

MARIE VAN OOSTERWICH.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

“WHY do you blush in speaking to me of him, Marie? Is it that you think no longer that the love of the arts should be your only love?”

“Always, Master, but this young man has talent, and I could have wished that you would have accepted him as a pupil,”

“On his account only, Marie?”

The young girl bent her head, and the old man continued, kissing her forehead, —

“My noble child, I regret having forbid him entrance to my studio, for I love thee too much, to give thee pain even in the person of another.”

And without waiting Marie’s answer, he who spoke thus, laying aside a palette and brushes which he held, hastened to the door of the studio, and half-opening it, called several times to a person who was descending the stairs.

This Master so paternal, this old man who understood so well a young girl’s heart, was Jean David van Heem, a celebrated painter of Utrecht, to whom all the sovereigns of Europe had sent patents of nobility, and who excelled in painting flowers, and the precious vases in which they bloomed.

The artist had founded at Utrecht a celebrated school, where many pupils came to form themselves. The Master’s eye divined genius even in the bud, and the pupil who possessed this gift was initiated by him into all the mysteries of the art.

But David van Heem had been a long time without finding any one, in whom he hoped to live again. He saw that he was growing old, and he felt a sadness mixed with pride, that he could not have formed a pupil who should equal him; it seemed to him that he should die without posterity. One day, while finishing a masterpiece, this sad thought drew a tear from his eye. While musing thus, there was a light knock at the door of his studio, and one of his servants announced to him that a minister of the reformed church, accompanied by a young girl, asked to speak with him. The painter quitted his work, and ordered the strangers to be introduced. He rose to receive a man forty years of age, who led by the hand a young girl, who appeared to be about fifteen. This man had a grave demeanor, at once noble and modest. He was habited entirely in black, and his unornamented dress announced the ecclesiastic. His calm and serene aspect seemed a reflection of the Gospel, whose holy doctrines he professed. He was the father of the beautiful child whom he led. The young girl wore a robe of brown merino, which fitted closely to her finely rounded figure, and her beautiful fair hair was imprisoned in one of those coifs of silk and black lace, worn by the wives and daughters of the Dutch citizens. Her young face, around which clustered some golden ringlets, shone forth yet more fresh and rosy under the black covering of this nun’s hood. She kept her large blue eyes timidly cast down; she raised them at a word from her father, and smiling, showed her small pearly teeth, of dazzling whiteness. This angelic face attracted the notice of David van Heem, who took the hand of the young girl kindly, and asked her father what he desired of him. The Protestant minister took from under his daughter’s arm a portfolio of drawings, and having opened it, drew from it several sketches which he showed to the great artist.

“The child whom you see there has painted these flowers, without a master, notwithstanding the prohibition of her mother, who would have preferred seeing her at her needlework. For myself I have opposed her taste for the art, for I thought that the life of a woman to be calm and happy should be retired, that the éclat of talent became not a young maiden, and that especially for her, there is less joy than grief in the applause of this world. But her inclinations have triumphed over my efforts; all the flowers of the field have lived again under her inexperienced hand, which divined drawing, without having learned it; and seeing her imitations equal nature, I said to myself, it was the will of God; and the talent with which he has gifted her will not be fatal to her.”

“Say that it will make her glory and her fortune,” cried David van Heem, surveying with a beaming face the sketches before him. The child who has painted these flowers is destined to be the ornament of her country.”

“Approach Marie,” said her father, happy in spite of himself at the future promise to his daughter; — “ask our greatest painter to receive you as a pupil, and henceforth love and respect him as a father,”

“And from this day,” replied David van Heem, embracing the young girl; and pressing affectionately the hand of the Protestant minister, “this child shall be treated in my house like my own child, and I will unfold to her all the mysteries of my art.”

Some tears fell on Marie's cheeks, but she found no words to express her gratitude. The family of David van Heem became hers, his daughters treated her like a younger sister. Surrounded by love, encouraged by sweet praises, it seemed to her that she already tasted the first fruits of that artist-life, which her master had prophesied for her.

David van Heem understood the tender and enthusiastic soul of Marie. He poured out on her all his paternal bounty. That she might feel less the absence of her family, and that she might devote herself with ardor to the study of painting, he developed in her that love of art, which had possessed her while a mere child, and soon the whole world concentrated itself for the young girl within the compass of the studio, where her labors were mingled with those of her master. David van Heem blessed Heaven that he had found a pupil worthy of him. Sometimes the old man took pleasure in making Marie finish one of his own works, and he was proud as a father, when the amateurs to whom he showed his picture could not distinguish Marie's touch from his own. Under such a master, who, far from dreading her rivalry, encouraged it, the progress of Marie was rapid. After one year's study, she had mastered the whole science, and equalled the painter in execution; she already knew enough to dispense with lessons, but David could not dispense with her. She was the joy and pride of his age, and often in her bursts of gratitude, she promised the old man never to quit him.

The studio of David van Heem presented a charming picture. The noble old man, palette in hand, standing before a great canvass, destined for some sovereign of Europe, was surrounded by his daughters, good and simple women, who conversed gaily with Marie. The young inspired artist made the flowers bloom on the same canvass with her master. How beautiful she was thus, this young girl of seventeen! Her blue eyes always so sweet, glowed then with all the fire of genius; her cheeks bright with the animation of labor contrasted with the whiteness of her neck, upon which her hair fell luxuriantly. Her figure was of a flexibility full of elegance, and her

delicate rosy hands, which held the palette and brushes, seemed to have been formed for a model. She was a wholly poetical being, who realized for her old master the muse of painting.

Baskets of natural flowers, which served for models, exhaled their perfumes; precious vases and antique bronzes from Italy charmed the eye. The portraits of all the sovereigns of Europe, suspended from the walls, attracted the attention. Among them was preeminent the noble head of Louis the Fourteenth, full of grandeur. The king of France had himself sent his portrait to David van Heem, and other princes had followed his example, thus the studio of the painter was adorned with gifts, which royalty bestowed upon genius, as from power to power.

How noble was this artist life! how serene and graceful the interior of the studio! Sometimes the happy laborers were interrupted by illustrious visitors, who came to render homage to their talent, and purchase their paintings. Then only did any news from without reach this sanctuary; generally the world was nothing to them in this peaceful happiness. Often Marie sang with her master some solemn and affecting chant, which the daughters of David van Heem repeated in chorus. They laughed, they played, they admired an effect of light which the brush sought to produce, and the present day flowed on as happy as the past, and the morrow brought the same happiness.

Three years of Marie's life had thus passed away; three years, which had brought forth in her soul only pure and calm sentiments, or those quickening inspirations of art, which kindle the soul, without exhausting it. It is true that the poetical organization of Marie was tempered by that transparent and slightly cold nature, which makes the heart of a German woman beat only by halves. Marie's thoughts were lost in her musings, and asked nothing beyond. Among the pupils of David van Heem, no other had been admitted to his intimacy, no other had obtained the praises of the master, or had been distinguished by him. Marie confounded them in her indifference, her look never rested on any of them, and she could say with Shakspeare's Miranda, that she had never seen a man.

On the evening previous to the day when our story begins, Marie was painting near her master, when the door of the studio opened. A young man asked to speak with David van Heem.

"Enter, my friend," said the artist kindly. You are not unknown to me, "continued he, after having looked at him; "I have seen you before in my studio."

"Yes, and you took no notice of me," replied the young man with assurance, "therefore I take the liberty to come and recommend myself by showing you this sketch."

And he placed before the master triumphantly a very remarkable flower painting.

"You paint boldly; with strength, but too quickly; there is somewhat of the furioso in your work."

"Master, that is because I am lazy."

"Singular explanation of the fault with which I reproach you! It is ly from laziness then that you work too quickly?"

"Yes, master, I work quickly, that I may do nothing afterwards."

"And what charm do you find in inaction?"

"When I repose, I travel, I dream, I drink."

At this last word, Marie raised her head, and cast a look of disdainful astonishment upon him who had just uttered it. He continued without appearing troubled, and addressing himself to her;

“Yes, mademoiselle, does that surprise you? does that seem strange to you? A half intoxication inspires in my brain enchanting dreams; then I am surrounded by paintings more exquisite than those of our great master; I contemplate monuments which defy the most magnificent monuments of antiquity; I love and am beloved by young girls nearly as beautiful as you, mademoiselle.”

He said this with assurance, fixing his long black eyes full of boldness on Marie's look, which immediately fell.

