a splendid black horse.His handsomesky-blue uniform marked him out amid the variegated multitude as oneof the Emperor's orderly staff-officers.His gold lace glittered inthe sunshine which lighted up the aigrette on his tall,narrow shako,so that the gazer might have compared him to a will-o'-the-wisp,or toa visible spirit emanating from the Emperor to infuse movement intothose battalions whose swaying bayonets flashed into flames;for,at amere glance from his eyes,they broke and gathered again,surging toand fro like the waves in a bay,or again swept before him like thelong ridges of high-crested wave which the vexed Ocean directs againstthe shore.

When the manoeuvres were over the officer galloped back at

full speed,pulled up his horse,and awaited orders.He was not ten paces fromJulie as he stood before the Emperor,much as General Rapp stands inGerard's Battle of Austerlitz.The young girl could behold her loverin all his soldierly splendor.

Colonel Victor d'Aiglemont,barely thirty years of age,was tall,slender,and well made.His well-proportioned figure never showed tobetter advantage than now as he exerted his strength to hold in therestive animal,whose back seemed to curve gracefully to the rider'sweight.His brown masculine face possessed the indefinable charm ofperfectly regular features combined with youth.The fiery eyes underthe broad forehead,shaded by thick eyebrows and long lashes,lookedlike white ovals bordered by an outline of black.His nose had thedelicate curve of an eagle's beak;the sinuous lines of the inevitableblack moustache enhanced the crimson of the lips.The brown and tawnyshades which overspread the wide high-colored cheeks told a tale ofunusual vigor,and his whole face bore the impress of dashing courage.

He was the very model which French artists seek to-day for the typicalhero of Imperial France.The horse which he rode was covered withsweat,the animal's quivering head denoted the last

degree ofrestiveness;his hind hoofs were set down wide apart and exactly in aline,he shook his long thick tail to the wind;in his fidelity to hismaster he seemed to be a visible presentment of that master's devotionto the Emperor.

Julie saw her lover watching intently for the Emperor's glances,andfelt a momentary pang of jealousy,for as yet he had not given her alook.Suddenly at a word from his sovereign Victor gripped his horse'sflanks and set out at a gallop,but the animal took fright at a shadowcast by a post,shied,backed,and reared up so suddenly that hisrider was all but thrown off.Julie cried out,her face grew white,people looked at her curiously,but she saw no one,her eyes werefixed upon the too mettlesome beast.The officer gave the horse asharp admonitory cut with the whip,and galloped off with Napoleon'sorder.

Julie was so absorbed,so dizzy with sights and sounds,thatunconsciously she clung to her father's arm so tightly that he couldread her thoughts by the varying pressure of her fingers.When Victorwas all but flung out of the saddle,she clutched her father with aconvulsive grip as if she herself were in danger of falling,and theold man looked at his daughter's

tell-tale face with dark and painfulanxiety.Pity,jealousy,something even of regret stole across everydrawn and wrinkled line of mouth and brow.When he saw the unwontedlight in Julie's eyes,when that cry broke from her,when theconvulsive grasp of her fingers drew away the veil and put him inpossession of her secret,then with that revelation of her love therecame surely some swift revelation of the future.Mournful forebodingscould be read in his own face.

Julie's soul seemed at that moment to have passed into the officer'sbeing.A torturing thought more cruel than any previous dreadcontracted the old man's painworn features,as he saw the glance ofunderstanding that passed between the soldier and Julie.The girl'seyes were wet,her cheeks glowed with unwonted color.Her fatherturned abruptly and led her away into the Garden of the Tuileries.

"Why,father,"she cried,"there are still the regiments in the Placedu Carrousel to be passed in review."

"No,child,all the troops are marching out."

"I think you are mistaken,father;M.d'Aiglemont surely told them toadvance----"

"But I feel ill,my child,and I do not care to stay."

Julie could readily believe the words when she glanced at his face;helooked quite worn out by his fatherly anxieties.

"Are you feeling very ill?"she asked indifferently,her mind was sofull of other thoughts.

"Every day is a reprieve for me,is it not?"returned her father.

"Now do you mean to make me miserable again by talking about yourdeath?I was in such spirits!Do pray get rid of those horrid gloomyideas of yours."

The father heaved a sigh."Ah!spoiled child,"he cried,"the besthearts are sometimes very cruel.We devote our whole lives to you,youare our one thought,we plan for your welfare,sacrifice our tastes toyour whims,idolize you,give the very blood in our veins for you,andall this is nothing,is

it?Alas!yes,you take it all as a matter ofcourse.If we would always have your smiles and your disdainful love,we should need the power of God in heaven.Then comes another,alover,a husband,and steals away your heart."

Julie looked in amazement at her father;he walked slowly along,andthere was no light in the eyes which he turned upon her.

"You hide yourself even from us,"he continued,"but,perhaps,alsoyou hide yourself from yourself--"

"What do you mean by that,father?"

"I think that you have secrets from me,Julie.--You love,"he went onquickly,as he saw the color rise to her face."Oh!I hoped that youwould stay with your old father until he died.I hoped to keep youwith me,still radiant and happy,to admire you as you were but solately.So long as I knew nothing of your future I could believe in ahappy lot for you;but now I cannot possibly take away with me a hopeof happiness for your life,for you love the colonel even more thanthe cousin.I can no longer doubt it."

"And why should I be forbidden to love him?"asked Julie,with livelycuriosity in her face.

"Ah,my Julie,you would not understand me,"sighed the father.

"Tell me,all the same,"said Julie,with an involuntary petulantgesture.

"Very well,child,listen to me.Girls are apt to imagine noble andenchanting and totally imaginary figures in their own minds;they havefanciful extravagant ideas about men,and sentiment,and life;andthen they innocently endow somebody or other with all the perfectionsof their day-dreams,and put their trust in him.They fall in lovewith this imaginary creature in the man of their choice;and then,when it is too late to escape from their fate,behold their firstidol,the illusion made fair with their fancies,turns to an odiousskeleton.Julie,I would rather have you fall in love with an old manthan with the Colonel.Ah!if you could but see things from thestandpoint of ten years hence,you would admit that my old experiencewas right.I know what Victor is,that gaiety of his is simply animalspirits--the gaiety of

the barracks.He has no ability,and he is aspendthrift.He is one of those men whom Heaven created to eat anddigest four meals a day,to sleep,to fall in love with the firstwoman that comes to hand,and to fight.He does not understand life.

His kind heart,for he has a kind heart,will perhaps lead him to givehis purse to a sufferer or to a comrade;but he is careless,he hasnot the delicacy of heart which makes us slaves to a woman'shappiness,he is ignorant,he is selfish.There are plenty ofbuts--"

"But,father,he must surely be clever,he must have ability,or hewould not be a colonel--"

"My dear,Victor will be a colonel all his life.--I have seen no onewho appears to me to be worthy of you,"the old father added,with akind of enthusiasm.

He paused an instant,looked at his daughter,and added,"Why,my poorJulie,you are still too young,too fragile,too delicate for thecares and rubs of married life.D'Aiglemont's relations have spoiledhim,just as your mother and I have spoiled you.What hope is therethat you two could agree,with two imperious wills

diametricallyopposed to each other?You will be either the tyrant or the victim,and either alternative means,for a wife,an equal sum of misfortune.

But you are modest and sweet-natured,you would yield from the first.

In short,"he added,in a quivering voice,"there is a grace offeeling in you which would never be valued,and then----"he brokeoff,for the tears overcame him.

"Victor will give you pain through all the girlish qualities of youryoung nature,"he went on,after a pause."I know what soldiers are,my Julie;I have been in the army.In a man of that kind,love veryseldom gets the better of old habits,due partly to the miseries amidwhich soldiers live,partly to the risks they run in a life ofadventure."

"Then you mean to cross my inclinations,do you,father?"asked Julie,half in earnest,half in jest."Am I to marry to please you and not toplease myself?"

"To please me!"cried her father,with a start of surprise."To pleaseme,child?when you will not hear the voice that upbraids

you sotenderly very much longer!But I have always heard children imputepersonal motives for the sacrifices that their parents make for them.

Marry Victor,my Julie!Some day you will bitterly deplore hisineptitude,his thriftless ways,his selfishness,his lack ofdelicacy,his inability to understand love,and countless troublesarising through him.Then,remember,that here under these trees yourold father's prophetic voice sounded in your ears in vain."

He said no more;he had detected a rebellious shake of the head on hisdaughter's part.Both made several paces towards the carriage whichwas waiting for them at the grating.During that interval of silence,the young girl stole a glance at her father's face,and little bylittle her sullen brow cleared.The intense pain visible on his bowedforehead made a lively impression upon her.

"Father,"she began in gentle tremulous tones,"I promise to say nomore about Victor until you have overcome your prejudices againsthim."

The old man looked at her in amazement.Two tears which filled hiseyes overflowed down his withered cheeks.He could not take Julie inhis arms in that crowded place;but he pressed her hand tenderly.Afew minutes later when they had taken their places in the cabriolet,all the anxious thought which had gathered about his brow hadcompletely disappeared.Julie's pensive attitude gave him far lessconcern than the innocent joy which had betrayed her secret during thereview.

A Woman of Thirty -Part II

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Part II

early a year had passed since the Emperor's last review.In earlyMarch 1814a caleche was rolling along the highroad from Amboise toTours.As the carriage came out from beneath the green-roofed aisle ofwalnut trees by the post-house of la Frilliere,the horses dashedforward with such speed that in a moment they gained the bridge builtacross the Cise at the point of its confluence with the Loire.There,however,they come to a sudden stand.One of the traces had given wayin consequence of the furious pace at which the post-boy,obedient tohis orders,had urged on four horses,the most vigorous of theirbreed.Chance,therefore,gave the two recently awakened occupants ofthe carriage an opportunity of seeing one of the most lovelylandscapes along the enchanting banks of the Loire,and that at theirfull leisure.

At a glance the travelers could see to the right the whole windingcourse of the Cise meandering like a silver snake among the meadows,where the grass had taken the deep,bright green of early spring.Tothe left lay the Loire in all its glory.A

chill morning breeze,ruffling the surface of the stately river,had fretted the broadsheets of water far and wide into a network of ripples,which caughtthe gleams of the sun,so that the green islets here and there in itscourse shone like gems set in a gold necklace.On the opposite bankthe fair rich meadows of Touraine stretched away as far as the eyecould see;the low hills of the Cher,the only limits to the view,layon the far horizon,a luminous line against the clear blue sky.Toursitself,framed by the trees on the islands in a setting of springleaves,seemed to rise like Venice out of the waters,and her oldcathedral towers soaring in air were blended with the pale fantasticcloud shapes in the sky.

Over the side of the bridge,where the carriage had come to a stand,the traveler looks along a line of cliffs stretching as far as Tours.

Nature in some freakish mood must have raised these barriers of rock,undermined incessantly by the rippling Loire at their feet,for aperpetual wonder for spectators.The village of Vouvray nestles,as itwere,among the clefts and crannies of the crags,which begin todescribe a bend at the junction of the Loire and Cise.A wholepopulation of vine-dressers lives,in fact,in

appalling insecurity inholes in their jagged sides for the whole way between Vouvray andTours.In some places there are three tiers of dwellings hollowed out,one above the other,in the rock,each row communicating with the nextby dizzy staircases cut likewise in the face of the cliff.A littlegirl in a short red petticoat runs out into her garden on the roof ofanother dwelling;you can watch a wreath of hearth-smoke curling upamong the shoots and trails of the vines.Men are at work in theiralmost perpendicular patches of ground,an old woman sits tranquillyspinning under a blossoming almond tree on a crumbling mass of rock,and smiles down on the dismay of the travelers far below her feet.Thecracks in the ground trouble her as little as the precarious state ofthe old wall,a pendant mass of loose stones,only kept in position bythe crooked stems of its ivy mantle.The sound of coopers'malletsrings through the skyey caves;for here,where Nature stints humanindustry of soil,the soil is everywhere tilled,and everywherefertile.

No view along the whole course of the Loire can compare with the richlandscape of Touraine,here outspread beneath the traveler's eyes.Thetriple picture,thus barely sketched in outline,is one of thosescenes which the imagination engraves

for ever upon the memory;let apoet fall under its charm,and he shall be haunted by visions whichshall reproduce its romantic loveliness out of the vague substance ofdreams.

As the carriage stopped on the bridge over the Cise,white sails cameout here and there from among the islands in the Loire to add newgrace to the perfect view.The subtle scent of the willows by thewater's edge was mingled with the damp odor of the breeze from theriver.The monotonous chant of a goat-herd added a plaintive note tothe sound of birds'songs in a chorus which never ends;the cries ofthe boatmen brought tidings of distant busy life.Here was Touraine inall its glory,and the very height of the splendor of spring.Here wasthe one peaceful district in France in those troublous days;for itwas so unlikely that a foreign army should trouble its quiet thatTouraine might be said to defy invasion.

As soon as the caleche stopped,a head covered with a foraging cap wasput out of the window,and soon afterwards an impatient military manflung open the carriage door and sprang down into the road to pick aquarrel with the postilion,but the skill with which the Tourangeauwas repairing the trace restored Colonel

d'Aiglemont's equanimity.Hewent back to the carriage,stretched himself to relieve his benumbedmuscles,yawned,looked about him,and finally laid a hand on the armof a young woman warmly wrapped up in a furred pelisse.

"Come,Julie,"he said hoarsely,"just wake up and take a look at thiscountry.It is magnificent."

Julie put her head out of the window.She wore a traveling cap ofsable fur.Nothing could be seen of her but her face,for the whole ofher person was completely concealed by the folds of her fur pelisse.

The young girl who tripped to the review at the Tuileries with lightfootsteps and joy and gladness in her heart was scarcely recognizablein Julie d'Aiglemont.Her face,delicate as ever,had lost the rose-colorwhich once gave it so rich a glow.A few straggling locks ofblack hair,straightened out by the damp night air,enhanced its deadwhiteness,and all its life and sparkle seemed to be torpid.Yet hereyes glittered with preternatural brightness in spite of the violetshadows under the lashes upon her wan cheeks.

She looked out with indifferent eyes over the fields towards the Cher,at the islands in the river,at the line of the crags of Vouvraystretching along the Loire towards Tours;then she sank back as soonas possible into her seat in the caleche.She did not care to give aglance to the enchanting valley of the Cise.

"Yes,it is wonderful,"she said,and out in the open air her voicesounded weak and faint to the last degree.Evidently she had had herway with her father,to her misfortune.

"Would you not like to live here,Julie?"

"Yes;here or anywhere,"she answered listlessly.

"Do you feel ill?"asked Colonel d'Aiglemont.

"No,not at all,"she answered with momentary energy;and,smiling ather husband,she added,"I should like to go to sleep."

Suddenly there came a sound of a horse galloping towards

them.Victord'Aiglemont dropped his wife's hand and turned to watch the bend inthe road.No sooner had he taken his eyes from Julie's pale face thanall the assumed gaiety died out of it;it was as if a light had beenextinguished.She felt no wish to look at the landscape,no curiosityto see the horseman who was galloping towards them at such a furiouspace,and,ensconcing herself in her corner,stared out before her atthe hindquarters of the post-horses,looking as blank as any Bretonpeasant listening to his recteur's sermon.

Suddenly a young man riding a valuable horse came out from behind theclump of poplars and flowering briar-rose.

"It is an Englishman,"remarked the Colonel.

"Lord bless you,yes,General,"said the post-boy;"he belongs to therace of fellows who have a mind to gobble up France,they say."

The stranger was one of the foreigners traveling in France at the timewhen Napoleon detained all British subjects within the limits of theEmpire,by way of reprisals for the violation of the

Treaty of Amiens,an outrage of international law perpetrated by the Court of St.James.

These prisoners,compelled to submit to the Emperor's pleasure,werenot all suffered to remain in the houses where they were arrested,noryet in the places of residence which at first they were permitted tochoose.Most of the English colony in Touraine had been transplantedthither from different places where their presence was supposed to beinimical to the interests of the Continental Policy.

The young man,who was taking the tedium of the early morning hours onhorseback,was one of these victims of bureaucratic tyranny.Two yearspreviously,a sudden order from the Foreign Office had dragged himfrom Montpellier,whither he had gone on account of consumptivetendencies.He glanced at the Comte d'Aiglemont,saw that he was amilitary man,and deliberately looked away,turning his head somewhatabruptly towards the meadows by the Cise.

"The English are all as insolent as if the globe belonged to them,"

muttered the Colonel."Luckily,Soult will give them a

thrashingdirectly."

The prisoner gave a glance to the caleche as he rode by.Brief thoughthat glance was,he had yet time to notice the sad expression whichlent an indefinable charm to the Countess'pensive face.Many men aredeeply moved by the mere semblance of suffering in a woman;they takethe look of pain for a sign of constancy or of love.Julie herself wasso much absorbed in the contemplation of the opposite cushion that shesaw neither the horse nor the rider.The damaged trace meanwhile hadbeen quickly and strongly repaired;the Count stepped into his placeagain;and the post-boy,doing his best to make up for lost time,drove the carriage rapidly along the embankment.On they drove underthe overhanging cliffs,with their picturesque vine-dressers'huts andstores of wine maturing in their dark sides,till in the distanceuprose the spire of the famous Abbey of Marmoutiers,the retreat ofSt.Martin.

"What can that diaphanous milord want with us?"exclaimed the Colonel,turning to assure himself that the horseman who had followed them fromthe bridge was the young Englishman.

After all,the stranger committed no breach of good manners by ridingalong on the footway,and Colonel d'Aiglemont was fain to lie back inhis corner after sending a scowl in the Englishman's direction.But inspite of his hostile instincts,he could not help noticing the beautyof the animal and the graceful horsemanship of the rider.The youngman's face was of that pale,fair-complexioned,insular type,which isalmost girlish in the softness and delicacy of its color and texture.

He was tall,thin,and fair-haired,dressed with the extreme andelaborate neatness characteristic of a man of fashion in prudishEngland.Any one might have thought that bashfulness rather thanpleasure at the sight of the Countess had called up that flush intohis face.Once only Julie raised her eyes and looked at the stranger,and then only because she was in a manner compelled to do so,for herhusband called upon her to admire the action of the thoroughbred.Itso happened that their glances clashed;and the shy Englishman,instead of riding abreast of the carriage,fell behind on this,andfollowed them at a distance of a few paces.

Yet the Countess had scarcely given him a glance;she saw none of thevarious perfections,human and equine,commended to her

notice,andfell back again in the carriage,with a slight movement of the eyelidsintended to express her acquiescence in her husband's views.TheColonel fell asleep again,and both husband and wife reached Tourswithout another word.Not one of those enchanting views ofeverchanging landscape through which they sped had drawn so much as aglance from Julie's eyes.

Mme.d'Aiglemont looked now and again at her sleeping husband.Whileshe looked,a sudden jolt shook something down upon her knees.It washer father's portrait,a miniature which she wore suspended about herneck by a black cord.At the sight of it,the tears,till then keptback,overflowed her eyes,but no one,save perhaps the Englishman,saw them glitter there for a brief moment before they dried upon herpale cheeks.

Colonel d'Aiglemont was on his way to the South.Marshal Soult wasrepelling an English invasion of Bearn;and d'Aiglemont,the bearer ofthe Emperor's orders to the Marshal,seized the opportunity of takinghis wife as far as Tours to leave her with an elderly relative of hisown,far away from the dangers threatening Paris.

Very shortly the carriage rolled over the paved road of Tours,overthe bridge,along the Grande-Rue,and stopped at last before the oldmansion of the ci-devant Marquise de Listomere-Landon.

The Marquise de Listomere-Landon,with her white hair,pale face,andshrewd smile,was one of those fine old ladies who still seem to wearthe paniers of the eighteenth century,and affects caps of an extinctmode.They are nearly always caressing in their manners,as if theheyday of love still lingered on for these septuagenarian portraits ofthe age of Louis Quinze,with the faint perfume of empoudre a lamarechale always clinging about them.Bigoted rather than pious,andless of bigots than they seem,women who can tell a story well andtalk still better,their laughter comes more readily for an old memorythan for a new jest--the present intrudes upon them.

When an old waiting-woman announced to the Marquise de Listomere-Landon(to give her the title which she was soon to resume)thearrival of a nephew whom she had not seen since the outbreak of thewar with Spain,the old lady took off her spectacles with alacrity,shut the Galerie de l'ancienne Cour (her

favorite work),andrecovered something like youthful activity,hastening out upon theflight of steps to greet the young couple there.

Aunt and niece exchanged a rapid glance of survey.

"Good-morning,dear aunt,"cried the Colonel,giving the old lady ahasty embrace."I am bringing a young lady to put under your wing.Ihave come to put my treasure in your keeping.My Julie is neitherjealous nor a coquette,she is as good as an angel.I hope that shewill not be spoiled here,"he added,suddenly interrupting himself.

"Scapegrace!"returned the Marquise,with a satirical glance at hernephew.

She did not wait for her niece to approach her,but with a certainkindly graciousness went forward herself to kiss Julie,who stoodthere thoughtfully,to all appearance more embarrassed than curiousconcerning her new relation.

"So we are to make each other's acquaintance,are we,my

love?"theMarquise continued."Do not be too much alarmed of me.I always trynot to be an old woman with young people."

On the way to the drawing-room,the Marquise ordered breakfast for herguests in provincial fashion;but the Count checked his aunt's flow ofwords by saying soberly that he could only remain in the house whilethe horses were changing.On this the three hurried into the drawing-room.

The Colonel had barely time to tell the story of the politicaland military events which had compelled him to ask his aunt for ashelter for his young wife.While he talked on without interruption,the older lady looked from her nephew to her niece,and took thesadness in Julie's white face for grief at the enforced separation.

"Eh!eh!"her looks seemed to say,"these young things are in lovewith each other."

The crack of the postilion's whip sounded outside in the silent oldgrass-grown courtyard.Victor embraced his aunt once more,and rushedout.

"Good-bye,dear,"he said,kissing his wife,who had followed him

downto the carriage.

"Oh!Victor,let me come still further with you,"she pleadedcoaxingly."I do not want to leave you----"

"Can you seriously mean it?"

"Very well,"said Julie,"since you wish it."The carriagedisappeared.

"So you are very fond of my poor Victor?"said the Marquise,interrogating her niece with one of those sagacious glances whichdowagers give younger women.

"Alas,madame!"said Julie,"must one not love a man well indeed tomarry him?"

The words were spoken with an artless accent which revealed either apure heart or inscrutable depths.How could a woman,who had been thefriend of Duclos and the Marechal de Richelieu,refrain from trying toread the riddle of this marriage?Aunt and niece were standing on thesteps,gazing after

the fast vanishing caleche.The look in the youngCountess'eyes did not mean love as the Marquise understood it.Thegood lady was a Provencale,and her passions had been lively.

"So you were captivated by my good-for-nothing of a nephew?"sheasked.

Involuntarily Julie shuddered,something in the experienced coquette'slook and tone seemed to say that Mme.de Listomere-Landon's knowledgeof her husband's character went perhaps deeper than his wife's.Mme.
d'Aiglemont,in dismay,took refuge in this transparent dissimulation,ready to her hand,the first resource of an artless unhappiness.Mme.
de Listomere appeared to be satisfied with Julie's answers;but in hersecret heart she rejoiced to think that here was a love affair on handto enliven her solitude,for that her niece had some amusingflirtation on foot she was fully convinced.

In the great drawing-room,hung with tapestry framed in strips ofgilding,young Mme.d'Aiglemont sat before a blazing fire,behind aChinese screen placed to shut out the cold draughts

from the window,and her heavy mood scarcely lightened.Among the old eighteenth-centuryfurniture,under the old paneled ceiling,it was not very easyto be gay.Yet the young Parisienne took a sort of pleasure in thisentrance upon a life of complete solitude and in the solemn silence ofthe old provincial house.She exchanged a few words with the aunt,astranger,to whom she had written a bride's letter on her marriage,and then sat as silent as if she had been listening to an opera.Notuntil two hours had been spent in an atmosphere of quiet befitting laTrappe,did she suddenly awaken to a sense of uncourteous behavior,and bethink herself of the short answers which she had given her aunt.

Mme.de Listomere,with the gracious tact characteristic of a bygoneage,had respected her niece's mood.When Mme.d'Aiglemont becameconscious of her shortcomings,the dowager sat knitting,though as amatter of fact she had several times left the room to superintendpreparations in the Green Chamber,whither the Countess'luggage hadbeen transported;now,however,she had returned to her greatarmchair,and stole a glance from time to time at this young relative.

Julie felt ashamed of giving way to irresistible broodings,and

triedto earn her pardon by laughing at herself.

"My dear child,we know the sorrows of widowhood,"returned heraunt.But only the eyes of forty years could have distinguished theirony hovering about the old lady's mouth.

Next morning the Countess improved.She talked.Mme.de Listomere nolonger despaired of fathoming the new-made wife,whom yesterday shehad set down as a dull,unsociable creature,and discoursed on thedelights of the country,of dances,of houses where they could visit.

All that day the Marquise's questions were so many snares;it was theold habit of the old Court,she could not help setting traps todiscover her niece's character.For several days Julie,plied withtemptations,steadfastly declined to seek amusement abroad;and muchas the old lady's pride longed to exhibit her pretty niece,she wasfain to renounce all hope of taking her into society,for the youngCountess was still in morning for her father,and found in her lossand her mourning dress a pretext for her sadness and desire forseclusion.

By the end of the week the dowager admired Julie's angelic

sweetnessof disposition,her diffident charm,her indulgent temper,andthenceforward began to take a prodigious interest in the mysterioussadness gnawing at this young heart.The Countess was one of thosewomen who seem born to be loved and to bring happiness with them.Mme.

de Listomere found her niece's society grown so sweet and precious,that she doted upon Julie,and could no longer think of parting withher.A month sufficed to establish an eternal friendship between thetwo ladies.The dowager noticed,not without surprise,the changesthat took place in Mme.d'Aiglemont;gradually her bright color diedaway,and her face became dead white.Yet,Julie's spirits rose as thebloom faded from her cheeks.Sometimes the dowager's sallies provokedoutbursts of merriment or peals of laughter,promptly repressed,however,by some clamorous thought.

Mme.de Listomere had guessed by this time that it was neitherVictor's absence nor a father's death which threw a shadow over herniece's life;but her mind was so full of dark suspicions,that shefound it difficult to lay a finger upon the real cause of themischief.Possibly truth is only discoverable by chance.A day came,however,at length when Julie flashed out

before her aunt's astonishedeyes into a complete forgetfulness of her marriage;she recovered thewild spirits of careless girlhood.Mme.de Listomere then and theremade up her mind to fathom the depths of this soul,for its exceedingsimplicity was as inscrutable as dissimulation.

Night was falling.The two ladies were sitting by the window whichlooked out upon the street,and Julie was looking thoughtful again,when some one went by on horseback.

"There goes one of your victims,"said the Marquise.

Mme.d'Aiglemont looked up;dismay and surprise blended in her face.

"He is a young Englishman,the Honorable Arthur Ormand,LordGrenville's eldest son.His history is interesting.His physician senthim to Montpellier in 1802;it was hoped that in that climate he mightrecover from the lung complaint which was gaining ground.He wasdetained,like all his fellow-countrymen,by Bonaparte when war brokeout.That monster cannot live without fighting.The young Englishman,by

way of amusing himself,took to studying his own complaint,whichwas believed to be incurable.By degrees he acquired a liking foranatomy and physic,and took quite a craze for that kind of thing,amost extraordinary taste in a man of quality,though the Regentcertainly amused himself with chemistry!In short,Monsieur Arthurmade astonishing progress in his studies;his health did the sameunder the faculty of Montpellier;he consoled his captivity,and atthe same time his cure was thoroughly completed.They say that hespent two whole years in a cowshed,living on cresses and the milk ofa cow brought from Switzerland,breathing as seldom as he could,andnever speaking a word.Since he come to Tours he has lived quitealone;he is as proud as a peacock;but you have certainly made aconquest of him,for probably it is not on my account that he hasridden under the window twice every day since you have been here.--Hehas certainly fallen in love with you."

That last phrase roused the Countess like magic.Her involuntary startand smile took the Marquise by surprise.So far from showing a sign ofthe instinctive satisfaction felt by the most strait-laced of womenwhen she learns that she has destroyed the

peace of mind of some malevictim,there was a hard,haggard expression in Julie's face--a lookof repulsion amounting almost to loathing.

A woman who loves will put the whole world under the ban of Love'sempire for the sake of the one whom she loves;but such a woman canlaugh and jest;and Julie at that moment looked as if the memory ofsome recently escaped peril was too sharp and fresh not to bring withit a quick sensation of pain.Her aunt,by this time convinced thatJulie did not love her nephew,was stupefied by the discovery that sheloved nobody else.She shuddered lest a further discovery should showher Julie's heart disenchanted,lest the experience of a day,orperhaps of a night,should have revealed to a young wife the fullextent of Victor's emptiness.

"If she has found him out,there is an end of it,"thought thedowager."My nephew will soon be made to feel the inconveniences ofwedded life."

The Marquise now proposed to convert Julie to the monarchicaldoctrines of the times of Louis Quinze;but a few

hours later shediscovered,or,more properly speaking,guessed,the not uncommonstate of affairs,and the real cause of her niece's low spirits.

Julie turned thoughtful on a sudden,and went to her room earlier thanusual.When her maid left her for the night,she still sat by the firein the yellow velvet depths of a great chair,an old-world piece offurniture as well suited for sorrow as for happy people.Tears flowed,followed by sighs and meditation.After a while she drew a littletable to her,sought writing materials,and began to write.The hourswent by swiftly.Julie's confidences made to the sheet of paper seemedto cost her dear;every sentence set her dreaming,and at last shesuddenly burst into tears.The clocks were striking two.Her head,grown heavy as a dying woman's,was bowed over her breast.When sheraised it,her aunt appeared before her as suddenly as if she hadstepped out of the background of tapestry upon the walls.

"What can be the matter with you,child?"asked the Marquise."Why areyou sitting up so late?And why,in the first place,are you cryingalone,at your age?"

Without further ceremony she sat down beside her niece,her eyes thewhile devouring the unfinished letter.

"Were you writing to your husband?"

"Do I know where he is?"returned the Countess.

Her aunt thereupon took up the sheet and proceeded to read it.She hadbrought her spectacles;the deed was premeditated.The innocent writerof the letter allowed her to take it without the slightest remark.Itwas neither lack of dignity nor consciousness of secret guilt whichleft her thus without energy.Her aunt had come in upon her at acrisis.She was helpless;right or wrong,reticence and confidence,like all things else,were matters of indifference.Like some youngmaid who had heaped scorn upon her lover,and feels so lonely and sadwhen evening comes,that she longs for him to come back or for a heartto which she can pour out her sorrow,Julie allowed her aunt toviolate the seal which honor places upon an open letter,and satmusing while the Marquise read on:--

"MY DEAR LOUISA,--Why do you ask so often for the

fulfilment of asrash a promise as two young and inexperienced girls could make?

You say that you often ask yourself why I have given no answer toyour questions for these six months.If my silence told younothing,perhaps you will understand the reasons for it to-day,asyou read the secrets which I am about to betray.I should haveburied them for ever in the depths of my heart if you had notannounced your own approaching marriage.You are about to bemarried,Louisa.The thought makes me shiver.Poor little one!

marry,yes,in a few months'time one of the keenest pangs ofregret will be the recollection of a self which used to be,of thetwo young girls who sat one evening under one of the tallest oak-treeson the hillside at Ecouen,and looked along the fair valleyat our feet in the light of the sunset,which caught us in itsglow.We sat on a slab of rock in ecstasy,which sobered down intomelancholy of the gentlest.You were the first to discover thatthe far-off sun spoke to us of the future.How inquisitive and howsilly we were!Do you remember all the absurd things we said anddid?We embraced each other;'like lovers,'said we.We solemnlypromised that the first bride should faithfully reveal to theother the mysteries of marriage,the joys which our childish

mindsimagined to be so delicious.That evening will complete yourdespair,Louisa.In those days you were young and beautiful andcareless,if not radiantly happy;a few days of marriage,and youwill be,what I am already--ugly,wretched,and old.Need I tellyou how proud I was and how vain and glad to be married to ColonelVictor d'Aiglemont?And besides,how could I tell you now?for Icannot remember that old self.A few moments turned my girlhood toa dream.All through the memorable day which consecrated a chain,the extent of which was hidden from me,my behavior was not freefrom reproach.Once and again my father tried to repress myspirits;the joy which I showed so plainly was thought unbefittingthe occasion,my talk scarcely innocent,simply because I was soinnocent.I played endless child's tricks with my bridal veil,mywreath,my gown.Left alone that night in the room whither I hadbeen conducted in state,I planned a piece of mischief to teaseVictor.While I awaited his coming,my heart beat wildly,as itused to do when I was a child stealing into the drawing-room onthe last day of the old year to catch a glimpse of the New Year'sgifts piled up there in heaps.When my husband came in and lookedfor me,my smothered laughter ringing out from beneath the lace inwhich I had shrouded myself,was the last outburst of thedelicious

merriment which brightened our games in childhood ..."

When the dowager had finished reading the letter,and after such abeginning the rest must have been sad indeed,she slowly laid herspectacles on the table,put the letter down beside them,and lookedfixedly at her niece.Age had not dimmed the fire in those green eyesas yet.

"My little girl,"she said,"a married woman cannot write such aletter as this to a young unmarried woman;it is scarcely proper--"

"So I was thinking,"Julie broke in upon her aunt."I felt ashamed ofmyself while you were reading it."

"If a dish at table is not to our taste,there is no occasion todisgust others with it,child,"the old lady continued benignly,"especially when marriage has seemed to us all,from Eve downwards,soexcellent an institution...You have no mother?"

The Countess trembled,then she raised her face meekly,and

said:

"I have missed my mother many times already during the past year;butI have myself to blame,I would not listen to my father.He wasopposed to my marriage;he disapproved of Victor as a son-in-law."

She looked at her aunt.The old face was lighted up with a kindlylook,and a thrill of joy dried Julie's tears.She held out her young,soft hand to the old Marquise,who seemed to ask for it,and theunderstanding between the two women was completed by the close graspof their fingers.

"Poor orphan child!"

The words came like a final flash of enlightenment to Julie.It seemedto her that she heard her father's prophetic voice again.

"Your hands are burning!Are they always like this?"asked theMarquise.

"The fever only left me seven or eight days ago."

"You had a fever upon you,and said nothing about it to me!"

"I have had it for a year,"said Julie,with a kind of timid anxiety.

"My good little angel,then your married life hitherto has been onelong time of suffering?"

Julie did not venture to reply,but an affirmative sign revealed thewhole truth.

"Then you are unhappy?"

"On!no,no,aunt.Victor loves me,he almost idolizes me,and I adorehim,he is so kind."

"Yes,you love him;but you avoid him,do you not?"

"Yes ...sometimes ...He seeks me too often."

"And often when you are alone you are troubled with the fear that hemay suddenly break in on your solitude?"

"Alas!yes,aunt.But,indeed,I love him,I do assure you."

"Do you not,in your own thoughts,blame yourself because you find itimpossible to share his pleasures?Do you never think at times thatmarriage is a heavier yoke than an illicit passion could be?"

"Oh,that is just it,"she wept."It is all a riddle to me,and canyou guess it all?My faculties are benumbed,I have no ideas,I canscarcely see at all.I am weighed down by vague dread,which freezesme till I cannot feel,and keeps me in continual torpor.I have novoice with which to pity myself,no words to express my trouble.Isuffer,and I am ashamed to suffer when Victor is happy at my cost."

"Babyish nonsense,and rubbish,all of it!"exclaimed the aunt,and agay smile,an after-glow of the joys of her own youth,suddenlylighted up her withered face.

"And do you too laugh!"the younger woman cried despairingly.

"It was just my own case,"the Marquise returned promptly."And nowVictor has left you,you have become a girl again,recovering atranquillity without pleasure and without pain,have you not?"

Julie opened wide eyes of bewilderment.

"In fact,my angel,you adore Victor,do you not?But still you wouldrather be a sister to him than a wife,and,in short,your marriage isemphatically not a success?"

"Well--no,aunt.But why do you smile?"

"Oh!you are right,poor child!There is nothing very amusing in allthis.Your future would be big with more than one mishap if I had nottaken you under my protection,if my old experience of life had notguessed the very innocent cause of your troubles.My nephew did notdeserve his good fortune,the blockhead!In the reign of our well-belovedLouis Quinze,a young wife in your position would very soonhave punished her husband for behaving like a ruffian.The selfishcreature!The men who serve under this Imperial tyrant are all of themignorant boors.They take brutality for gallantry;they know no moreof women than

they know of love;and imagine that because they go outto face death on the morrow,they may dispense to-day with allconsideration and attentions for us.The time was when a man couldlove and die too at the proper time.My niece,I will form you.I willput an end to this unhappy divergence between you,a natural thingenough,but it would end in mutual hatred and desire for a divorce,always supposing that you did not die on the way to despair."

A Woman of Thirty -Part III

A Woman of Thirty

Part III

ulie's amazement equaled her surprise as she listened to her aunt.

She was surprised by her language,dimly divining rather thanappreciating the wisdom of the words she heard,and very much dismayedto find what this relative,out of great experience,passed judgmentupon Victor as her father had done,though in somewhat milder terms.

Perhaps some quick prevision of the future crossed her mind; doubtless,at any rate,she felt the heavy weight of the burden whichmust inevitably overwhelm her,for she burst into tears,and sprang tothe old lady's arms."Be my mother,"she sobbed.

The aunt shed no tears.The Revolution had left old ladies of theMonarchy but few tears to shed.Love,in bygone days,and the Terrorat a later time,had familiarized them with extremes of joy andanguish in such a sort that,amid the perils of life,they preservedtheir dignity and coolness,a capacity for sincere but undemonstrativeaffection which never disturbed their well-bred self-possession,and adignity of demeanor which a younger

generation has done very ill todiscard.

The dowager took Julie in her arms,and kissed her on the foreheadwith a tenderness and pity more often found in women's ways and mannerthan in their hearts.Then she coaxed her niece with kind,soothingwords,assured her of a happy future,lulled her with promises oflove,and put her to bed as if she had been not a niece,but adaughter,a much-beloved daughter whose hopes and cares she had madeher own.Perhaps the old Marquise had found her own youth andinexperience and beauty again in this nephew's wife.And the Countessfell asleep,happy to have found a friend,nay a mother,to whom shecould tell everything freely.