“We have nothing to do with that, my boy,” said David van Heem; “you have talent, if you will apply yourself more closely. You can acquire some day fortune and renown.”

“Let fortune go; as for renown, it is, you see, like the fog, which passes over our rivers; I should love as well the water which flows beneath, though, to say the truth, water and I are open enemies.”

“Truce to these vulgar pleasantries,” said David van Heem with severity. “If you wish that I should find you worthy to be admitted into my studio, you must reform your language and conduct. Nature has well endowed you; but there is much yet to be done to aid nature.”

“It is truly admirable!” cried Marie, who had approached some moments before to look at the voting man's sketch.

And as if speaking to herself, she added in a low tone, — “I have never done anything so well.”

“Do you hear that praise?” said David; “it should make you very proud, for she who has pronounced it is Marie von Oosterwich, one of our greatest painters.”

“I knew that,” replied the voting man; “but that which I was ignorant of, and which is worth more, is that Marie is without doubt the most beautiful woman in the world.”

Speaking thus, he looked eagerly at the young girl.

“Is not he a child!” said David, smiling; not being able to conceal the paternal satisfaction which he felt in the praises of Marie; — “I like your frankness, my friend; talk less, be modest, and return to work in my studio,” added the good master, tapping him lightly on the shoulder. “But what is your name?”

“Guillaume van Aelst.”

“Ah! I knew your uncle; a painter of talent, but fond of the tavern, and of doing nothing.”

“It is a family failing.”

“But which can be rooted out,” replied David; “promise me to drink no more, and to renounce the ‘far niente,’ a bad herb brought from Italy.”

“Here I shall have no longer need of the intoxication that wine gives,” replied Guillaume, glancing again at Marie; “beautiful dreams will come of themselves; but with these dreams how sweet will be the ‘far niente.’ Labor opposes thought in its vague excursions.”

“Bah, bah!” interrupted David.

“Cannot one labor while dreaming?” said Marie in her turn. These were the only words that she uttered. They escaped from her as the involuntary expression of hope.

“If one must work to please you, master, I will work,” said Guillaume, eagerly; and his look addressed itself to Marie.

“Well! to-morrow; I will retain your sketch to examine it more closely.”

The young man bowed and retreated slowly, turning his head at each step; he did not meet Marie's eye.

“What a charming figure that voting man has,” cried the old painter.

“What a fine talent!” said Marie.

“Very well,” said David with an arch smile; “I snare the remark which you should have made, and you that which became me; you speak like the old man, and I like the young girl.”

“What do you mean, master?”

“That you should rather remark the figure of the young man than his talent, and I rather his talent than his figure.”

And the happy old man laughed at his own word, and at the embarrassment of the young girl.

“But,” said she, “I noticed both.”

“And in that case, what do you think of them?”

“I thought his face agreeable, and his talent wonderful. These flowers, are they not supernatural?” said she, pointing to Guillaume's sketch. “This cactus, with its purple flowers, its firm and pointed leaves; these aloes, with their alabaster bunches, bristling with thorns, are they not admirable? We should say they were preserved at Amsterdam in the greenhouses of the Stadtholder.”

“How!” said the master, more gaily, “those great black eyes, veiled with drooping lashes, surmounted by two arches of ebony, that pure and intellectual brow, that thick brown hair in wavy masses, that mouth with its coquettish moustache, adorned with dazzling teeth, that elegant figure, which a black velvet doublet displays to advantage, does not all that make a charming cavalier! Ah! ah! ah! you see that I have good eyes.”

Marie smiled not; she threw herself with emotion upon the paternal bosom of David, and said to him, half trembling;

“Master, do you wish then that I should love thus young man?”

“And why not, if he should become one of our greatest painters, if I can render him worthy of thee? From to-morrow we will begin his education.” Saying these words, he went out on business, and left Marie with a new thought, with a sentiment never before awakened in her soul. She understood nothing of the unknown reverie, which took possession of her; she could not explain to herself why she had abandoned her brushes, and remained pensive before Guillaume's sketch. This sketch was very beautiful. She had at first admired it enthusiastically, but she now saw it no longer; instead of those Asiatic flowers, with their brilliant colors and their gigantic forms, which the young painter had designedly chosen to develop the bold and vivid touches of his brush; Marie saw behind them the passionate and expressive face of Guillaume. She remained thus many hours, absorbed in a kind of inward contemplation. When David van Heem reentered the studio, he gently reproved her idleness, for, looking at her work, he perceived that she had not done anything since his departure.

“Are you going to be like Guillaume? Are you going to imitate his idleness, and dream so as to do nothing?” said the good painter laughing.

“Oh! to-morrow I will atone for the time lost,” replied she, with emotion, “but to-day I am indisposed.”

And the poor child blushed; she thought she had deceived, yet she told the truth; she was not well; an emotion at once deep and quiet threw her body and soul into a soft languor. For the first time in her life she was silent and pensive at evening, and at night her fair lashes were not closed; this was her first sleepless night.

Is love then a grief, that from its first awakening it should express itself in sadness and tears? Its passionate transports, its ardent extasies, its most intoxicating felicities are mixed with dark shadows and melancholy smiles. We do not enjoy this intense happiness. We dream, we desire, we call, and believe that we seize it, when we grasp only its phantom; and when we think that we have lost it, we weep as if we had possessed it. It is but a celestial mirage, but is worth more than all the oases on the earth. Often he who causes this deceitful vision is ignorant, or is unworthy of it; then the soul which deceives itself is the prey of its own dreams, and is consumed in torments of its own creation. Love, that tyrannical sentiment, often enchains hearts, that nothing should draw together. It fixes the virgin thoughts of the young maiden upon the impure man, who profanes them; it unites a calm, sweet life to a stormy and licentious being; it casts devotion to egotism, as a martyr to the lions of the circus.

Marie had none of those forebodings which poison love; but she wondered in her innocence that her thoughts could rest on a young man of such shameless manners and speech. He was handsome, but of an ignoble beauty; he had talent, but presumption without true pride; he was full of vanity; he was not truly an artist, an inspired artist, at once proud and modest. He believed not in his own genius, and had received it from God, without comprehending its greatness. Marie felt all this vaguely; but in the impetuosity of her heart, stronger than her reason and her purity, she accused herself of judging too harshly and too quickly one, who, after all, had received from heaven two marks of special favor, beauty and genius.

On the morrow, Marie's cheeks were pale; yet she had regained her calm exterior, and painted with her master, conversing calmly; yet she felt a vague uneasiness; it was past noon and Guillaume had not arrived.

“Our young man is late,” said her master, as if he had divined her thought. “He has not boasted falsely, he is indolent and careless.”

Marie did not reply.

“I have made some inquiries concerning him,” continued David van Heem; “they say that he is disorderly in his habits, that he works only when urged by necessity; but that, like the Neapolitan lazzarone, living is for him doing nothing.”

“He has confessed to us all his faults,” said Marie, “and you had hope of correcting them.”

“I have reflected on it, and it appears difficult to me.”

“What! even before having undertaken it?”

“Poor child!” murmured David. She remained silent, and appeared to muse sadly.

Before admitting Guillaume into the sanctuary of his studio, David van Heem had made inquiries concerning his character. At first he had been won in spite of himself, by his frankness, the power of his talent, and his handsome face; but perceiving that Marie had received the same impressions, he wished to assure himself if he who caused them was really worthy of them. The good old man thought of Marie's future life; he pictured it to himself as calm and brilliant as her present life; and he would have reproached himself with treason, if he had not secured the

happiness of the angel, sent by God to his old age. He had learned in the city, that Guillaume, an undisciplined child, had quitted his family at the age of twelve years. Vagabond and idle, he cultivated the talent with which nature had endowed him, merely to gratify his passions, wine and play. Hardly had he attained his nineteenth year, when he was already cited at Utrecht, where he had been but six months, as a frequenter of taverns.

Learning Guillaume's conduct, David van Heem regretted having too quickly and easily consented to give the young painter private lessons, and to admit him into the chaste society of his dear Marie. He almost reproached himself with having been imprudent, and he was thinking how to repair his fault, when Guillaume appeared. He bowed with a careless air, his hair was in disorder, his dress retained the scent of wine, his appearance bore marks of having just left the inn. Marie dared not look at him, and David gave him a scrutinizing glance.

"I have made you wait," said he unconcernedly; "pardon, master; but before immuring myself in a cloister, I was obliged to bid adieu to my companions; and I have just sworn to them eternal friendship, glass in hand."

"It was a young man of talent, and not a sot, that I expected to admit to my studio," said the old man, fixing on Guillaume a stern look.

The young man sustained this look with assurance, and replied smiling; —

"Do you think, master, that the love of wine prevented Schoorel and Mabuse from being great men?"

"I think," replied David half vexed, "that we should imitate their talent, and not their vice. Rubens, the eagle of painting, had as much grandeur in his sentiments as in his genius, and was never sullied by those ignoble habits, that you call relaxations. If the life of Mabuse tempt you, choose a master who resembles him, I shall not suit you."

"Is it a dismissal that you give me?"

"Well! yes, go," said David with some emotion; "our peaceful habits are not yours."

"I could have accomodated myself to them, and found a charm in them."

The old painter shook his head.

"It is well," replied Guillaume haughtily; "I will take my sketch, and bid you adieu. Adieu, Mademoiselle."

Marie answered not; she did not raise her head; she feared lest he might see a tear fall from her long lashes. But when Guillaume had gone she attempted to justify him; and it was then that the good painter, who could not resist one of Marie's desires, blaming himself for his severity, as he had at first for his indulgence, recalled the young man, who had already passed the staircase. Guillaume returned slowly, and reentered the studio triumphantly.

"You have thought better of it?" said he, "and I think that you are right; I am worth more than I appear to be, and shall perhaps do you honor."

And without waiting a word from the Master, he placed his sketch on an easel, and began to paint. Then his companions seemed to have dissappeared from before him; he painted with ardor, with rapture; one would have thought him mastered by his work.

"The plant, which he reproduced from memory, grew under his brushes, as from the hand of nature. Marie and David van Heem looked at him with admiration. When he had finished according to his fancy his sketch, already far advanced, he pushed back the easel with his foot, threw down his brushes and maul-stick, and crossing his arms, he remained motionless,

contemplating Marie. Labor had animated his features and stamped them with nobleness and inspiration. His black eye, calm and radiant, had a penetrating glance, which attracted the notice of the young girl; without wishing it, Marie looked at Guillaume, and felt happy in seeing him so handsome. Guillaume smiled like a man in ecstasy; but soon his face lost by degrees every trace of enthusiasm; a kind of languor overspread his features, and his head sank on his breast, his eyes closed, he appeared to sleep.

“He has fainted,” cried Marie, with a kind of fright.

“He is asleep,” said David van Heem calmly.

“It is the fatigue of labor and inspiration,” added Marie, almost with respect.

“It is the fatigue of his voluptuous dreams,” murmured the master, who had observed Guillaume, with the sagacity of an old man. And leading Marie away, he left the young man asleep in his studio.

After some hours of deep sleep, Guillaume awoke, and taking the picture which he had finished during the day, went out. He felt the appetite of twenty years; and as he did not need to pass the night in sleep, he passed it in good cheer. The following morning, leaving the tavern, he went to a broker, where he sold for some florins the masterpiece, which he had finished the preceding evening. The landlord of the inn waited at the door, and took from Guillaume's hand the money that had just been counted out to him. Remaining without resources for the day, Guillaume thought on working anew, and regained the house of David van Heem; it seemed yet buried in sleep; no sound was heard; but as the gate of the garden which fronted the house was ajar, Guillaume repaired to the studio, where everything was still quiet.

He entered by stealth, and stood some minutes without perceiving Marie, who was deeply engaged in a prayer-book. She herself had not heard the sound of his steps, and Guillaume remained contemplating her, without her raising her head, — she had ceased reading, and remained seated on one of those splendid arm-chairs of ebony, with gothic carvings, so precious in our times. Dressed in a white robe, her arms and shoulders half bare, her hair flowing in golden ringlets over her calm brow and pale cheeks; thus leaning her head on her hand, sad and pensive, she resembled one of those ethereal beings sung by Moore; celestial beings who suspected not our miseries, and were initiated into them by love. Marie had passed a tranquil night; the evening before Guillaume had appeared to her a noble and earnest young man, full of genius and enthusiasm for the arts; she no longer repelled his image; the last words which her master uttered had not reached her ears, and had she heard them, she would not have understood their import. She loved Guillaume, and she knew not that she ought to forbid herself to love him. He was a brother, whom God had sent to her, and at this thought she prayed for him. Suddenly she raised her blue eyes, so clear and pure, but she did not see Guillaume. Her look rested on the trellised window, near which she was sitting, and she stretched her hand out mechanically to pluck one of the climbing bell-flowers, which formed on the lattice a mosaic of flowers and verdure. Not being able to reach it, she rose to gather it. The breeze of spring breathing through the trees of the garden into the studio, made Marie's dress flutter, and waving the hair from her face, imprinted on her cheeks a rosy tint as delicate as the flower of the bind-weed which she twisted in her fingers. The sunbeams sparkled over her head like a golden halo. She had an expression so holy, that one must have blessed and adored her with reverence; but Marie's beauty was at the same time so youthful and moving that it inflamed Guillaume's passions. He rushed

toward the young girl, and surrounding her with his arms, as if to prevent her flight, cried; "Oh! Marie, how beautiful you are!" — and he imprinted a kiss on her arm. The innocent girl did not refuse him; she looked at him with happiness, and said to him without blushing; "It is you, ah! it is you, Guillaume, who are beautiful!" And their looks mingled with transport. Marie became pale and cold; Guillaume pressed his burning lips to hers. Then, as if a mysterious and sudden revelation had penetrated her heart, she freed herself from Guillaume's embrace; then returning to herself with dignity, in her turn she touched with her lips the forehead of the young man, and said to him with a trembling voice; — "Guillaume, you are my betrothed, you are the first whose lips have touched mine; Guillaume you will be the last." And tottering with emotion, she fell fainting.

Fright made Guillaume forget that thus young girl was in his power; fear made him respectful. Seeing her so pale and cold, terror seized him; he thought that he had killed her. He went to seek assistance, when David van Heem appeared.

Divining the truth, and even more, he seemed to regain the strength of his youth to hurl down Guillaume, and drive him from his studio.

"Miserable wretch, what have you done?" cried he, raising his arm against him.

"Nothing," answered Guillaume, in a tone of frankness. "I love her."

"You love her, and have insulted her?" cried the old painter; "Go; I will know the truth from her"

Guillaume departed. Marie quickly recovered. With the anxiety of a father, David van Heem dared not at first interrogate her. But when he saw that the blood again colored her cheeks, he folded her to his heart, and drying a tear, he demanded from her instantly the truth. She answered by tears; then the avowal of her love escaped from her in these words; "I love him and I have told him so."

"And he?" replied the old master with vivacity.

"Oh! he, he loves me also," said she; and she related frankly the scene which we have described.

David comprehended this spontaneous development of a feeling which we have formerly known; but he foresaw all the abandonment and danger of it. He made Marie understand that she ought to resist, not the transports of her heart, which would be always pure, but Guillaume's desires, which might mislead her. He made her feel that, which natural modesty and innocence reveal but by halves; that love ought to be concealed in the heart of a woman, until the day, when a holy sanction should come, to perpetuate by consecrating it. She understood that until then to avow her love would be to profane it, and she promised her master, that without retracting the words which had escaped from her in her innocence, she would never express to Guillaume what she felt for him, — "until" she added, "you shall tell me. You may love him, and I shall feel that this love is no longer discordant with my other sentiments; for, I must confess to you, master, I should not have chosen this love; it has come to me, it astonishes me, it is contrary to my nature; but I resist in vain; it triumphs; it intoxicates me, and overthrows the peace of my life."

"It is not love that you must conquer, replied David; it is he who is the cause of it that must be changed; there is good in Guillaume, and if he is to become my child by being united to thee, I would treat him henceforth as a son. Go, call him, let him resume his labor. You shall see him every day, at every hour, but never without me."

Marie understood the holy thoughts of the old man, and fell at his knees to bless him. Then, by his order, she recalled Guillaume, who was impatiently pacing the garden; he cleared the staircase at a bound, and rushing into the studio, said with an overflowing heart; — “Well! dear Marie, are you better?”

“So well,” said David calmly, “that she is going to resume her brush; come, my children, both to your work.”

Guillaume was reassured by Marie's demeanor, by her sweet smile, by her heightened color; he dared not think of dissimulation towards the old painter. Emboldened by the presence of her master, Marie addressed Guillaume first.

“But where is your picture? I have not been able to find it,” said she to him.