Next morning,when the two women kissed each other with heartfeltkindness,and that look of intelligence which marks a real advance infriendship,a closer intimacy between two souls,they heard the soundof horsehoofs,and,turning both together,saw the young Englishmanride slowly past the window,after his wont.Apparently he had made acertain study of the life led by the two lonely women,for he neverfailed to ride by as they sat at breakfast,and again at dinner.Hishorse

slackened pace of its own accord,and for the space of timerequired to pass the two windows in the room,its rider turned amelancholy look upon the Countess,who seldom deigned to take theslightest notion of him.Not so the Marquise.Minds not necessarilylittle find it difficult to resist the little curiosity which fastensupon the most trifling event that enlivens provincial life;and theEnglishman's mute way of expressing his timid,earnest love tickledMme.de Listomere.For her the periodically recurrent glance became apart of the day's routine,hailed daily with new jests.As the twowomen sat down to table,both of them looked out at the same moment.

This time Julie's eyes met Arthur's with such a precision of sympathythat the color rose to her face.The stranger immediately urged hishorse into a gallop and went.

"What is to be done,madame?"asked Julie."People see this Englishmango past the house,and they will take it for granted that I--"

"Yes,"interrupted her aunt.

"Well,then,could I not tell him to discontinue his promenades?"

"Would not that be a way of telling him that he was dangerous?Youmight put that notion into his head.And besides,can you prevent aman from coming and going as he pleases?Our meals shall be served inanother room to-morrow;and when this young gentleman sees us nolonger,there will be an end of making love to you through the window.

There,dear child,that is how a woman of the world does."

But the measure of Julie's misfortune was to be filled up.The twowomen had scarcely risen from table when Victor's man arrived in hothaste from Bourges with a letter for the Countess from her husband.

The servant had ridden by unfrequented ways.

Victor sent his wife news of the downfall of the Empire and thecapitulation of Paris.He himself had gone over to the Bourbons,andall France was welcoming them back with transports of enthusiasm.Hecould not go so far as Tours,but he begged her to come at once tojoin him at Orleans,where he hoped to be in readiness with passportsfor her.His servant,an old

soldier,would be her escort so far asOrleans;he (Victor)believed that the road was still open.

"You have not a moment to lose,madame,"said the man."The Prussians,Austrians,and English are about to effect a junction either at Bloisor at Orleans."

A few hours later,Julie's preparations were made,and she started outupon her journey in an old traveling carriage lent by her aunt.

"Why should you not come with us to Paris?"she asked,as she put herarms about the Marquise."Now that the Bourbons have come back youwould be--"

"Even if there had not been this unhoped-for return,I should stillhave gone to Paris,my poor child,for my advice is only too necessaryto both you and Victor.So I shall make all my preparations forrejoining you there."

Julie set out.She took her maid with her,and the old soldiergalloped beside the carriage as escort.At nightfall,as they

changedhorses for the last stage before Blois,Julie grew uneasy.All the wayfrom Amboise she had heard the sound of wheels behind them,a carriagefollowing hers had kept at the same distance.She stood on the stepand looked out to see who her traveling companions might be,and inthe moonlight saw Arthur standing three paces away,gazing fixedly atthe chaise which contained her.Again their eyes met.The Countesshastily flung herself back in her seat,but a feeling of dread set herpulses throbbing.It seemed to her,as to most innocent andinexperienced young wives,that she was herself to blame for this lovewhich she had all unwittingly inspired.With this thought came aninstinctive terror,perhaps a sense of her own helplessness beforeaggressive audacity.One of a man's strongest weapons is the terriblepower of compelling a woman to think of him when her naturally livelyimagination takes alarm or offence at the thought that she isfollowed.

The Countess bethought herself of her aunt's advice,and made up hermind that she would not stir from her place during the rest of thejourney;but every time the horses were changed she heard theEnglishman pacing round the two carriages,and again upon the roadheard the importunate sound of the wheels of his

caleche.Julie soonbegan to think that,when once reunited to her husband,Victor wouldknow how to defend her against this singular persecution.

"Yet suppose that in spite of everything,this young man does not loveme?"This was the thought that came last of all.

No sooner did she reach Orleans than the Prussians stopped the chaise.

It was wheeled into an inn-yard and put under a guard of soldiers.

Resistance was out of the question.The foreign soldiers made thethree travelers understand by signs that they were obeying orders,andthat no one could be allowed to leave the carriage.For about twohours the Countess sat in tears,a prisoner surrounded by the guard,who smoked,laughed,and occasionally stared at her with insolentcuriosity.At last,however,she saw her captors fall away from thecarriage with a sort of respect,and heard at the same time the soundof horses entering the yard.Another moment,and a little group offoreign officers,with an Austrian general at their head,gatheredabout the door of the traveling carriage.

"Madame,"said the General,"pray accept our apologies.A mistake hasbeen made.You may continue your journey without fear;and here is apassport which will spare you all further annoyance of any kind."

Trembling the Countess took the paper,and faltered out some vaguewords of thanks.She saw Arthur,now wearing an English uniform,standing beside the General,and could not doubt that this promptdeliverance was due to him.The young Englishman himself looked halfglad,half melancholy;his face was turned away,and he only dared tosteal an occasional glance at Julie's face.

Thanks to the passport,Mme.d'Aiglemont reached Paris without furthermisadventure,and there she found her husband.Victor d'Aiglemont,released from his oath of allegiance to the Emperor,had met with amost flattering reception from the Comte d'Artois,recently appointedLieutenant-General of the kingdom by his brother Louis XVIII.

D'Aiglemont received a commission in the Life Guards,equivalent tothe rank of general.But amid the rejoicings

over the return of theBourbons,fate dealt poor Julie a terrible blow.The death of theMarquise de Listomere-Landon was an irreparable loss.The old ladydied of joy and of an accession of gout to the heart when the Ducd'Angouleme came back to Tours,and the one living being entitled byher age to enlighten Victor,the woman who,by discreet counsels,might have brought about perfect unanimity of husband and wife,wasdead;and Julie felt the full extent of her loss.Henceforward shemust stand alone between herself and her husband.But she was youngand timid;there could be no doubt of the result,or that from thefirst she would elect to bear her lot in silence.The very perfectionsof her character forbade her to venture to swerve from her duties,orto attempt to inquire into the cause of her sufferings,for to put anend to them would have been to venture on delicate ground,and Julie'sgirlish modesty shrank from the thought.

A word as to M.d'Aiglemont's destinies under the Restoration.

How many men are there whose utter incapacity is a secret kept frommost of their acquaintance.For such as these high rank,high office,illustrious birth,a certain veneer of politeness,and considerablereserve of manner,or the prestige of great

fortunes,are but somany sentinels to turn back critics who would penetrate to thepresence of the real man.Such men are like kings,in that their realfigure,character,and life can never be known nor justly appreciated,because they are always seen from too near or too far.Factitiousmerit has a way of asking questions and saying little;and understandsthe art of putting others forward to save the necessity of posingbefore them;then,with a happy knack of its own,it draws andattaches others by the thread of the ruling passion of self-interest,keeping men of far greater abilities to play like puppets,anddespising those whom it has brought down to its own level.The pettyfixed idea naturally prevails;it has the advantage of persistenceover the plasticity of great thoughts.

The observer who should seek to estimate and appraise the negativevalues of these empty heads needs subtlety rather than superior witfor the task;patience is a more necessary part of his judicial outfitthan great mental grasp,cunning and tact rather than any elevation orgreatness of ideas.Yet skilfully as such usurpers can cover anddefend their weak points,it is difficult to delude wife and motherand children and the house-friend of the family;fortunately for them,however,these persons almost

always keep a secret which in a mannertouches the honor of all,and not unfrequently go so far as to help tofoist the imposture upon the public.And if,thanks to such domesticconspiracy,many a noodle passes current for a man of ability,on theother hand many another who has real ability is taken for a noodle toredress the balance,and the total average of this kind of false coinin circulation in the state is a pretty constant quantity.

Bethink yourself now of the part to be played by a clever woman quickto think and feel,mated with a husband of this kind,and can you notsee a vision of lives full of sorrow and self-sacrifice?Nothing uponearth can repay such hearts so full of love and tender tact.Put astrong-willed woman in this wretched situation,and she will force away out of it for herself by a crime,like Catherine II.,whom mennevertheless style "the Great."But these women are not all seatedupon thrones,they are for the most part doomed to domesticunhappiness none the less terrible because obscure.

Those who seek consolation in this present world for their woes ofteneffect nothing but a change of ills if they remain faithful to

theirduties;or they commit a sin if they break the laws for theirpleasure.All these reflections are applicable to Julie's domesticlife.

Before the fall of Napoleon nobody was jealous of d'Aiglemont.He wasone colonel among many,an efficient orderly staff-officer,as good aman as you could find for a dangerous mission,as unfit as well couldbe for an important command.D'Aiglemont was looked upon as a dashingsoldier such as the Emperor liked,the kind of man whom his messusually calls "a good fellow."The Restoration gave him back his titleof Marquis,and did not find him ungrateful;he followed the Bourbonsinto exile at Ghent,a piece of logical loyalty which falsified thehoroscope drawn for him by his late father-in-law,who predicted thatVictor would remain a colonel all his life.After the Hundred Days hereceived the appointment of Lieutenant-General,and for the secondtime became a marquis;but it was M.d'Aiglemont's ambition to be apeer of France.He adopted,therefore,the maxims and the politics ofthe Conservateur,cloaked himself in dissimulation which hid nothing(there being nothing to hide),cultivated gravity of countenance andthe art of asking questions and saying little,and

was taken for a manof profound wisdom.Nothing drew him from his intrenchments behind theforms of politeness;he laid in a provision of formulas,and madelavish use of his stock of the catch-words coined at need in Paris togive fools the small change for the ore of great ideas and events.

Among men of the world he was reputed a man of taste and discernment;

and as a bigoted upholder of aristocratic opinions he was held up fora noble character.If by chance he slipped now and again into his oldlight-heartedness or levity,others were ready to discover anundercurrent of diplomatic intention beneath his inanity andsilliness."Oh!he only says exactly as much as he means to say,"

thought these excellent people.

So d'Aiglemont's defects and good qualities stood him alike in goodstead.He did nothing to forfeit a high military reputation gained byhis dashing courage,for he had never been a commander-in-chief.Greatthoughts surely were engraven upon that manly aristocraticcountenance,which imposed upon every one but his own wife.And wheneverybody else believed in the Marquis d'Aiglemont's imaginarytalents,the Marquis persuaded

himself before he had done that he wasone of the most remarkable men at Court,where,thanks to his purelyexternal qualifications,he was in favor and taken at his ownvaluation.

At home,however,M.d'Aiglemont was modest.Instinctively he feltthat his wife,young though she was,was his superior;and out of thisinvoluntary respect there grew an occult power which the Marquise wasobliged to wield in spite of all her efforts to shake off the burden.

She became her husband's adviser,the director of his actions and hisfortunes.It was an unnatural position;she felt it as something of ahumiliation,a source of pain to be buried in the depths of her heart.

From the first her delicately feminine instinct told her that it is afar better thing to obey a man of talent than to lead a fool;and thata young wife compelled to act and think like a man is neither man norwoman,but a being who lays aside all the charms of her womanhoodalong with its misfortunes,yet acquires none of the privileges whichour laws give to the stronger sex.Beneath the surface her life was abitter mockery.Was she not compelled to protect her protector,toworship a hollow idol,a poor creature who flung her

the love of aselfish husband as the wages of her continual self-sacrifice;who sawnothing in her but the woman;and who either did not think it worthwhile,or (wrong quite as deep)did not think at all of troublinghimself about her pleasures,of inquiring into the cause of her lowspirits and dwindling health?And the Marquis,like most men who chafeunder a wife's superiority,saved his self-love by arguing fromJulie's physical feebleness a corresponding lack of mental power,forwhich he was pleased to pity her;and he would cry out upon fate whichhad given him a sickly girl for a wife.The executioner posed,infact,as the victim.

All the burdens of this dreary lot fell upon the Marquise,who stillmust smile upon her foolish lord,and deck a house of mourning withflowers,and make a parade of happiness in a countenance wan withsecret torture.And with this sense of responsibility for the honor ofboth,with the magnificent immolation of self,the young Marquiseunconsciously acquired a wifely dignity,a consciousness of virtuewhich became her safeguard amid many dangers.

Perhaps,if her heart were sounded to the very depths,this

intimateclosely hidden wretchedness,following upon her unthinking,girlishfirst love,had roused in her an abhorrence of passion;possibly shehad no conception of its rapture,nor of the forbidden but frenziedbliss for which some women will renounce all the laws of prudence andthe principles of conduct upon which society is based.She put fromher like a dream the thought of bliss and tender harmony of lovepromised by Mme.de Listomere-Landon's mature experience,and waitedresignedly for the end of her troubles with a hope that she might dieyoung.

Her health had declined daily since her return from Touraine;her lifeseemed to be measured to her in suffering;yet her ill-health wasgraceful,her malady seemed little more than languor,and might wellbe taken by careless eyes for a fine lady's whim of invalidism.

Her doctors had condemned her to keep to the sofa,and there among herflowers lay the Marquise,fading as they faded.She was not strongenough to walk,nor to bear the open air,and only went out in aclosed carriage.Yet with all the marvels of modern luxury andinvention about her,she looked more like an indolent

queen than aninvalid.A few of her friends,half in love perhaps with her sadplight and her fragile look,sure of finding her at home,andspeculating no doubt upon her future restoration to health,would cometo bring her the news of the day,and kept her informed of thethousand and one small events which fill life in Paris with variety.

Her melancholy,deep and real though it was was still the melancholyof a woman rich in many ways.The Marquise d'Aiglemont was like aflower,with a dark insect gnawing at its root.

Occasionally she went into society,not to please herself,but inobedience to the exigencies of the position which her husband aspiredto take.In society her beautiful voice and the perfection of hersinging could always gain the social success so gratifying to a youngwoman;but what was social success to her,who drew nothing from itfor her heart or her hopes?Her husband did not care for music.And,moreover,she seldom felt at her ease in salons,where her beautyattracted homage not wholly disinterested.Her position excited a sortof cruel compassion,a morbid curiosity.She was suffering from aninflammatory complaint not infrequently fatal,for which our nosologyas yet

has found no name,a complaint spoken of among women inconfidential whispers.In spite of the silence in which her life wasspent,the cause of her ill-health was no secret.She was still but agirl in spite of her marriage;the slightest glance threw her intoconfusion.In her endeavor not to blush,she was always laughing,always apparently in high spirits;she would never admit that she wasnot perfectly well,and anticipated questions as to her health byshame-stricken subterfuges.

In 1817,however,an event took place which did much to alleviateJulie's hitherto deplorable existence.A daughter was born to her,andshe determined to nurse her child herself.For two years motherhood,its all-absorbing multiplicity of cares and anxious joys,made lifeless hard for her.She and her husband lived necessarily apart.Herphysicians predicted improved health,but the Marquise herself put nofaith in these auguries based on theory.Perhaps,like many a one forwhom life has lost its sweetness,she looked forward to death as ahappy termination of the drama.

But with the beginning of the year 1819life grew harder than ever.

Even while she congratulated herself upon the negative happiness whichshe had contrived to win,she caught a terrifying glimpse of yawningdepths below it.She had passed by degrees out of her husband's life.

Her fine tact and her prudence told her that misfortune must come,andthat not singly,of this cooling of an affection already lukewarm andwholly selfish.Sure though she was of her ascendency over Victor,andcertain as she felt of his unalterable esteem,she dreaded theinfluence of unbridled passions upon a head so empty,so full of rashself-conceit.

Julie's friends often found her absorbed in prolonged musings;theless clairvoyant among them would jestingly ask her what she wasthinking about,as if a young wife would think of nothing butfrivolity,as if there were not almost always a depth of seriousnessin a mother's thoughts.Unhappiness,like great happiness,inducesdreaming.Sometimes as Julie played with her little Helene,she wouldgaze darkly at her,giving no reply to the childish questions in whicha mother delights,questioning the present and the future as to thedestiny of this little one.Then some sudden recollection would bringback the scene of the review at the Tuileries and fill her

eyes withtears.Her father's prophetic warnings rang in her ears,andconscience reproached her that she had not recognized its wisdom.Hertroubles had all come of her own wayward folly,and often she knew notwhich among so many were the hardest to bear.The sweet treasures ofher soul were unheeded,and not only so,she could never succeed inmaking her husband understand her,even in the commonest everydaythings.Just as the power to love developed and grew strong andactive,a legitimate channel for the affections of her nature wasdenied her,and wedded love was extinguished in grave physical andmental sufferings.Add to this that she now felt for her husband thatpity closely bordering upon contempt,which withers all affection atlast.Even if she had not learned from conversations with some of herfriends,from examples in life,from sundry occurrences in the greatworld,that love can bring ineffable bliss,her own wounds would havetaught her to divine the pure and deep happiness which binds twokindred souls each to each.

In the picture which her memory traced of the past,Arthur's frankface stood out daily nobler and purer;it was but a flash,for uponthat recollection she dared not dwell.The young

Englishman's shy,silent love for her was the one event since her marriage which hadleft a lingering sweetness in her darkened and lonely heart.It may bethat all the blighted hopes,all the frustrated longings whichgradually clouded Julie's mind,gathered,by a not unnatural trick ofimagination,about this man--whose manners,sentiments,and characterseemed to have so much in common with her own.This idea stillpresented itself to her mind fitfully and vaguely,like a dream;yetfrom that dream,which always ended in a sigh,Julie awoke to greaterwretchedness,to keener consciousness of the latent anguish broodingbeneath her imaginary bliss.

Occasionally her self-pity took wilder and more daring flights.Shedetermined to have happiness at any cost;but still more often she laya helpless victim of an indescribable numbing stupor,the words sheheard had no meaning to her,or the thoughts which arose in her mindwere so vague and indistinct that she could not find language toexpress them.Balked of the wishes of her heart,realities jarredharshly upon her girlish dreams of life,but she was obliged to devourher tears.To whom could she make complaint?Of whom be understood?

She possessed,moreover,that highest degree of woman's

sensitivepride,the exquisite delicacy of feeling which silences uselesscomplainings and declines to use an advantage to gain a triumph whichcan only humiliate both victor and vanquished.

Julie tried to endow M.d'Aiglemont with her own abilities andvirtues,flattering herself that thus she might enjoy the happinesslacking in her lot.All her woman's ingenuity and tack was employed inmaking the best of the situation;pure waste of pains unsuspected byhim,whom she thus strengthened in his despotism.There were momentswhen misery became an intoxication,expelling all ideas,all self-control;
but,fortunately,sincere piety always brought her back toone supreme hope;she found a refuge in the belief in a future life,awonderful thought which enabled her to take up her painful taskafresh.No elation of victory followed those terrible inward battlesand throes of anguish;no one knew of those long hours of sadness;herhaggard glances met no response from human eyes,and during the briefmoments snatched by chance for weeping,her bitter tears fell unheededand in solitude.

One evening in January 1820,the Marquise became aware of the fullgravity of the crisis,gradually brought on by force of

circumstances.

When a husband and wife know each other thoroughly,and their relationhas long been a matter of use and wont,when the wife has learned tointerpret every slightest sign,when her quick insight discernsthoughts and facts which her husband keeps from her,a chance word,ora remark so carelessly let fall in the first instance,seems,uponsubsequent reflection,like the swift breaking out of light.A wifenot seldom suddenly awakes upon the brink of a precipice or in thedepths of the abyss;and thus it was with the Marquise.She wasfeeling glad to have been left to herself for some days,when the realreason of her solitude flashed upon her.Her husband,whether fickleand tired of her,or generous and full of pity for her,was hers nolonger.

In the moment of that discovery she forgot herself,her sacrifices,all that she had passed through,she remembered only that she was amother.Looking forward,she thought of her daughter's fortune,of thefuture welfare of the one creature through whom some gleams ofhappiness came to her,of her Helene,the only possession which boundher to life.

Then Julie wished to live to save her child from a

stepmother'sterrible thraldom,which might crush her darling's life.Upon this newvision of threatened possibilities followed one of those paroxysms ofthought at fever-heat which consume whole years of life.

Henceforward husband and wife were doomed to be separated by a wholeworld of thought,and all the weight of that world she must bearalone.Hitherto she had felt sure that Victor loved her,in so far ashe could be said to love;she had been the slave of pleasures whichshe did not share;to-day the satisfaction of knowing that shepurchased his contentment with her tears was hers no longer.She wasalone in the world,nothing was left to her now but a choice of evils.

In the calm stillness of the night her despondency drained her of allher strength.She rose from her sofa beside the dying fire,and stoodin the lamplight gazing,dry-eyed,at her child,when M.d'Aiglemontcame in.He was in high spirits.Julie called to him to admire Heleneas she lay asleep,but he met his wife's enthusiasm with acommonplace:

"All children are nice at that age."

He closed the curtains about the cot after a careless kiss on thechild's forehead.Then he turned his eyes on Julie,took her hand anddrew her to sit beside him on the sofa,where she had been sittingwith such dark thoughts surging up in her mind.

"You are looking very handsome to-night,Mme.d'Aiglemont,"heexclaimed,with the gaiety intolerable to the Marquise,who knew itsemptiness so well.

"Where have you spent the evening?"she asked,with a pretence ofcomplete indifference.

"At Mme.de Serizy's."

He had taken up a fire-screen,and was looking intently at the gauze.

He had not noticed the traces of tears on his wife's face.Julieshuddered.Words could not express the overflowing torrent of thoughtswhich must be forced down into inner depths.

"Mme.de Serizy is giving a concert on Monday,and is dying for you togo.You have not been anywhere for some time past,and

that is enoughto set her longing to see you at her house.She is a good-naturedwoman,and very fond of you.I should be glad if you would go;I allbut promised that you should----"

"I will go."

There was something so penetrating,so significant in the tones ofJulie's voice,in her accent,in the glance that went with the words,that Victor,startled out of his indifference,stared at his wife inastonishment.

A Woman of Thirty -Part IV

Part IV

hat was all,Julie had guessed that it was Mme.de Serizy who hadstolen her husband's heart from her.Her brooding despair benumbedher.She appeared to be deeply interested in the fire.Victormeanwhile still played with the fire-screen.He looked bored,like aman who has enjoyed himself elsewhere,and brought home the consequentlassitude.He yawned once or twice,then he took up a candle in onehand,and with the other languidly sought his wife's neck for theusual embrace;but Julie stooped and received the good-night kiss uponher forehead;the formal,loveless grimace seemed hateful to her atthat moment.

As soon as the door closed upon Victor,his wife sank into a seat.Herlimbs tottered beneath her,she burst into tears.None but those whohave endured the torture of some such scene can fully understand theanguish that it means,or divine the horror of the long-drawn tragedyarising out of it.

Those simple,foolish words,the silence that followed between thehusband and wife,the Marquis'gesture and expression,the way inwhich he sat before the fire,his attitude as he made that futileattempt to put a kiss on his wife's throat,--all these things made upa dark hour for Julie,and the catastrophe of the drama of her sad andlonely life.In her madness she knelt down before the sofa,buryingher face in it to shut out everything from sight,and prayed toHeaven,putting a new significance into the words of the eveningprayer,till it became a cry from the depths of her own soul,whichwould have gone to her husband's heart if he had heard it.

The following week she spent in deep thought for her future,utterlyoverwhelmed by this new trouble.She made a study of it,trying todiscover a way to regain her ascendency over the Marquis,scheming howto live long enough to watch over her daughter's happiness,yet tolive true to her own heart.Then she made up her mind.She wouldstruggle with her rival.She would shine once more in society.Shewould feign the love which she could no longer feel,she wouldcaptivate her husband's fancy;and when she had lured him into herpower,she would coquet with him like a capricious mistress who

takesdelight in tormenting a lover.This hateful strategy was the onlypossible way out of her troubles.In this way she would becomemistress of the situation;she would prescribe her own sufferings ather good pleasure,and reduce them by enslaving her husband,andbringing him under a tyrannous yoke.She felt not the slightestremorse for the hard life which he should lead.At a bound she reachedcold,calculating indifference--for her daughter's sake.She hadgained a sudden insight into the treacherous,lying arts of degradedwomen;the wiles of coquetry,the revolting cunning which arouses suchprofound hatred in men at the mere suspicion of innate corruption in awoman.

Julie's feminine vanity,her interests,and a vague desire to inflictpunishment,all wrought unconsciously with the mother's love withinher to force her into a path where new sufferings awaited her.But hernature was too noble,her mind too fastidious,and,above all things,too open,to be the accomplice of these frauds for very long.

Accustomed as she was to self-scrutiny,at the first step in vice--forvice it was--the cry of conscience must inevitably drown the clamor ofthe passions and of selfishness.Indeed,in a

young wife whose heartis still pure,whose love has never been mated,the very sentiment ofmotherhood is overpowered by modesty.Modesty;is not all womanhoodsummed up in that?But just now Julie would not see any danger,anything wrong,in her life.

She went to Mme.de Serizy's concert.Her rival had expected to see apallid,drooping woman.The Marquise wore rouge,and appeared in allthe splendor of a toilet which enhanced her beauty.

Mme.de Serizy was one of those women who claim to exercise a sort ofsway over fashions and society in Paris;she issued her decrees,sawthem received in her own circle,and it seemed to her that all theworld obeyed them.She aspired to epigram,she set up for an authorityin matters of taste.Literature,politics,men and women,all alikewere submitted to her censorship,and the lady herself appeared todefy the censorship of others.Her house was in every respect a modelof good taste.

Julie triumphed over the Countess in her own salon,filled as it waswith beautiful women and women of fashion.Julie's

liveliness andsparkling wit gathered all the most distinguished men in the roomsabout her.Her costume was faultless,for the despair of the women,who one and all envied her the fashion of her dress,and attributedthe moulded outline of her bodice to the genius of some unknowndressmaker,for women would rather believe in miracles worked by thescience of chiffons than in the grace and perfection of the formbeneath.

When Julie went to the piano to sing Desdemona's song,the men in therooms flocked about her to hear the celebrated voice so long mute,andthere was a deep silence.The Marquise saw the heads clustered thicklyin the doorways,saw all eyes turned upon her,and a sharp thrill ofexcitement quivered through her.She looked for her husband,gave hima coquettish side-glance,and it pleased her to see that his vanitywas gratified to no small degree.In the joy of triumph she sang thefirst part of Al piu salice.Her audience was enraptured.Never hadMalibran nor Pasta sung with expression and intonation so perfect.Butat the beginning of the second part she glanced over the glisteninggroups and saw--Arthur.He never took his eyes from her face.A quickshudder thrilled through her,and her voice faltered.Up hurried Mme.

de Serizy from her place.

"What is it,dear?Oh!poor little thing!she is in such weak health; I was so afraid when I saw her begin a piece so far beyond herstrength."

The song was interrupted.Julie was vexed.She had not courage to singany longer,and submitted to her rival's treacherous sympathy.Therewas a whisper among the women.The incident led to discussions;theyguessed that the struggle had begun between the Marquise and Mme.deSerizy,and their tongues did not spare the latter.

Julie's strange,perturbing presentiments were suddenly realized. Through her preoccupation with Arthur she had loved to imagine thatwith that gentle,refined face he must remain faithful to his firstlove.There were times when she felt proud that this ideal,pure,andpassionate young love should have been hers;the passion of the younglover whose thoughts are all for her to whom he dedicates every momentof his life,who blushes as a woman blushes,thinks as a woman mightthink,forgetting ambition,fame,and fortune in devotion to his love,--she need

never fear a rival.All these things she had fondly andidly dreamed of Arthur;now all at once it seemed to her that herdream had come true.In the young Englishman's half-feminine face sheread the same deep thoughts,the same pensive melancholy,the samepassive acquiescence in a painful lot,and an endurance like her own.

She saw herself in him.Trouble and sadness are the most eloquent oflove's interpreters,and response is marvelously swift between twosuffering creatures,for in them the powers of intuition and ofassimilation of facts and ideas are well-nigh unerring and perfect.Sowith the violence of the shock the Marquise's eyes were opened to thewhole extent of the future danger.She was only too glad to find apretext for her nervousness in her chronic ill-health,and willinglysubmitted to be overwhelmed by Mme.de Serizy's insidious compassion.

That incident of the song caused talk and discussion which differedwith the various groups.Some pitied Julie's fate,and regretted thatsuch a remarkable woman was lost to society;others fell to wonderingwhat the cause of her ill-health and seclusion could be.

"Well,now,my dear Ronquerolles,"said the Marquis,addressing Mme.

de Serizy's brother,"you used to envy me my good fortune,and youused to blame me for my infidelities.Pshaw,you would not find muchto envy in my lot,if,like me,you had a pretty wife so fragile thatfor the past two years you might not so much as kiss her hand for fearof damaging her.Do not you encumber yourself with one of thosefragile ornaments,only fit to put in a glass case,so brittle and socostly that you are always obliged to be careful of them.They tell methat you are afraid of snow or wet for that fine horse of yours;howoften do you ride him?That is just my own case.It is true that mywife gives me no ground for jealousy,but my marriage is purelyornamental business;if you think that I am a married man,you aregrossly mistaken.So there is some excuse for my unfaithfulness.Ishould dearly like to know what you gentlemen who laugh at me would doin my place.Not many men would be so considerate as I am.I am sure,"

(here he lowered his voice)"that Mme.d'Aiglemont suspects nothing.

And then,of course,I have no right to complain at all;I am verywell off.Only there is nothing more trying for a man who

feels thingsthan the sight of suffering in a poor creature to whom you areattached----"

"You must have a very sensitive nature,then,"said M.deRonquerolles,"for you are not often at home."

Laughter followed on the friendly epigram;but Arthur,who made one ofthe group,maintained a frigid imperturbability in his quality of anEnglish gentleman who takes gravity for the very basis of his being.

D'Aiglemont's eccentric confidence,no doubt,had kindled some kind ofhope in Arthur,for he stood patiently awaiting an opportunity of aword with the Marquis.He had not to wait long.

"My Lord Marquis,"he said,"I am unspeakably pained to see the stateof Mme.d'Aiglemont's health.I do not think that you would talkjestingly about it if you knew that unless she adopts a certain courseof treatment she must die miserably.If I use this language to you,itis because I am in a manner justified in using it,for I am quitecertain that I can save Mme.d'Aiglemont's life and restore her tohealth and happiness.It is odd,no doubt,that a man of my rankshould be a physician,yet nevertheless chance

determined that Ishould study medicine.I find life dull enough here,"he continued,affecting a cold selfishness to gain his ends,"it makes no differenceto me whether I spend my time and travel for the benefit of asuffering fellow-creature,or waste it in Paris on some nonsense orother.It is very,very seldom that a cure is completed in thesecomplaints,for they require constant care,time,and patience,and,above all things,money.Travel is needed,and a punctilious followingout of prescriptions,by no means unpleasant,and varied daily.Twogentlemen"(laying a stress on the word in its English sense)"canunderstand each other.I give you warning that if you accept myproposal,you shall be a judge of my conduct at every moment.I willdo nothing without consulting you,without your superintendence,and Iwill answer for the success of my method if you will consent to followit.Yes,unless you wish to be Mme.d'Aiglemont's husband no longer,and that before long,"he added in the Marquis'ear.

The Marquis laughed."One thing is certain--that only an Englishmancould make me such an extraordinary proposal,"he said."Permit me toleave it unaccepted and unrejected.I will think it over;and my wifemust be consulted first in any case."

Julie had returned to the piano.This time she sang a song fromSemiramide,Son regina,son guerriera,and the whole room applauded,a stifled outburst of wellbred acclamation which proved that theFaubourg Saint-Germain had been roused to enthusiasm by her singing.

The evening was over.D'Aiglemont brought his wife home,and Julie sawwith uneasy satisfaction that her first attempt had at once beensuccessful.Her husband had been roused out of indifference by thepart which she had played,and now he meant to honor her with such apassing fancy as he might bestow upon some opera nymph.It amusedJulie that she,a virtuous married woman,should be treated thus.Shetried to play with her power,but at the outset her kindness brokedown once more,and she received the most terrible of all the lessonsheld in store for her by fate.

Between two and three o'clock in the morning Julie sat up,sombre andmoody,beside her sleeping husband,in the room dimly lighted by theflickering lamp.Deep silence prevailed.Her agony of remorse hadlasted near an hour;how bitter her tears

had been none perhaps canrealize save women who have known such an experience as hers.Onlysuch natures as Julie's can feel her loathing for a calculated caress,the horror of a loveless kiss,of the heart's apostasy followed bydolorous prostitution.She despised herself;she cursed marriage.Shecould have longed for death;perhaps if it had not been for a cry fromher child,she would have sprung from the window and dashed herselfupon the pavement.M.d'Aiglemont slept on peacefully at her side;hiswife's hot dropping tears did not waken him.

But next morning Julie could be gay.She made a great effort to lookhappy,to hide,not her melancholy,as heretofore,but an insuperableloathing.From that day she no longer regarded herself as a blamelesswife.Had she not been false to herself?Why should she not play adouble part in the future,and display astounding depths of cunning indeceiving her husband?In her there lay a hitherto undiscovered latentdepravity,lacking only opportunity,and her marriage was the cause.

Even now she had asked herself why she should struggle with love,when,with her heart and her whole nature in revolt,she

gave herselfto the husband whom she loved no longer.Perhaps,who knows?somepiece of fallacious reasoning,some bit of special pleading,lies atthe root of all sins,of all crimes.How shall society exist unlessevery individual of which it is composed will make the necessarysacrifices of inclination demanded by its laws?If you accept thebenefits of civilized society,do you not by implication engage toobserve the conditions,the conditions of its very existence?And yet,starving wretches,compelled to respect the laws of property,are notless to be pitied than women whose natural instincts and sensitivenessare turned to so many avenues of pain.

A few days after that scene of which the secret lay buried in themidnight couch,d'Aiglemont introduced Lord Grenville.Julie gave theguest a stiffly polite reception,which did credit to her powers ofdissimulation.Resolutely she silenced her heart,veiled her eyes,steadied her voice,and she kept her future in her own hands.Then,when by these devices,this innate woman-craft,as it may be called,she had discovered the full extent of the love which she inspired,Mme.d'Aiglemont welcomed the hope of a speedy cure,and no longeropposed her husband,who pressed her to accept the young doctor'soffer.Yet she declined to trust

herself with Lord Grenville untilafter some further study of his words and manner,she could feelcertain that he had sufficient generosity to endure his pain insilence.She had absolute power over him,and she had begun to abusethat power already.Was she not a woman?

Montcontour is an old manor-house build upon the sandy cliffs abovethe Loire,not far from the bridge where Julie's journey wasinterrupted in 1814.It is a picturesque,white chateau,with turretscovered with fine stone carving like Mechlin lace;a chateau such asyou often see in Touraine,spick and span,ivy clad,standing amongits groves of mulberry trees and vineyards,with its hollow walks,itsstone balustrades,and cellars mined in the rock escarpments mirroredin the Loire.The roofs of Montcontour gleam in the sun;the wholeland glows in the burning heat.Traces of the romantic charm of Spainand the south hover about the enchanting spot.The breeze brings thescent of bell flowers and golden broom,the air is soft,all about youlies a sunny land,a land which casts its dreamy spell over your soul,a land of languor and of soft desire,a fair,sweet-scented country,where pain is lulled to sleep and passion wakes.No heart is cold forlong beneath its clear

sky,beside its sparkling waters.One ambitiondies after another,and you sink into serene content and repose,asthe sun sinks at the end of the day swathed about with purple andazure.

One warm August evening in 1821two people were climbing the paths cutin the crags above the chateau,doubtless for the sake of the viewfrom the heights above.The two were Julie and Lord Grenville,butthis Julie seemed to be a new creature.The unmistakable color ofhealth glowed in her face.Overflowing vitality had brought a lightinto her eyes,which sparkled through a moist film with that liquidbrightness which gives such irresistible charm to the eyes ofchildren.She was radiant with smiles;she felt the joy of living andall the possibilities of life.From the very way in which she liftedher little feet,it was easy to see that no suffering trammeled herlightest movements;there was no heaviness nor languor in her eyes,her voice,as heretofore.Under the white silk sunshade which screenedher from the hot sunlight,she looked like some young bride beneathher veil,or a maiden waiting to yield to the magical enchantments ofLove.

Arthur led her with a lover's care,helping her up the pathway as

ifshe had been a child,finding the smoothest ways,avoiding the stonesfor her,bidding her see glimpses of distance,or some flower besidethe path,always with the unfailing goodness,the same delicate designin all that he did;the intuitive sense of this woman's wellbeingseemed to be innate in him,and as much,nay,perhaps more,a part ofhis being as the pulse of his own life.

The patient and her doctor went step for step.There was nothingstrange for them in a sympathy which seemed to have existed since theday when they first walked together.One will swayed them both;theystopped as their senses received the same impression;every word andevery glance told of the same thought in either mind.They had climbedup through the vineyards,and now they turned to sit on one of thelong white stones,quarried out of the caves in the hillside;butJulie stood awhile gazing out over the landscape.

"What a beautiful country!"she cried."Let us put up a tent and livehere.Victor,Victor,do come up here!"

M.d'Aiglemont answered by a halloo from below.He did not,however,hurry himself,merely giving his wife a glance from time to time whenthe windings of the path gave him a glimpse of her.Julie breathed theair with delight.She looked up at Arthur,giving him one of thosesubtle glances in which a clever woman can put the whole of herthought.

"Ah,I should like to live here always,"she said."Would it bepossible to tire of this beautiful valley?--What is the picturesqueriver called,do you know?"

"That is the Cise."

"The Cise,"she repeated."And all this country below,before us?"

"Those are the low hills above the Cher."

"And away to the right?Ah,that is Tours.Only see how fine thecathedral towers look in the distance."

She was silent,and let fall the hand which she had stretched outtowards the view upon Arthur's.Both admired the wide

landscape madeup of so much blended beauty.Neither of them spoke.The murmuringvoice of the river,the pure air,and the cloudless heaven were all intune with their thronging thoughts and their youth and the love intheir hearts.

"Oh!mon Dieu,how I love this country!"Julie continued,withgrowing and ingenuous enthusiasm."You lived here for a long while,did you not?"she added after a pause.

A thrill ran through Lord Grenville at her words.

"It was down there,"he said,in a melancholy voice,indicating as hespoke a cluster of walnut trees by the roadside,"that I,a prisoner,saw you for the first time."

"Yes,but even at that time I felt very sad.This country looked wildto me then,but now----"She broke off,and Lord Grenville did notdare to look at her.