Guillaume blushed.

“Go seek it, if you have left it at home,” said David van Heem; “I have spoken of it to a merchant, who will give you a good price for it.”

“Master,” murmured Guillaume, making an effort over himself, and abruptly endeavoring to disembarass himself, “there is no longer time; I have sold it from necessity.”

David van Heem did not reproach him; but he continued with a kindness that Guillaume could not explain:

“My child, that shall be so no longer; I wish that you should live henceforth at my house; you will find there all the pleasures of life, and you can then labor for glory, and not for those miserable florins, which the brokers will pay for your talent.”

This indulgent kindness confounded Guillaume; he looked at Marie to know the meaning of it; the face of the young girl expressed gratitude, and her tears silently blessed the provident affection of the old man.

The characters of the greater part of the Flemish painters are a curious study; there are those who unite to a creative force and richness an uncultivated and slothful mind, incessantly stupefied by the intoxication into which their gross passions plunge them. Unpolished diamonds with a rough surface, these odd geniuses have only sparks of greatness; their art makes them touch the sublime, their nature, the base; and when youth has consumed this fleeting fire of an imperfect intellect, they die out, squalid and besotted, on the table of an inn. Guillaume was not yet so bad; but the noble David van Heem, who had seen among his schoolfellows examples of the irregularities and blemishes of genius, discovered with affright the low tendencies of the young painter; he was born with an instinct for good, but he had never had the conviction of it. Sometimes he was moved by the example of a great action or a great sentiment, but he himself never conceived the inspiration or even the first thought of it. Having from his infancy broken the salutary and holy restraints of family ties, he had delivered himself up without restraint to all the fancies which possessed him, and the habits, to which he had accustomed himself, bound him all the more strongly, that he felt a kind of pride in his independence. Guillaume gathered more from his sensations than from his soul. Beauty moved him, a word of love made him start; the sight of deep grief and a word of despair wrung from the heart would have found him cold. He had an occasional vivacity, which came from the blood; but he was so insensible to the good, that he never had a spontaneous transport for glory or virtue. Already his fine head became less fine; retaining yet the life of youth and health, it lost by degrees that intellectual expression, so charming in the human face.

Why does not God grant to woman, in the hour when he sends her love, one of his piercing glances, which search to their depths misery and vice! Why do so many trusting, ingenuous souls yield themselves up fatally to the impure spirits, that will profane them! Light fails them, while seeking for happiness; but it shines out and seems to taunt them in the abyss of sorrow, into which they are cast, deprived of her. Marie was the soul; Guillaume was matter. He loved her for her beauty; she loved him for the faith which she had in his genius, and the sentiments, which she thought must flow from it. But, enlightened by David, this faith had become less blind. Marie comprehended that Guillaume's nature was not identical with hers, and she feared the same inequality in their loves as in their tastes; yet so powerful was the charm which attracted her to Guillaume, that she felt a deep joy in thinking that he was about to become the guest of his master, and the constant companion of her labors.

During the first days of his instalment in the house of the old painter, Guillaume did not quit the studio. He had begun a new sketch, but he painted with difficulty; — his slothful nature triumphed over his feeble will. He passed hours in looking at Marie, in replying to the words of the young girl by gestures of love; he could find no other expressions, for he had nothing in his soul. She, happy in seeing him, conversed gaily, in accents full of ardor and vivacity; she spoke art, tenderness, happiness. She painted with more sentiment and enthusiasm; love seemed to redouble her powers, while it had stupefied those of the young man. Did a direct and burning word of love escape from Marie, if it struck the heart of Guillaume, it did not draw forth a feeling, expressed by a tender and respectful word; the lips of the young man moved, but it was a kiss that they would give; he inclined towards the young girl, as if to embrace her; loving yet fearful she then fled; her heart was sad and humble, and she wept, saying, "He does not love me!" The old painter remarked with grief the strife of these two opposite natures, which were at variance while seeking to approach each other; he would have separated them forever, but love, by a strange fatality, called them together.

The house of David van Heem was a calm sanctuary, a holy retreat, where virtue secured peace, and the arts that enthusiasm which embellishes and animates virtue. The fortune, which the old man had amassed by his talent, afforded him an honorable maintenance, but no splendor; none of that ostentatious luxury, which seeks to produce a fine outward effect, at the expense of happiness and inward tranquillity. David van Heem's daughters were married; he had no one but his adopted child, his dear Marie; and sometimes he thought in Guillaume's good hours, that he should be happy to unite them and die surrounded by their cares. This consoling dream was dissipated each day; he who had caused it, seemed to seek to destroy it. The hospitality of the old painter seemed burdensome to Guillaume. He found at David's house a plentiful table, but the strong liquors, to which he was accustomed and which brutalized him, never appeared there. At evening some distinguished men of the city, some illustrious travellers, some prince passing through Utrecht came to visit the great painter. They conversed, they became interested in some question of art, and never to turn the conversation, did they have recourse to play, that other bad passion, all powerful in the soul of Guillaume. Enthralled by Marie's beauty, on which he hung enraptured each day, he resisted during several weeks the call of his inveterate habits; but he could not conquer them; he had no resolution. He had finished a second picture; it was not a masterpiece, like the first; it was a work in which the life was wanting. One evening he took away this picture and did not appear at supper. Marie feared some misfortune for him, and wept.

His old master foresaw some fault, and remained sad and silent. It grew late. They waited in vain for Guillaume; he did not come.

“Take courage, my noble child,” said her master, leaving her; “this man is unworthy of thee.” And these words, which struck her heart, tortured her all the night. She would have rejected an affection so deep and tyrannical, but she felt mastered by it, and not being able to stifle it, she abandoned the attempt. The following day, David van Heem went out to attend the French ambassador, who had summoned him. Marie entered the deserted studio, pale and disheartened; life seemed to her sad and weary. She recalled to mind sadly the time when she saw the days flow on for her so lightly and joyfully; she stopped before the picture which she had finished the preceding evening; it was a crown of orange flowers and white roses, a nuptial crown, destined for the daughter of Madame de la Valliere, for M’lle de Blois, who was to marry the Prince de Conti.

Although at war with their country, Louis XIV protected the Dutch artists, and had ordered this picture from Marie van Oosterwich, whose fame had reached even the court of France. The young girl had done it with love, for in tracing under her brush this virgin garland, she thought involuntarily on the day, when one similar should encircle her pure brow. Upon an urn of chased gold, Marie had draped one of those magnificent veils of Flanders lace, whose wavy shadows also adorned a likeness of the bride. Her brush had given all the delicacy of the rich design of this precious fabric, and upon this nuptial ornament she had gracefully placed the modest flowers which completed its decoration. Each orange bud, each rose in the crown had been to Marie a long and precious labor; her heart was bound up in this work; she could not bear to part with it; but the French ambassador claimed it. A few days and it would be lost to her; she wished to make a copy, but her strength failed. The tumultuous feelings which convulsed her soul disturbed the calmness requisite for those exquisite works of art.

She was still contemplating this crown which she had made under Guillaume’s eye, and thinking on him when the door of the studio was suddenly thrown open. He rushed towards her, his hair in disorder, his features discomposed, bearing the stamp of despair.

“Marie, dear Marie,” he cried, “you alone can save me from dishonor, and I come to you with confidence. I have been separated from you, one day, from you my guardian angel, and my evil life has retaken me, body and soul. I have played, I have lost; I played upon honor, and I should be abused, trampled under foot, if I did not pay. They await me, they have given me but a few hours; Marie, will you save me?”

“What must be done?” said she, happy in seeing him again, and almost forgetting his offences. “Guillaume, do you wish that I should speak to my master? He is generous and good; he will come to our assistance. Do you wish what I possess? Will my little savings suffice for you? I have three hundred florins; take them, Guillaume, I pray you.”

“Alas! it is not enough, said he, making an effort over himself; I owe eight hundred florins.”

“Well! I will implore my master, and if he cannot give you that sum, Guillaume, I have the diamond Medallion which the Emperor Leopold sent me; I will pawn it to a Jew.”

“It will be useless, Marie; the formalities will consume too much time. I am lost, Marie; adieu, pardon me the injury that I have done you.”

“Oh! why do you speak of injury?” she cried; I bless you, for when you are here, I am happy, I suffer no more. Leave me not again, find happiness with me, and take my life if thou needest it. Oh! Guillaume, what can I do to give you peace?”

And the eyes of the young girl spoke passion. She pressed the hands of Guillaume with indescribable tender ness. At this moment, she forgot that he who implored it was unworthy of her. The reunion was so sweet an intoxication, that all fears were forgotten“.

“Marie,” replied Guillaume, “the sacrifice is too great; I dare not exact it.”

“My God! Guillaume, would you ask this picture, destined for the King of France, this picture which belongs to me no longer? I should break my word, yet I will give it you.”

“What do you say, Marie? Have you divined my meaning? It is this picture which I need, and I dared not confess it to you; the other day, a broker who admired it valued it at a thousand florins; he said that he would give eight hundred for it.”

“And that is the sum which you have lost? Guillaume, take it, I will paint it again from memory, I will pass nights in labor. Guillaume, go quickly, you will be too late.”

And as if she had not made an immense sacrifice, she joyfully put into his hands the masterpiece designed for the daughter of Louis XIV.

“Marie, I do not deserve your kindness; I am not worthy to bless you; may God reward you!”

He was about to depart, but stopping suddenly, he felt a kind of remorse.

“I am very guilty, very base; to save myself, I expose you to the anger of the king of France; what will he say to the public sale of this picture, destined for his daughter

“Ah, what are such fears to me? Oh! Guillaume, you will never understand my love.”

And, overcome by emotion, she fell on his neck, and began to weep; then suddenly freeing herself,

“Go!” she cried, “and may I see you again calm and free from evil remembrances.”

When he had departed, she threw herself on her knees, and asked pardon of God for her idolatry. Guillaume hastened rapidly down stairs, and without seeing him, came full against David van Heem, who had just returned home. The old painter had recognised him, and when he found Marie in the studio in tears, he knew all.

“And you have let him carry away that picture,” cried he with a kind of affright.

“Master, his honor was at stake; to assist him, I would have given my life!”

“My child,” answered David, deeply afflicted, “misfortune has entered our doors with this man.”

“Oh! say rather happiness!” cried she with passionate sincerity; “when I see him, I am happy in dying for him. Even now, it is with joy that I weep. I have given him repose by a sacrifice which seemed sweet to me.”

“You have given him repose, by destroying that of your old master. Oh! Marie, love effaces me from thy heart, and thy adopted father is no longer anything to thee!”

“Do not accuse me; can I help loving him? You have seen my struggles; I have striven with my heart; I have been conquered; but this love is not impious; were it necessary to resign it for you, my father, you know that I would,” said she, with resignation.

“Marie, the sacrifice which he has wrung from you will involve us in great misfortunes; the French army is at our gates; Louis prepares to enter our city as a conqueror; at the least offence he can treat us as enemies. Until now, he has protected us as artists; if we irritate him, he will persecute us as Dutch and Protestants. The French ambassador has just summoned me, he has apprised me of the new successes of the French army. ‘You will see our powerful monarch,’ he added, ‘he comes to reestablish the Catholic religion in your conquered provinces. You, whom he has named his painter, you, whom he has ennobled, you should give an example of submission by returning into the pale of the church.’ I kept silent, and the ambassador understood my thoughts. He coldly assured me of his protection; then, as I was about to take leave, he recalled me to speak of thee, Marie. ‘You have,’ he said to me, ‘a skilful pupil, from whom our great king has ordered a picture; this work is expected at court; is it finished?’ — ‘Yes my lord.’ — ‘Well! I will send for it to-day, and I will myself go and see if your pupil will be less rebellious than you to the desires of Louis the Great.’

“‘Marie van Oosterwich is the daughter of a Protestant minister,’ I answered; ‘she cannot renounce her religion without giving a death-blow to her father.’ — ‘The Bishop of Utrecht, whom France has just nominated, will give her to understand, that there is an authority yet more sacred than that of a father; it is that of a king, emanating from that of God.’ Pronouncing these words, he hastily left me. You see, my child, we have everything to fear from these hostile dispositions; we must recover this picture, so imprudently delivered to Guillaume.”

And without awaiting Marie's answer, David van Heem gave orders that the young man should be sought after.

“Master,” said she firmly, “it is I alone who am guilty, and I wish to bear alone the anger of the ambassador; all this has been done without your counsel; ah! I should be too much punished, should you suffer by it.”

“Are you not my daughter?” said David tenderly; “our griefs like our joys cannot be divided. If the unfortunate one visit us, we will receive him together.”

Guillaume returned, pale and cast down like a criminal.

“I have had you recalled,” said David gravely.

“It is too late,” said Guillaume bending down his head.

“I will give you eight hundred florins.”

“It is too late, I tell you; the picture is sold.”

“Can I not with gold obtain it from the broker?”

“It is no longer in his possession.”

“And to whom has he sold it?”

“To the French ambassador,” cried Guillaume in despair. “Oh! pardon me this new misfortune, I have been deceived by this man's avidity; he has taken advantage of my distress; but, believe me, oh, believe me, I was ignorant of his intentions.”

The old David van Heem was thunderstruck; but he read so much suffering on Guillaume's features, that he could not find words in which to reproach him. Marie began to console them; she pressed her master's hand and the young man's together.

“Why afflict yourselves thus?” said she to them; “to aid our friends in trouble brings sweeter pleasures than the favors of princes. I am going to write to the ambassador, to try and justify myself. If I cannot appease him, why then, master, we will live in obscurity, during the

occupation of the French. The triumph of the enemies of our country should indeed humble us, and their protection seem bitter to us.”

“Noble child!” murmured David.

Guillaume appeared not to understand this lofty pride. While they were consulting on the means to be used to avoid persecution, a friend of David van Heem, a sheriff of the city of Utrecht, entered the studio, and said sadly to the old man; “What madness has seized you to resist the king of France? why furnish our enemies with pretexts to persecute us? The weak should submit, waiting till they shall be strong enough to revolt.” And the sheriff, pressed by questions as to what they had to fear, told David van Heem, that he entered the house of the French ambassador, as he was on the point of going out, and that he had found him very much irritated at the resistance which the painter had offered to his idea of Catholic proselytism. The ambassador had wished to convert some of the distinguished citizens, and see them follow the triumphal entry, which was in preparation for Louis XIV. He had not succeeded in his attempt on the painter, and was thinking how to revenge himself, when the Jewish broker to whom Guillaume had sold Marie's painting asked to speak with him. This broker carried on a great trade in works of art; he owned a Magazine of immense riches, and already thought of escaping the pillage of the conquerors by putting himself under the protection of the French ambassador. Other Jews, to escape losses by the war, had set the example by sending a considerable tribute of silver to France. This broker had thought of offering rare pictures, thinking thus to flatter the sovereign who had declared himself protector of the arts. When Guillaume had delivered Marie's masterpiece to the Jew, the man saw all the advantage that he could obtain from this work, by carrying it himself to the French ambassador, and offering it to him under the respectful form of a restitution. This step of the Jew had all the success that he had hoped from it. The ambassador learning that the picture came from the studio of David van Heem, had promised the broker to reward his disinterestedness. At the same time he broke out in threats against the arrogant artist, “who,” he said, “dared to revolt against Louis the Great.” Hearing an account of this scene, David understood all the imminence of the danger which menaced him; yet he hoped to escape persecution by leading a retired life during the sojourn of the French in Utrecht. The sheriff shook his head.

“You are not a man who can be forgotten,” said he to him; “if you had slavishly submitted to the will of the king, he would have loaded you with honors; you have dared to resist; much more, you have apparently dared to brave him; Louis XIV. will persecute you, he will make an example of you. You are celebrated; he will think to render his authority more imposing by the severity which he will display towards you.”

“The peace of my old age is destroyed,” said David van Heem sadly. “What can be done?”

“Depart with me, master, said Marie; we will go to my family at Delft, my native town, an obscure place, that persecution will not visit; there we shall regain the peace and security necessary for labor. Master, let us depart, and regret nothing since we shall not be separated.”

She looked at Guillaume; he appeared to reflect.

“This young girl is right,” said the sheriff; “you must depart, and that as quickly as possible. When you shall be no longer here, I can preserve your house from pillage; I will obtain

sureties. All your arrangements can be made during the day; to-morrow be far away from Utrecht; fly from the persecution, which, doubt not, is preparing for you.”

“The will of God be done,” said the old David with resignation; “if my last days should be evil, at least may he watch over those of my child. My friend, I will follow your advice; I will depart to-morrow, with Marie.”

“And with Guillaume,” cried she full of love.