"All this pleasure I owe to you,"Julie began at last,after a longsilence."Only the living can feel the joy of life,and until now haveI not been dead to it all?You have given me more than

health,youhave made me feel all its worth--"

Women have an inimitable talent for giving utterance to strongfeelings in colorless words;a woman's eloquence lies in tone andgesture,manner and glance.Lord Grenville hid his face in his hands,for his tears filled his eyes.This was Julie's first word of thankssince they left Paris a year ago.

For a whole year he had watched over the Marquise,putting his wholeself into the task.D'Aiglemont seconding him,he had taken her firstto Aix,then to la Rochelle,to be near the sea.From moment to momenthe had watched the changes worked in Julie's shattered constitution byhis wise and simple prescriptions.He had cultivated her health as anenthusiastic gardener might cultivate a rare flower.Yet,to allappearance,the Marquise had quietly accepted Arthur's skill and carewith the egoism of a spoiled Parisienne,or like a courtesan who hasno idea of the cost of things,nor of the worth of a man,and judgesof both by their comparative usefulness to her.

The influence of places upon us is a fact worth remarking.Ifmelancholy comes over us by the margin of a great

water,anotherindelible law of our nature so orders it that the mountains exercise apurifying influence upon our feelings,and among the hills passiongains in depth by all that it apparently loses in vivacity.Perhaps itwas the light of the wide country by the Loire,the height of the fairsloping hillside on which the lovers sat,that induced the calm blissof the moment when the whole extent of the passion that lies beneath afew insignificant-sounding words is divined for the first time with adelicious sense of happiness.

Julie had scarcely spoken the words which had moved Lord Grenville sodeeply,when a caressing breeze ruffled the treetops and filled theair with coolness from the river;a few clouds crossed the sky,andthe soft cloud-shadows brought out all the beauty of the fair landbelow.

Julie turned away her head,lest Arthur should see the tears which shesucceeded in repressing;his emotion had spread at once to her.Shedried her eyes,but she dared not raise them lest he should read theexcess of joy in a glance.Her woman's instinct told her that duringthis hour of danger she must hide her love in the depths of her heart.

Yet silence might prove equally dangerous,and Julie saw that LordGrenville was unable to utter a word.She went on,therefore,in agentle voice:

"You are touched by what I have said.Perhaps such a quick outburst offeeling is the way in which a gracious and kind nature like yoursreverses a mistaken judgment.You must have thought me ungrateful whenI was cold and reserved,or cynical and hard,all through the journeywhich,fortunately,is very near its end.I should not have beenworthy of your care if I had been unable to appreciate it.I haveforgotten nothing.Alas!I shall forget nothing,not the anxious wayin which you watched over me as a mother watches over her child,nor,and above all else,the noble confidence of our life as brother andsister,the delicacy of your conduct--winning charms,against which wewomen are defenceless.My lord,it is out of my power to make you areturn----"

At these words Julie hastily moved further away,and Lord Grenvillemade no attempt to detain her.She went to a rock not far away,andthere sat motionless.What either felt remained a secret known to eachalone;doubtless they wept in silence.The

singing of the birds aboutthem,so blithe,so overflowing with tenderness at sunset time,couldonly increase the storm of passion which had driven them apart.Naturetook up their story for them,and found a language for the love ofwhich they did not dare to speak.

"And now,my lord,"said Julie,and she came and stood before Arthurwith a great dignity,which allowed her to take his hand in hers."Iam going to ask you to hallow and purify the life which you have givenback to me.Here,we will part.I know,"she added,as she saw howwhite his face grew,"I know that I am repaying you for your devotionby requiring of you a sacrifice even greater than any which you havehitherto made for me,sacrifices so great that they should receivesome better recompense than this....But it must be...You mustnot stay in France.By laying this command upon you,do I not give yourights which shall be held sacred?"she added,holding his handagainst her beating heart.

"Yes,"said Arthur,and he rose.

He looked in the direction of d'Aiglemont,who appeared on

theopposite side of one of the hollow walks with the child in his arms.

He had scrambled up on the balustrade by the chateau that littleHelene might jump down.

"Julie,I will not say a word of my love;we understand each other toowell.Deeply and carefully though I have hidden the pleasures of myheart,you have shared them all,I feel it,I know it,I see it.Andnow,at this moment,as I receive this delicious proof of the constantsympathy of our hearts,I must go....Cunning schemes for gettingrid of him have crossed my mind too often;the temptation might beirresistible if I stayed with you."

"I had the same thought,"she said,a look of pained surprise in hertroubled face.

Yet in her tone and involuntary shudder there was such virtue,suchcertainty of herself,won in many a hard-fought battle with a lovethat spoke in Julie's tones and involuntary gestures,that LordGrenville stood thrilled with admiration of her.The mere shadow of acrime had been dispelled from that

clear conscience.The religioussentiment enthroned on the fair forehead could not but drive away theevil thoughts that arise unbidden,engendered by our imperfect nature,thoughts which make us aware of the grandeur and the perils of humandestiny.

"And then,"she said,"I should have drawn down your scorn upon me,and--I should have been saved,"she added,and her eyes fell."To belowered in your eyes,what is that but death?"

For a moment the two heroic lovers were silent,choking down theirsorrow.Good or ill,it seemed that their thoughts were loyally one,and the joys in the depths of their heart were no more experiencesapart than the pain which they strove most anxiously to hide.

"I have no right to complain,"she said after a while,"my misery isof my own making,"and she raised her tear-filled eyes to the sky.

"Perhaps you don't remember it,but that is the place where we meteach other for the first time,"shouted the General from below,and hewaved his hand towards the distance."There,down

yonder,near thosepoplars!"

The Englishman nodded abruptly by way of answer.

"So I was bound to die young and to know no happiness,"Juliecontinued."Yes,do not think that I live.Sorrow is just as fatal asthe dreadful disease which you have cured.I do not think that I am toblame.No.My love is stronger than I am,and eternal;but allunconsciously it grew in me;and I will not be guilty through my love.

Nevertheless,though I shall be faithful to my conscience as a wife,to my duties as a mother,I will be no less faithful to the instinctsof my heart.Hear me,"she cried in an unsteady voice,"henceforth Ibelong to him no longer."

By a gesture,dreadful to see in its undisguised loathing sheindicated her husband.

"The social code demands that I shall make his existence happy,"shecontinued."I will obey,I will be his servant,my devotion to himshall be boundless;but from to-day I am a widow.I will neither be aprostitute in my own eyes nor in those

of the world.If I do notbelong to M.d'Aiglemont,I will never belong to another.You shallhave nothing,nothing save this which you have wrung from me.This isthe doom which I have passed upon myself,"she said,looking proudlyat him."And now,know this--if you give way to a single criminalthought,M.d'Aiglemont's widow will enter a convent in Spain orItaly.By an evil chance we have spoken of our love;perhaps thatconfession was bound to come;but our hearts must never vibrate againlike this.To-morrow you will receive a letter from England,and weshall part,and never see each other again."

The effort had exhausted all Julie's strength.She felt her kneestrembling,and a feeling of deathly cold came over her.Obeying awoman's instinct,she sat down,lest she should sink into Arthur'sarms.

"Julie!"cried Lord Grenville.

The sharp cry rang through the air like a crack of thunder.Till thenhe could not speak;now,all the words which the dumb lover could notutter gathered themselves in that heartrending appeal.

"Well,what is wrong with her?"asked the General,who had hurried upat that cry,and now suddenly confronted the two.

"Nothing serious,"said Julie,with that wonderful self-possessionwhich a woman's quick-wittedness usually brings to her aid when it ismost called for."The chill,damp air under the walnut tree made mefeel quite faint just now,and that must have alarmed this doctor ofmine.Does he not look on me as a very nearly finished work of art?Hewas startled,I suppose,by the idea of seeing it destroyed."Withostentatious coolness she took Lord Grenville's arm,smiled at herhusband,took a last look at the landscape,and went down the pathway,drawing her traveling companion with her.

"This certainly is the grandest view that we have seen,"she said;"Ishall never forget it.Just look,Victor,what distance,what anexpanse of country,and what variety in it!I have fallen in love withthis landscape."

Her laughter was almost hysterical,but to her husband it soundednatural.She sprang gaily down into the hollow pathway

and vanished.

"What?"she cried,when they had left M.d'Aiglemont far behind."Sosoon?Is it so soon?Another moment,and we can neither of us beourselves;we shall never be ourselves again,our life is over,inshort--"

"Let us go slowly,"said Lord Grenville,"the carriages are still someway off,and if we may put words into our glances,our hearts may livea little longer."

A Woman of Thirty -Part V

A Woman of Thirty

Part V

hey went along the footpath by the river in the late evening light,almost in silence;such vague words as they uttered,low as the murmurof the Loire,stirred their souls to the depths.Just as the sun sank,a last red gleam from the sky fell over them;it was like a mournfulsymbol of their ill-starred love.

The General,much put out because the carriage was not at the spotwhere they had left it,followed and outstripped the pair withoutinterrupting their converse.Lord Grenville's high minded and delicatebehavior throughout the journey had completely dispelled the Marquis'
suspicions.For some time past he had left his wife in freedom,reposing confidence in the noble amateur's Punic faith.Arthur andJulie walked on together in the close and painful communion of twohearts laid waste.

So short a while ago as they climbed the cliffs at

Montcontour,therehad been a vague hope in either mind,an uneasy joy for which theydared not account to themselves;but now as they came along thepathway by the river,they pulled down the frail structure ofimaginings,the child's cardcastle,on which neither of them had daredto breathe.That hope was over.

That very evening Lord Grenville left them.His last look at Juliemade it miserably plain that since the moment when sympathy revealedthe full extent of a tyrannous passion,he did well to mistrusthimself.

The next morning,M.d'Aiglemont and his wife took their places in thecarriage without their traveling companion,and were whirled swiftlyalong the road to Blois.The Marquise was constantly put in mind ofthe journey made in 1814,when as yet she know nothing of love,andhad been almost ready to curse it for its persistency.Countlessforgotten impressions were revived.The heart has its own memory.Awoman who cannot recollect the most important great events willrecollect through a lifetime things which appealed to her feelings;
and Julie d'Aiglemont found all the most trifling details of thatjourney laid up in her mind.It was pleasant to her to recall

itslittle incidents as they occurred to her one by one;there were pointsin the road when she could even remember the thoughts that passedthrough her mind when she saw them first.

Victor had fallen violently in love with his wife since she hadrecovered the freshness of her youth and all her beauty,and now hepressed close to her side like a lover.Once he tried to put his armround her,but she gently disengaged herself,finding some excuse orother for evading the harmless caress.In a little while she shrankfrom the close contact with Victor,the sensation of warmthcommunicated by their position.She tried to take the unoccupied placeopposite,but Victor gallantly resigned the back seat to her.For thisattention she thanked him with a sigh,whereupon he forgot himself,and the Don Juan of the garrison construed his wife's melancholy tohis own advantage,so that at the end of the day she was compelled tospeak with a firmness which impressed him.

"You have all but killed me,dear,once already,as you know,"saidshe."If I were still an inexperienced girl,I might begin tosacrifice myself afresh;but I am a mother,I have a daughter to bringup,and I owe as much to her as to you.Let us

resign ourselves to amisfortune which affects us both alike.You are the less to be pitied.

Have you not,as it is,found consolations which duty and the honor ofboth,and (stronger still)which Nature forbids to me?Stay,"sheadded,"you carelessly left three letters from Mme.de Serizy in adrawer;here they are.My silence about this matter should make itplain to you that in me you have a wife who has plenty of indulgenceand does not exact from you the sacrifices prescribed by the law.ButI have thought enough to see that the roles of husband and wife arequite different,and that the wife alone is predestined to misfortune.

My virtue is based upon firmly fixed and definite principles.I shalllive blamelessly,but let me live."

The Marquis was taken aback by a logic which women grasp with theclear insight of love,and overawed by a certain dignity natural tothem at such crises.Julie's instinctive repugnance for all thatjarred upon her love and the instincts of her heart is one of thefairest qualities of woman,and springs perhaps from a natural virtuewhich neither laws nor civilization can silence.And who shall dare toblame women?If a woman can silence the exclusive sentiment which bidsher "forsake all

other"for the man whom she loves,what is she but apriest who has lost his faith?If a rigid mind here and there condemnsJulie for a sort of compromise between love and wifely duty,impassioned souls will lay it to her charge as a crime.To be thusblamed by both sides shows one of two things very clearly--that miserynecessarily follows in the train of broken laws,or else that thereare deplorable flaws in the institutions upon which society in Europeis based.

Two years went by.M.and Mme.d'Aiglemont went their separate ways,leading their life in the world,meeting each other more frequentlyabroad than at home,a refinement upon divorce,in which many amarriage in the great world is apt to end.

One evening,strange to say,found husband and wife in their owndrawing-room.Mme.d'Aiglemont had been dining at home with a friend,and the General,who almost invariably dined in town,had not gone outfor once.

"There is a pleasant time in store for you,Madame la Marquise," said M.d'Aiglemont,setting his coffee cup down upon the table.Helooked at the guest,Mme.de Wimphen,and

half-pettishly,half-mischievouslyadded,"I am starting off for several days'sport withthe Master of the Hounds.For a whole week,at any rate,you will be awidow in good earnest;just what you wish for,I suppose.--Guillaume,"
he said to the servant who entered,"tell them to put the horses in."

Mme.de Wimphen was the friend to whom Julie had begun the letter uponher marriage.The glances exchanged by the two women said plainly thatin her Julie had found an intimate friend,an indulgent and invaluableconfidante.Mme.de Wimphen's marriage had been a very happy one.
Perhaps it was her own happiness which secured her devotion to Julie'sunhappy life,for under such circumstances,dissimilarity of destinyis nearly always a strong bond of union.

"Is the hunting season not over yet?"asked Julie,with an indifferentglance at her husband.

"The Master of the Hounds comes when and where he pleases,madame.Weare going boar-hunting in the Royal Forest."

"Take care that no accident happens to you."

"Accidents are usually unforeseen,"he said,smiling.

"The carriage is ready,my Lord Marquis,"said the servant.

"Madame,if I should fall a victim to the boar--"he continued,with asuppliant air.

"What does this mean?"inquired Mme.de Wimphen.

"Come,come,"said Mme.d'Aiglemont,turning to her husband;smilingat her friend as if to say,"You will soon see."

Julie held up her head;but as her husband came close to her,sheswerved at the last,so that his kiss fell not on her throat,but onthe broad frill about it.

"You will be my witness before heaven now that I need a firman toobtain this little grace of her,"said the Marquis,addressing Mme.deWimphen."This is how this wife of mine understands love.She hasbrought me to this pass,by what trickery I am at a

loss toknow....A pleasant time to you!"and he went.

"But your poor husband is really very good-natured,"cried Louisa deWimphen,when the two women were alone together."He loves you."

"Oh!not another syllable after that last word.The name I bear makesme shudder----"

"Yes,but Victor obeys you implicitly,"said Louisa.

"His obedience is founded in part upon the great esteem which I haveinspired in him.As far as outward things go,I am a model wife.Imake his house pleasant to him;I shut my eyes to his intrigues;Itouch not a penny of his fortune.He is free to squander the interestexactly as he pleases;I only stipulate that he shall not touch theprincipal.At this price I have peace.He neither explains norattempts to explain my life.But though my husband is guided by me,that does not say that I have nothing to fear from his character.I ama bear leader who daily trembles lest the muzzle should give way atlast.If Victor once took it into his head that I had forfeited myright to his esteem,what would

happen next I dare not think;for heis violent,full of personal pride,and vain above all things.Whilehis wits are not keen enough to enable him to behave discreetly at adelicate crisis when his lowest passions are involved,his characteris weak,and he would very likely kill me provisionally even if hedied of remorse next day.But there is no fear of that fatal goodfortune."

A brief pause followed.Both women were thinking of the real cause ofthis state of affairs.Julie gave Louisa a glance which revealed herthoughts.

"I have been cruelly obeyed,"she cried."Yet I never forbade him towrite to me.Oh!he has forgotten me,and he is right.If his lifehad been spoiled,it would have been too tragical;one life is enough,is it not?Would you believe it,dear;I read English newspaperssimply to see his name in print.But he has not yet taken his seat inthe House of Lords."

"So you know English."

"Did I not tell you?--Yes,I learned."

"Poor little one!"cried Louisa,grasping Julie's hand in hers."Howcan you still live?"

"That is the secret,"said the Marquise,with an involuntary gesturealmost childlike in its simplicity."Listen,I take laudanum.Thatduchess in London suggested the idea;you know the story,Maturin madeuse of it in one of his novels.My drops are very weak,but I sleep;Iam only awake for seven hours in the day,and those house I spend withmy child."

Louisa gazed into the fire.The full extent of her friend's misery wasopening out before her for the first time,and she dared not look intoher face.

"Keep my secret,Louisa,"said Julie,after a moment's silence.

Just as she spoke the footman brought in a letter for the Marquise.

"Ah!"she cried,and her face grew white.

"I need not ask from whom it comes,"said Mme.de

Wimphen,but theMarquise was reading the letter,and heeded nothing else.

Mme.de Wimphen,watching her friend,saw strong feeling wrought tothe highest pitch,ecstasy of the most dangerous kind painted onJulie's face in swift changing white and red.At length Julie flungthe sheet into the fire.

"It burns like fire,"she said."Oh!my heart beats till I cannotbreathe."

She rose to her feet and walked up and down.Her eyes were blazing.

"He did not leave Paris!"she cried.

Mme.de Wimphen did not dare to interrupt the words that followed,jerked-out sentences,measured by dreadful pauses in between.Afterevery break the deep notes of her voice sank lower and lower.Therewas something awful about the last words.

"He has seen me,constantly,and I have not known it.--A look,takenby stealth,every day,helps him to live.--Louisa,you do not know!--Heis dying.--He wants to say good-bye to me.He knows that my husbandhas gone away for several days.He will be here in a moment.Oh!Ishall die:I am lost.--Listen,Louisa,stay with me!--I am afraid!"

"But my husband knows that I have been dining with you;he is sure tocome for me,"said Mme.de Wimphen.

"Well,then,before you go I will send him away.I will play theexecutioner for us both.Oh me!he will think that I do not love himany more--And that letter of his!Dear,I can see those words inletters of fire."

A carriage rolled in under the archway.

"Ah!"cried the Marquise,with something like joy in her voice,"he iscoming openly.He makes no mystery of it."

"Lord Grenville,"announced the servant.

The Marquise stood up rigid and motionless;but at the sight ofArthur's white face,so thin and haggard,how was it possible to keepup the show of severity?Lord Grenville saw that Julie was not alone,but he controlled his fierce annoyance,and looked cool andunperturbed.Yet for the two women who knew his secret,his face,histones,the look in his eyes had something of the power attributed tothe torpedo.Their faculties were benumbed by the sharp shock ofcontact with his horrible pain.The sound of his voice set Julie'sheart beating so cruelly that she could not trust herself to speak;

she was afraid that he would see the full extent of his power overher.Lord Grenville did not dare to look at Julie,and Mme.de Wimphenwas left to sustain a conversation to which no one listened.Julieglanced at her friend with touching gratefulness in her eyes to thankher for coming to her aid.

By this time the lovers had quelled emotion into silence,and couldpreserve the limits laid down by duty and convention.But M.deWimphen was announced,and as he came in the two friends exchangedglances.Both felt the difficulties of this fresh complication.It wasimpossible to enter into explanations with M.de Wimphen,and Louisacould not think of any sufficient

pretext for asking to be left.

Julie went to her,ostensibly to wrap her up in her shawl."I will bebrave,"she said,in a low voice."He came here in the face of all theworld,so what have I to fear?Yet but for you,in that first moment,when I saw how changed he looked,I should have fallen at his feet."

"Well,Arthur,you have broken your promise to me,"she said,in afaltering voice,when she returned.Lord Grenville did not venture totake the seat upon the sofa by her side.

"I could not resist the pleasure of hearing your voice,of being nearyou.The thought of it came to be a sort of madness,a deliriousfrenzy.I am no longer master of myself.I have taken myself to task;
it is no use,I am too weak,I ought to die.But to die without seeingyou,without having heard the rustle of your dress,or felt yourtears.What a death!"

He moved further away from her;but in his hasty uprising a pistolfell out of his pocket.The Marquise looked down blankly

at theweapon;all passion,all expression had died out of her eyes.LordGrenville stooped for the thing,raging inwardly over an accidentwhich seemed like a piece of lovesick strategy.

"Arthur!"

"Madame,"he said,looking down,"I came here in utter desperation;Imeant----"he broke off.

"You meant to die by your own hand here in my house!"

"Not alone!"he said in a low voice.

"Not alone!My husband,perhaps----?"

"No,no,"he cried in a choking voice."Reassure yourself,"hecontinued,"I have quite given up my deadly purpose.As soon as I camein,as soon as I saw you,I felt that I was strong enough to suffer insilence,and to die alone."

Julie sprang up,and flung herself into his arms.Through her sobbinghe caught a few passionate words,"To know

happiness,and then to die.

--Yes,let it be so."

All Julie's story was summed up in that cry from the depths;it wasthe summons of nature and of love at which women without a religionsurrender.With the fierce energy of unhoped-for joy,Arthur caughther up and carried her to the sofa;but in a moment she tore herselffrom her lover's arms,looked at him with a fixed despairing gaze,took his hand,snatched up a candle,and drew him into her room.Whenthey stood by the cot where Helene lay sleeping,she put the curtainssoftly aside,shading the candle with her hand,lest the light shoulddazzle the half-closed eyes beneath the transparent lids.Helene laysmiling in her sleep,with her arms outstretched on the coverlet.

Julie glanced from her child to Arthur's face.That look told him all.

"We may leave a husband,even though he loves us:a man is strong;hehas consolations.--We may defy the world and its laws.But amotherless child!"--all these thoughts,and a thousand others moremoving still,found language in that glance.

"We can take her with us,"muttered he;"I will love her dearly."

"Mamma!"cried little Helene,now awake.Julie burst into tears.LordGrenville sat down and folded his arms in gloomy silence.

"Mamma!"At the sweet childish name,so many nobler feelings,so manyirresistible yearnings awoke,that for a moment love was effaced bythe all-powerful instinct of motherhood;the mother triumphed over thewoman in Julie,and Lord Grenville could not hold out,he was defeatedby Julie's tears.

Just at that moment a door was flung noisily open."Madamed'Aiglemont,are you hereabouts?"called a voice which rang like acrack of thunder through the hearts of the two lovers.The Marquis hadcome home.

Before Julie could recover her presence of mind,her husband was onthe way to the door of her room which opened into his.Luckily,at asign,Lord Grenville escaped into the dressing-closet,and she hastilyshut the door upon him.

"Well,my lady,here am I,"said Victor,"the hunting party did notcome off.I am just going to bed."

"Good-night,so am I.So go and leave me to undress."

"You are very cross to-night,Madame la Marquise."

The General returned to his room,Julie went with him to the door andshut it.Then she sprang to the dressing-close to release Arthur.Allher presence of mind returned;she bethought herself that it was quitenatural that her sometime doctor should pay her a visit;she mighthave left him in the drawing-room while she put her little girl tobed.She was about to tell him,under her breath,to go back to thedrawing-room,and had opened the door.Then she shrieked aloud.LordGrenville's fingers had been caught and crushed in the door.

"Well,what is it?"demanded her husband.

"Oh!nothing,I have just pricked my finger with a pin."

The General's door opened at once.Julie imagined that the irruptionwas due to a sudden concern for her,and cursed a solicitude in whichlove had no part.She had barely time to close the dressing-closet,and Lord Grenville had not extricated his hand.The General did,infact,appear,but his wife had mistaken his motives;his apprehensionswere entirely on his own account.

"Can you lend me a bandana handkerchief?The stupid fool Charlesleaves me without a single one.In the early days you used to botherme with looking after me so carefully.Ah,well,the honeymoon did notlast very long for me,nor yet for my cravats.Nowadays I am givenover to the secular arm,in the shape of servants who do not care onejack straw for what I say."

"There!There is a bandana for you.Did you go into the drawing-room?"

"No."

"Oh!you might perhaps have been in time to see Lord Grenville."

"Is he in Paris?"

"It seems so."

"Oh!I will go at once.The good doctor."

"But he will have gone by now!"exclaimed Julie.

The Marquis,standing in the middle of the room,was tying thehandkerchief over his head.He looked complacently at himself in theglass.

"What has become of the servants is more than I know,"he remarked."Ihave rung the bell for Charles,and he has not answered it.And yourmaid is not here either.Ring for her.I should like another blanketon my bed to-night."

"Pauline is out,"the Marquise said drily.

"What,at midnight!"exclaimed the General.

"I gave her leave to go to the Opera."

"That is funny!"returned her husband,continuing to undress."Ithought I saw her coming upstairs."

"She has come in then,of course,"said Julie,with assumedimpatience,and to allay any possible suspicion on her husband's partshe pretended to ring the bell.

The whole history of that night has never been known,but no doubt itwas as simple and as tragically commonplace as the domestic incidentsthat preceded it.

Next day the Marquise d'Aiglemont took to her bed,nor did she leaveit for some days.

"What can have happened in your family so extraordinary that every oneis talking about your wife?"asked M.de Ronquerolles of M.
d'Aiglemont a short time after that night of catastrophes.

"Take my advice and remain a bachelor,"said d'Aiglemont."Thecurtains of Helene's cot caught fire,and gave

my wife such a shockthat it will be a twelvemonth before she gets over it;so the doctorsays.You marry a pretty wife,and her looks fall off;you marry agirl in blooming health,and she turns into an invalid.You think shehas a passionate temperament,and find her cold,or else under herapparent coldness there lurks a nature so passionate that she is thedeath of you,or she dishonors your name.Sometimes the meekest ofthem will turn out crotchety,though the crotchety ones never grow anysweeter.Sometimes the mere child,so simple and silly at first,willdevelop an iron will to thwart you and the ingenuity of a fiend.I amtired of marriage."

"Or of your wife?"

"That would be difficult.By-the-by,do you feel inclined to go toSaint-Thomas d'Aquin with me to attend Lord Grenville's funeral?"

"A singular way of spending time.--Is it really known how he came byhis death?"added Ronquerolles.

"His man says that he spent a whole night sitting on somebody's

windowsill to save some woman's character,and it has been infernally coldlately."

"Such devotion would be highly creditable to one of us old stagers;
but Lord Grenville was a youngster and--an Englishman.Englishmennever can do anything like anybody else."

"Pooh!"returned d'Aiglemont,"these heroic exploits all depend uponthe woman in the case,and it certainly was not for one that I know,that poor Arthur came by his death."

A Woman of Thirty

Chapter II

A Hidden Grief

etween the Seine and the little river Loing lies a wide flat country,skirted on the one side by the Forest of Fontainebleau,and marked outas to its southern limits by the towns of Moret,Montereau,andNemours.It is a dreary country;little knolls of hills appear only atrare intervals,and a coppice here and there among the fields affordsfor game;and beyond,upon every side,stretches the endless gray oryellowish horizon peculiar to Beauce,Sologne,and Berri.

In the very centre of the plain,at equal distances from Moret andMontereau,the traveler passes the old chateau of Saint-Lange,standing amid surroundings which lack neither dignity nor stateliness.

There are magnificent avenues of elm-trees,great gardens encircled bythe moat,and a circumference of walls about a huge

manorial pilewhich represents the profits of the maltote,the gains of farmers-general,legalized malversation,or the vast fortunes of great housesnow brought low beneath the hammer of the Civil Code.

Should any artist or dreamer of dreams chance to stray along the roadsfull of deep ruts,or over the heavy land which secures the placeagainst intrusion,he will wonder how it happened that this romanticold place was set down in a savanna of corn-land,a desert of chalk,and sand,and marl,where gaiety dies away,and melancholy is anatural product of the soil.The voiceless solitude,the monotonoushorizon line which weigh upon the spirits are negative beauties,whichonly suit with sorrow that refuses to be comforted.

Hither,at the close of the year 1820,came a woman,still young,wellknown in Paris for her charm,her fair face,and her wit;and to theimmense astonishment of the little village a mile away,this woman ofhigh rank and corresponding fortune took up her abode at Saint-Lange.

From time immemorial,farmers and laborers had seen no gentry

at thechateau.The estate,considerable though it was,had been left incharge of a land-steward and the house to the old servants.Whereforethe appearance of the lady of the manor caused a kind of sensation inthe district.

A group had gathered in the yard of the wretched little wineshop atthe end of the village (where the road forks to Nemours and Moret)tosee the carriage pass.It went by slowly,for the Marquise had comefrom Paris with her own horses,and those on the lookout had ampleopportunity of observing a waiting-maid,who sat with her back to thehorses holding a little girl,with a somewhat dreamy look,upon herknee.The child's mother lay back in the carriage;she looked like adying woman sent out into the country air by her doctors as a lastresource.Village politicians were by no means pleased to see theyoung,delicate,downcast face;they had hoped that the new arrival atSaint-Lange would bring some life and stir into the neighborhood,andclearly any sort of stir or movement must be distasteful to thesuffering invalid in the traveling carriage.

That evening,when the notables of Saint-Lange were drinking in theprivate room of the wineshop,the longest head among them

declaredthat such depression could admit of but one construction--the Marquisewas ruined.His lordship the Marquis was away in Spain with the Ducd'Angouleme (so they said in the papers),and beyond a doubt herladyship had come to Saint-Lange to retrench after a run of ill-luckon the Bourse.The Marquis was one of the greatest gamblers on theface of the globe.Perhaps the estate would be cut up and sold inlittle lots.There would be some good strokes of business to be madein that case,and it behooved everybody to count up his cash,unearthhis savings and to see how he stood,so as to secure his share of thespoil of Saint-Lange.

So fair did this future seem,that the village worthies,dying to knowwhether it was founded on fact,began to think of ways of getting atthe truth through the servants at the chateau.None of these,however,could throw any light on the calamity which had brought their mistressinto the country at the beginning of winter,and to the old chateau ofSaint-Lange of all places,when she might have taken her choice ofcheerful country-houses famous for their beautiful gardens.

His worship the mayor called to pay his respects;but he did not

seethe lady.Then the land-steward tried with no better success.

Madame la Marquise kept her room,only leaving it,while it was set inorder,for the small adjoining drawing-room,where she dined;if,indeed,to sit down to a table,to look with disgust at the dishes,and take the precise amount of nourishment required to prevent deathfrom sheer starvation,can be called dining.The meal over,shereturned at once to the old-fashioned low chair,in which she had satsince the morning,in the embrasure of the one window that lighted herroom.

Her little girl she only saw for a few minutes daily,during thedismal dinner,and even for a short time she seemed scarcely able tobear the child's presence.Surely nothing but the most unheard-ofanguish could have extinguished a mother's love so early.

None of the servants were suffered to come near,her own woman was theone creature whom she liked to have about her;the chateau must beperfectly quiet,the child must play at the other end of the house.

The slightest sound had grown so intolerable,that any human

voice,even the voice of her own child,jarred upon her.

At first the whole countryside was deeply interested in theseeccentricities;but time passed on,every possible hypothesis had beenadvanced to account for them and the peasants and dwellers in thelittle country towns thought no more of the invalid lady.

So the Marquise was left to herself.She might live on,perfectlysilent,amid the silence which she herself had created;there wasnothing to draw her forth from the tapestried chamber where hergrandmother died,whither she herself had come that she might die,gently,without witnesses,without importunate solicitude,withoutsuffering from the insincere demonstrations of egoism masquerading asaffection,which double the agony of death in great cities.

She was twenty-six years old.At that age,with plenty of romanticillusions still left,the mind loves to dwell on the thought of deathwhen death seems to come as a friend.But with youth,death is coy,coming up close only to go away,showing himself and hiding again,till youth has time to fall out of love

with him during thisdalliance.There is that uncertainty too that hangs over death'sto-morrow.Youth plunges back into the world of living men,there tofind the pain more pitiless than death,that does not wait to strike.

This woman who refused to live was to know the bitterness of theserepreves in the depths of her loneliness;in moral agony,which deathwould not come to end,she was to serve a terrible apprenticeship tothe egoism which must take the bloom from her heart and break her into the life of the world.

This harsh and sorry teaching is the usual outcome of our earlysorrows.For the first,and perhaps for the last time in her life,theMarquise d'Aiglemont was in very truth suffering.And,indeed,wouldit not be an error to suppose that the same sentiment can bereproduced in us?Once develop the power to feel,is it not alwaysthere in the depths of our nature?The accidents of life may lull orawaken it,but there it is,of necessity modifying the self,itsabiding place.Hence,every sensation should have its great day onceand for all,its first day of storm,be it long or short.Hence,likewise,pain,the most abiding of our sensations,could be keenlyfelt only at its first

irruption,its intensity diminishing with everysubsequent paroxysm,either because we grow accustomed to thesecrises,or perhaps because a natural instinct of self-preservationasserts itself,and opposes to the destroying force of anguish anequal but passive force of inertia.

Yet of all kinds of suffering,to which does the name of anguishbelong?For the loss of parents,Nature has in a manner prepared us;

physical suffering,again,is an evil which passes over us and isgone;it lays no hold upon the soul;if it persists,it ceases to bean evil,it is death.The young mother loses her firstborn,but weddedlove ere long gives her a successor.This grief,too,is transient.

After all,these,and many other troubles like unto them,are in somesort wounds and bruises;they do not sap the springs of vitality,andonly a succession of such blows can crush in us the instinct thatseeks happiness.Great pain,therefore,pain that arises to anguish,should be suffering so deadly,that past,present,and future arealike included in its grip,and no part of life is left sound andwhole.Never afterwards can we think the same thoughts as before.

Anguish engraves itself in ineffaceable characters on mouth and brow;

it passes through us,destroying or relaxing the springs that vibrateto enjoyment,leaving behind in the soul the seeds of a disgust forall things in this world.

Yet,again,to be measureless,to weigh like this upon body and soul,the trouble should befall when soul and body have just come to theirfull strength,and smite down a heart that beats high with life.Thenit is that great scars are made.Terrible is the anguish.None,it maybe,can issue from this soul-sickness without undergoing some dramaticchange.Those who survive it,those who remain on earth,return to theworld to wear an actor's countenance and to play an actor's part.Theyknow the side-scenes where actors may retire to calculate chances,shed their tears,or pass their jests.Life holds no inscrutable darkplaces for those who have passed through this ordeal;their judgmentsare Rhadamanthine.

For young women of the Marquise d'Aiglemont's age,this first,thismost poignant pain of all,is always referable to the same cause.Awoman,especially if she is a young woman,greatly

beautiful,and bynature great,never fails to stake her whole life as instinct andsentiment and society all unite to bid her.Suppose that that lifefails her,suppose that she still lives on,she cannot but endure themost cruel pangs,inasmuch as a first love is the loveliest of all.

How comes it that this catastrophe has found no painter,no poet?Andyet,can it be painted?Can it be sung?No;for the anguish arisingfrom it eludes analysis and defies the colors of art.And more thanthis,such pain is never confessed.To console the sufferer,you mustbe able to divine the past which she hugs in bitterness to her soullike a remorse;it is like an avalanche in a valley;it laid all wastebefore it found a permanent resting-place.

The Marquise was suffering from this anguish,which will for longremain unknown,because the whole world condemns it,while sentimentcherishes it,and the conscience of a true woman justifies her in it.

It is with such pain as with children steadily disowned of life,andtherefore bound more closely to the mother's heart than other childrenmore bounteously endowed.Never,perhaps,was the awful catastrophe inwhich the whole world without dies for us,so deadly,so complete,socruelly aggravated by circumstance

as it had been for the Marquise.

The man whom she had loved was young and generous;in obedience to thelaws of the world,she had refused herself to his love,and he haddied to save a woman's honor,as the world calls it.To whom could shespeak of her misery?Her tears would be an offence against herhusband,the origin of the tragedy.By all laws written and unwrittenshe was bound over to silence.A woman would have enjoyed the story;aman would have schemed for his own benefit.No;such grief as hers canonly weep freely in solitude and in loneliness;she must consume herpain or be consumed by it;die or kill something within her--herconscience,it may be.

Day after day she sat gazing at the flat horizon.It lay out beforeher like her own life to come.There was nothing to discover,nothingto hope.The whole of it could be seen at a glance.It was the visiblepresentment in the outward world of the chill sense of desolationwhich was gnawing restlessly at her heart.The misty mornings,thepale,bright sky,the low clouds scudding under the gray dome ofheaven,fitted with the moods of her soul-sickness.Her heart did notcontract,was neither more nor less seared,rather it seemed as if heryouth,in its full

blossom,was slowly turned to stone by an anguishintolerable because it was barren.She suffered through herself andfor herself.How could it end save in self-absorption?Ugly torturingthoughts probed her conscience.Candid self-examination pronouncedthat she was double,there were two selves within her;a woman whofelt and a woman who thought;a self that suffered and a self thatcould fain suffer no longer.Her mind traveled back to the joys ofchildish days;they had gone by,and she had never known how happythey were.Scenes crowded up in her memory as in a bright mirrorglass,to demonstrate the deception of a marriage which,all that itshould be in the eyes of the world,was in reality wretched.What hadthe delicate pride of young womanhood done for her--the blissforegone,the sacrifices made to the world?Everything in herexpressed love,awaited love;her movements still were full of perfectgrace;her smile,her charm,were hers as before;why?she askedherself.The sense of her own youth and physical loveliness no moreaffected her than some meaningless reiterated sound.Her very beautyhad grown intolerable to her as a useless thing.She shrank aghastfrom the thought that through the rest of life she must remain anincomplete creature;had not the inner self lost its power ofreceiving impressions with that

zest,that exquisite sense offreshness which is the spring of so much of life's gladness?Theimpressions of the future would for the most part be effaced as soonas received,and many of the thoughts which once would have moved hernow would move her no more.

After the childhood of the creature dawns the childhood of the heart;

but this second infancy was over,her lover had taken it down with himinto the grave.The longings of youth remained;she was young yet;butthe completeness of youth was gone,and with that lost completenessthe whole value and savor of life had diminished somewhat.Should shenot always bear within her the seeds of sadness and mistrust,ready togrow up and rob emotion of its springtide of fervor?Conscious shemust always be that nothing could give her now the happiness so longedfor,that seemed so fair in her dreams.The fire from heaven thatsheds abroad its light in the heart,in the dawn of love,had beenquenched in tears,the first real tears which she had shed;henceforthshe must always suffer,because it was no longer in her power to bewhat once she might have been.This is a belief which turns us inaversion and bitterness of spirit from

any proffered new delight.

Julie had come to look at life from the point of view of age about todie.Young though she felt,the heavy weight of joyless days hadfallen upon her,and left her broken-spirited and old before her time.