“If he wishes to share our fate,” replied the master.

Guillaume seemed to awake from the reverie in which he was plunged.

“It is I who have troubled your beautiful and tranquil life,” said he; “but if you forgive me, if you do not fear the influence of my society, I will never leave you.”

“Never,” said Marie, “and we shall be happy wherever we go.” She could no longer restrain her love, it overflowed in spite of herself.

The departure was decided upon. David gave some orders to Guillaume, who went to execute them, and during his absence, he arranged with Marie all that was necessary for their emmigration. While making these sad preparations, the expression of the old painter seemed more than usually melancholy; but by a contrast which existed for the last time between the sentiments of the master and the pupil, Marie's beautiful face, beamed with an involuntary joy, while she was actively engaged in all the preparations for departure. David observed this emotion, and gently reproached her for it.

“When I leave in sadness the house where I was born, and should have died,” said he, “without a hope of ever again returning to it, “why dost thou not share my affliction, thou, my daughter, who formerly comprehendedst all my feelings?”

“And you, master,” replied she, “why can you not feel that I am happy, in giving happiness to all; to you, to my father, to my family, whom we shall again see; to the town which we shall inhabit? Oh! it seems to me that our life will be henceforward one long festival. Guillaume loves me; this misfortune, which overtakes us, and of which he is perhaps the cause, has made his love known to me; you have heard him, Master, he has told us himself that lie will never leave us. Repentance has made him good; and do you wish me to be afflicted by a misfortune which gives me his heart?”

“My God! grant that she may be happy, for it would kill her to be deceived!” said David in a low and fervent tone. “Yes, my daughter, thy happiness will make me forget my sorrows. May this happiness be as great as I desire!”

“He loves me; I wish nothing more.”

“Trust to my experience to sound Guillaume's heart upon this love; let me question him. If I find him worthy of thee, from this evening he shall be thy betrothed. He will protect thee from the dangers which may menace our journey, better than I, a poor old man; and if he prove himself noble and good, on our arrival at your father's house, your union shall be accomplished.”

“Master, here he is,” cried Marie, who heard footsteps. “Ah! let me bear what you say to him; my heart understands his better than yours can, and I wish to hear his answer to you.”

Then, as Guillaume approached, at a sign of assent from her master, she concealed herself in a corner of the carved stone balcony upon which the window of the studio opened.

Guillaume had been absent several hours; but he had not been employed all this time in executing the orders which his master had given him. He had met on his way the companions of

his Bacchanalian orgies, those who the evening before had won from him the eight hundred florins. He would have avoided them; but entangled with them, he had yielded anew to that humiliating ascendancy, which vice exercises over the man, who has once been weak enough to accept its dominion. Guillaume was dragged to the inn.

“I bid you adieu,” said he, emptying a glass which had just been poured out; “I depart tomorrow; I leave Utrecht for a long time.”

“What! you depart, when pleasures arrive?” cried all his friends.

“Do you call the triumphal entrance of our enemies into this city, which they will pillage to their heart's content, pleasure?”

“There are no enemies but crime and misery,” said they, laughing; “let us unite ourselves to the victors, and we shall cease to be the vanquished. A city taken, or one which opens its gates, is a mine of pleasure for artists; noisy saturnalia, easy amours, riches quickly gained and dissipated, all this for him who knows how to enjoy it, and the ‘far niente,’ the ‘dolce far niente’ is assured to us during this happy season.”

Guillaume was allured by these inducements; still he feebly resisted.

“I have promised to go,” said he, “and I will go.”

“Let us see! fate will decide that,” cried several voices; “come, take up the dice and try; you go, or you stay; you go if you win, you remain if you lose; you must see that all the chances are in your favor; though losing, you still gain, for your departure is doubtless a penance imposed on you, and from which we shall deliver you. Good Heavens! to depart at the moment of a military invasion is renouncing the joys of taverns, and confessing yourself unworthy of them. Come, take up the dice, and let fate overcome your indecision!”

Guillaume still hesitated, but he yielded to the railleries heaped on him; he shook the dice-box, and as the dice came down,

“This pledges your word,” said they; “if you lose, you remain; that is your word of honor!”

“So be it,” murmured he.

The dice fell; Guillaume had lost, he was conquered.

“And now perform your oath! you will remain with us.”

“‘Tis well, I have never failed in a promise at play; but I ought not to have done it; I had consented to depart, and I dare not go and disengage myself.”

Guillaume spoke truly; cowardly and timid in all his actions, he was neither proud enough, nor strong enough, to resist the persuasions of others, and when he had yielded to them, he had not the courage to avow openly that he had done so. To avoid all explanation with David van Heem, and especially to escape Marie's presence, he had thought of letting them both depart without seeing them again; but a remnant of delicacy prevented him; he had received money from the old painter to make some purchases; he must render an account of it.

They made him swear again that he would not depart, and he must perform this oath; for he, who violated the most sacred duties, believed himself bound by an oath, made at play in a drunken fit. Till we meet again, repeated he; and walked slowly towards the quiet house of David van Heem, which night already veiled.

Entering the studio, he was happy not to see Marie.

“My son,” said David to him kindly, “you are very late.”

“Master, here are your purchases; these colors, these oils, these brushes required selection; it has taken me a long time. This is what I have expended, here is the money due to you.”

“It is well, my friend.”

“Adieu, master; I have now something to do for myself.”

And already he had repassed the threshold of the door.

“Is the affair which calls you so pressing, that you cannot listen to me?”

“Master, I will return.”

He sought to avoid an explanation by a falsehood. David took him by the arm.

“Guillaume, it concerns the happiness that I wish to give you; do you love Marie?”

“She is so beautiful!” said the young man with vivacity, who could understand in this woman, the noblest of beings, nothing but her beauty.

“But do you love her?” replied the master; “do you understand the worth of her soul and genius?”

“I understand that I love her, while beholding her.”

“And when you think of her, do you understand it?”

“I love rather her presence than the remembrance of it; a word of love uttered by her mouth, rather than a word of love that she may write to me; a kiss of love that she might give me would be sweeter than her acts of devotion; but Marie will never understand that; she is cold as the marble virgins of our temple.”

Eternal reproach of the libertine to the modest woman, of the man who mistakes the fire of the blood for warmth of soul, and believes not in the love which is drowned in tears, but in that which bursts forth boldly.

“Marie loves you enough,” replied David, “to give you all the pleasures of which she dreams in her virgin heart, and those which you might wish to obtain from her.”

“She loves me in her way, which is not mine; I must renounce her.”

“Renounce her,” cried the old man, pained as if the blow, which was to strike Marie, had reached him. “You believe yourself then unworthy of Marie? your vices are then so inveterate that love cannot make you conquer them? Guillaume, return to the right path, there is yet time; an angel and an old man near your heart might guide you in life; if you repulse them, you will perish in the mire.”

“I am unworthy of you, I am unworthy of her.”

“Unworthy by weakness, unworthy because you do not love; for love strengthens us and overturns all obstacles; it renders easy that which seems impossible to one who does not love. It melts the soul by its tenderness, it elevates it by its greatness, it illumines it by its brightness. Guillaume, Marie's love ought to shine on you and regenerate you.” The old man spoke warmly, and the young man remained cold; he could not understand.

“The love of this angel will change your nature, continued David; it is the happiness which awaits your life; evil will flee, when you shall have fled from it; you will return to it pure; let this day efface the past. Banish the remembrance of the images of vice; you are no longer the young lawless rover, Guillaume, you may at this moment become the betrothed of Marie. Say only that you love her enough to make her happy; that you feel bold and strong enough to protect

her against dangers during our flight? After this noviciate of happiness, you will be her husband; there is the goal, it depends on you to attain it.”

Guillaume did not reply. David thought for a moment that the intoxication of his soul rendered him dumb.

“Come,” he said to him, “let me bless thee. I will call Marie, I will place the nuptial ring on your finger; this consecration will unfold a new life to you.”

“I will return,” murmured Guillaume, bending down his head with shame.”

“What is your thought?” murmured David with deep emotion, for a dreadful doubt struck him. “If you have an infamous design, dare at least to avow it.”

“I cannot depart,” said Guillaume in a low tone.

“Ah! I knew it,” said David, rushing upon him; “you are a scoundrel; you have drawn misfortune upon the young girl and the old man; you have pillaged them, and now you abandon them. You have killed my child; coward, take my curse; I could wish you dead.”