With a despairing cry,she asked the world what it could give her inexchange for the love now lost,by which she had lived.She askedherself whether in that vanished love,so chaste and pure,her willhad not been more criminal than her deeds,and chose to believeherself guilty;partly to affront the world,partly for her ownconsolation,in that she had missed the close union of body and soul,which diminishes the pain of the one who is left behind by theknowledge that once it has known and given joy to the full,andretains within itself the impress of that which is no more.

Something of the mortification of the actress cheated of her partmingled with the pain which thrilled through every fibre of her heartand brain.Her nature had been thwarted,her vanity wounded,herwoman's generosity cheated of self-sacrifice.Then,when she hadraised all these questions,set

vibrating all the springs in thosedifferent phases of being which we distinguish as social,moral,andphysical,her energies were so far exhausted and relaxed that she waspowerless to grasp a single thought amid the chase of conflictingideas.

Sometimes as the mists fell,she would throw her window open,andwould stay there,motionless,breathing in unheedingly the dampearthly scent in the air,her mind to all appearance an unintelligentblank,for the ceaseless burden of sorrow humming in her brain lefther deaf to earth's harmonies and insensible to the delights ofthought.

One day,towards noon,when the sun shone out for a little,her maidcame in without a summons.

"This is the fourth time that M.le Cure has come to see Mme.laMarquise;to-day he is so determined about it,that we did not knowwhat to tell him."

"He has come to ask for some money for the poor,no doubt;take himtwenty-five louis from me."

The woman went only to return.

"M.le Cure will not take the money,my lady;he wants to speak toyou."

"Then let him come!"said Mme.d'Aiglemont,with an involuntary shrugwhich augured ill for the priest's reception.Evidently the lady meantto put a stop to persecution by a short and sharp method.

Mme.d'Aiglemont had lost her mother in her early childhood;and as anatural consequence in her bringing-up,she had felt the influence ofthe relaxed notions which loosened the hold of religion upon Franceduring the Revolution.Piety is a womanly virtue which women alone canreally instil;and the Marquise,a child of the eighteenth century,had adopted her father's creed of philosophism,and practised noreligious observances.A priest,to her way of thinking,was a civilservant of very doubtful utility.In her present position,theteaching of religion could only poison her wounds;she had,moreover,but scanty faith in the lights of country cures,and made up her mindto put this one gently but firmly in his place,and to rid

herself ofhim,after the manner of the rich,by bestowing a benefit.

At first sight of the cure the Marquise felt no inclination to changeher mind.She saw before her a stout,rotund little man,with a ruddy,wrinkled,elderly face,which awkwardly and unsuccessfully tried tosmile.His bald,quadrant-shaped forehead,furrowed by intersectinglines,was too heavy for the rest of his face,which seemed to bedwarfed by it.A fringe of scanty white hair encircled the back of hishead,and almost reached his ears.Yet the priest looked as if bynature he had a genial disposition;his thick lips,his slightlycurved nose,his chin,which vanished in a double fold of wrinkles,--allmarked him out as a man who took cheerful views of life.

At first the Marquise saw nothing but these salient characteristics,but at the first word she was struck by the sweetness of the speaker'svoice.Looking at him more closely,she saw that the eyes under thegrizzled eyebrows had shed tears,and his face,turned in profile,wore so sublime an impress of sorrow,that the Marquise recognized theman in the cure.

"Madame la Marquise,the rich only come within our province when theyare in trouble.It is easy to see that the troubles of a young,beautiful,and wealthy woman,who has lost neither children norrelatives,are caused by wounds whose pangs religion alone can soothe.

Your soul is in danger,madame.I am not speaking now of the hereafterwhich awaits us.No,I am not in the confessional.But it is my duty,is it not,to open your eyes to your future life here on earth?Youwill pardon an old man,will you not,for importunity which has yourown happiness for its object?"

"There is no more happiness for me,monsieur.I shall soon be,as yousay,in your province;but it will be for ever."

"Nay,madame.You will not die of this pain which lies heavy upon you,and can be read in your face.If you had been destined to die of it,you would not be here at Saint-Lange.A definite regret is not sodeadly as hope deferred.I have known others pass through moreintolerable and more awful anguish,and yet they live."

The Marquise looked incredulous.

"Madame,I know a man whose affliction was so sore that your troublewould seem to you to be light compared with his."

Perhaps the long solitary hours had begun to hang heavily;perhaps inthe recesses of the Marquise's mind lay the thought that here was afriendly heart to whom she might be able to pour out her troubles.
However,it was,she gave the cure a questioning glance which couldnot be mistaken.

"Madame,"he continued,"the man of whom I tell you had but threechildren left of a once large family circle.He lost his parents,hisdaughter,and his wife,whom he dearly loved.He was left alone atlast on the little farm where he had lived so happily for so long.Histhree sons were in the army,and each of the lads had risen inproportion to his time of service.During the Hundred Days,the oldestwent into the Guard with a colonel's commission;the second was amajor in the artillery;the youngest a major in a regiment ofdragoons.Madame,those three boys loved their father as much as heloved them.If you but knew how

careless young fellows grow of hometies when they are carried away by the current of their own lives,youwould realize from this one little thing how warmly they loved thelonely old father,who only lived in and for them--never a week passedwithout a letter from one of the boys.But then he on his side hadnever been weakly indulgent,to lessen their respect for him;norunjustly severe,to thwart their affection;or apt to grudgesacrifices,the thing that estranges children's hearts.He had beenmore than a father;he had been a brother to them,and their friend.

"At last he went to Paris to bid them good-bye before they set out forBelgium;he wished to see that they had good horses and all that theyneeded.And so they went,and the father returned to his home again.

Then the war began.He had letters from Fleurus,and again from Ligny.

All went well.Then came the battle of Waterloo,and you know therest.France was plunged into mourning;every family waited in intenseanxiety for news.You may imagine,madame,how the old man waited fortidings,in anxiety that knew no peace nor rest.He used to read thegazettes;he went to the coach office

every day.One evening he wastold that the colonel's servant had come.The man was riding hismaster's horse--what need was there to ask any questions?--the colonelwas dead,cut in two by a shell.Before the evening was out theyoungest son's servant arrived--the youngest had died on the eve ofthe battle.At midnight came a gunner with tidings of the death of thelast;upon whom,in those few hours,the poor father had centered allhis life.Madame,they all had fallen."

After a pause the good man controlled his feelings,and added gently:

"And their father is still living,madame.He realized that if God hadleft him on earth,he was bound to live on and suffer on earth;but hetook refuge in the sanctuary.What could he be?"

The Marquise looked up and saw the cure's face,grown sublime in itssorrow and resignation,and waited for him to speak.When the wordscame,tears broke from her.

"A priest,madame;consecrated by his own tears previously shed at thefoot of the altar."

Silence prevailed for a little.The Marquise and the cure looked outat the foggy landscape,as if they could see the figures of those whowere no more.

"Not a priest in a city,but a simple country cure,"added he.

"At Saint-Lange,"she said,drying her eyes.

"Yes,madame."

Never had the majesty of grief seemed so great to Julie.The two wordssank straight into her heart with the weight of infinite sorrow.Thegentle,sonorous tones troubled her heart.Ah!that full,deep voice,charged with plangent vibration,was the voice of one who had sufferedindeed.

"And if I do not die,monsieur,what will become of me?"The Marquisespoke almost reverently.

"Have you not a child,madame?"

"Yes,"she said stiffly.

The cure gave her such a glance as a doctor gives a patient whose lifeis in danger.Then he determined to do all that in him lay to combatthe evil spirit into whose clutches she had fallen.

"We must live on with our sorrows--you see it yourself,madame,andreligion alone offers us real consolation.Will you permit me to comeagain?--to speak to you as a man who can sympathize with everytrouble,a man about whom there is nothing very alarming,I think?"

"Yes,monsieur,come back again.Thank you for your thought of me."

"Very well,madame;then I shall return very shortly."

A Woman of Thirty -Part II

A Woman of Thirty

Part II

his visit relaxed the tension of soul,as it were;the heavy strainof grief and loneliness had been almost too much for the Marquise'sstrength.The priest's visit had left a soothing balm in her heart,his words thrilled through her with healing influence.She began tofeel something of a prisoner's satisfaction,when,after he has hadtime to feel his utter loneliness and the weight of his chains,hehears a neighbor knocking on the wall,and welcomes the sound whichbrings a sense of human friendship.Here was an unhoped-for confidant.

But this feeling did not last for long.Soon she sank back into theold bitterness of spirit,saying to herself,as the prisoner

mightsay,that a companion in misfortune could neither lighten her ownbondage nor her future.

In the first visit the cure had feared to alarm the susceptibilitiesof self-absorbed grief,in a second interview he hoped to make someprogress towards religion.He came back again two days later,and fromthe Marquise's welcome it was plain that she had looked forward to thevisit.

"Well,Mme.la Marquise,have you given a little thought to the greatmass of human suffering?Have you raised your eyes above our earth andseen the immensity of the universe?--the worlds beyond worlds whichcrush our vanity into insignificance,and with our vanity reduce oursorrows?"

"No,monsieur,"she said;"I cannot rise to such heights,our sociallaws lie too heavily upon me,and rend my heart with a too poignantanguish.And laws perhaps are less cruel than the usages of the world.
Ah!the world!"

"Madame,we must obey both.Law is the doctrine,and custom

thepractice of society."

"Obey society?"cried the Marquise,with an involuntary shudder."Eh!
monsieur,it is the source of all our woes.God laid down no law tomake us miserable;but mankind,uniting together in social life,haveperverted God's work.Civilization deals harder measure to us womenthan nature does.Nature imposes upon us physical suffering which youhave not alleviated;civilization has developed in us thoughts andfeelings which you cheat continually.Nature exterminates the weak;
you condemn them to live,and by so doing,consign them to a life ofmisery.The whole weight of the burden of marriage,an institution onwhich society is based,falls upon us;for the man liberty,duties forthe woman.We must give up our whole lives to you,you are only boundto give us a few moments of yours.A man,in fact,makes a choice,while we blindly submit.Oh,monsieur,to you I can speak freely.
Marriage,in these days,seems to me to be legalized prostitution.
This is the cause of my wretchedness.But among so many miserablecreatures so unhappily yoked,I alone am bound to be silent,I aloneam to blame for my misery.My marriage was my

own doing."

She stopped short,and bitter tears fell in the silence.

"In the depths of my wretchedness,in the midst of this sea ofdistress,"she went on,"I found some sands on which to set foot andsuffer at leisure.A great tempest swept everything away.And here amI,helpless and alone,too weak to cope with storms."

"We are never weak while God is with us,"said the priest."And ifyour cravings for affection cannot be satisfied here on earth,haveyou no duties to perform?"

"Duties continually!"she exclaimed,with something of impatience inher tone."But where for me are the sentiments which give us strengthto perform them?Nothing from nothing,nothing for nothing,--this,monsieur,is one of the most inexorable laws of nature,physical orspiritual.Would you have these trees break into leaf without the sapwhich swells the buds?It is the same with our human nature;and in methe sap is dried up at its source."

"I am not going to speak to you of religious sentiments of whichresignation is born,"said the cure,"but of motherhood,madame,surely--"

"Stop,monsieur!"said the Marquise,"with you I will be sincere. Alas!in future I can be sincere with no one;I am condemned tofalsehood.The world requires continual grimaces,and we are bidden toobey its conventions if we would escape reproach.There are two kindsof motherhood,monsieur;once I knew nothing of such distinctions,butI know them now.Only half of me has become a mother;it were betterfor me if I had not been a mother at all.Helene is not his child!

Oh!do not start.At Saint-Lange there are volcanic depths whence comelurid gleams of light and earthquake shocks to shake the fragileedifices of laws not based on nature.I have borne a child,that isenough,I am a mother in the eyes of the law.But you,monsieur,withyour delicately compassionate soul,can perhaps understand this cryfrom an unhappy woman who has suffered no lying illusions to enter herheart.God will judge me,but surely I have only obeyed His laws bygiving way to the affections which He Himself set in me,and this Ihave

learned from my own soul.--What is a child,monsieur,but theimage of two beings,the fruit of two sentiments spontaneouslyblended?Unless it is owned by every fibre of the body,as by everychord of tenderness in the heart;unless it recalls the bliss of love,the hours,the places where two creatures were happy,their words thatoverflowed with the music of humanity,and their sweet imaginings,that child is an incomplete creation.Yes,those two should find thepoetic dreams of their intimate double life realized in their child asin an exquisite miniature;it should be for them a never-failingspring of emotion,implying their whole past and their whole future.

"My poor little Helene is her father's child,the offspring of dutyand of chance.In me she finds nothing but the affection of instinct,the woman's natural compassion for the child of her womb.Sociallyspeaking,I am above reproach.Have I not sacrificed my life and myhappiness to my child?Her cries go to my heart;if she were to fallinto the water,I should spring to save her,but she is not in myheart.

"Ah!love set me dreaming of a motherhood far greater and morecomplete.In a vanished dream I held in my arms a child

conceived indesire before it was begotten,the exquisite flower of life thatblossoms in the soul before it sees the light of day.I am Helene'smother only in the sense that I brought her forth.When she needs meno longer,there will be an end of my motherhood;with the extinctionof the cause,the effects will cease.If it is a woman's adorableprerogative that her motherhood may last through her child's life,surely that divine persistence of sentiment is due to the far-reachingglory of the conception of the soul?Unless a child has lain wrappedabout from life's first beginnings by the mother's soul,the instinctof motherhood dies in her as in the animals.This is true;I feel thatit is true.As my poor little one grows older,my heart closes.Mysacrifices have driven us apart.And yet I know,monsieur,that toanother child my heart would have gone out in inexhaustible love;forthat other I should not have known what sacrifice meant,all had beendelight.In this,monsieur,my instincts are stronger than reason,stronger than religion or all else in me.Does the woman who isneither wife nor mother sin in wishing to die when,for hermisfortune,she has caught a glimpse of the infinite beauty of love,the limitless joy of motherhood?What can become of her?I can tellyou what she feels.I cannot put that memory from me so resolutely butthat a

hundred times,night and day,visions of a happiness,greaterit may be than the reality,rise before me,followed by a shudderwhich shakes brain and heart and body.Before these cruel visions,myfeelings and thoughts grow colorless,and I ask myself,'What would mylife have been if----?'"

She hid her face in her hands and burst into tears.

"There you see the depths of my heart!"she continued."For hischild I could have acquiesced in any lot however dreadful.He whodied,bearing the burden of the sins of the world will forgive thisthought of which I am dying;but the world,I know,is merciless.Inits ears my words are blasphemies;I am outraging all its codes.Oh!

that I could wage war against this world and break down and refashionits laws and traditions!Has it not turned all my thoughts,andfeelings,and longings,and hopes,and every fibre in me into so manysources of pain?Spoiled my future,present,and past?For me thedaylight is full of gloom,my thoughts pierce me like a sword,mychild is and is not.

"Oh,when Helene speaks to me,I wish that her voice were

different,when she looks into my face I wish that she had other eyes.Sheconstantly keeps me in mind of all that should have been and is not.Icannot bear to have her near me.I smile at her,I try to make up toher for the real affection of which she is defrauded.I am wretched,monsieur,too wretched to live.And I am supposed to be a patternwife.And I have committed no sins.And I am respected!I have foughtdown forbidden love which sprang up at unawares within me;but if Ihave kept the letter of the law,have I kept it in my heart?There hasnever been but one here,"she said,laying her right hand on herbreast,"one and no other;and my child feels it.Certain looks andtones and gestures mould a child's nature,and my poor little onefeels no thrill in the arm I put about her,no tremor comes into myvoice,no softness into my eyes when I speak to her or take her up.

She looks at me,and I cannot endure the reproach in her eyes.Thereare times when I shudder to think that some day she may be my judgeand condemn her mother unheard.Heaven grant that hate may not grow upbetween us!Ah!God in heaven,rather let the tomb open for me,ratherlet me end my days here at Saint-Lange!--I want to go back to theworld where I shall find my other soul and become wholly a mother.Ah!

forgive me,sir,I am mad.Those words were choking me;now they arespoken.Ah!you are weeping too!You will not despise me--"

She heard the child come in from a walk."Helene,my child,comehere!"she called.The words sounded like a cry of despair.

The little girl ran in,laughing and calling to her mother to see abutterfly which she had caught;but at the sight of that mother'stears she grew quiet of a sudden,and went up close,and received akiss on her forehead.

"She will be very beautiful some day,"said the priest.

"She is her father's child,"said the Marquise,kissing the little onewith eager warmth,as if she meant to pay a debt of affection or toextinguish some feeling of remorse.

"How hot you are,mamma!"

"There,go away,my angel,"said the Marquise.

The child went.She did not seem at all sorry to go;she did not lookback;glad perhaps to escape from a sad face,and instinctivelycomprehending already an antagonism of feeling in its expression.Amother's love finds language in smiles,they are a part of the divineright of motherhood.The Marquise could not smile.She flushed red asshe felt the cure's eyes.She had hoped to act a mother's part beforehim,but neither she nor her child could deceive him.And,indeed,when a woman loves sincerely,in the kiss she gives there is a divinehoney;it is as if a soul were breathed forth in the caress,a subtleflame of fire which brings warmth to the heart;the kiss that lacksthis delicious unction is meagre and formal.The priest had felt thedifference.He could fathom the depths that lie between the motherhoodof the flesh and the motherhood of the heart.He gave the Marquise akeen,scrutinizing glance,then he said:

"You are right,madame;it would be better for you if you weredead----"

"Ah!"she cried,"then you know all my misery;I see you do if,Christian priest as you are,you can guess my determination to

die andsanction it.Yes,I meant to die,but I have lacked the courage.Thespirit was strong,but the flesh was weak,and when my hand did nottremble,the spirit within me wavered.

"I do not know the reason of these inner struggles,and alternations.

I am very pitiably a woman no doubt,weak in my will,strong only tolove.Oh,I despise myself.At night,when all my household wasasleep,I would go out bravely as far as the lake;but when I stood onthe brink,my cowardice shrank from self-destruction.To you I willconfess my weakness.When I lay in my bed,again,shame would comeover me,and courage would come back.Once I took a dose of laudanum;

I was ill,but I did not die.I thought I had emptied the phial,but Ihad only taken half the dose."

"You are lost,madame,"the cure said gravely,with tears in hisvoice."You will go back into the world,and you will deceive theworld.You will seek and find a compensation (as you imagine it to be)

for your woes;then will come a day of reckoning for your pleasures--"

"Do you think,"she cried,"that I shall bestow the last,the mostprecious treasures of my heart upon the first base impostor who canplay the comedy of passion?That I would pollute my life for a momentof doubtful pleasure?No;the flame which shall consume my soul shallbe love,and nothing but love.All men,monsieur,have the senses oftheir sex,but not all have the man's soul which satisfies all therequirements of our nature,drawing out the melodious harmony whichnever breaks forth save in response to the pressure of feeling.Such asoul is not found twice in our lifetime.The future that lies beforeme is hideous;I know it.A woman is nothing without love;beauty isnothing without pleasure.And even if happiness were offered to me asecond time,would not the world frown upon it?I owe my daughter anhonored mother.Oh!I am condemned to live in an iron circle,fromwhich there is but one shameful way of escape.The round of familyduties,a thankless and irksome task,is in store for me.I shallcurse life;but my child shall have at least a fair semblance of amother.I will give her treasures of virtue for the treasures of loveof which I defraud her.

"I have not even the mother's desire to live to enjoy her

child'shappiness.I have no belief in happiness.What will Helene's fate be?

My own,beyond doubt.How can a mother ensure that the man to whom shegives her daughter will be the husband of her heart?You pour scorn onthe miserable creatures who sell themselves for a few coins to anypasser-by,though want and hunger absolve the brief union;whileanother union,horrible for quite other reasons,is tolerated,nayencouraged,by society,and a young and innocent girl is married to aman whom she has only met occasionally during the previous threemonths.She is sold for her whole lifetime.It is true that the priceis high!If you allow her no compensation for her sorrows,you mightat least respect her;but no,the most virtuous of women cannot escapecalumny.This is our fate in its double aspect.Open prostitution andshame;secret prostitution and unhappiness.As for the poor,portionless girls,they may die or go mad,without a soul to pitythem.Beauty and virtue are not marketable in the bazaar where soulsand bodies are bought and sold--in the den of selfishness which youcall society.Why not disinherit daughters?Then,at least,you mightfulfil one of the laws of nature,and guided by your own inclinations,choose your companions."

"Madame,from your talk it is clear to me that neither the spirit offamily nor the sense of religion appeals to you.Why should youhesitate between the claims of the social selfishness which irritatesyou,and the purely personal selfishness which craves satisfactions--"

"The family,monsieur--does such a thing exist?I decline to recognizeas a family a knot of individuals bidden by society to divide theproperty after the death of father and mother,and to go theirseparate ways.A family means a temporary association of personsbrought together by no will of their own,dissolved at once by death.

Our laws have broken up homes and estates,and the old familytradition handed down from generation to generation.I see nothing butwreck and ruin about me."

"Madame,you will only return to God when His hand has been heavy uponyou,and I pray that you have time enough given to you in which tomake your peace with Him.Instead of looking to heaven for comfort,you are fixing your eyes on earth.Philosophism and personal interesthave invaded your

heart;like the children of the sceptical eighteenthcentury,you are deaf to the voice of religion.The pleasures of thislife bring nothing but misery.You are about to make an exchange ofsorrows,that is all."

She smiled bitterly.

"I will falsify your predictions,"she said."I shall be faithful tohim who died for me."

"Sorrow,"he answered,"is not likely to live long save in soulsdisciplined by religion,"and he lowered his eyes respectfully lestthe Marquise should read his doubts in them.The energy of heroutburst had grieved him.He had seen the self that lurked beneath somany forms,and despaired of softening a heart which affliction seemedto sear.The divine Sower's seed could not take root in such a soil,and His gentle voice was drowned by the clamorous outcry of self-pity.

Yet the good man returned again and again with an apostle's earnestpersistence,brought back by a hope of leading so noble and proud asoul to God;until the day when he made the discovery that theMarquise only cared to talk with him because

it was sweet to speak ofhim who was no more.He would not lower his ministry by condoning herpassion,and confined the conversation more and more to generalitiesand commonplaces.

Spring came,and with the spring the Marquise found distraction fromher deep melancholy.She busied herself for lack of other occupationwith her estate,making improvements for amusement.

In October she left the old chateau.In the life of leisure at Saint-Langeshe had recovered from her grief and grown fair and fresh.Hergrief had been violent at first in its course,as the quoit hurledforth with all the player's strength,and like the quoit after manyoscillations,each feebler than the last,it had slackened intomelancholy.Melancholy is made up of a succession of suchoscillations,the first touching upon despair,the last on the borderbetween pain and pleasure;in youth,it is the twilight of dawn;inage,the dusk of night.

As the Marquise drove through the village in her traveling carriage,she met the cure on his way back from the church.She bowed inresponse to his farewell greeting,but it was with

lowered eyes andaverted face.She did not wish to see him again.The village cure hadjudged this poor Diana of Ephesus only too well.

A Woman of Thirty -Chapter III

A Woman of Thirty

Chapter III

At Thirty Years

adame Firmiani was giving a ball.M.Charles de Vandenesse,a youngman of great promise,the bearer of one of those historic

names which,in spite of the efforts of legislation,are always associated with theglory of France,had received letters of introduction to some of thegreat lady's friends in Naples,and had come to thank the hostess andto take his leave.

Vandenesse had already acquitted himself creditably on severaldiplomatic missions;and now that he had received an appointment asattache to a plenipotentiary at the Congress of Laybach,he wished totake advantage of the opportunity to make some study of Italy on theway.This ball was a sort of farewell to Paris and its amusements andits rapid whirl of life,to the great eddying intellectual centre andmaelstrom of pleasure;and a pleasant thing it is to be borne along bythe current of this sufficiently slandered great city of Paris.YetCharles de Vandenesse had little to regret,accustomed as he had beenfor the past three years to salute European capitals and turn his backupon them at the capricious bidding of a diplomatist's destiny.Womenno longer made any impression upon him;perhaps he thought that a realpassion would play too large a part in a diplomatist's life;orperhaps that the paltry amusements of frivolity were too empty for aman of strong character.We all of us have huge claims to strength ofcharacter.There is no man

in France,be he ever so ordinary a memberof the rank and file of humanity,that will waive pretensions tosomething beyond mere cleverness.

Charles,young though he was--he was scarcely turned thirty--looked atlife with a philosophic mind,concerning himself with theories andmeans and ends,while other men of his age were thinking of pleasure,sentiments,and the like illusions.He forced back into some innerdepth the generosity and enthusiasms of youth,and by nature he wasgenerous.He tried hard to be cool and calculating,to coin the fundof wealth which chanced to be in his nature into gracious manners,andcourtesy,and attractive arts;'tis the proper task of an ambitiousman,to play a sorry part to gain "a good position,"as we call it inmodern days.

He had been dancing,and now he gave a farewell glance over the rooms,to carry away a distinct impression of the ball,moved,doubtless,tosome extent by the feeling which prompts a theatre-goer to stay in hisbox to see the final tableau before the curtain falls.But M.deVandenesse had another reason for his survey.He gazed curiously atthe scene before him,so

French in character and in movement,seekingto carry away a picture of the light and laughter and the faces atthis Parisian fete,to compare with the novel faces and picturesquesurroundings awaiting him at Naples,where he meant to spend a fewdays before presenting himself at his post.He seemed to be drawingthe comparison now between this France so variable,changing even asyou study her,with the manners and aspects of that other land knownto him as yet only by contradictory hearsay tales or books of travel,for the most part unsatisfactory.Thoughts of a somewhat poeticalcast,albeit hackneyed and trite to our modern ideas,crossed hisbrain,in response to some longing of which,perhaps,he himself washardly conscious,a desire in the depths of a heart fastidious ratherthan jaded,vacant rather than seared.

"These are the wealthiest and most fashionable women and the greatestladies in Paris,"he said to himself."These are the great men of theday,great orators and men of letters,great names and titles;artistsand men in power;and yet in it all it seems to me as if there werenothing but petty intrigues and still-born loves,meaningless smilesand causeless scorn,eyes lighted by no flame within,brain-power inabundance running aimlessly to

waste.All those pink-and-white facesare here not so much for enjoyment,as to escape from dulness.None ofthe emotion is genuine.If you ask for nothing but court feathersproperly adjusted,fresh gauzes and pretty toilettes and fragile,fairwomen,if you desire simply to skim the surface of life,here is yourworld for you.Be content with meaningless phrases and fascinatingsimpers,and do not ask for real feeling.For my own part,I abhor thestale intrigues which end in sub-prefectures and receiver-generals'

places and marriages;or,if love comes into the question,in stealthycompromises,so ashamed are we of the mere semblance of passion.Not asingle one of all these eloquent faces tells you of a soul,a soulwholly absorbed by one idea as by remorse.Regrets and misfortune goabout shame-facedly clad in jests.There is not one woman here whoseresistance I should care to overcome,not one who could drag you downto the pit.Where will you find energy in Paris?A poniard here is acurious toy to hang from a gilt nail,in a picturesque sheath tomatch.The women,the brains,and hearts of Paris are all on a par.

There is no passion left,because we have no individuality.High birthand intellect and fortune are all reduced to one level;we all

havetaken to the uniform black coat by way of mourning for a dead France.

There is no love between equals.Between two lovers there should bedifferences to efface,wide gulfs to fill.The charm of love fled fromus in 1789.Our dulness and our humdrum lives are the outcome of thepolitical system.Italy at any rate is the land of sharp contrasts.

Woman there is a malevolent animal,a dangerous unreasoning siren,guided only by her tastes and appetites,a creature no more to betrusted than a tiger--"

Mme.Firmiani here came up to interrupt this soliloquy made up ofvague,conflicting,and fragmentary thoughts which cannot bereproduced in words.The whole charm of such musing lies in itsvagueness--what is it but a sort of mental haze?

"I want to introduce you to some one who has the greatest wish to makeyour acquaintance,after all that she has heard of you,"said thelady,taking his arm.

She brought him into the next room,and with such a smile and glanceas a Parisienne alone can give,she indicated a woman

sitting by thehearth.

"Who is she?"the Comte de Vandenesse asked quickly.

"You have heard her name more than once coupled with praise or blame.
She is a woman who lives in seclusion--a perfect mystery."

"Oh!if ever you have been merciful in your life,for pity's sake tellme her name."

"She is the Marquise d'Aiglemont."

"I will take lessons from her;she had managed to make a peer ofFrance of that eminently ordinary person her husband,and a dullardinto a power in the land.But,pray tell me this,did Lord Grenvilledie for her sake,do you think,as some women say?"

"Possibly.Since that adventure,real or imaginary,she is very muchchanged,poor thing!She has not gone into society since.Four yearsof constancy--that is something in Paris.If she is here to-night----"

Here Mme.Firmiani broke off,adding with a mysterious expression,"Iam forgetting that I must say nothing.Go and talk with her."

For a moment Charles stood motionless,leaning lightly against theframe of the doorway,wholly absorbed in his scrutiny of a woman whohad become famous,no one exactly knew how or why.Such curiousanomalies are frequent enough in the world.Mme.d'Aiglemont'sreputation was certainly no more extraordinary than plenty of othergreat reputations.There are men who are always in travail of somegreat work which never sees the light,statisticians held to beprofound on the score of calculations which they take very good carenot to publish,politicians who live on a newspaper article,men ofletters and artists whose performances are never given to the world,men of science,much as Sganarelle is a Latinist for those who know noLatin;there are the men who are allowed by general consent to possessa peculiar capacity for some one thing,be it for the direction ofarts,or for the conduct of an important mission.The admirablephrase,"A man with a special subject,"might have been invented onpurpose for these acephalous species in the domain of literature andpolitics.

Charles gazed longer than he intended.He was vexed with himself forfeeling so strongly interested;it is true,however,that the lady'sappearance was a refutation of the young man's ballroomgeneralizations.

The Marquise had reached her thirtieth year.She was beautiful inspite of her fragile form and extremely delicate look.Her greatestcharm lay in her still face,revealing unfathomed depths of soul.Somehaunting,ever-present thought veiled,as it were,the full brillianceof eyes which told of a fevered life and boundless resignation.Soseldom did she raise the eyelids soberly downcast,and so listlesswere her glances,that it almost seemed as if the fire in her eyeswere reserved for some occult contemplation.Any man of genius andfeeling must have felt strangely attracted by her gentleness andsilence.If the mind sought to explain the mysterious problem of aconstant inward turning from the present to the past,the soul was noless interested in initiating itself into the secrets of a heart proudin some sort of its anguish.Everything about her,moreover,was inkeeping with these thoughts which she inspired.Like almost all womenwho have very long hair,she was very pale and

perfectly white.Themarvelous fineness of her skin (that almost unerring sign)indicated aquick sensibility which could be seen yet more unmistakably in herfeatures;there was the same minute and wonderful delicacy of finishin them that the Chinese artist gives to his fantastic figures.

Perhaps her neck was rather too long,but such necks belong to themost graceful type,and suggest vague affinities between a woman'shead and the magnetic curves of the serpent.Leave not a single one ofthe thousand signs and tokens by which the most inscrutable characterbetrays itself to an observer of human nature,he has but to watchcarefully the little movements of a woman's head,the ever-varyingexpressive turns and curves of her neck and throat,to read hernature.

Mme.d'Aiglemont's dress harmonized with the haunting thought thatinformed the whole woman.Her hair was gathered up into a tall coronetof broad plaits,without ornament of any kind;she seemed to havebidden farewell for ever to elaborate toilettes.Nor were any of thesmall arts of coquetry which spoil so many women to be detected inher.Perhaps her bodice,modest though it was,did not altogetherconceal the dainty grace of her figure,perhaps,too,her gown lookedrich from the extreme

distinction of its fashion,and if it ispermissible to look for expression in the arrangement of stuffs,surely those numerous straight folds invested her with a greatdignity.There may have been some lingering trace of the indeliblefeminine foible in the minute care bestowed upon her hand and foot;

yet,if she allowed them to be seen with some pleasure,it would havetasked the utmost malice of a rival to discover any affectation in hergestures,so natural did they seem,so much a part of old childishhabit,that her careless grace absolved this vestige of vanity.

All these little characteristics,the nameless trifles which combineto make up the sum of a woman's prettiness or ugliness,her charm orlack of charm,can only be indicated,when,as with Mme.d'Aiglemont,a personality dominates and gives coherence to the details,informingthem,blending them all in an exquisite whole.Her manner wasperfectly in accord with her style of beauty and her dress.Only tocertain women at a certain age is it given to put language into theirattitude.Is it joy or is it sorrow that teaches a woman of thirty thesecret of that eloquence of carriage,so that she must always remainan enigma which each

interprets by the aid of his hopes,desires,ortheories?

The way in which the Marquise leaned both elbows on the arm of herchair,the toying of her interclasped fingers,the curve of herthroat,the indolent lines of her languid but lissome body as she layback in graceful exhaustion,as it were;her indolent limbs,herunstudied pose,the utter lassitude of her movements,--all suggestedthat this was a woman for whom life had lost its interest,a woman whohad known the joys of love only in dreams,a woman bowed down by theburden of memories of the past,a woman who had long since despairedof the future and despaired of herself,an unoccupied woman who tookthe emptiness of her own life for the nothingness of life.

Charles de Vandenesse saw and admired the beautiful picture beforehim,as a kind of artistic success beyond an ordinary woman's powersof attainment.He was acquainted with d'Aiglemont;and now,at thefirst sight of d'Aiglemont's wife,the young diplomatist saw at aglance a disproportionate marriage,an incompatibility (to use thelegal jargon)so great that it was impossible that the Marquise shouldlove her husband.And yet--the Marquise d'Aiglemont's life was

abovereproach,and for any observer the mystery about her was the moreinteresting on this account.The first impulse of surprise over,Vandenesse cast about for the best way of approaching Mme.
d'Aiglemont.He would try a commonplace piece of diplomacy,hethought;he would disconcert her by a piece of clumsiness and see howshe would receive it.

"Madame,"he said,seating himself near her,"through a fortunateindiscretion I have learned that,for some reason unknown to me,Ihave had the good fortune to attract your notice.I owe you the morethanks because I have never been so honored before.At the same time,you are responsible for one of my faults,for I mean never to bemodest again--"

"You will make a mistake,monsieur,"she laughed;"vanity should beleft to those who have nothing else to recommend them."

The conversation thus opened ranged at large,in the usual way,over amultitude of topics--art and literature,politics,men and things--tillinsensibly they fell to talking of the eternal theme in Franceand all the world over--love,sentiment,and women.

"We are bond-slaves."

"You are queens."

This was the gist and substance of all the more or less ingeniousdiscourse between Charles and the Marquise,as of all such discourses--past,present,and to come.Allow a certain space of time,and thetwo formulas shall begin to mean "Love me,"and "I will love you."

"Madame,"Charles de Vandenesse exclaimed under his breath,"you havemade me bitterly regret that I am leaving Paris.In Italy I certainlyshall not pass hours in intellectual enjoyment such as this has been."

"Perhaps,monsieur,you will find happiness,and happiness is worthmore than all the brilliant things,true and false,that are saidevery evening in Paris."

Before Charles took leave,he asked permission to pay a farewell callon the Marquise d'Aiglemont,and very lucky did he feel

himself whenthe form of words in which he expressed himself for once was used inall sincerity;and that night,and all day long on the morrow,hecould not put the thought of the Marquise out of his mind.

At times he wondered why she had singled him out,what she had meantwhen she asked him to come to see her,and thought supplied aninexhaustible commentary.Again it seemed to him that he haddiscovered the motives of her curiosity,and he grew intoxicated withhope or frigidly sober with each new construction put upon that pieceof commonplace civility.Sometimes it meant everything,sometimesnothing.He made up his mind at last that he would not yield to thisinclination,and--went to call on Mme.d'Aiglemont.

There are thoughts which determine our conduct,while we do not somuch as suspect their existence.If at first sight this assertionappears to be less a truth than a paradox,let any candid inquirerlook into his own life and he shall find abundant confirmationtherein.Charles went to Mme.d'Aiglemont,and so obeyed one of theselatent,pre-existent germs of thought,of which our experience and ourintellectual gains and

achievements are but later and tangibledevelopments.

For a young man a woman of thirty has irresistible attractions.Thereis nothing more natural,nothing better established,no human tie ofstouter tissue than the heart-deep attachment between such a woman asthe Marquise d'Aiglemont and such a man as Charles de Vandenesse.Youcan see examples of it every day in the world.A girl,as a matter offact,has too many young illusions,she is too inexperienced,theinstinct of sex counts for too much in her love for a young man tofeel flattered by it.A woman of thirty knows all that is involved inthe self-surrender to be made.Among the impulses of the first,putcuriosity and other motives than love;the second acts with integrityof sentiment.The first yields;the second makes deliberate choice.Isnot that choice in itself an immense flattery?A woman armed withexperience,forewarned by knowledge,almost always dearly bought,seems to give more than herself;while the inexperienced and credulousgirl,unable to draw comparisons for lack of knowledge,can appreciatenothing at its just worth.She accepts love and ponders it.A woman isa counselor and a guide at an age when we love to be guided andobedience is delight;while a girl would fain learn all

things,meeting us with a girl's naivete instead of a woman's tenderness.

She affords a single triumph;with a woman there is resistance uponresistance to overcome;she has but joy and tears,a woman has raptureand remorse.

A girl cannot play the part of a mistress unless she is so corruptthat we turn from her with loathing;a woman has a thousand ways ofpreserving her power and her dignity;she has risked so much for love,that she must bid him pass through his myriad transformations,whileher too submissive rival gives a sense of too serene security whichpalls.If the one sacrifices her maidenly pride,the other immolatesthe honor of a whole family.A girl's coquetry is of the simplest,shethinks that all is said when the veil is laid aside;a woman'scoquetry is endless,she shrouds herself in veil after veil,shesatisfies every demand of man's vanity,the novice responds but toone.

And there are terrors,fears,and hesitations--trouble and storm inthe love of a woman of thirty years,never to be found in a younggirl's love.At thirty years a woman asks her lover to give her backthe esteem she has forfeited for his sake;she lives only

for him,herthoughts are full of his future,he must have a great career,she bidshim make it glorious;she can obey,entreat,command,humble herself,or rise in pride;times without number she brings comfort when a younggirl can only make moan.And with all the advantages of her position,the woman of thirty can be a girl again,for she can play all parts,assume a girl's bashfulness,and grow the fairer even for a mischance.

Between these two feminine types lies the immeasurable differencewhich separates the foreseen from the unforeseen,strength fromweakness.The woman of thirty satisfies every requirement;the younggirl must satisfy none,under penalty of ceasing to be a young girl.