Guillaume freed himself from the grasp of the unfortunate painter, and meanly quitted that dwelling into which he had brought despair. Then David hastily went to Marie; he had heard the fall of a body, and felt that it was his dearly loved child who was dying. As if pierced by a dagger, Marie had fallen under the stroke of a word that broke her heart. The emotion of the old man was as violent; but it was all inward; seeing the baseness of Guillaume, that cool baseness which acts without remorse, he would have crushed him like a reptile, and when his arm fell powerless, he regretted his youth and wept. This dreadful hour, this strife of bitter feelings had at once made David a man of an hundred years. The preceding evening his vigorous and flourishing old age gave promise of many and happy years. The thought that he could die never occurred to those who looked at him. A sudden change, a deathblow stunning as a stroke of apoplexy had fallen upon him. Pale, exhausted, his complexion dull and lifeless, you would have said that his blood was petrified in his veins, that it no longer circulated; looking at him you would have thought that the end of life was fast approaching. When Marie had recovered, she fixed her looks on her master, who wept and supported her in his arms. She was struck with the dreadful change in his features, and throwing aside the grief which was killing herself; “Oh! speak to me,” said she to the old man; do not be so sad and despairing; do not weep for me, these tears kill you. See, I am strong, I will live for you, only live for me. My master, my father, forget this dreadful dream, and let us again find that peace which we once had.” And she sought to console him, she who was in consoling; she appeared again to hope, she who hoped no longer; she spoke of living, while she carried death in her bosom; for her eyes had been suddenly opened. This old man, who had surrounded her with paternal love and true happiness, might in an instant fall dead beside her, struck down by a grief which came through her, and which he felt to the depths of his soul as keenly as she had done. She understood this exceeding great affection, she saw it in all its depth, and the idea that he, who lavished it upon her each day, might die, made that fatal sentiment, that love which had caused it, appear impious to her. She violently tore the image of Guillaume from the depths of her soul; she rent her bosom, to bury it there, and smiled on the old man whom her sufferings had overwhelmed.

“We must depart before to-morrow's dawn,” said she calmly; “master, take some rest; I will complete with your servants the preparations for departure. See, I am well now; but you, you

suffer? renew the strength necessary for our journey.” — And when he would console her; “fear nothing,” said she, “God has cured me.”

David slept deeply and painfully. Marie watched all the night, sometimes at his bedside, sometimes busy in giving orders. During this painful watch a feverish trembling seized her; her thoughts crowded upon one another in her burning head, and dreadful images passed before her eyes. Sometimes she appeared to dream; it seemed to her that her spirit wandered in a mysterious and dread infinity, an eternal circle formed in space by grief. She had strange visions, trances, which annihilated her. It seemed to her that her body was dissolved, and that her soul suffered alone in incessant torment. She had no longer a distinct perception of what had thrown her into this mental delirium. Guillaume was mingled with the phantoms of her tortured imagination, and by turns before her under the seducing form of the angel and the impure one of a reptile. Night and misfortune made all their shadows glide before her; when the day which began to dawn came to dissipate her sad dreams, she made a supernatural effort to free herself from grief, but dragged it with her. She quitted the couch of her master who still slept, and seeking bitter emotions with a strange avidity, she wished to see again for the last time the studio, where her beautiful years had flowed on so calmly and sweetly. She leaned upon that trellised window, where the bind-weed and the clematis intertwined their flowers. The sun shed its first beam in the east, and this ray of light glittered among the leaves, yet sprinkled with pearls of dew. The songs of birds and the perfume of flowers rose from the garden and spread around her. Attracted on awaking by the fragrance and the sweet sounds, she remembered suddenly, that on a similar morning, two months before, Guillaume had found her musing on him, in this same place; a word and a kiss had escaped from their souls at the same time and mingled on their lips. Marie had given up her life in that kiss; she had believed that a new world was opened for her, she had peopled it with wonders and felicity; and now this world was bare and waste; grief had sowed it with thorns.

“Undeceived so soon, oh my God!” cried she, “what have I done to deserve this dreadful grief?” She wept; then she began praying for resignation. Pale and dismayed like the Magdalen of Canova, there was no longer anything terrestrial in her touching features; the freshness of youth and health had left her cheeks; one night had sufficed to make her old; and she also would have been startled at the change in her features, if she had thought of looking at them. Prayer had opened her soul to resignation, to that regenerating virtue, whose worship fills half of the life of woman, and succeeds her days of blighted hopes. The young Christian rose grave and sad. She repaired to her master, to assist him in putting on a travelling dress, and supporting the sinking old man, she put him into the modest travelling carriage which was to convey them far from Utrecht. One faithful servant took charge of the equipage. When they had lost sight of the house, Marie felt her heart sink, but she restrained her tears. The old painter had not the same strength; he wept; he felt that the adieu was eternal. They travelled on some time in silence, neither speaking; they feared lest all their emotion should betray itself in their speech. The old man spared the grief of his child, the child that of the old man; at last emotion overcame them, it broke forth in sobs; these paroxysms of grief, which occurred many times during the journey, completed the wreck of the dying painter's strength.

The same day that these two exiles departed so sadly from the sleeping town, it awoke joyful, tumultuous, and in festal attire to open its gates to the king of France who had conquered it.

“Louis,” says Voltaire, “made his triumphal entry into this city, attended by his grand Almoner, his confessor, and the nominal Archbishop of Utrecht. They repaired with solemnity to the chief Catholic church. The Archbishop, who bore only the vain name of one, was for some time established in a real dignity. The religion of Louis XIV. made conquests as well as his arms.”

Having arrived at Delft, Marie conducted her old master to the house where her family lived; but there a sad trial yet awaited her. No sound issued from the house, animated formerly by Marie's little brothers and sisters; all was sad and desolate at the entrance; the domestic animals no longer grazed at the foot of the walls formerly so full of life. The emigrants knocked at the door with a kind of dismay, and when an old servant, who had brought Marie up, opened it to them.

“My father, my mother?” stammered the young girl, whose emotion altered her voice.

“How! do you not know,” replied the servant. “Have you not then received the letter, in which they inform you of their flight, telling you to return to Delft, and watch over your dying grandfather, who could not follow them? It is then Heaven which has inspired you, leading you hither. Come my child, come and see your grandfather, he is expecting you.”

Marie followed the good woman to the bedside of the paralytic old man, whose face already bore the marks of death; recognising the child of his son, John van Oosterwich made a motion; he would have extended his arms to Marie, and his strength failing, a tear of grief and tenderness escaped from the old man.

“What has become of them?” cried she in anguish; “why have they left you alone?”

“I forced them to depart,” replied the old man feebly, “to escape by flight from the Catholic persecution which menaced them. They have gone to rejoin their brothers in England; there, the protection of all the people will again give them a country. Your father would not leave me; like Æneas, he would have carried away his old father in his arms; but feeling that I had but few days to live, I did not wish that my body should be buried in a foreign land, and I have depended on thee to close my eyes,”

While hearing the old man's words, Marie held her head bent on her bosom; the sad and calm expression of her face told that her soul was resigned. God had struck her without warning, he had extinguished at once the glory of youth which adorned her brow, and sullied the home of happiness within her soul. He had cast grief on the young maiden, under all forms, and she in her virtue had accepted it without murmuring. Yesterday, and her destiny was brilliant and happy; beauty and genius were resplendent in her, glory summoned her to its triumphs, love to its felicities; to-day, prostrated by deceptions and sufferings, she was bending like an angel between two dying old men; for, the counterpart of all his sorrows had annihilated David van Heem, and the old painter seeing John van Oosterwich die, said to himself, that he also was on the brink of the grave.

Some days after her return to her father's house, Marie closed the eyes of her grandfather; and when his coffin was closed, a strong and pious woman, she returned to watch over the couch on which her old master languished. The faculties of the artist had been suspended by

misfortune; you would have said that his intellect, formerly so keen, was no longer alive except to suffering; all his brilliant past seemed effaced from his mind; he had retained only the remembrance of that dreadful hour, when Guillaume had given him his death-blow by destroying the happiness of his adopted child. As he felt his last moments approach, this remembrance awoke yet more bitter and poignant. All the clearness of his thoughts seemed to return to him; bespoke to Marie of Guillaume, for a long time, without hatred, coldly, and with that enlightened wisdom which the dying display when speaking of the passions.