Such ideas as these,developing in a young man's mind,help tostrengthen the strongest of all passions,a passion in which allspontaneous and natural feeling is blended with the artificialsentiment created by conventional manners.

The most important and decisive step in a woman's life is the very onethat she invariably regards as the most insignificant.After hermarriage she is no longer her own

mistress,she is the queen and thebond-slave of the domestic hearth.The sanctity of womanhood isincompatible with social liberty and social claims;and for a womanemancipation means corruption.If you give a stranger the right ofentry into the sanctuary of home,do you not put yourself at hismercy?How then if she herself bids him enter it?Is not this anoffence,or,to speak more accurately,a first step towards anoffence?You must either accept this theory with all its consequences,or absolve illicit passion.French society hitherto has chosen thethird and middle course of looking on and laughing when offences come,apparently upon the Spartan principle of condoning the theft andpunishing clumsiness.And this system,it may be,is a very wise one.

'Tis a most appalling punishment to have all your neighbors pointingthe finger of scorn at you,a punishment that a woman feels in hervery heart.Women are tenacious,and all of them should be tenaciousof respect;without esteem they cannot exist,esteem is the firstdemand that they make of love.The most corrupt among them feels thatshe must,in the first place,pledge the future to buy absolution forthe past,and strives to make her lover understand that only forirresistible bliss can she barter the respect which the worldhenceforth will refuse to her.

Some such reflections cross the mind of any woman who for the firsttime and alone receives a visit from a young man;and this especiallywhen,like Charles de Vandenesse,the visitor is handsome or clever.

And similarly there are not many young men who would fail to base somesecret wish on one of the thousand and one ideas which justify theinstinct that attracts them to a beautiful,witty,and unhappy womanlike the Marquise d'Aiglemont.

Mme.d'Aiglemont,therefore,felt troubled when M.de Vandenesse wasannounced;and as for him,he was almost confused in spite of theassurance which is like a matter of costume for a diplomatist.But notfor long.The Marquise took refuge at once in the friendliness ofmanner which women use as a defence against the misinterpretations offatuity,a manner which admits of no afterthought,while it paves theway to sentiment (to make use of a figure of speech),tempering thetransition through the ordinary forms of politeness.In this ambiguousposition,where the four roads leading respectively to Indifference,Respect,Wonder,and Passion meet,a woman may

stay as long as shepleases,but only at thirty years does she understand all thepossibilities of the situation.Laughter,tenderness,and jest are allpermitted to her at the crossing of the ways;she has acquired thetact by which she finds all the responsive chords in a man's nature,and skill in judging the sounds which she draws forth.Her silence isas dangerous as her speech.You will never read her at that age,nordiscover if she is frank or false,nor how far she is serious in heradmissions or merely laughing at you.She gives you the right toengage in a game of fence with her,and suddenly by a glance,agesture of proved potency,she closes the combat and turns from youwith your secret in her keeping,free to offer you up in a jest,freeto interest herself in you,safe alike in her weakness and yourstrength.

Although the Marquise d'Aiglemont took up her position upon thisneutral ground during the first interview,she knew how to preserve ahigh womanly dignity.The sorrows of which she never spoke seemed tohang over her assumed gaiety like a light cloud obscuring the sun.

When Vandenesse went out,after a conversation which he had enjoyedmore than he had thought possible,he carried with him

the convictionthat this was like to be too costly a conquest for his aspirations.

"It would mean sentiment from here to yonder,"he thought,"andcorrespondence enough to wear out a deputy second-clerk on hispromotion.And yet if I really cared----"

Luckless phrase that has been the ruin of many an infatuated mortal.

In France the way to love lies through self-love.Charles went back toMme.d'Aiglemont,and imagined that she showed symptoms of pleasure inhis conversion.And then,instead of giving himself up like a boy tothe joy of falling in love,he tried to play a double role.He did hisbest to act passion and to keep cool enough to analyze the progress ofthis flirtation,to be lover and diplomatist at once;but youth andhot blood and analysis could only end in one way,over head and earsin love;for,natural or artificial,the Marquise was more than hismatch.Each time he went out from Mme.d'Aiglemont,he strenuouslyheld himself to his distrust,and submitted the progressive situationsof his case to a rigorous scrutiny fatal to his own emotions.

"To-day she gave me to understand that she has been very unhappy andlonely,"said he to himself,after the third visit,"and that but forher little girl she would have longed for death.She was perfectlyresigned.Now as I am neither her brother nor her spiritual director,why should she confide her troubles to me?She loves me."

Two days later he came away apostrophizing modern manners.

"Love takes on the hue of every age.In 1822love is a doctrinaire.

Instead of proving love by deeds,as in times past,we have taken toargument and rhetoric and debate.Women's tactics are reduced to threeshifts.In the first place,they declare that we cannot love as theylove.(Coquetry!the Marquise simply threw it at me,like a challenge,this evening!)Next they grow pathetic,to appeal to our naturalgenerosity or self-love;for does it not flatter a young man's vanityto console a woman for a great calamity?And lastly,they have a crazefor virginity.She must have thought that I thought her very innocent.

My good faith is like to become an excellent speculation."

But a day came when every suspicious idea was exhausted.He askedhimself whether the Marquise was not sincere;whether so muchsuffering could be feigned,and why she should act the part ofresignation?She lived in complete seclusion;she drank in silence ofa cup of sorrow scarcely to be guessed unless from the accent of somechance exclamation in a voice always well under control.From thatmoment Charles felt a keen interest in Mme.d'Aiglemont.And yet,though his visits had come to be a recognized thing,and in some sorta necessity to them both,and though the hour was kept free by tacitagreement,Vandenesse still thought that this woman with whom he wasin love was more clever than sincere."Decidedly,she is an uncommonlyclever woman,"he used to say to himself as he went away.

When he came into the room,there was the Marquise in her favoriteattitude,melancholy expressed in her whole form.She made no movementwhen he entered,only raised her eyes and looked full at him,but theglance that she gave him was like a smile.Mme.d'Aiglemont's mannermeant confidence and sincere friendship,but of love there was notrace.Charles sat down and found nothing to say.A sensation forwhich no language exists

troubled him.

"What is the matter with you?"she asked in a softened voice.

"Nothing....Yes;I am thinking of something of which,as yet,youhave not thought at all."

"What is it?"

"Why--the Congress is over."

"Well,"she said,"and ought you to have been at the Congress?"

A direct answer would have been the most eloquent and delicatedeclaration of love;but Charles did not make it.Before the candidfriendship in Mme.d'Aiglemont's face all the calculations of vanity,the hopes of love,and the diplomatist's doubts died away.She did notsuspect,or she seemed not to suspect,his love for her;and Charles,in utter confusion turning upon himself,was forced to admit that hehad said and done nothing which could warrant such a belief on herpart.For M.de Vandenesse that evening,the Marquise was,as she hadalways

been,simple and friendly,sincere in her sorrow,glad to havea friend,proud to find a nature responsive to her own--nothing more.

It had not entered her mind that a woman could yield twice;she hadknown love--love lay bleeding still in the depths of her heart,butshe did not imagine that bliss could bring her its rapture twice,forshe believed not merely in the intellect,but in the soul;and for herlove was no simple attraction;it drew her with all noble attractions.

In a moment Charles became a young man again,enthralled by thesplendor of a nature so lofty.He wished for a fuller initiation intothe secret history of a life blighted rather by fate than by her ownfault.Mme.d'Aiglemont heard him ask the cause of the overwhelmingsorrow which had blended all the harmonies of sadness with her beauty;

she gave him one glance,but that searching look was like a seal setupon some solemn compact.

"Ask no more such questions of me,"she said."Four years ago,on thisvery day,the man who loved me,for whom I would have given upeverything,even my own self-respect,died,and

died to save my name.

That love was still young and pure and full of illusions when it cameto an end.Before I gave way to passion--and never was a woman sourged by fate--I had been drawn into the mistake that ruins many agirl's life,a marriage with a man whose agreeable manners concealedhis emptiness.Marriage plucked my hopes away one by one.And now,to-day,I have forfeited happiness through marriage,as well as thehappiness styled criminal,and I have known no happiness.Nothing isleft to me.If I could not die,at least I ought to be faithful to mymemories."

No tears came with the words.Her eyes fell,and there was a slighttwisting of the fingers interclasped,according to her wont.It wassimply said,but in her voice there was a note of despair,deep as herlove seemed to have been,which left Charles without a hope.Thedreadful story of a life told in three sentences,with that twistingof the fingers for all comment,the might of anguish in a fragilewoman,the dark depths masked by a fair face,the tears of four yearsof mourning fascinated Vandenesse;he sat silent and diminished in thepresence of her woman's greatness and nobleness,seeing not thephysical beauty so exquisite,so perfectly complete,but the soul sogreat in its

power to feel.He had found,at last,the ideal of hisfantastic imaginings,the ideal so vigorously invoked by all who lookon life as the raw material of a passion for which many a one seeksardently,and dies before he has grasped the whole of the dreamed-oftreasure.

With those words of hers in his ears,in the presence of her sublimebeauty,his own thoughts seemed poor and narrow.Powerless as he felthimself to find words of his own,simple enough and lofty enough toscale the heights of this exaltation,he took refuge in platitudes asto the destiny of women.

"Madame,we must either forget our pain,or hollow out a tomb forourselves."

But reason always cuts a poor figure beside sentiment;the one beingessentially restricted,like everything that is positive,while theother is infinite.To set to work to reason where you are required tofeel,is the mark of a limited nature.Vandenesse therefore held hispeace,sat awhile with his eyes fixed upon her,then came away.A preyto novel thoughts which exalted

woman for him,he was in something thesame position as a painter who has taken the vulgar studio model for atype of womanhood,and suddenly confronts the Mnemosyne of the Musee--that noblest and least appreciated of antique statues.

A Woman of Thirty -Part II

A Woman of Thirty

Part II

harles de Vandenesse was deeply in love.He loved

Mme.d'Aiglemontwith the loyalty of youth,with the fervor that communicates suchineffable charm to a first passion,with a simplicity of heart ofwhich a man only recovers some fragments when he loves again at alater day.Delicious first passion of youth,almost always deliciouslysavored by the woman who calls it forth;for at the golden prime ofthirty,from the poetic summit of a woman's life,she can look outover the whole course of love--backwards into the past,forwards intothe future--and,knowing all the price to be paid for love,enjoys herbliss with the dread of losing it ever present with her.Her soul isstill fair with her waning youth,and passion daily gathers strengthfrom the dismaying prospect of the coming days.

"This is love,"Vandenesse said to himself this time as he left theMarquise,"and for my misfortune I love a woman wedded to hermemories.It is hard work to struggle against a dead rival,neverpresent to make blunders and fall out of favor,nothing of him leftbut his better qualities.What is it but a sort of high treasonagainst the Ideal to attempt to break the charm of memory,to destroythe hopes that survive a lost lover,precisely because he onlyawakened longings,and all that is loveliest and most enchanting inlove?"

These sober reflections,due to the discouragement and dread offailure with which love begins in earnest,were the last expiringeffort of diplomatic reasoning.Thenceforward he knew noafterthoughts,he was the plaything of his love,and lost himself inthe nothings of that strange inexplicable happiness which is full fedby a chance word,by silence,or a vague hope.He tried to lovePlatonically,came daily to breathe the air that she breathed,becamealmost a part of her house,and went everywhere with her,slave as hewas of a tyrannous passion compounded of egoism and devotion of thecompletest.Love has its own instinct,finding the way to the heart,as the feeblest insect finds the way to its flower,with a will whichnothing can dismay or turn aside.If feeling is sincere,its destinyis not doubtful.Let a woman begin to think that her life depends onthe sincerity or fervor or earnestness which her lover shall put intohis longings,and is there not sufficient in the thought to put herthrough all the tortures of dread?It is impossible for a woman,beshe wife or mother,to be secure from a young man's love.One thing itis within her power to do--to refuse to see him as soon as she learnsa secret which she never fails to guess.But this is too decided astep to take at an age when marriage has

become a prosaic and tiresomeyoke,and conjugal affection is something less than tepid (if indeedher husband has not already begun to neglect her).Is a woman plain?

she is flattered by a love which gives her fairness.Is she young andcharming?She is only to be won by a fascination as great as her ownpower to charm,that is to say,a fascination well-nigh irresistible.

Is she virtuous?There is a love sublime in its earthliness whichleads her to find something like absolution in the very greatness ofthe surrender and glory in a hard struggle.Everything is a snare.Nolesson,therefore,is too severe where the temptation is so strong.

The seclusion in which the Greeks and Orientals kept and keep theirwomen,an example more and more followed in modern England,is theonly safeguard of domestic morality;but under this system there is anend of all the charm of social intercourse;and society,and goodbreeding,and refinement of manners become impossible.The nationsmust take their choice.

So a few months went by,and Mme.d'Aiglemont discovered that her lifewas closely bound with this young man's life,without overmuchconfusion in her surprise,and felt with something

almost likepleasure that she shared his tastes and his thoughts.Had she adoptedVandenesse's ideas?Or was it Vandenesse who had made her lightestwhims his own?She was not careful to inquire.She had been swept outalready into the current of passion,and yet this adorable woman toldherself with the confident reiteration of misgiving;

"Ah!no.I will be faithful to him who died for me."

Pascal said that "the doubt of God implies belief in God."Andsimilarly it may be said that a woman only parleys when she hassurrendered.A day came when the Marquise admitted to herself that shewas loved,and with that admission came a time of wavering amongcountless conflicting thoughts and feelings.The superstitions ofexperience spoke their language.Should she be happy?Was it possiblethat she should find happiness outside the limits of the laws whichsociety rightly or wrongly has set up for humanity to live by?

Hitherto her cup of life had been full of bitterness.Was there anyhappy issue possible for the ties which united two human beings heldapart by social conventions?And might not happiness be bought toodear?Still,this so ardently desired

happiness,for which it is sonatural to seek,might perhaps be found after all.Curiosity is alwaysretained on the lover's side in the suit.The secret tribunal wasstill sitting when Vandenesse appeared,and his presence put themetaphysical spectre,reason,to flight.

If such are the successive transformations through which a sentiment,transient though it be,passes in a young man and a woman of thirty,there comes a moment of time when the shades of difference blend intoeach other,when all reasonings end in a single and final reflectionwhich is lost and absorbed in the desire which it confirms.Then thelonger the resistance,the mightier the voice of love.And here endeththis lesson,or rather this study made from the ecorche,to borrow amost graphic term from the studio,for in this history it is not somuch intended to portray love as to lay bare its mechanism and itsdangers.From this moment every day adds color to these dry bones,clothes them again with living flesh and blood and the charm of youth,and puts vitality into their movements;till they glow once more withthe beauty,the persuasive grace of sentiment,the loveliness of life.

Charles found Mme.d'Aiglemont absorbed in thought,and to his "Whatis it?"spoken in thrilling tones grown persuasive with the heart'ssoft magic,she was careful not to reply.The delicious question borewitness to the perfect unity of their spirits;and the Marquise felt,with a woman's wonderful intuition,that to give any expression to thesorrow in her heart would be to make an advance.If,even now,eachone of those words was fraught with significance for them both,inwhat fathomless depths might she not plunge at the first step?Sheread herself with a clear and lucid glance.She was silent,andVandenesse followed her example.

"I am not feeling well,"she said at last,taking alarm at the pausefraught with such great moment for them both,when the language of theeyes completely filled the blank left by the helplessness of speech.

"Madame,"said Charles,and his voice was tender but unsteady withstrong feeling,"soul and body are both dependent on each other.Ifyou were happy,you would be young and fresh.Why do you refuse to askof love all that love has taken from you?You think that your life isover when it is only just beginning.Trust

yourself to a friend'scare.It is so sweet to be loved."

"I am old already,"she said;"there is no reason why I should notcontinue to suffer as in the past.And 'one must love,'do you say?

Well,I must not,and I cannot.Your friendship has put some sweetnessinto my life,but beside you I care for no one,no one could efface mymemories.A friend I accept;I should fly from a lover.Besides,wouldit be a very generous thing to do,to exchange a withered heart for ayoung heart;to smile upon illusions which now I cannot share,tocause happiness in which I should either have no belief,or tremble tolose?I should perhaps respond to his devotion with egoism,shouldweigh and deliberate while he felt;my memory would resent thepoignancy of his happiness.No,if you love once,that love is neverreplaced,you see.Indeed,who would have my heart at this price?"

There was a tinge of heartless coquetry in the words,the last effortof discretion.

"If he loses courage,well and good,I shall live alone and faithful."

The thought came from the very depths of the woman,for her it was thetoo slender willow twig caught in vain by a swimmer swept out by thecurrent.

Vandenesse's involuntary shudder at her dictum plead more eloquentlyfor him than all his past assiduity.Nothing moves a woman so much asthe discovery of a gracious delicacy in us,such a refinement ofsentiment as her own,for a woman the grace and delicacy are suretokens of truth.Charles'start revealed the sincerity of his love.
Mme.d'Aiglemont learned the strength of his affection from theintensity of his pain.

"Perhaps you are right,"he said coldly."New love,new vexation ofspirit."

Then he changed the subject,and spoke of indifferent matters;but hewas visibly moved,and he concentrated his gaze on Mme.d'Aiglemont asif he were seeing her for the last time.

"Adieu,madame,"he said,with emotion in his voice.

"Au revoir,"said she,with that subtle coquetry,the secret of avery few among women.

He made no answer and went.

When Charles was no longer there,when his empty chair spoke for him,regrets flocked in upon her,and she found fault with herself.Passionmakes an immense advance as soon as a woman persuades herself that shehas failed somewhat in generosity or hurt a noble nature.In lovethere is never any need to be on our guard against the worst in us;
that is a safeguard;a woman only surrenders at the summons of avirtue."The floor of hell is paved with good intentions,"--it is nopreacher's paradox.

Vandenesse stopped away for several days.Every evening at theaccustomed hour the Marquise sat expectant in remorseful impatience.
She could not write--that would be a declaration,and,moreover,herinstinct told her that he would come back.On the sixth day he wasannounced,and never had she heard the name with such delight.Her joyfrightened her.

"You have punished me well,"she said,addressing him.

Vandenesse gazed at her in astonishment.

"Punished?"he echoed."And for what?"He understood her quite well,but he meant to be avenged for all that he had suffered as soon as shesuspected it.

"Why have you not come to see me?"she demanded with a smile.

"Then you have seen no visitors?"asked he,parrying the question.

"Yes.M.de Ronquerolles and M.de Marsay and young d'Escrignon cameand stayed for nearly two hours,the first two yesterday,the laststhis morning.And besides,I have had a call,I believe,from Mme.
Firmiani and from your sister,Mme.de Listomere."

Here was a new infliction,torture which none can comprehend

unlessthey know love as a fierce and all-invading tyrant whose mildestsymptom is a monstrous jealousy,a perpetual desire to snatch away thebeloved from every other influence.

"What!"thought he to himself,"she has seen visitors,she has beenwith happy creatures,and talking to them,while I was unhappy and allalone."

He buried his annoyance forthwith,and consigned love to the depths ofhis heart,like a coffin to the sea.His thoughts were of the kindthat never find expression in words;they pass through the mindswiftly as a deadly acid,that poisons as it evaporates and vanishes.

His brow,however,was over-clouded;and Mme.d'Aiglemont,guided byher woman's instinct,shared his sadness without understanding it.Shehad hurt him,unwittingly,as Vandenesse knew.He talked over hisposition with her,as if his jealousy were one of those hypotheticalcases which lovers love to discuss.Then the Marquise understood itall.She was so deeply moved,that she could not keep back the tears--andso these lovers entered the heaven of love.

Heaven and Hell are two great imaginative conceptions formulating ourideas of Joy and Sorrow--those two poles about which human existencerevolves.Is not heaven a figure of speech covering now and forevermore an infinite of human feeling impossible to express save inits accidents--since that Joy is one?And what is Hell but the symbolof our infinite power to suffer tortures so diverse that of our painit is possible to fashion works of art,for no two human sorrows arealike?

One evening the two lovers sat alone and side by side,silentlywatching one of the fairest transformations of the sky,a cloudlessheaven taking hues of pale gold and purple from the last rays of thesunset.With the slow fading of the daylight,sweet thoughts seem toawaken,and soft stirrings of passion,and a mysterious sense oftrouble in the midst of calm.Nature sets before us vague images ofbliss,bidding us enjoy the happiness within our reach,or lament itwhen it has fled.In those moments fraught with enchantment,when thetender light in the canopy of the sky blends in harmony with thespells working within,it is difficult to resist the heart's desiresgrown so magically potent.Cares are blunted,joy becomes ecstasy;

pain,intolerable anguish.The pomp of sunset gives the signal forconfessions and draws them forth.Silence grows more dangerous thanspeech for it gives to eyes all the power of the infinite of theheavens reflected in them.And for speech,the least word hasirresistible might.Is not the light infused into the voice and purpleinto the glances?Is not heaven within us,or do we feel that we arein the heavens?

Vandenesse and Julie--for so she had allowed herself to be called forthe past few days by him whom she loved to speak of as Charles--Vandenesseand Julie were talking together,but they had drifted veryfar from their original subject;and if their spoken words had grownmeaningless they listened in delight to the unspoken thoughts thatlurked in the sounds.Her hand lay in his.She had abandoned it to himwithout a thought that she had granted a proof of love.

Together they leaned forward to look out upon a majestic cloudcountry,full of snows and glaciers and fantastic mountain peaks withgray stains of shadow on their sides,a picture composed of sharpcontrasts between fiery red and the shadows of darkness,filling theskies with a fleeting vision of glory which

cannot be reproduced--magnificentswaddling-bands of sunrise,bright shrouds of the dyingsun.As they leaned Julie's hair brushed lightly against Vandenesse'scheek.She felt that light contact,and shuddered violently,and heeven more,for imperceptibly they both had reached one of thoseinexplicable crises when quiet has wrought upon the senses until everyfaculty of perception is so keen that the slightest shock fills theheart lost in melancholy with sadness that overflows in tears;orraises joy to ecstasy in a heart that is lost in the vertigo of love.

Almost involuntarily Julie pressed her lover's hand.That wooingpressure gave courage to his timidity.All the joy of the present,allthe hopes of the future were blended in the emotion of a first caress,the bashful trembling kiss that Mme.d'Aiglemont received upon hercheek.The slighter the concession,the more dangerous and insinuatingit was.For their double misfortune it was only too sincere arevelation.Two noble natures had met and blended,drawn each to eachby every law of natural attraction,held apart by every ordinance.

General d'Aiglemont came in at that very moment.

"The Ministry has gone out,"he said."Your uncle will be in the newcabinet.So you stand an uncommonly good chance of an embassy,Vandenesse."

Charles and Julie looked at each other and flushed red.That blush wasone more tie to unite them;there was one thought and one remorse ineither mind;between two lovers guilty of a kiss there is a bond quiteas strong and terrible as the bond between two robbers who havemurdered a man.Something had to be said by way of reply.

"I do not care to leave Paris now,"Charles said.

"We know why,"said the General,with the knowing air of a man whodiscovers a secret."You do not like to leave your uncle,because youdo not wish to lose your chance of succeeding to the title."

The Marquise took refuge in her room,and in her mind passed apitiless verdict upon her husband.

"His stupidity is really beyond anything!"

A Woman of Thirty -Chapter IV

A Woman of Thirty

Chapter IV

The Finger of God

etween the Barriere d'Italie and the Barriere de la Sante,along theboulevard which leads to the Jardin des Plantes,you have a view ofParis fit to send an artist or the tourist,the most blase inmatters of landscape,into ecstasies.Reach the slightly higher groundwhere the line of boulevard,shaded by

tall,thick-spreading trees,curves with the grace of some green and silent forest avenue,and yousee spread out at your feet a deep valley populous with factorieslooking almost countrified among green trees and the brown streams ofthe Bievre or the Gobelins.

On the opposite slope,beneath some thousands of roofs packed closetogether like heads in a crowd,lurks the squalor of the FaubourgSaint-Marceau.The imposing cupola of the Pantheon,and the grimmelancholy dome of the Val-du-Grace,tower proudly up above a wholetown in itself,built amphitheatre-wise;every tier being grotesquelyrepresented by a crooked line of street,so that the two publicmonuments look like a huge pair of giants dwarfing into insignificancethe poor little houses and the tallest poplars in the valley.To yourleft behold the observatory,the daylight,pouring athwart its windowsand galleries,producing such fantastical strange effects that thebuilding looks like a black spectral skeleton.Further yet in thedistance rises the elegant lantern tower of the Invalides,soaring upbetween the bluish pile of the Luxembourg and the gray tours of Saint-Sulpice.

From this standpoint the lines of the architecture areblended with green leaves and gray shadows,and change every momentwith every aspect of the heavens,every alteration of light or colorin the sky.Afar,the skyey spaces themselves seem to be full ofbuildings;near,wind the serpentine curves of waving trees and greenfootpaths.

Away to your right,through a great gap in this singular landscape,you see the canal Saint-Martin,a long pale stripe with its edging ofreddish stone quays and fringes of lime avenue.The long rows ofbuildings beside it,in genuine Roman style,are the public granaries.

Beyond,again,on the very last plane of all,see the smoke-dimmedslopes of Belleville covered with houses and windmills,which blendtheir freaks of outline with the chance effects of cloud.And still,between that horizon,vague as some childish recollection,and theserried range of roofs in the valley,a whole city lies out of sight:

a huge city,engulfed,as it were,in a vast hollow between thepinnacles of the Hopital de la Pitie and the ridge line of theCimetiere de l'Est,between suffering on the one hand and

death on theother;a city sending up a smothered roar like Ocean grumbling at thefoot of a cliff,as if to let you know that "I am here!"

When the sunlight pours like a flood over this strip of Paris,purifying and etherealizing the outlines,kindling answering lightshere and there in the window panes,brightening the red tiles,flamingabout the golden crosses,whitening walls and transforming theatmosphere into a gauzy veil,calling up rich contrasts of light andfantastic shadow;when the sky is blue and earth quivers in the heat,and the bells are pealing,then you shall see one of the eloquentfairy scenes which stamp themselves for ever on the imagination,ascene that shall find as fanatical worshipers as the wondrous views ofNaples and Byzantium or the isles of Florida.Nothing is wanting tocomplete the harmony,the murmur of the world of men and the idyllicquiet of solitude,the voices of a million human creatures and thevoice of God.There lies a whole capital beneath the peacefulcypresses of Pere-Lachaise.

The landscape lay in all its beauty,sparkling in the spring sunlight,as I stood looking out over it one morning,my back

against a hugeelm-tree that flung its yellow flowers to the wind.At the sight ofthe rich and glorious view before me,I thought bitterly of the scornwith which even in our literature we affect to hold this land of ours,and poured maledictions on the pitiable plutocrats who fall out oflove with fair France,and spend their gold to acquire the right ofsneering at their own country,by going through Italy at a gallop andinspecting that desecrated land through an opera-glass.I cast lovingeyes on modern Paris.I was beginning to dream dreams,when the soundof a kiss disturbed the solitude and put philosophy to flight.Downthe sidewalk,along the steep bank,above the rippling water,I sawbeyond the Ponte des Gobelins the figure of a woman,dressed with thedaintiest simplicity;she was still young,as it seemed to me,and theblithe gladness of the landscape was reflected in her sweet face.Hercompanion,a handsome young man,had just set down a little boy.Aprettier child has never been seen,and to this day I do not knowwhether it was the little one or his mother who received the kiss.Intheir young faces,in their eyes,their smile,their every movement,you could read the same deep and tender thought.Their arms wereinterlaced with such glad swiftness;they drew close together withsuch marvelous unanimity of impulse

that,conscious of nothing butthemselves,they did not so much as see me.A second child,however--alittle girl,who had turned her back upon them in sullen discontent--threwme a glance,and the expression in her eyes startled me.She wasas pretty and engaging as the little brother whom she left to runabout by himself,sometimes before,sometimes after their mother andher companion;but her charm was less childish,and now,as she stoodmute and motionless,her attitude and demeanor suggested a torpidsnake.There was something indescribably mechanical in the way inwhich the pretty woman and her companion paced up and down.In absenceof mind,probably,they were content to walk to and fro between thelittle bridge and a carriage that stood waiting nearby at a corner inthe boulevard,turning,stopping short now and again,looking intoeach other's eyes,or breaking into laughter as their casual talk grewlively or languid,grave or gay.

I watched this delicious picture a while from my hiding-place by thegreat elm-tree,and should have turned away no doubt and respectedtheir privacy,if it had not been for a chance discovery.In the faceof the brooding,silent,elder child I saw traces of thought overdeepfor her age.When her mother and the

young man at her side turned andcame near,her head was frequently lowered;the furtive sidelongglances of intelligence that she gave the pair and the child herbrother were nothing less than extraordinary.Sometimes the prettywoman or her friend would stroke the little boy's fair curls,or lay acaressing finger against the baby throat or the white collar as heplayed at keeping step with them;and no words can describe the shrewdsubtlety,the ingenuous malice,the fierce intensity which lighted upthat pallid little face with the faint circles already round the eyes.

Truly there was a man's power of passion in the strange-looking,delicate little girl.Here were traces of suffering or of thought inher;and which is the more certain token of death when life is inblossom--physical suffering,or the malady of too early thoughtpreying upon a soul as yet in bud?Perhaps a mother knows.For my ownpart,I know of nothing more dreadful to see than an old man'sthoughts on a child's forehead;even blasphemy from girlish lips isless monstrous.

The almost stupid stolidity of this child who had begun to thinkalready,her rare gestures,everything about her,interested me.Iscrutinized her curiously.Then the common whim of the

observer drewme to compare her with her brother,and to note their likeness andunlikeness.

Her brown hair and dark eyes and look of precocious power made a richcontrast with the little one's fair curled head and sea-green eyes andwinning helplessness.She,perhaps,was seven or eight years of age;

the boy was full four years younger.Both children were dressed alike;

but here again,looking closely,I noticed a difference.It was veryslight,a little thing enough;but in the light of after events I sawthat it meant a whole romance in the past,a whole tragedy to come.

The little brown-haired maid wore a linen collar with a plain hem,herbrother's was edged with dainty embroidery,that was all;but thereinlay the confession of a heart's secret,a tacit preference which achild can read in the mother's inmost soul as clearly as if the spiritof God revealed it.The fair-haired child,careless and glad,lookedalmost like a girl,his skin was so fair and fresh,his movements sograceful,his look so sweet;while his older sister,in spite of herenergy,in spite of the beauty of her features and her dazzlingcomplexion,looked like a sickly little

boy.In her bright eyes therewas none of the humid softness which lends such charm to children'sfaces;they seemed,like courtiers'eyes,to be dried by some innerfire;and in her pallor there was a certain swarthy olive tint,thesign of vigorous character.Twice her little brother came to her,holding out a tiny hunting-horn with a touching charm,a winning look,and wistful expression,which would have sent Charlet into ecstasies,but she only scowled in answer to his "Here,Helene,will you takeit?"so persuasively spoken.The little girl,so sombre and vehementbeneath her apparent indifference,shuddered,and even flushed redwhen her brother came near her;but the little one seemed not tonotice his sister's dark mood,and his unconsciousness,blended withearnestness,marked a final difference in character between the childand the little girl,whose brow was overclouded already by the gloomof a man's knowledge and cares.

"Mamma,Helene will not play,"cried the little one,seizing anopportunity to complain while the two stood silent on the Ponte desGobelins.

"Let her alone,Charles;you know very well that she is always

cross."

Tears sprang to Helene's eyes at the words so thoughtlessly uttered byher mother as she turned abruptly to the young man by her side.Thechild devoured the speech in silence,but she gave her brother one ofthose sagacious looks that seemed inexplicable to me,glancing with asinister expression from the bank where he stood to the Bievre,thenat the bridge and the view,and then at me.

I as afraid lest my presence should disturb the happy couple;Islipped away and took refuge behind a thicket of elder trees,whichcompletely screened me from all eyes.Sitting quietly on the summit ofthe bank,I watched the ever-changing landscape and the fierce-lookinglittle girl,for with my head almost on a level with the boulevard Icould still see her through the leaves.Helene seemed uneasy over mydisappearance,her dark eyes looked for me down the alley and behindthe trees with indefinable curiosity.What was I to her?Then Charles'
baby laughter rang out like a bird's song in the silence.The tall,young man,with the same fair hair,was dancing him in his arms,showering kisses upon him,and the meaningless baby

words of that"little language"which rises to our lips when we play with children.

The mother looked on smiling,now and then,doubtless,putting in somelow word that came up from the heart,for her companion would stopshort in his full happiness,and the blue eyes that turned towards herwere full of glowing light and love and worship.Their voices,blending with the child's voice,reached me with a vague sense of acaress.The three figures,charming in themselves,composed a lovelyscene in a glorious landscape,filling it with a pervasiveunimaginable grace.A delicately fair woman,radiant with smiles,achild of love,a young man with the irresistible charm of youth,acloudless sky;nothing was wanting in nature to complete a perfectharmony for the delight of the soul.I found myself smiling as iftheir happiness had been my own.

The clocks struck nine.The young man gave a tender embrace to hiscompanion,and went towards the tilbury which an old servant droveslowly to meet him.The lady had grown grave and almost sad.Thechild's prattle sounded unchecked through the last farewell kisses.

Then the tilbury rolled away,and the lady stood

motionless,listeningto the sound of the wheels,watching the little cloud of dust raisedby its passage along the road.Charles ran down the green pathway backto the bridge to join his sister.I heard his silver voice calling toher.

"Why did you not come to say good-bye to my good friend?"cried he.

Helene looked up.Never surely did such hatred gleam from a child'seyes as from hers at that moment when she turned them on the brotherwho stood beside her on the bank side.She gave him an angry push.

Charles lost his footing on the steep slope,stumbled over the rootsof a tree,and fell headlong forwards,dashing his forehead on thesharp-edged stones of the embankment,and,covered with blood,disappeared over the edge into the muddy river.The turbid waterclosed over a fair,bright head with a shower of splashes;one sharpshriek after another rang in my ears;then the sounds were stifled bythe thick stream,and the poor child sank with a dull sound as if astone had been thrown into the water.The accident had happened withmore than lightning swiftness.I sprang down the footpath,and Helene,stupefied with

horror,shrieked again and again:

"Mamma!mamma!"

The mother was there at my side.She had flown to the spot like abird.But neither a mother's eyes nor mine could find the exact placewhere the little one had gone under.There was a wide space of blackhurrying water,and below in the bed of the Bievre ten feet of mud.

There was not the smallest possibility of saving the child.No one wasstirring at that hour on a Sunday morning,and there are neitherbarges nor anglers on the Bievre.There was not a creature in sight,not a pole to plumb the filthy stream.What need was there for me toexplain how the ugly-looking accident had happened--accident ormisfortune,whichever it might be?Had Helene avenged her father?Herjealousy surely was the sword of God.And yet when I looked at themother I shivered.What fearful ordeal awaited her when she shouldreturn to her husband,the judge before whom she must stand all herdays?And here with her was an inseparable,incorruptible witness.Achild's forehead is transparent,a child's face hides no thoughts,anda lie,like a red flame set within glows out red that colors even

theeyes.But the unhappy woman had not thought as yet of the punishmentawaiting her at home;she was staring into the Bievre.

Such an event must inevitably send ghastly echoes through a woman'slife,and here is one of the most terrible of the reverberations thattroubled Julie's love from time to time.

Several years had gone by.The Marquis de Vandenesse wore mourning forhis father,and succeeded to his estates.One evening,therefore,after dinner it happened that a notary was present in his house.Thiswas no pettifogging lawyer after Sterne's pattern,but a very solid,substantial notary of Paris,one of your estimable men who do a stupidthing pompously,set down a foot heavily upon your private corn,andthen ask what in the world there is to cry out about?If,by accident,they come to know the full extent of the enormity,"Upon my word,"crythey,"I hadn't a notion!"This was a well-intentioned ass,in short,who could see nothing in life but deeds and documents.

Mme.de Aiglemont had been dining with M.de Vandenesse;her husbandhad excused himself before dinner was over,for he was

taking his twochildren to the play.They were to go to some Boulevard theatre orother,to the Ambigu-Comique or the Gaiete,sensational melodramabeing judged harmless here in Paris,and suitable pabulum forchildhood,because innocence is always triumphant in the fifth act.

The boy and girl had teased their father to be there before thecurtain rose,so he had left the table before dessert was served.

But the notary,the imperturbable notary,utterly incapable of askinghimself why Mme.d'Aiglemont should have allowed her husband andchildren to go without her to the play,sat on as if he were screwedto his chair.Dinner was over,dessert had been prolonged bydiscussion,and coffee delayed.All these things consumed time,doubtless precious,and drew impatient movements from that charmingwoman;she looked not unlike a thoroughbred pawing the ground before arace;but the man of law,to whom horses and women were equallyunknown quantities,simply thought the Marquise a very lively andsparkling personage.So enchanted was he to be in the company of awoman of fashion and a political celebrity,that he was exertinghimself to shine in conversation,and taking the

lady's forced smilefor approbation,talked on with unflagging spirit,till the Marquisewas almost out of patience.

The master of the house,in concert with the lady,had more than oncemaintained an eloquent silence when the lawyer expected a civil reply;
but these significant pauses were employed by the talkative nuisancein looking for anecdotes in the fire.M.de Vandenesse had recourse tohis watch;the charming Marquise tried the experiment of fastening herbonnet strings,and made as if she would go.But she did not go,andthe notary,blind and deaf,and delighted with himself,was quiteconvinced that his interesting conversational powers were sufficientto keep the lady on the spot.

"I shall certainly have that woman for a client,"said he to himself.

Meanwhile the Marquise stood,putting on her gloves,twisting herfingers,looking from the equally impatient Marquis de Vandenesse tothe lawyer,still pounding away.At every pause in the worthy man'sfire of witticisms the charming pair heaved a

sigh of relief,andtheir looks said plainly,"At last!He is really going!"

Nothing of the kind.It was a nightmare which could only end inexasperating the two impassioned creatures,on whom the lawyer hadsomething of the fascinating effect of a snake on a pair of birds;
before long they would be driven to cut him short.

The clever notary was giving them the history of the discreditableways in which one du Tillet (a stockbroker then much in favor)hadlaid the foundations of his fortune;all the ins and outs of the wholedisgraceful business were accurately put before them;and the narratorwas in the very middle of his tale when M.de Vandenesse heard theclock strike nine.Then it became clear to him that his legal adviserwas very emphatically an idiot who must be sent forthwith about hisbusiness.He stopped him resolutely with a gesture.

"The tongs,my lord Marquis?"queried the notary,handing the objectin question to his client.

"No,monsieur,I am compelled to send you away.Mme.d'Aiglemontwishes to join her children,and I shall have the honor of escortingher."

"Nine o'clock already!Time goes like a shadow in pleasant company,"
said the man of law,who had talked on end for the past hour.

He looked for his hat,planted himself before the fire,with asuppressed hiccough;and,without heeding the Marquise's witheringglances,spoke once more to his impatient client:

"To sum up,my lord Marquis.Business before all things.To-morrow,then,we must subpoena your brother;we will proceed to make out theinventory,and faith,after that----"

So ill had the lawyer understood his instructions,that his impressionwas the exact opposite to the one intended.It was a delicate matter,and Vandenesse,in spite of himself,began to put the thick-headednotary right.The discussion which followed took up a certain amountof time.

"Listen,"the diplomatist said at last at a sign from the lady,"Youare puzzling my brains;come back to-morrow,and if the writ is notissued by noon to-morrow,the days of grace will expire,and then--"

As he spoke,a carriage entered the courtyard.The poor woman turnedsharply away at the sound to hide the tears in her eyes.The Marquisrang to give the servant orders to say that he was not at home;butbefore the footman could answer the bell,the lady's husbandreappeared.He had returned unexpectedly from the Gaiete,and heldboth children by the hand.The little girl's eyes were red;the boywas fretful and very cross.

"What can have happened?"asked the Marquise.

"I will tell you by and by,"said the General,and catching a glimpsethrough an open door of newspapers on the table in the adjoiningsitting-room,he went off.The Marquise,at the end of her patience,flung herself down on the sofa in desperation.The notary,thinking itincumbent upon him to be amiable with the children,spoke to thelittle boy in an insinuating tone:

"Well,my little man,and what is there on at the theatre?"

"The Valley of the Torrent,"said Gustave sulkily.

"Upon my word and honor,"declared the notary,"authors nowadays arehalf crazy.The Valley of the Torrent!Why not the Torrent of theValley?It is conceivable that a valley might be without a torrent init;now if they had said the Torrent of the Valley,that would havebeen something clear,something precise,something definite andcomprehensible.But never mind that.Now,how is the drama to takeplace in a torrent and in a valley?You will tell me that in thesedays the principal attraction lies in the scenic effect,and the titleis a capital advertisement.--And did you enjoy it,my little friend?"
he continued,sitting down before the child.

When the notary pursued his inquiries as to the possibilities of adrama in the bed of a torrent,the little girl turned slowly away andbegan to cry.Her mother did not notice this in her intense annoyance.

"Oh!yes,monsieur,I enjoyed it very much,"said the child."There

isa dear little boy in the play,and he was all alone in the world,because his papa could not have been his real papa.And when he cameto the top of the bridge over the torrent,a big,naughty man with abeard,dressed all in black,came and threw him into the water.Andthen Helene began to sob and cry,and everybody scolded us,and fatherbrought us away quick,quick----"

M.de Vandenesse and the Marquise looked on in dull amazement,as ifall power to think or move had been suddenly paralyzed.

"Do be quiet,Gustave!"cried the General."I told you that you werenot to talk about anything that happened at the play,and you haveforgotten what I said already."

"Oh,my lord Marquis,your lordship must excuse him,"cried thenotary."I ought not to have asked questions,but I had no idea--"

"He ought not to have answered them,"said the General,lookingsternly at the child.

It seemed that the Marquise and the master of the house both perfectlyunderstood why the children had come back so suddenly.Mme.
d'Aiglemont looked at her daughter,and rose as if to go to her,but aterrible convulsion passed over her face,and all that could be readin it was relentless severity.

"That will do,Helene,"she said."Go into the other room,and leaveoff crying."

"What can she have done,poor child!"asked the notary,thinking toappease the mother's anger and to stop Helene's tears at one stroke.
"So pretty as she his,she must be as good as can be;never anythingbut a joy to her mother,I will be bound.Isn't that so,my littlegirl?"

Helene cowered,looked at her mother,dried her eyes,struggled forcomposure,and took refuge in the next room.

"And you,madame,are too good a mother not to love all your

childrenalike.You are too good a woman,besides,to have any of thoselamentable preferences which have such fatal effects,as we lawyershave only too much reason to know.Society goes through our hands;wesee its passions in that most revolting form,greed.Here it is themother of a family trying to disinherit her husband's children toenrich the others whom she loves better;or it is the husband whotries to leave all his property to the child who has done his best toearn his mother's hatred.And then begin quarrels,and fears,anddeeds,and defeasances,and sham sales,and trusts,and all the restof it;a pretty mess,in fact,it is pitiable,upon my honor,pitiable!There are fathers that will spend their whole lives incheating their children and robbing their wives.Yes,robbing is theonly word for it.We were talking of tragedy;oh!I can assure you ofthis that if we were at liberty to tell the real reasons of somedonations that I know of,our modern dramatists would have thematerial for some sensational bourgeois dramas.How the wife managesto get her way,as she invariably does,I cannot think;for in spiteof appearances,and in spite of their weakness,it is always the womenwho carry the day.Ah!by the way,they don't take me in.I alwaysknow the reason at the bottom of those predilections which the worldpolitely styles 'unaccountable.'But in justice to the

husbands,Imust say that they never discover anything.You will tell me thatthis is a merciful dispens--"

Helene had come back to the drawing-room with her father,and waslistening attentively.So well did she understand all that was said,that she gave her mother a frightened glance,feeling,with a child'squick instinct,that these remarks would aggravate the punishmenthanging over her.The Marquise turned her white face to Vandenesse;
and,with terror in her eyes,indicated her husband,who stood withhis eyes fixed absently on the flower pattern of the carpet.Thediplomatist,accomplished man of the world though he was,could nolonger contain his wrath,he gave the man of law a withering glance.

"Step this way,sir,"he said,and he went hurriedly to the door ofthe ante-chamber;the notary left his sentence half finished,andfollowed,quaking,and the husband and wife were left together.

"Now,sir"said the Marquise de Vandenesse--he banged the drawing-roomdoor,and spoke with concentrated rage--"ever

since dinner you havedone nothing but make blunders and talk folly.For heaven's sake,go.

You will make the most frightful mischief before you have done.If youare a clever man in your profession,keep to your profession;and ifby any chance you should go into society,endeavor to be morecircumspect."

With that he went back to the drawing-room,and did not even wish thenotary good-evening.For a moment that worthy stood dumfounded,bewildered,utterly at a loss.Then,when the buzzing in his earssubsided,he thought he heard someone moaning in the next room.

Footsteps came and went,and bells were violently rung.He was by nomeans anxious to meet the Marquis again,and found the use of his legsto make good his escape,only to run against a hurrying crowd ofservants at the door.

"Just the way of all these grand folk,"said he to himself outside inthe street as he looked about for a cab."They lead you on to talkwith compliments,and you think you are amusing them.Not a bit of it.

They treat you insolently;put you at a distance;even put you out

atthe door without scruple.After all,I talked very cleverly,I saidnothing but what was sensible,well turned,and discreet;and,upon myword,he advises me to be more circumspect in future.I will take goodcare of that!Eh!the mischief take it!I am a notary and a member ofmy chamber!--Pshaw!it was an ambassador's fit of temper,nothing issacred for people of that kind.To-morrow he shall explain what hemeant by saying that I had done nothing but blunder and talk nonsensein his house.I will ask him for an explanation--that is,I will askhim to explain my mistake.After all is done and said,I am in thewrong perhaps----Upon my word,it is very good of me to cudgel mybrains like this.What business is it of mine?"

So the notary went home and laid the enigma before his spouse,with acomplete account of the evening's events related in sequence.

And she replied,"My dear Crottat,His Excellency was perfectly rightwhen he said that you had done nothing but blunder and talk folly."

"Why?"

"My dear,if I told you why,it would not prevent you from doing thesame thing somewhere else to-morrow.I tell you again--talk of nothingbut business when you go out;that is my advice to you."

"If you will not tell me,I shall ask him to-morrow--"

"Why,dear me!the veriest noodle is careful to hide a thing of thatkind,and do you suppose that an ambassador will tell you about it?
Really,Crottat,I have never known you so utterly devoid of common-sense."

"Thank you,my dear."

A Woman of Thirty

Chapter V

Two Meetings

ne of Napoleon's orderly staff-officers,who shall be known in thishistory only as the General or the Marquis,had come to spend thespring at Versailles.He made a large fortune under the Restoration;
and as his place at Court would not allow him to go very far fromParis,he had taken a country house between the church and the barrierof Montreuil,on the road that leads to the Avenue de Saint-Cloud.

The house had been built originally as a retreat for the

short-livedloves of some grand seigneur.The grounds were very large;thegardens on either side extending from the first houses of Montreuil tothe thatched cottages near the barrier,so that the owner could enjoyall the pleasures of solitude with the city almost at his gates.By anodd piece of contradiction,the whole front of the house itself,withthe principal entrance,gave directly upon the street.Perhaps in timepast it was a tolerably lonely road,and indeed this theory looks allthe more probable when one comes to think of it;for not so very faraway,on this same road,Louis Quinze built a delicious summer villafor Mlle.de Romans,and the curious in such things will discover thatthe wayside casinos are adorned in a style that recalls traditionsof the ingenious taste displayed in debauchery by our ancestors who,with all the license paid to their charge,sought to invest it withsecrecy and mystery.

One winter evening the family were by themselves in the lonely house.

The servants had received permission to go to Versailles to celebratethe wedding of one of their number.It was Christmas time,and theholiday makers,presuming upon the double festival,did not scruple tooutstay their leave of absence;yet,as

the General was well known tobe a man of his word,the culprits felt some twinges of conscience asthey danced on after the hour of return.The clocks struck eleven,andstill there was no sign of the servants.

A deep silence prevailed over the country-side,broken only by thesound of the northeast wind whistling through the black branches,wailing about the house,dying in gusts along the corridors.The hardfrost had purified the air,and held the earth in its grip;the roadsgave back every sound with the hard metallic ring which always strikesus with a new surprise;the heavy footsteps of some belated reveler,or a cab returning to Paris,could be heard for a long distance withunwonted distinctness.Out in the courtyard a few dead leaves set a-dancingby some eddying gust found a voice for the night which fainhad been silent.It was,in fact,one of those sharp,frosty eveningsthat wring barren expressions of pity from our selfish ease forwayfarers and the poor,and fills us with a luxurious sense of thecomfort of the fireside.

But the family party in the salon at that hour gave not a thought toabsent servants nor houseless folk,nor to the gracious charm

withwhich a winter evening sparkles.No one played the philosopher out ofseason.Secure in the protection of an old soldier,women and childrengave themselves up to the joys of home life,so delicious when thereis no restraint upon feeling;and talk and play and glances are brightwith frankness and affection.

The General sat,or more properly speaking,lay buried,in the depthsof a huge,high-back armchair by the hearth.The heaped-up fire burnedscorching clear with the excessive cold of the night.The good fatherleaned his head slightly to one side against the back of the chair,inthe indolence of perfect serenity and a glow of happiness.Thelanguid,half-sleepy droop of his outstretched arms seemed to completehis expression of placid content.He was watching his youngest,a boyof five or thereabouts,who,half clad as he was,declined to allowhis mother to undress him.The little one fled from the night-gown andcap with which he was threatened now and again,and stoutly declinedto part with his embroidered collar,laughing when his mother calledto him,for he saw that she too was laughing at this declaration ofinfant independence.The next step was to go back to a game of rompswith his sister.She was as much a child as

he,but more mischievous;

and she was older by two years,and could speak distinctly already,whereas his inarticulate words and confused ideas were a puzzle evento his parents.Little Moina's playfulness,somewhat coquettishalready,provoked inextinguishable laughter,explosions of merrimentwhich went off like fireworks for no apparent cause.As they tumbledabout before the fire,unconcernedly displaying little plump bodiesand delicate white contours,as the dark and golden curls mingled in acollision of rosy cheeks dimpled with childish glee,a father surely,a mother most certainly,must have understood those little souls,andseen the character and power of passion already developed for theireyes.As the cherubs frolicked about,struggling,rolling,andtumbling without fear of hurt on the soft carpet,its flowers lookedpale beside the glowing white and red of their cheeks and thebrilliant color of their shining eyes.

On the sofa by the fire,opposite the great armchair,the children'smother sat among a heap of scattered garments,with a little scarletshoe in her hand.She seemed to have given herself up completely tothe enjoyment of the moment;wavering discipline had relaxed into asweet smile engraved upon her

lips.At the age of six-and-thirty,orthereabouts,she was a beautiful woman still,by reason of the rareperfection of the outlines of her face,and at this moment light andwarmth and happiness filled it with preternatural brightness.

Again and again her eyes wandered from her children,and their tendergaze was turned upon her husband's grave face;and now and again theeyes of husband and wife met with a silent exchange of happiness andthoughts from some inner depth.

The General's face was deeply bronzed,a stray lock of gray hairscored shadows on his forehead.The reckless courage of thebattlefield could be read in the lines carved in his hollow cheeks,and gleams of rugged strength in the blue eyes;clearly the bit of redribbon flaunting at his button-hole had been paid for by hardship andtoil.An inexpressible kindliness and frankness shone out of thestrong,resolute face which reflected his children's merriment;thegray-haired captain found it not so very hard to become a child again.

Is there not always a little love of children in the heart of asoldier who has seen enough of the seamy side of life to knowsomething of the piteous limitations of strength and the

privileges ofweakness?

At a round table rather further away,in a circle of bright lamplightthat dimmed the feebler illumination of the wax candles on thechimney-piece,sat a boy of thirteen,rapidly turning the pages of athick volume which he was reading,undisturbed by the shouts of thechildren.There was a boy's curiosity in his face.From his lyceensuniform he was evidently a schoolboy,and the book he was reading wasthe Arabian Nights.Small wonder that he was deeply absorbed.He satperfectly still in a meditative attitude,with his elbow on the table,and his hand propping his head--the white fingers contrasting stronglywith the brown hair into which they were thrust.As he sat,with thelight turned full upon his face,and the rest of his body in shadow,he looked like one of Raphael's dark portraits of himself--a bent headand intent eyes filled with visions of the future.

Between the table and the Marquise a tall,beautiful girl sat at hertapestry frame;sometimes she drew back from her work,sometimes shebent over it,and her hair,picturesque in its ebony smoothness anddarkness,caught the light of the

lamp.Helene was a picture inherself.In her beauty there was a rare distinctive character of powerand refinement.Though her hair was gathered up and drawn back fromher face,so as to trace a clearly marked line about her head,sothick and abundant was it,so recalcitrant to the comb,that it sprangback in curl-tendrils to the nape of her neck.The bountiful line ofeyebrows was evenly marked out in dark contrasting outline upon herpure forehead.On her upper lip,beneath the Grecian nose with itssensitively perfect curve of nostril,there lay a faint,swarthyshadow,the sign-manual of courage;but the enchanting roundness ofcontour,the frankly innocent expression of her other features,thetransparence of the delicate carnations,the voluptuous softness ofthe lips,the flawless oval of the outline of the face,and withthese,and more than all these,the saintlike expression in thegirlish eyes,gave to her vigorous loveliness the distinctive touch offeminine grace,that enchanting modesty which we look for in theseangels of peace and love.Yet there was no suggestion of fragilityabout her;and,surely,with so grand a woman's frame,so attractive aface,she must possess a corresponding warmth of heart and strength ofsoul.

She was as silent as her schoolboy brother.Seemingly a prey to

thefateful maiden meditations which baffle a father's penetration andeven a mother's sagacity,it was impossible to be certain whether itwas the lamplight that cast those shadows that flitted over her facelike thin clouds over a bright sky,or whether they were passingshades of secret and painful thoughts.

Husband and wife had quite forgotten the two older children at thatmoment,though now and again the General's questioning glance traveledto that second mute picture;a larger growth,a gracious realization,as it were,of the hopes embodied in the baby forms rioting in theforeground.Their faces made up a kind of living poem,illustratinglife's various phases.The luxurious background of the salon,thedifferent attitudes,the strong contrasts of coloring in the faces,differing with the character of differing ages,the modeling of theforms brought into high relief by the light--altogether it was a pageof human life,richly illuminated beyond the art of painter,sculptor,or poet.Silence,solitude,night and winter lent a final touch ofmajesty to complete the simplicity and sublimity of this exquisiteeffect of nature's contriving.Married life is full of these sacredhours,which perhaps owe their indefinable charm to some vague memoryof a better world.A divine radiance surely shines

upon them,thedestined compensation for some portion of earth's sorrows,the solacewhich enables man to accept life.We seem to behold a vision of anenchanted universe,the great conception of its system widens outbefore our eyes,and social life pleads for its laws by bidding uslook to the future.

Yet in spite of the tender glances that Helene gave Abel and Moinaafter a fresh outburst of merriment;in spite of the look of gladnessin her transparent face whenever she stole a glance at her father,adeep melancholy pervaded her gestures,her attitude,and more thanall,her eyes veiled by their long lashes.Those white,strong hands,through which the light passed,tinting them with a diaphanous,almostfluid red--those hands were trembling.Once only did the eyes of themother and daughter clash without shrinking,and the two women readeach other's thoughts in a look,cold,wan,and respectful on Helene'spart,sombre and threatening on her mother's.At once Helene's eyeswere lowered to her work,she plied her needle swiftly,and it waslong before she raised her head,bowed as it seemed by a weight ofthought too heavy to bear.Was the Marquise over harsh with this oneof her children?Did she think this harshness needful?Was she jealousof Helene's beauty?--She

might still hope to rival Helene,but only bythe magic arts of the toilette.Or again,had her daughter,like manya girl who reaches the clairvoyant age,read the secrets which thiswife (to all appearance so religiously faithful in the fulfilment ofher duties)believed to be buried in her own heart as deeply as in agrave?

Helene had reached an age when purity of soul inclines to pass over-rigidjudgments.A certain order of mind is apt to exaggeratetransgression into crime;imagination reacts upon conscience,and ayoung girl is a hard judge because she magnifies the seriousness ofthe offence.Helene seemed to think herself worthy of no one.Perhapsthere was a secret in her past life,perhaps something had happened,unintelligible to her at the time,but with gradually developingsignificance for a mind grown susceptible to religious influences;

something which lately seemed to have degraded her,as it were,in herown eyes,and according to her own romantic standard.This change inher demeanor dated from the day of reading Schiller's noble tragedy ofWilhelm Tell in a new series of translations.Her mother scolded herfor letting the book fall,and then remarked to herself that thepassage which had so

worked on Helene's feelings was the scene inwhich Wilhelm Tell,who spilt the blood of a tyrant to save a nation,fraternizes in some sort with John the Parricide.Helene had grownhumble,dutiful,and self-contained;she no longer cared for gaiety.

Never had she made so much of her father,especially when the Marquisewas not by to watch her girlish caresses.And yet,if Helene'saffection for her mother had cooled at all,the change in her mannerwas so slight as to be almost imperceptible;so slight that theGeneral could not have noticed it,jealous though he might be of theharmony of home.No masculine insight could have sounded the depths ofthose two feminine natures;the one was young and generous,the othersensitive and proud;the first had a wealth of indulgence in hernature,the second was full of craft and love.If the Marquise madeher daughter's life a burden to her by a woman's subtle tyranny,itwas a tyranny invisible to all but the victim;and for the rest,theseconjectures only called forth after the event must remain conjectures.

Until this night no accusing flash of light had escaped either ofthem,but an ominous mystery was too surely growing up between them,amystery known only to themselves and God.

"Come,Abel,"called the Marquise,seizing on her opportunity when thechildren were tired of play and still for a moment."Come,come,child;you must be put to bed--"

And with a glance that must be obeyed,she caught him up and took himon her knee.

"What!"exclaimed the General."Half-past ten o'clock,and not one ofthe servants has come back!The rascals!--Gustave,"he added,turningto his son,"I allowed you to read that book only on the conditionthat you should put it away at ten o'clock.You ought to have shut upthe book at the proper time and gone to bed,as you promised.If youmean to make your mark in the world,you must keep your word;let itbe a second religion to you,and a point of honor.Fox,one of thegreatest English orators,was remarkable,above all things,for thebeauty of his character,and the very first of his qualities was thescrupulous faithfulness with which he kept his engagements.When hewas a child,his father (an Englishman of the old school)gave him apretty strong lesson which he never forgot.Like most rich Englishmen,Fox's father had a country house and a considerable park about it.

Now,in the park there was an old summer-house,and orders had beengiven that this summer-house was to be pulled down and put upsomewhere else where there was a finer view.Fox was just about yourage,and had come home for the holidays.Boys are fond of seeingthings pulled to pieces,so young Fox asked to stay on at home for afew days longer to see the old summer-house taken down;but his fathersaid that he must go back to school on the proper day,so there wasanger between father and son.Fox's mother (like all mammas)took theboy's part.Then the father solemnly promised that the summer-houseshould stay where it was till the next holidays.

"So Fox went back to school;and his father,thinking that lessonswould soon drive the whole thing out of the boy's mind,had thesummer-house pulled down and put up in the new position.But as ithappened,the persistent youngster thought of nothing but that summer-house;

and as soon as he came home again,his first care was to go outto look at the old building,and he came in to breakfast looking quitedoleful,and said to his father,'You have broken your promise.'Theold English gentleman said with confusion full of dignity,'That istrue,my boy;but I will make amends.A man

ought to think of keepinghis word before he thinks of his fortune;for by keeping his word hewill gain fortune,while all the fortunes in the world will not effacethe stain left on your conscience by a breach of faith.'Then he gaveorders that the summer-house should be put up again in the old place,and when it had been rebuilt he had it taken down again for his son tosee.Let this be a lesson to you,Gustave."

Gustave had been listening with interest,and now he closed the bookat once.There was a moment's silence,while the General tookpossession of Moina,who could scarcely keep her eyes open.The littleone's languid head fell back on her father's breast,and in a momentshe was fast asleep,wrapped round about in her golden curls.

Just then a sound of hurrying footsteps rang on the pavement out inthe street,immediately followed by three knocks on the street door,waking the echoes of the house.The reverberating blows told,asplainly as a cry for help that here was a man flying for his life.Thehouse dog barked furiously.A thrill of excitement ran through Heleneand Gustave and the General and his wife;but neither Abel,with thenight-cap strings just tied under

his chin,nor Moina awoke.

"The fellow is in a hurry!"exclaimed the General.He put the littlegirl down on the chair,and hastened out of the room,heedless of hiswife's entreating cry,"Dear,do not go down--"

He stepped into his own room for a pair of pistols,lighted a darklantern,sprang at lightning speed down the staircase,and in anotherminute reached the house door,his oldest boy fearlessly following.

"Who is there?"demanded he.

"Let me in,"panted a breathless voice.

"Are you a friend?"

"Yes,friend,"

"Are you alone?"

"Yes!But let me in;they are after me!"

The General had scarcely set the door ajar before a man slipped intothe porch with the uncanny swiftness of a shadow.Before the master ofthe house could prevent him,the intruder had closed the door with awell-directed kick,and set his back against it resolutely,as if hewere determined that it should not be opened again.In a moment theGeneral had his lantern and pistol at a level with the stranger'sbreast,and beheld a man of medium height in a fur-lined pelisse.Itwas an old man's garment,both too large and too long for its presentwearer.Chance or caution had slouched the man's hat over his eyes.

"You can lower your pistol,sir,"said this person."I do not claim tostay in your house against your will;but if I leave it,death iswaiting for me at the barrier.And what a death!You would beanswerable to God for it!I ask for your hospitality for two hours.

And bear this in mind,sir,that,suppliant as I am,I have a right tocommand with the despotism of necessity.I want the Arab'shospitality.Either I and my secret must be inviolable,or

open thedoor and I will go to my death.I want secrecy,a safe hiding-place,and water.Oh!water!"he cried again,with a rattle in his throat.

"Who are you?"demanded the General,taken aback by the stranger'sfeverish volubility.

"Ah!who am I?Good,open the door,and I will put a distance betweenus,"retorted the other,and there was a diabolical irony in his tone.

Dexterously as the Marquis passed the light of the lantern over theman's face,he could only see the lower half of it,and that in nowiseprepossessed him in favor of this singular claimant of hospitality.

The cheeks were livid and quivering,the features dreadfullycontorted.Under the shadow of the hat-brim a pair of eyes gleamed outlike flames;the feeble candle-light looked almost dim in comparison.

Some sort of answer must be made however.

"Your language,sir,is so extraordinary that in my place

youyourself--"

"My life is in your hands!"the intruder broke in.The sound of hisvoice was dreadful to hear.

"Two hours?"said the Marquis,wavering.

"Two hours,"echoed the other.

Then quite suddenly,with a desperate gesture,he pushed back his hatand left his forehead bare,and,as if he meant to try a finalexpedient,he gave the General a glance that seemed to plunge like avivid flash into his very soul.That electrical discharge ofintelligence and will was swift as lightning and crushing as athunderbolt;for there are moments when a human being is invested fora brief space with inexplicable power.

"Come,whoever you may be,you shall be in safety under my roof,"themaster of the house said gravely at last,acting,as he imagined,uponone of those intuitions which a man cannot always explain to himself.

"God will repay you!"said the stranger,with a deep,involuntarysigh.

"Have you weapons?"asked the General.

For all answer the stranger flung open his fur pelisse,and scarcelygave the other time for a glance before he wrapped it about him again.

To all appearance he was unarmed and in evening dress.Swift as thesoldier's scrutiny had been,he saw something,however,which made himexclaim:

"Where the devil have you been to get yourself in such a mess in suchdry weather?"

"More questions!"said the stranger haughtily.

At the words the Marquis caught sight of his son,and his own latehomily on the strict fulfilment of a given word came up to his mind.

In lively vexation,he exclaimed,not without a touch of anger:

"What!little rogue,you here when you ought to be in bed?"

"Because I thought I might be of some good in danger,"answeredGustave.

"There,go up to your room,"said his father,mollified by the reply.
--"And you"(addressing the stranger),"come with me."

The two men grew as silent as a pair of gamblers who watch eachother's play with mutual suspicions.The General himself began to betroubled with ugly presentiments.The strange visit weighed upon hismind already like a nightmare;but he had passed his word,there wasno help for it now,and he led the way along the passages andstairways till they reached a large room on the second floorimmediately above the salon.This was an empty room where linen wasdried in the winter.It had but the one door,and for all decorationboasted one solitary shabby looking-glass above the chimney-piece,left by the previous owner,and a great pier glass,placedprovisionally opposite the fireplace until such time as a use shouldbe found for it in the rooms below.The four yellowish walls werebare.The floor had

never been swept.The huge attic was icy-cold,andthe furniture consisted of a couple of rickety straw-bottomed chairs,or rather frames of chairs.The General set the lantern down upon thechimney-piece.Then he spoke:

"It is necessary for your own safety to hide you in this comfortlessattic.And,as you have my promise to keep your secret,you willpermit me to lock you in."

The other bent his head in acquiescence.

"I asked for nothing but a hiding-place,secrecy,and water,"returnedhe.

"I will bring you some directly,"said the Marquis,shutting the doorcautiously.He groped his way down into the salon for a lamp beforegoing to the kitchen to look for a carafe.

"Well,what is it?"the Marquise asked quickly.

"Nothing,dear,"he returned coolly.

"But we listened,and we certainly heard you go upstairs withsomebody."

"Helene,"said the General,and he looked at his daughter,who raisedher face,"bear in mind that your father's honor depends upon yourdiscretion.You must have heard nothing."

The girl bent her head in answer.The Marquise was confused andsmarting inwardly at the way in which her husband had thought fit tosilence her.

Meanwhile the General went for the bottle and a tumbler,and returnedto the room above.His prisoner was leaning against the chimney-piece,his head was bare,he had flung down his hat on one of the two chairs.

Evidently he had not expected to have so bright a light turned uponhim,and he frowned and looked anxious as he met the General's keeneyes;but his face softened and wore a gracious expression as hethanked his protector.When the latter placed the bottle and glass onthe mantel-shelf,the stranger's eyes flashed out on him again;andwhen he spoke,it was in musical tones with no sign of the previousguttural convulsion,though his voice was

still unsteady withrepressed emotion.

"I shall seem to you to be a strange being,sir,but you must pardonthe caprices of necessity.If you propose to remain in the room,I begthat you will not look at me while I am drinking."

Vexed at this continual obedience to a man whom he disliked,theGeneral sharply turned his back upon him.The stranger thereupon drewa white handkerchief from his pocket and wound it about his righthand.Then he seized the carafe and emptied it at a draught.TheMarquis,staring vacantly into the tall mirror across the room,without a thought of breaking his implicit promise,saw the stranger'sfigure distinctly reflected by the opposite looking-glass,and saw,too,a red stain suddenly appear through the folds of the whitebandage.The man's hands were steeped in blood.

"Ah!you saw me!"cried the other.He had drunk off the water andwrapped himself again in his cloak,and now scrutinized the Generalsuspiciously."It is all over with me!Here they come!"

"I don't hear anything,"said the Marquis.

"You have not the same interest that I have in listening for sounds inthe air."

"You have been fighting a duel,I suppose,to be in such a state?" queried the General,not a little disturbed by the color of thosebroad,dark patches staining his visitor's cloak.

"Yes,a duel;you have it,"said the other,and a bitter smile flittedover his lips.

As he spoke a sound rang along the distant road,a sound of gallopinghorses;but so faint as yet,that it was the merest dawn of a sound.
The General's trained ear recognized the advance of a troop ofregulars.

"That is the gendarmerie,"said he.

He glanced at his prisoner to reassure him after his own involuntaryindiscretion,took the lamp,and went down to the salon.He hadscarcely laid the key of the room above upon the

chimney-piece whenthe hoof beats sounded louder and came swiftly nearer and nearer thehouse.The General felt a shiver of excitement,and indeed the horsesstopped at the house door;a few words were exchanged among the men,and one of them dismounted and knocked loudly.There was no help forit;the General went to open the door.He could scarcely conceal hisinward perturbation at the sight of half a dozen gendarmes outside,the metal rims of their caps gleaming like silver in the moonlight.

"My lord,"said the corporal,"have you heard a man run past towardsthe barrier within the last few minutes?"

"Towards the barrier?No."

"Have you opened the door to any one?"

"Now,am I in the habit of answering the door myself--"

"I ask your pardon,General,but just now it seems to me that--"

"Really!"cried the Marquis wrathfully."Have you a mind to try

jokingwith me?What right have you--?"

"None at all,none at all,my lord,"cried the corporal,hastilyputting in a soft answer."You will excuse our zeal.We know,ofcourse,that a peer of France is not likely to harbor a murderer atthis time of night;but as we want any information we can get--"

"A murderer!"cried the General."Who can have been--"

"M.le Baron de Mauny has just been murdered.It was a blow from anaxe,and we are in hot pursuit of the criminal.We know for certainthat he is somewhere in this neighborhood,and we shall hunt him down.

By your leave,General,"and the man swung himself into the saddle ashe spoke.It was well that he did so,for a corporal of gendarmerietrained to alert observation and quick surmise would have had hissuspicions at once if he had caught sight of the General's face.

Everything that passed through the soldier's mind was faithfullyrevealed in his frank countenance.

"Is it known who the murderer is?"asked he.

"No,"said the other,now in the saddle."He left the bureau full ofbanknotes and gold untouched."

"It was revenge,then,"said the Marquis.

"On an old man?pshaw!No,no,the fellow hadn't time to take it,thatwas all,"and the corporal galloped after his comrades,who werealmost out of sight by this time.

For a few minutes the General stood,a victim to perplexities whichneed no explanation;but in a moment he heard the servants returninghome,their voices were raised in some sort of dispute at the cross-roadsof Montreuil.When they came in,he gave vent to his feelings inan explosion of rage,his wrath fell upon them like a thunderbolt,andall the echoes of the house trembled at the sound of his voice.In themidst of the storm his own man,the boldest and cleverest of theparty,brought out an excuse;they had been stopped,he said,by thegendarmerie at the gate of Montreuil,a murder had been committed,andthe police were in pursuit.In a moment the General's anger vanished,he

said not another word;then,bethinking himself of his own singularposition,drily ordered them all off to bed at once,and left themamazed at his readiness to accept their fellow servant's lying excuse.

A Woman of Thirty -Part II

A Woman of Thirty

Part II

hile these incidents took place in the yard,an apparently

triflingoccurrence had changed the relative positions of three characters inthis story.The Marquis had scarcely left the room before his wifelooked first towards the key on the mantel-shelf,and then at Helene;
and,after some wavering,bent towards her daughter and said in a lowvoice,"Helene your father has left the key on the chimney-piece."

The girl looked up in surprise and glanced timidly at her mother.TheMarquise's eyes sparkled with curiosity.

"Well,mamma?"she said,and her voice had a troubled ring.

"I should like to know what is going on upstairs.If there is anybodyup there,he has not stirred yet.Just go up--"

"I?"cried the girl,with something like horror in her tones.

"Are you afraid?"

"No,mamma,but I thought I heard a man's footsteps."

"If I could go myself,I should not have asked you to go,Helene," said her mother with cold dignity."If your father were to come backand did not see me,he would go to look for me perhaps,but he wouldnot notice your absence."

"Madame,if you bid me go,I will go,"said Helene,"but I shall losemy father's good opinion--"

"What is this!"cried the Marquise in a sarcastic tone."But since youtake a thing that was said in joke in earnest,I now order you to goupstairs and see who is in the room above.Here is the key,child.

When your father told you to say nothing about this thing thathappened,he did not forbid you to go up to the room.Go at once--andlearn that a daughter ought never to judge her mother."

The last words were spoken with all the severity of a justly offendedmother.The Marquise took the key and handed it to Helene,who rosewithout a word and left the room.

"My mother can always easily obtain her pardon,"thought the

girl;

"but as for me,my father will never think the same of me again.Doesshe mean to rob me of his tenderness?Does she want to turn me out ofhis house?"

These were the thoughts that set her imagination in a sudden ferment,as she went down the dark passage to the mysterious door at the end.

When she stood before it,her mental confusion grew to a fatefulpitch.Feelings hitherto forced down into inner depths crowded up atthe summons of these confused thoughts.Perhaps hitherto she had neverbelieved that a happy life lay before her,but now,in this awfulmoment,her despair was complete.She shook convulsively as she setthe key in the lock;so great indeed was her agitation,that shestopped for a moment and laid her hand on her heart,as if to stillthe heavy throbs that sounded in her ears.Then she opened the door.

The creaking of the hinges sounded doubtless in vain on the murderer'sears.Acute as were his powers of hearing,he stood as if lost inthought,and so motionless that he might have been glued to the wallagainst which he leaned.In the circle of

semi-opaque darkness,dimlylit by the bull's-eye lantern,he looked like the shadowy figure ofsome dead knight,standing for ever in his shadowy mortuary niche inthe gloom of some Gothic chapel.Drops of cold sweat trickled over thebroad,sallow forehead.An incredible fearlessness looked out fromevery tense feature.His eyes of fire were fixed and tearless;heseemed to be watching some struggle in the darkness beyond him.Stormythoughts passed swiftly across a face whose firm decision spoke of acharacter of no common order.His whole person,bearing,and framebore out the impression of a tameless spirit.The man looked power andstrength personified;he stood facing the darkness as if it were thevisible image of his own future.

These physical characteristics had made no impression upon theGeneral,familiar as he was with the powerful faces of the group ofgiants gathered about Napoleon;speculative curiosity,moreover,as tothe why and wherefore of the apparition had completely filled hismind;but Helene,with feminine sensitiveness to surface impressions,was struck by the blended chaos of light and darkness,grandeur andpassion,suggesting a likeness between this stranger and Luciferrecovering from his

fall.Suddenly the storm apparent in his face wasstilled as if by magic;and the indefinable power to sway which thestranger exercised upon others,and perhaps unconsciously and as byreflex action upon himself,spread its influence about him with theprogressive swiftness of a flood.A torrent of thought rolled awayfrom his brow as his face resumed its ordinary expression.Perhaps itwas the strangeness of this meeting,or perhaps it was the mysteryinto which she had penetrated,that held the young girl spellbound inthe doorway,so that she could look at a face pleasant to behold andfull of interest.For some moments she stood in the magical silence;atrouble had come upon her never known before in her young life.

Perhaps some exclamation broke from Helene,perhaps she movedunconsciously;or it may be that the hunted criminal returned of hisown accord from the world of ideas to the material world,and heardsome one breathing in the room;however it was,he turned his headtowards his host's daughter,and saw dimly in the shadow a noble faceand queenly form,which he must have taken for an angel's,somotionless she stood,so vague and like a spirit.

"Monsieur ..."a trembling voice cried.

The murderer trembled.

"A woman!"he cried under his breath."Is it possible?Go,"he cried,"I deny that any one has a right to pity,to absolve,or condemn me.Imust live alone.Go,my child,"he added,with an imperious gesture,"I should ill requite the service done me by the master of the houseif I were to allow a single creature under his roof to breathe thesame air with me.I must submit to be judged by the laws of theworld."

The last words were uttered in a lower voice.Even as he realized witha profound intuition all the manifold misery awakened by thatmelancholy thought,the glance that he gave Helene had something ofthe power of the serpent,stirring a whole dormant world in the mindof the strange girl before him.To her that glance was like a lightrevealing unknown lands.She was stricken with strange trouble,helpless,quelled by a magnetic power exerted unconsciously.Tremblingand ashamed,she went out and returned to the salon.She had scarcelyentered the room before her father came back,so that she had not timeto say a word to her mother.

The General was wholly absorbed in thought.He folded his arms,andpaced silently to and fro between the windows which looked out uponthe street and the second row which gave upon the garden.His wife laythe sleeping Abel on her knee,and little Moina lay in untroubledslumber in the low chair,like a bird in its nest.Her older sisterstared into the fire,a skein of silk in one hand,a needle in theother.

Deep silence prevailed,broken only by lagging footsteps on thestairs,as one by one the servants crept away to bed;there was anoccasional burst of stifled laughter,a last echo of the weddingfestivity,or doors were opened as they still talked among themselves,then shut.A smothered sound came now and again from the bedrooms,achair fell,the old coachman coughed feebly,then all was silent.

In a little while the dark majesty with which sleeping earth isinvested at midnight brought all things under its sway.No lightsshone but the light of the stars.The frost gripped the ground.Therewas not a sound of a voice,nor a living creature stirring.Thecrackling of the fire only seemed to make the depth

of the silencemore fully felt.

The church clock of Montreuil had just struck one,when an almostinaudible sound of a light footstep came from the second flight ofstairs.The Marquis and his daughter,both believing that M.deMauny's murderer was a prisoner above,thought that one of the maidshad come down,and no one was at all surprised to hear the door openin the ante-chamber.Quite suddenly the murderer appeared in theirmidst.The Marquis himself was sunk in deep musings,the mother anddaughter were silent,the one from keen curiosity,the other fromsheer astonishment,so that the visitor was almost half-way across theroom when he spoke to the General.

"Sir,the two hours are almost over,"he said,in a voice that wasstrangely calm and musical.

"You here!"cried the General."By what means----?"and he gave wifeand daughter a formidable questioning glance.Helene grew red as fire.

"You!"he went on,in a tone filled with horror."You among

us!Amurderer covered with blood!You are a blot on this picture!Go,goout!"he added in a burst of rage.

At that word "murderer,"the Marquise cried out;as for Helene,itseemed to mark an epoch in her life,there was not a trace of surprisein her face.She looked as if she had been waiting for this--for him.

Those so vast thoughts of hers had found a meaning.The punishmentreserved by Heaven for her sins flamed out before her.In her own eyesshe was as great a criminal as this murderer;she confronted him withher quiet gaze;she was his fellow,his sister.It seemed to her thatin this accident the command of God had been made manifest.If she hadbeen a few years older,reason would have disposed of her remorse,butat this moment she was like one distraught.

The stranger stood impassive and self-possessed;a scornful smileoverspread his features and his thick,red lips.

"You appreciate the magnanimity of my behavior very badly,"he saidslowly."I would not touch with my fingers the glass of water youbrought me to allay my thirst;I did not so much as think of

washingmy blood-stained hands under your roof;I am going away,leavingnothing of my crime"(here his lips were compressed)"but thememory;I have tried to leave no trace of my presence in this house.

Indeed,I would not even allow your daughter to--"

"My daughter!"cried the General,with a horror-stricken glance atHelene."Vile wretch,go,or I will kill you--"

"The two hours are not yet over,"said the other;"if you kill me orgive me up,you must lower yourself in your own eyes--and in mine."

At these last words,the General turned to stare at the criminal indumb amazement;but he could not endure the intolerable light in thoseeyes which for the second time disorganized his being.He was afraidof showing weakness once more,conscious as he was that his will wasweaker already.

"An old man!You can never have seen a family,"he said,with afather's glance at his wife and children.

"Yes,an old man,"echoed the stranger,frowning slightly.

"Fly!"cried the General,but he did not dare to look at his guest. "Our compact is broken.I shall not kill you.No!I will never bepurveyor to the scaffold.But go out.You make us shudder."

"I know that,"said the other patiently."There is not a spot onFrench soil where I can set foot and be safe;but if man's justice,like God's,took all into account,if man's justice deigned to inquirewhich was the monster--the murderer or his victim--then I might holdup my head among my fellows.Can you not guess that other crimespreceded that blow from an axe?I constituted myself his judge andexecutioner;I stepped in where man's justice failed.That was mycrime.Farewell,sir.Bitter though you have made your hospitality,Ishall not forget it.I shall always bear in my heart a feeling ofgratitude towards one man in the world,and you are that man....
But I could wish that you had showed yourself more generous!"

He turned towards the door,but in the same instant Helene leaned towhisper something in her mother's ear.

"Ah!..."

At the cry that broke from his wife,the General trembled as if he hadseen Moina lying dead.There stood Helene and the murderer had turnedinstinctively,with something like anxiety about these folk in hisface.

"What is it,dear?"asked the General.

"Helene wants to go with him."

The murderer's face flushed.

"If that is how my mother understands an almost involuntaryexclamation,"Helene said in a low voice,"I will fulfil her wishes.

She glanced about her with something like fierce pride;then thegirl's eyes fell,and she stood,admirable in her modesty.

"Helene,did you go up to the room where----?"

"Yes,father."

"Helene"(and his voice shook with a convulsive tremor),"is this thefirst time that you have seen this man?"

"Yes,father."

"Then it is not natural that you should intend to--"

"If it is not natural,father,at any rate it is true."

"Oh!child,"said the Marquise,lowering her voice,but not so muchbut that her husband could hear her,"you are false to all theprinciples of honor,modesty,and right which I have tried tocultivate in your heart.If until this fatal hour you life has onlybeen one lie,there is nothing to regret in your loss.It can hardlybe the moral perfection of this stranger that attracts you to him?Canit be the kind of power that commits crime?I have too good an opinionof you to suppose that--"

"Oh,suppose everything,madame,"Helene said coldly.

But though her force of character sustained this ordeal,her

flashingeyes could scarcely hold the tears that filled them.The stranger,watching her,guessed the mother's language from the girl's tears,andturned his eagle glance upon the Marquise.An irresistible powerconstrained her to look at this terrible seducer;but as her eyes methis bright,glittering gaze,she felt a shiver run through her frame,such a shock as we feel at the sight of a reptile or the contact of aLeyden jar.

"Dear!"she cried,turning to her husband,"this is the Fiend himself.
He can divine everything!"

The General rose to his feet and went to the bell.

"He means ruin for you,"Helene said to the murderer.

The stranger smiled,took one forward stride,grasped the General'sarm,and compelled him to endure a steady gaze which benumbed thesoldier's brain and left him powerless.

"I will repay you now for your hospitality,"he said,"and then weshall be quits.I will spare you the shame by giving myself

up.Afterall,what should I do now with my life?"

"You could repent,"answered Helene,and her glance conveyed such hopeas only glows in a young girl's eyes.

"I shall never repent,"said the murderer in a sonorous voice,as heraised his head proudly.

"His hands are stained with blood,"the father said.

"I will wipe it away,"she answered.

"But do you so much as know whether he cares for you?"said herfather,not daring now to look at the stranger.

The murderer came up a little nearer.Some light within seemed to glowthrough Helene's beauty,grave and maidenly though it was,coloringand bringing into relief,as it were,the least details,the mostdelicate lines in her face.The stranger,with that terrible facestill blazing in his eyes,gave one tender glance to her enchantingloveliness,then he spoke,his tones revealing how deeply he had beenmoved.

"And if I refuse to allow this sacrifice of yourself,and so dischargemy debt of two hours of existence to your father;is not this love,love for yourself alone?"

"Then do you too reject me?"Helene's cry rang painfully through thehearts of all who heard her."Farewell,then,to you all;I will die."

"What does this mean?"asked the father and mother.

Helene gave her mother an eloquent glance and lowered her eyes.

Since the first attempt made by the General and his wife to contest byword or action the intruder's strange presumption to the right ofstaying in their midst,from their first experience of the power ofthose glittering eyes,a mysterious torpor had crept over them,andtheir benumbed faculties struggled in vain with the preternaturalinfluence.The air seemed to have suddenly grown so heavy,that theycould scarcely breathe;yet,while they could not find the reason ofthis feeling of oppression,a voice

within told them that thismagnetic presence was the real cause of their helplessness.In thismoral agony,it flashed across the General that he must make everyeffort to overcome this influence on his daughter's reeling brain;hecaught her by the waist and drew her into the embrasure of a window,as far as possible from the murderer.

"Darling,"he murmured,"if some wild love has been suddenly born inyour heart,I cannot believe that you have not the strength of soul toquell the mad impulse;your innocent life,your pure and dutiful soul,has given me too many proofs of your character.There must besomething behind all this.Well,this heart of mine is full ofindulgence,you can tell everything to me;even if it breaks,dearchild,I can be silent about my grief,and keep your confession asecret.What is it?Are you jealous of our love for your brothers oryour little sister?Is it some love trouble?Are you unhappy here athome?Tell me about it,tell me the reasons that urge you to leaveyour home,to rob it of its greatest charm,to leave your mother andbrothers and your little sister?"

"I am in love with no one,father,and jealous of no one,not even ofyour friend the diplomatist,M.de Vandenesse."

The Marquise turned pale;her daughter saw this,and stopped short.

"Sooner or later I must live under some man's protection,must I not?"

"That is true."

"Do we ever know,"she went on,"the human being to whom we link ourdestinies?Now,I believe in this man."

"Oh,child,"said the General,raising his voice,"you have no idea ofall the misery that lies in store for you."

"I am thinking of his."

"What a life!"groaned the father.

"A woman's life,"the girl murmured.

"You have a great knowledge of life!"exclaimed the

Marquise,findingspeech at last.

"Madame,my answers are shaped by the questions;but if you desire it,I will speak more clearly."

"Speak out,my child ...I am a mother."

Mother and daughter looked each other in the face,and the Marquisesaid no more.At last she said:

"Helene,if you have any reproaches to make,I would rather bear themthan see you go away with a man from whom the whole world shrinks inhorror."

"Then you see yourself,madame,that but for me he would be quitealone."

"That will do,madame,"the General cried;"we have but one daughterleft to us now,"and he looked at Moina,who slept on."As for you,"
he added,turning to Helene,"I will put you in a convent."

"So be it,father,"she said,in calm despair,"I shall die there.Youare answerable to God alone for my life and for his soul."

A deep sullen silence fell after these words.The on-lookers duringthis strange scene,so utterly at variance with all the sentiments ofordinary life,shunned each other's eyes.

Suddenly the Marquis happened to glance at his pistols.He caught upone of them,cocked the weapon,and pointed it at the intruder.At theclick of firearms the other turned his piercing gaze full upon theGeneral;the soldier's arm slackened indescribably and fell heavily tohis side.The pistol dropped to the floor.

"Girl,you are free,"said he,exhausted by this ghastly struggle.
"Kiss your mother,if she will let you kiss her.For my own part,Iwish never to see nor to hear of you again."

"Helene,"the mother began,"only think of the wretched life beforeyou."

A sort of rattling sound came from the intruder's deep chest,all eyeswere turned to him.Disdain was plainly visible in his face.

The General rose to his feet."My hospitality has cost me dear,"hecried."Before you came you had taken an old man's life;now your aredealing a deadly blow at a whole family.Whatever happens,there mustbe unhappiness in this house."

"And if your daughter is happy?"asked the other,gazing steadily atthe General.

The father made a superhuman effort for self-control."If she is happywith you,"he said,"she is not worth regretting."

Helene knelt timidly before her father.

"Father,I love and revere you,"she said,"whether you lavish all thetreasures of your kindness upon me,or make me feel to the full therigor of disgrace....But I entreat that your last words offarewell shall not be words of anger."

The General could not trust himself to look at her.The stranger camenearer;there was something half-diabolical,half-divine in the smilethat he gave Helene.

"Angel of pity,you that do not shrink in horror from a murderer,come,since you persist in your resolution of intrusting your life tome."

"Inconceivable!"cried her father.

The Marquise then looked strangely at her daughter,opened her arms,and Helene fled to her in tears.

"Farewell,"she said,"farewell,mother!"The stranger trembled asHelene,undaunted,made sign to him that she was ready.She kissed herfather's hand;and,as if performing a duty,gave a hasty kiss toMoina and little Abel,then she vanished with the murderer.

"Which way are they going?"exclaimed the General,listening to thefootsteps of the two fugitives.--"Madame,"he turned to his wife,"Ithink I must be dreaming;there is some mystery behind

all this,I donot understand it;you must know what it means."

The Marquise shivered.

"For some time past your daughter has grown extraordinarily romanticand strangely high-flown in her ideas.In spite of the pains I havetaken to combat these tendencies in her character--"

"This will not do----"began the General,but fancying that he heardfootsteps in the garden,he broke off to fling open the window.

"Helene!"he shouted.

His voice was lost in the darkness like a vain prophecy.The utteranceof that name,to which there should never be answer any more,actedlike a counterspell;it broke the charm and set him free from the evilenchantment which lay upon him.It was as if some spirit passed overhis face.He now saw clearly what had taken place,and cursed hisincomprehensible weakness.A shiver of heat rushed from his heart tohis head and feet;he became himself once more,terrible,thirstingfor revenge.He

raised a dreadful cry.

"Help!"he thundered,"help!"

He rushed to the bell-pull,pulled till the bells rang with a strangeclamor of din,pulled till the cord gave way.The whole house wasroused with a start.Still shouting,he flung open the windows thatlooked upon the street,called for the police,caught up his pistols,and fired them off to hurry the mounted patrols,the newly-arousedservants,and the neighbors.The dogs barked at the sound of theirmaster's voice;the horses neighed and stamped in their stalls.Thequiet night was suddenly filled with hideous uproar.The General onthe staircase,in pursuit of his daughter,saw the scared faces of theservants flocking from all parts of the house.

"My daughter!"he shouted."Helene has been carried off.Search thegarden.Keep a lookout on the road!Open the gates for thegendarmerie!--Murder!Help!"

With the strength of fury he snapped the chain and let loose the greathouse-dog.

"Helene!"he cried,"Helene!"

The dog sprang out like a lion,barking furiously,and dashed into thegarden,leaving the General far behind.A troop of horses came alongthe road at a gallop,and he flew to open the gates himself.

"Corporal!"he shouted,"cut off the retreat of M.de Mauny'smurderer.They have gone through my garden.Quick!Put a cordon of mento watch the ways by the Butte de Picardie.--I will beat up thegrounds,parks,and houses.--The rest of you keep a lookout along theroad,"he ordered the servants,"form a chain between the barrier andVersailles.Forward,every man of you!"

He caught up the rifle which his man had brought out,and dashed intothe garden.

"Find them!"he called to the dog.

An ominous baying came in answer from the distance,and he

plunged inthe direction from which the growl seemed to come.

It was seven o'clock in the morning;all the search made by gendarmes,servants,and neighbors had been fruitless,and the dog had not comeback.The General entered the salon,empty now for him though theother three children were there;he was worn out with fatigue,andlooked old already with that night's work.

"You have been very cold to your daughter,"he said,turning his eyeson his wife.--"And now this is all that is left to us of her,"headded,indicating the embroidery frame,and the flower just begun.

"Only just now she was there,and now she is lost ...lost!"

Tears followed;he hid his face in his hands,and for a few minutes hesaid no more;he could not bear the sight of the room,which so shorta time ago had made a setting to a picture of the sweetest familyhappiness.The winter dawn was struggling with the dying lamplight;

the tapers burned down to their paper-wreaths and flared out;

everything was all in keeping with the father's despair.

"This must be destroyed,"he said after a pause,pointing to thetambour-frame."I shall never bear to see anything again that remindsus of her!"

The terrible Christmas night when the Marquis and his wife lost theiroldest daughter,powerless to oppose the mysterious influenceexercised by the man who involuntarily,as it were,stole Helene fromthem,was like a warning sent by Fate.The Marquis was ruined by thefailure of his stock-broker;he borrowed money on his wife's property,and lost it in the endeavor to retrieve his fortunes.Driven todesperate expedients,he left France.Six years went by.His familyseldom had news of him;but a few days before Spain recognized theindependence of the American Republics,he wrote that he was cominghome.

So,one fine morning,it happened that several French merchants wereon board a Spanish brig that lay a few leagues out from Bordeaux,impatient to reach their native land again,with wealth acquired bylong years of toil and perilous adventures in Venezuela and Mexico.

A Woman of Thirty -Part III

A Woman of Thirty

Part III

ne of the passengers,a man who looked aged by trouble rather than byyears,was leaning against the bulwark netting,apparently quiteunaffected by the sight to be seen from the upper deck.The brightday,the sense that the voyage was safely over,had brought all thepassengers above to greet their land.The larger number of theminsisted that they could see,far off in the distance,the

houses andlighthouses on the coast of Gascony and the Tower of Cardouan,meltinginto the fantastic erections of white cloud along the horizon.But forthe silver fringe that played about their bows,and the long furrowswiftly effaced in their wake,they might have been perfectly still inmid-ocean,so calm was the sea.The sky was magically clear,the darkblue of the vault above paled by imperceptible gradations,until itblended with the bluish water,a gleaming line that sparkled likestars marking the dividing line of sea.The sunlight caught myriads offacets over the wide surface of the ocean,in such a sort that thevast plains of salt water looked perhaps more full of light than thefields of sky.

The brig had set all her canvas.The snowy sails,swelled by thestrangely soft wind,the labyrinth of cordage,and the yellow flagsflying at the masthead,all stood out sharp and uncompromisingly clearagainst the vivid background of space,sky,and sea;there was nothingto alter the color but the shadow cast by the great cloudlike sails.

A glorious day,a fair wind,and the fatherland in sight,a sea like amill-pond,the melancholy sound of the ripples,a

fair,solitaryvessel,gliding across the surface of the water like a woman stealingout to a tryst--it was a picture full of harmony.That mere speck fullof movement was a starting-point whence the soul of man could descrythe immutable vast of space.Solitude and bustling life,silence andsound,were all brought together in strange abrupt contrast;you couldnot tell where life,or sound,or silence,and nothingness lay,and nohuman voice broke the divine spell.

The Spanish captain,the crew,and the French passengers sat or stood,in a mood of devout ecstasy,in which many memories blended.There wasidleness in the air.The beaming faces told of complete forgetfulnessof past hardships,the men were rocked on the fair vessel as in agolden dream.Yet,from time to time the elderly passenger,leaningover the bulwark nettings,looked with something like uneasiness atthe horizon.Distrust of the ways of Fate could be read in his wholeface;he seemed to fear that he should not reach the coast of Francein time.This was the Marquis.Fortune had not been deaf to hisdespairing cry and struggles.After five years of endeavor and painfultoil,he was a wealthy man once more.In his impatience to reach hishome again and to bring the good news to his family,he had

followedthe example set by some French merchants in Havana,and embarked withthem on a Spanish vessel with a cargo for Bordeaux.And now,growntired of evil forebodings,his fancy was tracing out for him the mostdelicious pictures of past happiness.In that far-off brown line ofland he seemed to see his wife and children.He sat in his place bythe fireside;they were crowding about him;he felt their caresses.

Moina had grown to be a young girl;she was beautiful,and tall,andstriking.The fancied picture had grown almost real,when the tearsfilled his eyes,and,to hide his emotion,he turned his face towardsthe sea-line,opposite the hazy streak that meant land.

"There she is again....She is following us!"he said.

"What?"cried the Spanish captain.

"There is a vessel,"muttered the General.

"I saw her yesterday,"answered Captain Gomez.He looked at hisinterlocutor as if to ask what he thought;then he added in theGeneral's ear,"She has been chasing us all along."

"Then why she has not come up with us,I do not know,"said theGeneral,"for she is a faster sailor than your damned Saint-Ferdinand."

"She will have damaged herself,sprung a leak--"

"She is gaining on us!"the General broke in.

"She is a Columbian privateer,"the captain said in his ear,"and weare still six leagues from land,and the wind is dropping."

"She is not going ahead,she is flying,as if she knew that in twohours'time her prey would escape her.What audacity!"

"Audacity!"cried the captain."Oh!she is not called the Othellofor nothing.Not so long back she sank a Spanish frigate that carriedthirty guns!This is the one thing I was afraid of,for I had a notionthat she was cruising about somewhere off the Antilles.--Aha!"headded after a pause,as he watched the sails of his own vessel,"thewind is rising;we are making way.Get through we must,for 'theParisian'will show us no mercy."

"She is making way too!"returned the General.

The Othello was scarce three leagues away by this time;and althoughthe conversation between the Marquis and Captain Gomez had taken placeapart,passengers and crew,attracted by the sudden appearance of asail,came to that side of the vessel.With scarcely an exception,however,they took the privateer for a merchantman,and watched hercourse with interest,till all at once a sailor shouted with someenergy of language:

"By Saint-James,it is all up with us!Yonder is the Parisiancaptain!"

At that terrible name dismay,and a panic impossible to describe,spread through the brig.The Spanish captain's orders put energy intothe crew for a while;and in his resolute determination to make landat all costs,he set all the studding sails,and crowded on everystitch of canvas on board.But all this was not the work of a moment;

and naturally the men did not work together with that

wonderfulunanimity so fascinating to watch on board a man-of-war.The Othellomeanwhile,thanks to the trimming of her sails,flew over the waterlike a swallow;but she was making,to all appearance,so littleheadway,that the unlucky Frenchmen began to entertain sweet delusivehopes.At last,after unheard-of efforts,the Saint-Ferdinand sprangforward,Gomez himself directing the shifting of the sheets with voiceand gesture,when all at once the man at the tiller,steering atrandom (purposely,no doubt),swung the vessel round.The windstriking athwart the beam,the sails shivered so unexpectedly that thebrig heeled to one side,the booms were carried away,and the vesselwas completely out of hand.The captain's face grew whiter than hissails with unutterable rage.He sprang upon the man at the tiller,drove his dagger at him in such blind fury,that he missed him,andhurled the weapon overboard.Gomez took the helm himself,and stroveto right the gallant vessel.Tears of despair rose to his eyes,for itis harder to lose the result of our carefully-laid plans throughtreachery than to face imminent death.But the more the captain swore,the less the men worked,and it was he himself who fired the alarm-gun,hoping to be heard on shore.The privateer,now gaininghopelessly upon them,replied with a cannon-shot,which struck thewater ten

fathoms away from the Saint-Ferdinand.

"Thunder of heaven!"cried the General,"that was a close shave!Theymust have guns made on purpose."

"Oh!when that one yonder speaks,look you,you have to hold yourtongue,"said a sailor."The Parisian would not be afraid to meet anEnglish man-of-war."

"It is all over with us,"the captain cried in desperation;he hadpointed his telescope landwards,and saw not a sign from the shore.

"We are further from the coast than I thought."

"Why do you despair?"asked the General."All your passengers areFrenchmen;they have chartered your vessel.The privateer is aParisian,you say?Well and good,run up the white flag,and--"

"And he would run us down,"retorted the captain."He can be anythinghe likes when he has a mind to seize on a rich booty!"

"Oh!if he is a pirate--"

"Pirate!"said the ferocious looking sailor."Oh!he always has thelaw on his side,or he knows how to be on the same side as the law."

"Very well,"said the General,raising his eyes,"let us make up ourminds to it,"and his remaining fortitude was still sufficient to keepback the tears.

The words were hardly out of his mouth before a second cannon-shot,better aimed,came crashing through the hull of the Saint-Ferdinand.

"Heave to!"cried the captain gloomily.

The sailor who had commended the Parisian's law-abiding proclivitiesshowed himself a clever hand at working a ship after this desperateorder was given.The crew waited for half an hour in an agony ofsuspense and the deepest dismay.The Saint-Ferdinand had fourmillions of piastres on board,the whole fortunes of the fivepassengers,and the General's eleven hundred thousand francs.Atlength the Othello lay not ten gunshots

away,so that those on theSaint-Ferdinand could look into the muzzles of her loaded guns.Thevessel seemed to be borne along by a breeze sent by the Devil himself,but the eyes of an expert would have discovered the secret of herspeed at once.You had but to look for a moment at the rake of herstern,her long,narrow keel,her tall masts,to see the cut of hersails,the wonderful lightness of her rigging,and the ease andperfect seamanship with which her crew trimmed her sails to the wind.

Everything about her gave the impression of the security of power inthis delicately curved inanimate creature,swift and intelligent as agreyhound or some bird of prey.The privateer crew stood silent,readyin case of resistance to shatter the wretched merchantman,which,luckily for her,remained motionless,like a schoolboy caught inflagrant delict by a master.

"We have guns on board!"cried the General,clutching the Spanishcaptain's hand.But the courage in Gomez's eyes was the courage ofdespair.

"Have we men?"he said.

The Marquis looked round at the crew of the

Saint-Ferdinand,and acold chill ran through him.There stood the four merchants,pale andquaking for fear,while the crew gathered about some of their ownnumber who appeared to be arranging to go over in a body to the enemy.

They watched the Othello with greed and curiosity in their faces.

The captain,the Marquis,and the mate exchanged glances;they werethe only three who had a thought for any but themselves.

"Ah!Captain Gomez,when I left my home and country,my heart was halfdead with the bitterness of parting,and now must I bid it good-byeonce more when I am bringing back happiness and ease for my children?"

The General turned his head away towards the sea,with tears of ragein his eyes--and saw the steersman swimming out to the privateer.

"This time it will be good-bye for good,"said the captain by way ofanswer,and the dazed look in the Frenchman's eyes startled theSpaniard.

By this time the two vessels were almost alongside,and at the firstsight of the enemy's crew the General saw that Gomez's gloomy prophecywas only too true.The three men at each gun might have been bronzestatues,standing like athletes,with their rugged features,theirbare sinewy arms,men whom Death himself had scarcely thrown off theirfeet.

The rest of the crew,well armed,active,light,and vigorous,alsostood motionless.Toil had hardened,and the sun had deeply tanned,those energetic faces;their eyes glittered like sparks of fire withinfernal glee and clear-sighted courage.Perfect silence on the upperdeck,now black with men,bore abundant testimony to the rigorousdiscipline and strong will which held these fiends incarnate in check.

The captain of the Othello stood with folded arms at the foot of themain mast;he carried no weapons,but an axe lay on the deck besidehim.His face was hidden by the shadow of a broad felt hat.The menlooked like dogs crouching before their master.Gunners,soldiers,andship's crew turned their eyes first on his face,and then on themerchant vessel.

The two brigs came up alongside,and the shock of contact roused theprivateer captain from his musings;he spoke a word in the ear of thelieutenant who stood beside him.

"Grappling-irons!"shouted the latter,and the Othello grappled theSaint-Ferdinand with miraculous quickness.The captain of theprivateer gave his orders in a low voice to the lieutenant,whorepeated them;the men,told off in succession for each duty,went onthe upper deck of the Saint-Ferdinand,like seminarists going tomass.They bound crew and passengers hand and foot and seized thebooty.In the twinkling of an eye,provisions and barrels full ofpiastres were transferred to the Othello;the General thought thathe must be dreaming when he himself,likewise bound,was flung down ona bale of goods as if he had been part of the cargo.

A brief conference took place between the captain of the privateer andhis lieutenant and a sailor,who seemed to be the mate of the vessel;
then the mate gave a whistle,and the men jumped on board the Saint-Ferdinand,and completely dismantled her with the nimble dexterity ofa soldier who strips a dead comrade of a coveted

overcoat and shoes.

"It is all over with us,"said the Spanish captain coolly.He had eyedthe three chiefs during their confabulation,and saw that the sailorswere proceeding to pull his vessel to pieces.

"Why so?"asked the General.

"What would you have them do with us?"returned the Spaniard."Theyhave just come to the conclusion that they will scarcely sell theSaint-Ferdinand in any French or Spanish port,so they are going tosink her to be rid of her.As for us,do you suppose that they willput themselves to the expense of feeding us,when they don't know whatport they are to put into?"

The words were scarcely out of the captain's mouth before a hideousoutcry went up,followed by a dull splashing sound,as several bodieswere thrown overboard.He turned,the four merchants were no longer tobe seen,but eight ferocious-looking gunners were still standing withtheir arms raised above their heads.He shuddered.

"What did I tell you?"the Spanish captain asked coolly.

The Marquis rose to his feet with a spring.The surface of the sea wasquite smooth again;he could not so much as see the place where hisunhappy fellow-passengers had disappeared.By this time they weresinking down,bound hand and foot,below the waves,if,indeed,thefish had not devoured them already.

Only a few paces away,the treacherous steersman and the sailor whohad boasted of the Parisian's power were fraternizing with the crew ofthe Othello,and pointing out those among their own number,who,intheir opinion,were worthy to join the crew of the privateer.Then theboys tied the rest together by the feet in spite of frightful oaths.

It was soon over;the eight gunners seized the doomed men and flungthem overboard without more ado,watching the different ways in whichthe drowning victims met their death,their contortions,their lastagony,with a sort of malignant curiosity,but with no sign ofamusement,surprise,or pity.For them it was an ordinary event towhich seemingly they were quite accustomed.The older men lookedinstead with grim,set smiles at the casks of piastres about the mainmast.

The General and Captain Gomez,left seated on a bale of goods,consulted each other with well-nigh hopeless looks;they were,in asense,the sole survivors of the Saint-Ferdinand,for the seven menpointed out by the spies were transformed amid rejoicings intoPeruvians.

"What atrocious villains!"the General cried.Loyal and generousindignation silenced prudence and pain on his own account.

"They do it because they must,"Gomez answered coolly."If you cameacross one of those fellows,you would run him through the body,wouldyou not?"

The lieutenant now came up to the Spaniard.

"Captain,"said he,"the Parisian has heard of you.He says that youare the only man who really knows the passages of the Antilles and theBrazilian coast.Will you--"

The captain cut him short with a scornful exclamation.

"I shall die like a sailor,"he said,"and a loyal Spaniard and aChristian.Do you hear?"

"Heave him overboard!"shouted the lieutenant,and a couple of gunnersseized on Gomez.

"You cowards!"roared the General,seizing hold of the men.

"Don't get too excited,old boy,"said the lieutenant."If your redribbon has made some impression upon our captain,I myself do not carea rap for it.--You and I will have our little bit of talk togetherdirectly."

A smothered sound,with no accompanying cry,told the General that thegallant captain had died "like a sailor,"as he had said.

"My money or death!"cried the Marquis,in a fit of rage terrible tosee.

"Ah!now you talk sensibly!"sneered the lieutenant."That is the wayto get something out of us----"

Two of the men came up at a sign and hastened to bind the Frenchmen'sfeet,but with unlooked-for boldness he snatched the lieutenant'scutlass and laid about him like a cavalry officer who knows hisbusiness.

"Brigands that you are!You shall not chuck one of Napoleon's troopersover a ship's side like an oyster!"

At the sound of pistol shots fired point blank at the Frenchman,"theParisian"looked round from his occupation of superintending thetransfer of the rigging from the Saint-Ferdinand.He came up behindthe brave General,seized him,dragged him to the side,and was aboutto fling him over with no more concern than if the man had been abroken spar.They were at the very edge when the General looked intothe tawny eyes of the man who had stolen his daughter.The recognitionwas mutual.

The captain of the privateer,his arm still upraised,suddenly swungit in the contrary direction as if his victim was but a featherweight,and set him down at the foot of the main mast.A

murmur roseon the upper deck,but the captain glanced round,and there was asudden silence.

"This is Helene's father,"said the captain in a clear,firm voice. "Woe to any one who meddles with him!"

A hurrah of joy went up at the words,a shout rising to the sky like aprayer of the church;a cry like the first high notes of the TeDeum.The lads swung aloft in the rigging,the men below flung uptheir caps,the gunners pounded away on the deck,there was a generalthrill of excitement,an outburst of oaths,yells,and shrill cries involuble chorus.The men cheered like fanatics,the General'smisgivings deepened,and he grew uneasy;it seemed to him that therewas some horrible mystery in such wild transports.

"My daughter!"he cried,as soon as he could speak."Where is mydaughter?"

For all answer,the captain of the privateer gave him a searchingglance,one of those glances which throw the bravest man into aconfusion which no theory can explain.The General

was mute,not alittle to the satisfaction of the crew;it pleased them to see theirleader exercise the strange power which he possessed over all withwhom he came in contact.Then the captain led the way down a staircaseand flung open the door of a cabin.

"There she is,"he said,and disappeared,leaving the General in astupor of bewilderment at the scene before his eyes.

Helene cried out at the sight of him,and sprang up from the sofa onwhich she was lying when the door flew open.So changed was she thatnone but a father's eyes could have recognized her.The sun of thetropics had brought warmer tones into the once pale face,andsomething of Oriental charm with that wonderful coloring;there was acertain grandeur about her,a majestic firmness,a profound sentimentwhich impresses itself upon the coarsest nature.Her long,thick hair,falling in large curls about her queenly throat,gave an added idea ofpower to the proud face.The consciousness of that power shone outfrom every movement,every line of Helene's form.The rose-tintednostrils were dilated slightly with the joy of triumph;the serenehappiness of her life had left its plain tokens

in the fulldevelopment of her beauty.A certain indefinable virginal grace met inher with the pride of a woman who is loved.This was a slave and aqueen,a queen who would fain obey that she might reign.

A Woman of Thirty -Part IV

A Woman of Thirty

Part IV

er dress was magnificent and elegant in its richness;India

muslinwas the sole material,but her sofa and cushions were of cashmere.APersian carpet covered the floor in the large cabin,and her fourchildren playing at her feet were building castles of gems and pearlnecklaces and jewels of price.The air was full of the scent of rareflowers in Sevres porcelain vases painted by Madame Jacotot;tinySouth American birds,like living rubies,sapphires,and gold,hoveredamong the Mexican jessamines and camellias.A pianoforte had beenfitted into the room,and here and there on the paneled walls,coveredwith red silk,hung small pictures by great painters--a Sunset byHippolyte Schinner beside a Terburg,one of Raphael's Madonnasscarcely yielded in charm to a sketch by Gericault,while a Gerard Doweclipsed the painters of the Empire.On a lacquered table stood agolden plate full of delicious fruit.Indeed,Helene might have beenthe sovereign lady of some great country,and this cabin of hers aboudoir in which her crowned lover had brought together all earth'streasure to please his consort.The children gazed with bright,keeneyes at their grandfather.Accustomed as they were to a life ofbattle,storm,and tumult,they recalled the Roman children in David'sBrutus,watching the fighting and bloodshed with curious interest.

"What!is it possible?"cried Helene,catching her father's arm as ifto assure herself that this was no vision.

"Helene!"

"Father!"

They fell into each other's arms,and the old man's embrace was not soclose and warm as Helene's.

"Were you on board that vessel?"

"Yes,"he answered sadly,and looking at the little ones,who gatheredabout him and gazed with wide open eyes.

"I was about to perish,but--"

"But for my husband,"she broke in."I see how it was."

"Ah!"cried the General,"why must I find you again like this,Helene?

After all the many tears that I have shed,must I still groan for

yourfate?"

"And why?"she asked,smiling."Why should you be sorry to learn thatI am the happiest woman under the sun?"

"Happy?"he cried with a start of surprise.

"Yes,happy,my kind father,"and she caught his hands in hers andcovered them with kisses,and pressed them to her throbbing heart.Hercaresses,and a something in the carriage of her head,wereinterpreted yet more plainly by the joy sparkling in her eyes.

"And how is this?"he asked,wondering at his daughter's life,forgetful now of everything but the bright glowing face before him.

"Listen,father;I have for lover,husband,servant,and master onewhose soul is as great as the boundless sea,as infinite in hiskindness as heaven,a god on earth!Never during these seven years hasa chance look,or word,or gesture jarred in the divine harmony of histalk,his love,his caresses.His eyes have never

met mine without agleam of happiness in them;there has always been a bright smile onhis lips for me.On deck,his voice rises above the thunder of stormsand the tumult of battle;but here below it is soft and melodious asRossini's music--for he has Rossini's music sent for me.I haveeverything that woman's caprice can imagine.My wishes are more thanfulfilled.In short,I am a queen on the seas;I am obeyed here asperhaps a queen may be obeyed.--Ah!"she cried,interrupting herself,"happy did I say?Happiness is no word to express such bliss asmine.All the happiness that should have fallen to all the women inthe world has been my share.Knowing one's own great love and self-devotion,to find in his heart an infinite love in which a woman'ssoul is lost,and lost for ever--tell me,is this happiness?I havelived through a thousand lives even now.Here,I am alone;here,Icommand.No other woman has set foot on this noble vessel,and Victoris never more than a few paces distant from me,--he cannot wanderfurther from me than from stern to prow,"she added,with a shade ofmischief in her manner."Seven years!A love that outlasts seven yearsof continual joy,that endures all the tests brought by all themoments that make up seven years--is this love?Oh,no,no!it issomething better than all that I know of life ...human languagefails to express the bliss of

heaven."

A sudden torrent of tears fell from her burning eyes.The four littleones raised a piteous cry at this,and flocked like chickens abouttheir mother.The oldest boy struck the General with a threateninglook.

"Abel,darling,"said Helene,"I am crying for joy."

Helene took him on her knee,and the child fondled her,putting hisarms about her queenly neck,as a lion's whelp might play with thelioness.

"Do you never weary of your life?"asked the General,bewildered byhis daughter's enthusiastic language.

"Yes,"she said,"sometimes,when we are on land,yet even then I havenever parted from my husband."

"But you need to be fond of music and balls and fetes."

"His voice is music for me;and for fetes,I devise new toilettes

forhim to see.When he likes my dress,it is as if all the world admiredme.Simply for that reason I keep the diamonds and jewels,theprecious things,the flowers and masterpieces of art that he heapsupon me,saying,'Helene,as you live out of the world,I will havethe world come to you.'But for that I would fling them alloverboard."

"But there are others on board,wild,reckless men whose passions--"

"I understand,father,"she said smiling."Do not fear for me.Neverwas empress encompassed with more observance than I.The men are verysuperstitious;they look upon me as a sort of tutelary genius,theluck of the vessel.But he is their god;they worship him.Once,andonce only,one of the crew showed disrespect,mere words,"she added,laughing;"but before Victor knew of it,the others flung the offenderoverboard,although I forgave him.They love me as their good angel;Inurse them when they are ill;several times I have been so fortunateas to save a life,by constant care such as a woman can give.Poorfellows,they are giants,but they are children at the same time."

"And when there is fighting overhead?"

"I am used to it now;I quaked for fear during the first engagement,but never since.--I am used to such peril,and--I am your daughter,"
she said;"I love it."

"But how if he should fall?"

"I should die with him."

"And your children?"

"They are children of the sea and of danger;they share the life oftheir parents.We have but one life,and we do not flinch from it.Wehave but one life,our names are written on the same page of the bookof Fate,one skiff bears us and our fortunes,and we know it."

"Do you so love him that he is more to you than all beside?"

"All beside?"echoed she."Let us leave that mystery alone.Yet stay!

there is this dear little one--well,this too is he,"and strainingAbel to her in a tight clasp,she set eager kisses on his cheeks andhair.

"But I can never forget that he has just drowned nine men!"exclaimedthe General.

"There was no help for it,doubtless,"she said,"for he is generousand humane.He sheds as little blood as may be,and only in theinterests of the little world which he defends,and the sacred causefor which he is fighting.Talk to him about anything that seems to youto be wrong,and he will convince you,you will see."

"There was that crime of his,"muttered the General to himself.

"But how if that crime was a virtue?"she asked,with cold dignity.

"How if man's justice had failed to avenge a great wrong?"

"But a private revenge!"exclaimed her father.

"But what is hell,"she cried,"but a revenge through all eternity forthe wrong done in a little day?"

"Ah!you are lost!He has bewitched and perverted you.You are talkingwildly."

"Stay with us one day,father,and if you will but listen to him,andsee him,you will love him."

"Helene,France lies only a few leagues away,"he said gravely.

Helene trembled;then she went to the porthole and pointed to thesavannas of green water spreading far and wide.

"There lies my country,"she said,tapping the carpet with her foot.

"But are you not coming with me to see your mother and your sister andbrothers?"

"Oh!yes,"she cried,with tears in her voice,"if he is willing,ifhe will come with me."

"So,"the General said sternly,"you have neither country nor kin now,Helene?"

"I am his wife,"she answered proudly,and there was something verynoble in her tone."This is the first happiness in seven years thathas not come to me through him,"she said--then,as she caught herfather's hand and kissed it--"and this is the first word of reproachthat I have heard."

"And your conscience?"

"My conscience;he is my conscience!"she cried,trembling from headto foot."Here he is!Even in the thick of a fight I can tell hisfootstep among all the others on deck,"she cried.

A sudden crimson flushed her cheeks and glowed in her features,hereyes lighted up,her complexion changed to velvet whiteness,there wasjoy and love in every fibre,in the blue veins,in the unconscioustrembling of her whole frame.That

quiver of the sensitive plantsoftened the General.

It was as she had said.The captain came in,sat down in an easy-chair,took up his oldest boy,and began to play with him.There was amoment's silence,for the General's deep musing had grown vague anddreamy,and the daintily furnished cabin and the playing childrenseemed like a nest of halcyons,floating on the waves,between sky andsea,safe in the protection of this man who steered his way amid theperils of war and tempest,as other heads of household guide those intheir care among the hazards of common life.He gazed admiringly atHelene--a dreamlike vision of some sea goddess,gracious in herloveliness,rich in happiness;all the treasures about her grown poorin comparison with the wealth of her nature,paling before thebrightness of her eyes,the indefinable romance expressed in her andher surroundings.

The strangeness of the situation took the General by surprise;theideas of ordinary life were thrown into confusion by this loftypassion and reasoning.Chill and narrow social conventions faded awaybefore this picture.All these things the old soldier felt,and saw noless how impossible it was that his

daughter should give up so wide alife,a life so variously rich,filled to the full with suchpassionate love.And Helene had tasted danger without shrinking;howcould she return to the pretty stage,the superficial circumscribedlife of society?

It was the captain who broke the silence at last.

"Am I in the way?"he asked,looking at his wife.

"No,"said the General,answering for her."Helene has told me all.Isee that she is lost to us--"

"No,"the captain put in quickly;"in a few years'time the statute oflimitations will allow me to go back to France.When the conscience isclear,and a man has broken the law in obedience to----"he stoppedshort,as if scorning to justify himself.

"How can you commit new murders,such as I have seen with my own eyes,without remorse?"

"We had no provisions,"the privateer captain retorted calmly.

"But if you had set the men ashore--"

"They would have given the alarm and sent a man-of-war after us,andwe should never have seen Chili again."

"Before France would have given warning to the Spanish admiralty--"
began the General.

"But France might take it amiss that a man,with a warrant still outagainst him,should seize a brig chartered by Bordeaux merchants.Andfor that matter,have you never fired a shot or so too many inbattle?"

The General shrank under the other's eyes.He said no more,and hisdaughter looked at him half sadly,half triumphant.

"General,"the privateer continued,in a deep voice,"I have made it arule to abstract nothing from booty.But even so,my share will bebeyond a doubt far larger than your fortune.Permit me to return it toyou in another form--"

He drew a pile of banknotes from the piano,and without counting thepackets handed a million of francs to the Marquis.

"You can understand,"he said,"that I cannot spend my time inwatching vessels pass by to Bordeaux.So unless the dangers of thisBohemian life of ours have some attraction for you,unless you care tosee South America and the nights of the tropics,and a bit of fightingnow and again for the pleasure of helping to win a triumph for a youngnation,or for the name of Simon Bolivar,we must part.The long boatmanned with a trustworthy crew is ready for you.And now let us hopethat our third meeting will be completely happy."

"Victor,"said Helene in a dissatisfied tone,"I should like to see alittle more of my father."

"Ten minutes more or less may bring up a French frigate.However,sobe it,we shall have a little fun.The men find things dull."

"Oh,father,go!"cried Helene,"and take these keepsakes from me tomy sister and brothers and--mother,"she added.She caught up

ahandful of jewels and precious stones,folded them in an Indian shawl,and timidly held it out.

"But what shall I say to them from you?"asked he.Her hesitation onthe word "mother"seemed to have struck him.

"Oh!can you doubt me?I pray for their happiness every day."

"Helene,"he began,as he watched her closely,"how if we should notmeet again?Shall I never know why you left us?"

"That secret is not mine,"she answered gravely."Even if I had theright to tell it,perhaps I should not.For ten years I was moremiserable than words can say--"

She broke off,and gave her father the presents for her family.TheGeneral had acquired tolerably easy views as to booty in the course ofa soldier's career,so he took Helene's gifts and comforted himselfwith the reflection that the Parisian captain was sure to wage waragainst the Spaniards as an honorable man,under the influence ofHelene's pure and high-minded nature.His passion for courage carriedall before

it.It was ridiculous,he thought,to be squeamish in thematter;so he shook hands cordially with his captor,and kissedHelene,his only daughter,with a soldier's expansiveness;lettingfall a tear on the face with the proud,strong look that once he hadloved to see."The Parisian,"deeply moved,brought the children forhis blessing.The parting was over,the last good-bye was a longfarewell look,with something of tender regret on either side.

A strange sight to seaward met the General's eyes.The Saint-Ferdinandwas blazing like a huge bonfire.The men told off to sinkthe Spanish brig had found a cargo of rum on board;and as theOthello was already amply supplied,had lighted a floating bowl ofpunch on the high seas,by way of a joke;a pleasantry pardonableenough in sailors,who hail any chance excitement as a relief from theapparent monotony of life at sea.As the General went over the sideinto the long-boat of the Saint-Ferdinand,manned by six vigorousrowers,he could not help looking at the burning vessel,as well as atthe daughter who stood by her husband's side on the stern of theOthello.He saw Helene's white dress flutter like one more sail inthe breeze;he saw the tall,noble figure against a background of sea,queenly

still even in the presence of Ocean;and so many memoriescrowded up in his mind,that,with a soldier's recklessness of life,he forgot that he was being borne over the grave of the brave Gomez.

A vast column of smoke rising spread like a brown cloud,pierced hereand there by fantastic shafts of sunlight.It was a second sky,amurky dome reflecting the glow of the fire as if the under surface hadbeen burnished;but above it soared the unchanging blue of thefirmament,a thousand times fairer for the short-lived contrast.Thestrange hues of the smoke cloud,black and red,tawny and pale byturns,blurred and blending into each other,shrouded the burningvessel as it flared,crackled and groaned;the hissing tongues offlame licked up the rigging,and flashed across the hull,like a rumorof riot flashing along the streets of a city.The burning rum sent upblue flitting lights.Some sea god might have been stirring thefurious liquor as a student stirs the joyous flames of punch in anorgy.But in the overpowering sunlight,jealous of the insolent blaze,the colors were scarcely visible,and the smoke was but a filmfluttering like a thin scarf in the noonday torrent of light and heat.

The Othello made the most of the little wind she could gain to flyon her new course.Swaying first to one side,then to the other,likea stag beetle on the wing,the fair vessel beat to windward on herzigzag flight to the south.Sometimes she was hidden from sight by thestraight column of smoke that flung fantastic shadows across thewater,then gracefully she shot out clear of it,and Helene,catchingsight of her father,waved her handkerchief for yet one more farewellgreeting.

A few more minutes,and the Saint-Ferdinand went down with abubbling turmoil,at once effaced by the ocean.Nothing of all thathad been was left but a smoke cloud hanging in the breeze.TheOthello was far away,the long-boat had almost reached land,thecloud came between the frail skiff and the brig,and it was through abreak in the swaying smoke that the General caught the last glimpse ofHelene.A prophetic vision!Her dress and her white handkerchief stoodout against the murky background.Then the brig was not even visiblebetween the green water and the blue sky,and Helene was nothing butan imperceptible speck,a faint graceful line,an angel in heaven,amental image,a memory.

The Marquis had retrieved his fortunes,when he died,worn out withtoil.A few months after his death,in 1833,the Marquise was obligedto take Moina to a watering-place in the Pyrenees,for the capriciouschild had a wish to see the beautiful mountain scenery.They left thebaths,and the following tragical incident occurred on their way home.

"Dear me,mother,"said Moina,"it was very foolish of us not to stayamong the mountains a few days longer.It was much nicer there.Didyou hear that horrid child moaning all night,and that wretched woman,gabbling away in patois no doubt,for I could not understand a singleword she said.What kind of people can they have put in the next roomto ours?This is one of the horridest nights I have ever spent in mylife."

"I heard nothing,"said the Marquise,"but I will see the landlady,darling,and engage the next room,and then we shall have the wholesuite of rooms to ourselves,and there will be no more noise.How doyou feel this morning?Are you tired?"

As she spoke,the Marquise rose and went to Moina's bedside.

"Let us see,"she said,feeling for the girl's hand.

"Oh!let me alone,mother,"said Moina;"your fingers are cold."

She turned her head round on the pillow as she spoke,pettishly,butwith such engaging grace,that a mother could scarcely have taken itamiss.Just then a wailing cry echoed through the next room,a faintprolonged cry,that must surely have gone to the heart of any womanwho heard it.

"Why,if you heard that all night long,why did you not wake me?Weshould have--"

A deeper moan than any that had gone before it interrupted theMarquise.

"Some one is dying there,"she cried,and hurried out of the room.

"Send Pauline to me!"called Moina."I shall get up and dress."

The Marquise hastened downstairs,and found the landlady in thecourtyard with a little group about her,apparently much interested insomething that she was telling them.

"Madame,you have put some one in the next room who seems to be veryill indeed--"

"Oh!don't talk to me about it!"cried the mistress of the house."Ihave just sent some one for the mayor.Just imagine it;it is a woman,a poor unfortunate creature that came here last night on foot.Shecomes from Spain;she has no passport and no money;she was carryingher baby on her back,and the child was dying.I could not refuse totake her in.I went up to see her this morning myself;for when sheturned up yesterday,it made me feel dreadfully bad to look at her.

Poor soul!she and the child were lying in bed,and both of them atdeath's door.'Madame,'says she,pulling a gold ring off her finger,'this is all that I have left;take it in payment,it will be enough;

I shall not stay here long.Poor little one!we shall die togethersoon!'she said,looking at the child.I took her ring,and I askedher who she was,but she never would tell me her name....I

havejust sent for the doctor and M.le Maire."

"Why,you must do all that can be done for her,"cried the Marquise.

"Good heavens!perhaps it is not too late!I will pay for everythingthat is necessary----"

"Ah!my lady,she looks to me uncommonly proud,and I don't know thatshe would allow it."

"I will go to see her at once."

The Marquise went up forthwith to the stranger's room,withoutthinking of the shock that the sight of her widow's weeds might giveto a woman who was said to be dying.At the sight of that dying womanthe Marquise turned pale.In spite of the changes wrought by fearfulsuffering in Helene's beautiful face,she recognized her eldestdaughter.

But Helene,when she saw a woman dressed in black,sat upright in bedwith a shriek of horror.Then she sank back;she knew her mother.

"My daughter,"said Mme.d'Aiglemont,"what is to be done? Pauline!...Moina!..."

"Nothing now for me,"said Helene faintly."I had hoped to see myfather once more,but your mourning--"she broke off,clutched herchild to her heart as if to give it warmth,and kissed its forehead.

Then she turned her eyes on her mother,and the Marquise met the oldreproach in them,tempered with forgiveness,it is true,but stillreproach.She saw it,and would not see it.She forgot that Helene wasthe child conceived amid tears and despair,the child of duty,thecause of one of the greatest sorrows in her life.She stole to hereldest daughter's side,remembering nothing but that Helene was herfirstborn,the child who had taught her to know the joys ofmotherhood.The mother's eyes were full of tears."Helene,mychild!..."she cried,with her arms about her daughter.

Helene was silent.Her own babe had just drawn its last breath on herbreast.

Moina came into the room with Pauline,her maid,and the landlady andthe doctor.The Marquise was holding her daughter's ice-cold hand inboth of hers,and gazing at her in despair;but the widowed woman,whohad escaped shipwreck with but one of all her fair band of children,spoke in a voice that was dreadful to hear."All this is your work,"
she said."If you had but been for me all that--"

"Moina,go!Go out of the room,all of you!"cried Mme.d'Aiglemont,her shrill tones drowning Helene's voice.--"For pity's sake,"shecontinued,"let us not begin these miserable quarrels again now----"

"I will be silent,"Helene answered with a preternatural effort."I ama mother;I know that Moina ought not ...Where is my child?"

Moina came back,impelled by curiosity.

"Sister,"said the spoiled child,"the doctor--"

"It is all of no use,"said Helene."Oh!why did I not die as a girlof sixteen when I meant to take my own life?There is no

happinessoutside the laws.Moina ...you ..."

Her head sank till her face lay against the face of the little one;inher agony she strained her babe to her breast,and died.

"Your sister,Moina,"said Mme.d'Aiglemont,bursting into tears whenshe reached her room,"your sister meant no doubt to tell you that agirl will never find happiness in a romantic life,in living as nobodyelse does,and,above all things,far away from her mother."

A Woman of Thirty

Chapter VI

The Old Age of a Guilty Mother

t was one of the earliest June days of the year 1844.A lady of fiftyor thereabouts,for she looked older than her actual age,was pacingup and down one of the sunny paths in the garden of a great mansion inthe Rue Plument in Paris.It was noon.The lady took two or threeturns along the gently winding garden walk,careful never to losesight of a certain row of windows,to which she seemed to give herwhole attention;then she sat down on a bench,a piece of elegantsemi-rusticity made of branches with the bark left on the wood.Fromthe place where she sat she could look through the garden railingsalong the inner boulevards to the wonderful dome of the Invalidesrising above the crests of a forest of elm-trees,and see the lessstriking view of her own grounds terminating in the gray stone frontof one of the finest hotels in the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

Silence lay over the neighboring gardens,and the boulevardsstretching away to the Invalides.Day scarcely begins

at noon in thataristocratic quarter,and masters and servants are all alike asleep,or just awakening,unless some young lady takes it into her head to gofor an early ride,or a gray-headed diplomatist rises betimes toredraft a protocol.

The elderly lady stirring abroad at that hour was the Marquised'Aiglemont,the mother of Mme.de Saint-Hereen,to whom the greathouse belonged.The Marquise had made over the mansion and almost herwhole fortune to her daughter,reserving only an annuity for herself.

The Comtesse Moina de Saint-Hereen was Mme.d'Aiglemont's youngestchild.The Marquise had made every sacrifice to marry her daughter tothe eldest son of one of the greatest houses of France;and this wasonly what might have been expected,for the lady had lost her sons,first one and then the other.Gustave,Marquis d'Aiglemont,had diedof the cholera;Abel,the second,had fallen in Algeria.Gustave hadleft a widow and children,but the dowager's affection for her sonshad been only moderately warm,and for the next generation it wasdecidedly tepid.She was always civil to her daughter-in-law,but herfeeling towards the young Marquise was

the distinctly conventionalaffection which good taste and good manners require us to feel for ourrelatives.The fortunes of her dead children having been settled,shecould devote her savings and her own property to her darling Moina.

Moina,beautiful and fascinating from childhood,was Mme.
d'Aiglemont's favorite;loved beyond all the others with aninstinctive or involuntary love,a fatal drawing of the heart,whichsometimes seems inexplicable,sometimes,and to a close observer,onlytoo easy to explain.Her darling's pretty face,the sound of Moina'svoice,her ways,her manner,her looks and gestures,roused all thedeepest emotions that can stir a mother's heart with trouble,rapture,or delight.The springs of the Marquise's life,of yesterday,to-morrow,and to-day,lay in that young heart.Moina,with betterfortune,had survived four older children.As a matter of fact,Mme.
d'Aiglemont had lost her eldest daughter,a charming girl,in a mostunfortunate manner,said gossip,nobody knew exactly what became ofher;and then she lost a little boy of five by a dreadful accident.

The child of her affections had,however,been spared to

her,anddoubtless the Marquise saw the will of Heaven in that fact;for thosewho had died,she kept but very shadowy recollections in some far-offcorner of her heart;her memories of her dead children were like theheadstones on a battlefield,you can scarcely see them for the flowersthat have sprung up about them since.Of course,if the world hadchosen,it might have said some hard truths about the Marquise,mighthave taken her to task for shallowness and an overweening preferencefor one child at the expense of the rest;but the world of Paris isswept along by the full flood of new events,new ideas,and newfashions,and it was inevitable the Mme.d'Aiglemont should be in somesort allowed to drop out of sight.So nobody thought of blaming herfor coldness or neglect which concerned no one,whereas her quick,apprehensive tenderness for Moina was found highly interesting by nota few who respected it as a sort of superstition.Besides,theMarquise scarcely went into society at all;and the few families whoknew her thought of her as a kindly,gentle,indulgent woman,whollydevoted to her family.What but a curiosity,keen indeed,would seekto pry beneath the surface with which the world is quite satisfied?

And what would we not pardon to old people,if only they will effacethemselves like shadows,and consent to be regarded as

memories andnothing more!

Indeed,Mme.d'Aiglemont became a kind of example complacently held upby the younger generation to fathers of families,and frequently citedto mothers-in-law.She had made over her property to Moina in her ownlifetime;the young Countess'happiness was enough for her,she onlylived in her daughter.If some cautious old person or morose unclehere and there condemned the course with--"Perhaps Mme.d'Aiglemontmay be sorry some day that she gave up her fortune to her daughter;
she may be sure of Moina,but how can she be equally sure of herson-in-law?"--these prophets were cried down on all sides,and from allsides a chorus of praise went up for Moina.

"It ought to be said,in justice to Mme.de Saint-Hereen,that hermother cannot feel the slightest difference,"remarked a young marriedwoman."Mme.d'Aiglemont is admirably well housed.She has a carriageat her disposal,and can go everywhere just as she used to do--"

"Except to the Italiens,"remarked a low voice.(This was an

elderlyparasite,one of those persons who show their independence--as theythink--by riddling their friends with epigrams.)"Except to theItaliens.And if the dowager cares for anything on this earth but herdaughter--it is music.Such a good performer she was in her time!Butthe Countess'box is always full of young butterflies,and theCountess'mother would be in the way;the young lady is talked aboutalready as a great flirt.So the poor mother never goes to theItaliens."

"Mme.de Saint-Hereen has delightful 'At Homes'for her mother,"saida rosebud."All Paris goes to her salon.

"And no one pays any attention to the Marquise,"returned theparasite.

"The fact is that Mme.d'Aiglemont is never alone,"remarked acoxcomb,siding with the young women.

"In the morning,"the old observer continued in a discreet voice,"inthe morning dear Moina is asleep.At four o'clock dear Moina drives inthe Bois.In the evening dear Moina goes to a ball or to the Bouffes.

--Still,it is certainly true that Mme.d'Aiglemont has the privilegeof seeing her dear daughter while she dresses,and again at dinner,ifdear Moina happens to dine with her mother.Not a week ago,sir,"

continued the elderly person,laying his hand on the arm of the shytutor,a new arrival in the house,"not a week ago,I saw the poormother,solitary and sad,by her own fireside.--'What is the matter?'

I asked.The Marquise looked up smiling,but I am quite sure that shehad been crying.--'I was thinking that it is a strange thing that Ishould be left alone when I have had five children,'she said,'butthat is our destiny!And besides,I am happy when I know that Moina isenjoying herself.'--She could say that to me,for I knew her husbandwhen he was alive.A poor stick he was,and uncommonly lucky to havesuch a wife;it was certainly owing to her that he was made a peer ofFrance,and had a place at Court under Charles X."

Yet such mistaken ideas get about in social gossip,and such mischiefis done by it,that the historian of manners is bound to exercise hisdiscretion,and weigh the assertions so recklessly made.After all,who is to say that either mother or daughter was

right or wrong?Thereis but One who can read and judge their hearts!And how often does Hewreak His vengeance in the family circle,using throughout all timechildren as His instruments against their mothers,and fathers againsttheir sons,raising up peoples against kings,and princes againstpeoples,sowing strife and division everywhere?And in the world ofideas,are not opinions and feelings expelled by new feelings andopinions,much as withered leaves are thrust forth by the young leaf-budsin the spring?--all in obedience to the immutable Scheme;all tosome end which God alone knows.Yet,surely,all things proceed toHim,or rather,to Him all things return.

Such thoughts of religion,the natural thoughts of age,floated up nowand again on the current of Mme.d'Aiglemont's thoughts;they werealways dimly present in her mind,but sometimes they shone outclearly,sometimes they were carried under,like flowers tossed on thevexed surface of a stormy sea.

She sat on a garden-seat,tired with walking,exhausted with muchthinking--with the long thoughts in which a whole lifetime rises upbefore the mind,and is spread out like a scroll before the

eyes ofthose who feel that Death is near.

If a poet had chanced to pass along the boulevard,he would have foundan interesting picture in the face of this woman,grown old before hertime.As she sat under the dotted shadow of the acacia,the shadow theacacia casts at noon,a thousand thoughts were written for all theworld to see on her features,pale and cold even in the hot,brightsunlight.There was something sadder than the sense of waning life inthat expressive face,some trouble that went deeper than the wearinessof experience.It was a face of a type that fixes you in a momentamong a host of characterless faces that fail to draw a second glance,a face to set you thinking.Among a thousand pictures in a gallery,you are strongly impressed by the sublime anguish on the face of someMadonna of Murillo's;by some Beatrice Cenci in which Guido's artportrays the most touching innocence against a background of horrorand crime;by the awe and majesty that should encircle a king,caughtonce and for ever by Velasquez in the sombre face of a Philip II.,andso is it with some living human faces;they are tyrannous pictureswhich speak to you,submit you to searching scrutiny,and giveresponse to your inmost thoughts,nay,there are faces that set fortha whole

drama,and Mme.d'Aiglemont's stony face was one of theseawful tragedies,one of such faces as Dante Alighieri saw by thousandsin his vision.

For the little season that a woman's beauty is in flower it serves heradmirably well in the dissimulation to which her natural weakness andour social laws condemn her.A young face and rich color,and eyesthat glow with light,a gracious maze of such subtle,manifold linesand curves,flawless and perfectly traced,is a screen that hideseverything that stirs the woman within.A flush tells nothing,it onlyheightens the coloring so brilliant already;all the fires that burnwithin can add little light to the flame of life in eyes which onlyseem the brighter for the flash of a passing pain.Nothing is sodiscreet as a young face,for nothing is less mobile;it has theserenity,the surface smoothness,and the freshness of a lake.Thereis not character in women's faces before the age of thirty.Thepainter discovers nothing there but pink and white,and the smile andexpression that repeat the same thought in the same way--a thought ofyouth and love that goes no further than youth and love.But the faceof an old woman has expressed all that lay in her nature;passion hascarved lines on her features;love and wifehood and

motherhood,andextremes of joy and anguish,having wrung them,and left their tracesin a thousand wrinkles,all of which speak a language of their own;

then it is that a woman's face becomes sublime in its horror,beautiful in its melancholy,grand in its calm.If it is permissibleto carry the strange metaphor still further,it might be said that inthe dried-up lake you can see the traces of all the torrents that oncepoured into it and made it what it is.An old face is nothing to thefrivolous world;the frivolous world is shocked by the sight of thedestruction of such comeliness as it can understand;a commonplaceartist sees nothing there.An old face is the province of the poetsamong poets of those who can recognize that something which is calledBeauty,apart from all the conventions underlying so manysuperstitions in art and taste.

Though Mme.d'Aiglemont wore a fashionable bonnet,it was easy to seethat her once black hair had been bleached by cruel sorrows;yet hergood taste and the gracious acquired instincts of a woman of fashioncould be seen in the way she wore it,divided into two bandeaux,following the outlines of a forehead that still retained some tracesof former dazzling beauty,worn and lined

though it was.The contoursof her face,the regularity of her features,gave some idea,faint intruth,of that beauty of which surely she had once been proud;butthose traces spoke still more plainly of the anguish which had laid itwaste,of sharp pain that had withered the temples,and made thosehollows in her cheeks,and empurpled the eyelids,and robbed them oftheir lashes,and the eyes of their charm.She was in every way sonoiseless;she moved with a slow,self-contained gravity that showeditself in her whole bearing,and struck a certain awe into others.Herdiffident manner had changed to positive shyness,due apparently to ahabit now of some years'growth,of effacing herself in her daughter'spresence.She spoke very seldom,and in the low tones used by thosewho perforce must live within themselves a life of reflection andconcentration.This demeanor led others to regard her with anindefinable feeling which was neither awe nor compassion,but amysterious blending of the many ideas awakened in us by compassion andawe.Finally,there was something in her wrinkles,in the lines of herface,in the look of pain in those wan eyes of hers,that boreeloquent testimony to tears that never had fallen,tears that had beenabsorbed by her heart.Unhappy creatures,accustomed to raise theireyes to heaven,in mute appeal against the bitterness of their lot,would

have seen at once from her eyes that she was broken in to thecruel discipline of ceaseless prayer,would have discerned the almostimperceptible symptoms of the secret bruises which destroy all theflowers of the soul,even the sentiment of motherhood.

Painters have colors for these portraits,but words,and the mentalimages called up by words,fail to reproduce such impressionsfaithfully;there are mysterious signs and tokens in the tones of thecoloring and in the look of human faces,which the mind only seizesthrough the sense of sight;and the poet is fain to record the tale ofthe events which wrought the havoc to make their terrible ravagesunderstood.

The face spoke of cold and steady storm,an inward conflict between amother's long-suffering and the limitations of our nature,for ourhuman affections are bounded by our humanity,and the infinite has noplace in finite creatures.Sorrow endured in silence had at lastproduced an indefinable morbid something in this woman.Doubtlessmental anguish had reacted on the physical frame,and some disease,perhaps an aneurism,was undermining Julie's life.Deep-seated grieflies to

all appearance very quietly in the depths where it isconceived,yet,so still and apparently dormant as it is,itceaselessly corrodes the soul,like the terrible acid which eats awaycrystal.

Two tears made their way down the Marquise's cheeks;she rose to herfeet as if some thought more poignant than any that preceded it hadcut her to the quick.She had doubtless come to a conclusion as toMoina's future;and now,foreseeing clearly all the troubles in storefor her child,the sorrows of her own unhappy life had begun to weighonce more upon her.The key of her position must be sought in herdaughter's situation.

The Comte de Saint-Hereen had been away for nearly six months on apolitical mission.The Countess,whether from sheer giddiness,or inobedience to the countless instincts of woman's coquetry,or to essayits power--with all the vanity of a frivolous fine lady,all thecapricious waywardness of a child--was amusing herself,during herhusband's absence,by playing with the passion of a clever butheartless man,distracted (so he said)with love,the love thatcombines readily with every petty social ambition of a self-conceitedcoxcomb.Mme.d'Aiglemont,whose long

experience had given her aknowledge of life,and taught her to judge of men and to dread theworld,watched the course of this flirtation,and saw that it couldonly end in one way,if her daughter should fall into the hands of anutterly unscrupulous intriguer.How could it be other than a terriblethought for her that her daughter listened willingly to this roue?

Her darling stood on the brink of a precipice,she felt horribly sureof it,yet dared not hold her back.She was afraid of the Countess.

She knew too that Moina would not listen to her wise warnings;sheknew that she had no influence over that nature--iron for her,silken-softfor all others.Her mother's tenderness might have led her tosympathize with the troubles of a passion called forth by the noblerqualities of a lover,but this was no passion--it was coquetry,andthe Marquise despised Alfred de Vandenesse,knowing that he hadentered upon this flirtation with Moina as if it were a game of chess.

But if Alfred de Vandenesse made her shudder with disgust,she wasobliged--unhappy mother!--to conceal the strongest reason for herloathing in the deepest recesses of her heart.She was on terms ofintimate friendship with the Marquis de Vandenesse,the

young man'sfather;and this friendship,a respectable one in the eyes of theworld,excused the son's constant presence in the house,he professingan old attachment,dating from childhood,for Mme.de Saint-Hereen.

More than this,in vain did Mme.d'Aiglemont nerve herself to comebetween Moina and Alfred de Vandenesse with a terrible word,knowingbeforehand that she should not succeed;knowing that the strong reasonwhich ought to separate them would carry no weight;that she shouldhumiliate herself vainly in her daughter's eyes.Alfred was toocorrupt;Moina too clever to believe the revelation;the youngCountess would turn it off and treat it as a piece of maternalstrategy.Mme.d'Aiglemont had built her prison walls with her ownhands;she had immured herself only to see Moina's happiness ruinedthence before she died;she was to look on helplessly at the ruin ofthe young life which had been her pride and joy and comfort,a life athousand times dearer to her than her own.What words can describeanguish so hideous beyond belief,such unfathomed depths of pain?

She waited for Moina to rise,with the impatience and sickening dreadof a doomed man,who longs to have done with life,and

turns cold atthe thought of the headsman.She had braced herself for a last effort,but perhaps the prospect of the certain failure of the attempt wasless dreadful to her than the fear of receiving yet again one of thosethrusts that went to her very heart--before that fear her courageebbed away.Her mother's love had come to this.To love her child,tobe afraid of her,to shrink from the thought of the stab,yet to goforward.So great is a mother's affection in a loving nature,thatbefore it can fade away into indifference the mother herself must dieor find support in some great power without her,in religion oranother love.Since the Marquise rose that morning,her fatal memoryhad called up before her some of those things,so slight to allappearance,that make landmarks in a life.Sometimes,indeed,a wholetragedy grows out of a single gesture;the tone in which a few wordswere spoken rends a whole life in two;a glance into indifferent eyesis the deathblow of the gladdest love;and,unhappily,such gesturesand such words were only too familiar to Mme.d'Aiglemont--she had metso many glances that wound the soul.No,there was nothing in thosememories to bid her hope.On the contrary,everything went to showthat Alfred had destroyed her hold on her daughter's heart,that thethought of her was now associated with duty--not with gladness.Inways innumerable,in

things that were mere trifles in themselves,theCountess'detestable conduct rose up before her mother;and theMarquise,it may be,looked on Moina's undutifulness as a punishment,and found excuses for her daughter in the will of Heaven,that so shestill might adore the hand that smote her.

All these things passed through her memory that morning,and eachrecollection wounded her afresh so sorely,that with a very littleadditional pain her brimming cup of bitterness must have overflowed.Acold look might kill her.

The little details of domestic life are difficult to paint;but one ortwo perhaps will suffice to give an idea of the rest.

The Marquise d'Aiglemont,for instance,had grown rather deaf,but shecould never induce Moina to raise her voice for her.Once,with thenaivete of suffering,she had begged Moina to repeat some remark whichshe had failed to catch,and Moina obeyed,but with so bad a grace,the Mme.d'Aiglemont had never permitted herself to make her modestrequest again.Ever since that day when Moina was talking or retailinga piece of news,her

mother was careful to come near to listen;butthis infirmity of deafness appeared to put the Countess out ofpatience,and she would grumble thoughtlessly about it.This instanceis one from among very many that must have gone to the mother's heart;

and yet nearly all of them might have escaped a close observer,theyconsisted in faint shades of manner invisible to any but a woman'seyes.Take another example.Mme.d'Aiglemont happened to say one daythat the Princesse de Cadignan had called upon her."Did she come tosee you!"Moina exclaimed.That was all,but the Countess'voice andmanner expressed surprise and well-bred contempt in semitones.Anyheart,still young and sensitive,might well have applauded thephilanthropy of savage tribes who kill off their old people when theygrow too feeble to cling to a strongly shaken bough.Mme.d'Aiglemontrose smiling,and went away to weep alone.

Well-bred people,and women especially,only betray their feelings byimperceptible touches;but those who can look back over their ownexperience on such bruises as this mother's heart received,know alsohow the heart-strings vibrate to these light touches.Overcome by hermemories,Mme.d'Aiglemont

recollected one of those microscopicallysmall things,so stinging and so painful was it that never till thismoment had she felt all the heartless contempt that lurked beneathsmiles.

At the sound of shutters thrown back at her daughter's windows,shedried her tears,and hastened up the pathway by the railings.As shewent,it struck her that the gardener had been unusually careful torake the sand along the walk which had been neglected for some littletime.As she stood under her daughter's windows,the shutters werehastily closed.

"Moina,is it you?"she asked.

No answer.

The Marquise went on into the house.

"Mme.la Comtesse is in the little drawing-room,"said the maid,whenthe Marquise asked whether Mme.de Saint-Hereen had finished dressing.

Mme.d'Aiglemont hurried to the little drawing-room;her heart

was toofull,her brain too busy to notice matters so slight;but there on thesofa sat the Countess in her loose morning-gown,her hair in disorderunder the cap tossed carelessly on he head,her feet thrust intoslippers.The key of her bedroom hung at her girdle.Her face,aglowwith color,bore traces of almost stormy thought.

"What makes people come in!"she cried,crossly."Oh!it is you,mother,"she interrupted herself,with a preoccupied look.

"Yes,child;it is your mother----"

Something in her tone turned those words into an outpouring of theheart,the cry of some deep inward feeling,only to be described bythe word "holy."So thoroughly in truth had she rehabilitated thesacred character of a mother,that her daughter was impressed,andturned towards her,with something of awe,uneasiness,and remorse inher manner.The room was the furthest of a suite,and safe fromindiscreet intrusion,for no one could enter it without giving warningof approach through the previous apartments.The Marquise closed thedoor.

"It is my duty,my child,to warn you in one of the most seriouscrises in the lives of us women;you have perhaps reached itunconsciously,and I am come to speak to you as a friend rather thanas a mother.When you married,you acquired freedom of action;you areonly accountable to your husband now;but I asserted my authority solittle (perhaps I was wrong),that I think I have a right to expectyou to listen to me,for once at least,in a critical position whenyou must need counsel.Bear in mind,Moina that you are married to aman of high ability,a man of whom you may well be proud,a man who--"

"I know what you are going to say,mother!"Moina broke in pettishly.

"I am to be lectured about Alfred--"

"Moina,"the Marquise said gravely,as she struggled with her tears,"you would not guess at once if you did not feel--"

"What?"asked Moina,almost haughtily."Why,really,mother--"

Mme.d'Aiglemont summoned up all her strength."Moina,"she said,"youmust attend carefully to this that I ought to tell you--"

"I am attending,"returned the Countess,folding her arms,andaffecting insolent submission."Permit me,mother,to ring forPauline,"she added with incredible self-possession;"I will send heraway first."

She rang the bell.

"My dear child,Pauline cannot possibly hear--"

"Mamma,"interrupted the Countess,with a gravity which must havestruck her mother as something unusual,"I must--"

She stopped short,for the woman was in the room.

"Pauline,go yourself to Baudran's,and ask why my hat has not yetbeen sent."

Then the Countess reseated herself and scrutinized her mother.TheMarquise,with a swelling heart and dry eyes,in painful agitation,which none but a mother can fully understand,began to open Moina'seyes to the risk that she was

running.But either the Countess felthurt and indignant at her mother's suspicions of a son of the Marquisde Vandenesse,or she was seized with a sudden fit of inexplicablelevity caused by the inexperience of youth.She took advantage of apause.

"Mamma,I thought you were only jealous of the father--"she said,with a forced laugh.

Mme.d'Aiglemont shut her eyes and bent her head at the words,with avery faint,almost inaudible sigh.She looked up and out into space,as if she felt the common overmastering impulse to appeal to God atthe great crises of our lives;then she looked at her daughter,andher eyes were full of awful majesty and the expression of profoundsorrow.

"My child,"she said,and her voice was hardly recognizable,"you havebeen less merciful to your mother than he against whom she sinned;
less merciful than perhaps God Himself will be!"

Mme.d'Aiglemont rose;at the door she turned;but she saw nothing butsurprise in her daughter's face.She went out.Scarcely

had shereached the garden when her strength failed her.There was a violentpain at her heart,and she sank down on a bench.As her eyes wanderedover the path,she saw fresh marks on the path,a man's footprintswere distinctly recognizable.It was too late,then,beyond a doubt.

Now she began to understand the reason for that order given toPauline,and with these torturing thoughts came a revelation morehateful than any that had gone before it.She drew her owninferences--the son of the Marquis de Vandenesse had destroyed allfeeling of respect for her in her daughter's mind.The physical paingrew worse;by degrees she lost consciousness,and sat like one asleepupon the garden-seat.

The Countess de Saint-Hereen,left to herself,thought that her motherhad given her a somewhat shrewd home-thrust,but a kiss and a fewattentions that evening would make all right again.

A shrill cry came from the garden.She leaned carelessly out,asPauline,not yet departed on her errand,called out for help,holdingthe Marquise in her arms.

"Do not frighten my daughter!"those were the last words the

motheruttered.

Moina saw them carry in a pale and lifeless form that struggled forbreath,and arms moving restlessly as in protest or effort to speak;
and overcome by the sight,Moina followed in silence,and helped toundress her mother and lay her on her bed.The burden of her fault wasgreater than she could bear.In that supreme hour she learned to knowher mother--too late,she could make no reparation now.She would havethem leave her alone with her mother;and when there was no one elsein the room,when she felt that the hand which had always been sotender for her was now grown cold to her touch,she broke out intoweeping.Her tears aroused the Marquise;she could still look at herdarling Moina;and at the sound of sobbing,that seemed as if it mustrend the delicate,disheveled breast,could smile back at herdaughter.That smile taught the unnatural child that forgiveness isalways to be found in the great deep of a mother's heart.

Servants on horseback had been dispatched at once for the physicianand surgeon and for Mme.d'Aiglemont's

grandchildren.Mme.d'Aiglemontthe younger and her little sons arrived with the medical men,asufficiently impressive,silent,and anxious little group,which theservants of the house came to join.The young Marquise,hearing nosound,tapped gently at the door.That signal,doubtless,roused Moinafrom her grief,for she flung open the doors and stood before them.Nowords could have spoken more plainly than that disheveled figurelooking out with haggard eyes upon the assembled family.Before thatliving picture of Remorse the rest were dumb.It was easy to see thatthe Marquise's feet were stretched out stark and stiff with the agonyof death;and Moina,leaning against the door-frame,looking intotheir faces,spoke in a hollow voice:

"I have lost my mother!"

PARIS,1828-1844.

A Woman of Thirty -Addendum

A Woman of Thirty

Addendum

he following personages appear in other stories of the Human Comedy.

Aiglemont,General,Marquis Victor d'

At the Sign of the Cat and RacketThe Firm of Nucingen

Bonaparte,NapoleonThe VendettaThe Gondreville MysteryColonel ChabertDomestic PeaceThe Seamy Side of History

Camps,Madame Octave de (nee Cadignan)

Madame FirmianiThe Government ClerksA Daughter of EveThe Member for Arcis

Chatillonest,DeModeste Mignon

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Desroches (son)

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