“My daughter,” said he, imprinting a kiss on Marie's forehead with his already livid lips, “my daughter, your career will still be long, you will render it illustrious by your talents; you will again love glory, which when you were yet a child smiled on you like a mother, and then your brow, brightened once more by her, will regain the youth and beauty which grief effaces. That hour of consolation will come to you, and your destiny will again be brilliant; then the man who has troubled your youth, weary of his wandering, miserable life, may seek to shelter himself under your glorious and honored name. Oh, my child, in that hour recollect that he pierced you to the heart, less through cruelty, than through weakness; recollect that he could not conquer himself and renounce vice to render himself worthy of you; and if he says to you, that misfortune has changed him, do not follow the promptings of your goodness and love. Marie, if you should still love him, when you again see him, if you feel that his life is necessary to yours, exact a proof of repentance, demand that an entire year of diligent labor assure you of the change in his profligate life. Labor ennobles and purifies man. If Guillaume should love you enough to devote a year of his life to labor, virtue, the sap of life, may again arise in his soul. My child, you understand me, a year of trial, a year in which love shall not make you weak; you will be severe to the prodigal child; like an incensed parent, you will conceal your pardon and tenderness in the depths of your soul; you will remember me, and in this remembrance, gather strength to resist it. Swear to your dying master that his will shall be accomplished, and he will depart with less pain from that world in which he leaves you without him. The oath which you are about to make will protect you, and you cannot be absolved from it but by happiness.”

Marie, melted by the provident tenderness of the dying painter, swore never to belong to Guillaume, until he had passed through the trial exacted by the dying painter. A serene expression shone an instant on the brow of the old man, and as if his last thought had been uttered, he spoke no more, and some minutes after ceased to breathe.

Marie's task was accomplished; what had she to do in this world? The isolation of her life, the void in her heart made her desire to repose near those whom she had lost. She thought not of resuming her brushes; she forgot her art; grief had effaced everything, and she sought no longer that great relief which she formerly found in painting; sadness enchained her thoughts; she remained bowed down under her burden of grief as if condemned of heaven. She was in this exhausted state, when she received a letter from her family, emigrants in England. Her father who had learned the death of the two old men, sent for his dearly loved child; he told her that the King of England had offered to her, through him, the office of court painter. He spoke to her of fame and fortune; but these goods were no longer anything to Marie. Besides, would her parents, whom she had not seen from childhood, understand the sufferings that killed her? They knew among the events which had befallen her only the two deaths of which she had been witness; they suspected not the more trying changes which had passed in her heart. In her modest grief,

Marie would not reveal her inward torments; her master alone had learned them by sharing them, and had carried the secret with him to his grave. Marie did not feel the strength to confess to her father this love, which had broken into her life and her career of talent. Besides, it seemed to her that her days were coming to a close, and she would have reproached herself for carrying into a family, who awaited her as a consolation, the sight of the agony of her heart. She wrote to her father that she would remain in Holland to finish some work there, and that, wishing to merit the protection which the King of England offered her, she would finish a work worthy of him, which she would herself offer at a future time. This answer, which left her time to die as she thought in the agony of her grief, was dictated by a feeling which she did not confess to herself; to quit Holland without again seeing Guillaume, without knowing his fate, his future life, that was impossible for her heart which had given itself up wholly to him. Besides, that land where she had suffered, where she had loved, was dear to her; like her grandfather, she would be buried there. Notwithstanding the dejection which overwhelmed her, she imposed on herself the duty of fulfilling the promise which she had made to her father, began with the languor of an enfeebled inspiration the picture destined to the King of England; and labor like a soft couch soothed the poignancy of her grief. Her soul, fed with sad images and gloomy recollections, made use of melancholy as a state of meditation through which we must pass, before raising ourselves to God. The serenity which labor restored shed around her an atmosphere of peace which resembled happiness, and soon Marie was cited not only as the most honored and famous woman, but as the most happy in the little town where she lived. They knew nothing of her inward sufferings. The old housekeeper, who was present at her birth and still carefully watched over her, did not divine the cause of her sadness, and, seeing her calm and resigned, thought that the mournful scenes of death through which she had passed already began to be effaced from her memory. She resumed her brushes, at first without energy, then the necessity of an active life occurred to her and roused her weakened powers. She painted several little pictures in which she reproduced sad and modest flowers, creations to which she seemed to impart soul and in which her grief was reflected. Her fame attracted princes and illustrious travellers to Delft. She fled from the world, but the world sought her. They imposed tasks on her, loading her with honors. The Empress of Austria and the Queen of England sent her their portraits set in diamonds. They cast round her life pleasures which she did not seek; but the wound which she concealed from all eyes remained always fresh and bleeding. Many years passed away thus. She had hoped to die, and she languished in the midst of a world that worshipped her and believed her happy. Ah! of what avail to her youth was glory, without love. She felt that she was growing old, without having attained the fulfilment of her destiny. She was still beautiful, but of a saddened beauty, which seemed cold and dignified when no tender feeling marked it with the impress of her soul.

In vain had she sought to discover what had become of Guillaume, during the five years which had passed since that day when he had blasted her life by his baseness, and with the same blow struck dead her unhappy master. Since these sad events she had learned nothing of his fate. She strove with herself in her long days of solitude and labor; she tried to stifle a sentiment which seemed to her guilty; she reproached herself remorsefully for the remembrance which linked her to Guillaume, but she could not free herself. There are women whose souls are given but once, and their bodies never. These are angels of purity and love, whom God banishes for a time, and who return to him unsullied by the earth.

Marie's house was at once modest and elegant; modest in its construction which her father had directed, and which became the simplicity of a minister of the Gospel; elegant through the works of art with which Marie had adorned it, and the gardens which surrounded it from which the rarest flowers breathed their perfumes. Marie's studio opened out upon these gardens; by her exertions this studio now resembled somewhat that, in which she painted with David van Heem at Utrecht. On his dying bed her master bequeathed to her all the precious objects which adorned the sanctuary of his studies, and when labor had rendered her more calm, Marie surrounded herself with all these memorials; she sought to revive the past. The portrait of the old painter himself looked down on her as formerly with tenderness, and seemed to encourage to exertion in her hours of depression and grief. In a frame covered with a veil, which she alone raised, was another head, whose image was imprinted in her soul, and which her brush had reproduced with a miraculous truth; it was Guillaume, young, handsome, and impetuous, as he appeared to her at first. She asked pardon of God and her old master, for having painted it; but an irresistible desire had urged her on; she needed to see him again, in fancy, in dreams; she needed to feel that she saw this phantom which had eluded her love. For this woman, so illustrious and still so young and beautiful, the present and future were nothing; her life was all contained in the days now vanished; life was for her henceforth nothing but remembrance.

In front of the window of the studio, where Marie passed her days, on the other side of the garden which it overlooked, rose a small house, whose windows always closed attracted her sadly wandering eye in her moments of repose and reverie. She knew that this unoccupied house formerly belonged to a friend of her father, long since dead; the heirs had endeavored to sell it, but had not yet found a purchaser. A door opening into Marie's garden attested the intimacy which had existed between the proprietors of these two houses which thus faced each other. But it was long since this door of communication, closed by death, had been opened, and the ivy growing in the cracks already twined itself over the deserted dwelling. Marie said to herself sometimes; "Why do these windows remain eternally closed? Why does not some smiling friendly face come and bend down over these stone balconies to look at me? A smile, a look, would do me so much good; my heart is cold in this loneliness. Why, if I should die for it, can I not again see Guillaume? If he lived there, this gloomy dwelling would be animated; I should see him glide behind those windows, where now I see but empty space. I could love him, without telling him of it; but I should feel that he was near me, and my solitude would be peopled, for the torments of an unquiet life are preferable to the tortures of the repose in which I am buried. Oh! return, should thy presence be death; oh, return, for there are hours when I need to love, and I can love none but thee; why resist this love; my God, thou seest the death of my old master could not extinguish it; it is an affliction which thou hast sent upon me, and to which I must submit with resignation. A more profound depression succeeded these transports of her soul. Marie's health sank under it, and she felt a kind of pleasure in seeing her strength decrease, in counting the hours of her life which were passing away.

One summer's day, towards noon, she lay half-reclining on a bank of turf shaded by two flowering acacias. The air around was filled with the exquisite perfume from the alabaster bunches hanging from the branches of the vines. Marie inhaled this air, and sought to warm herself by the pale beams of the sun of the North. She felt a kind of gentle languor free from pain; while a dreamy veil stole over her thoughts as if she were falling asleep. Yet, she saw

everything around here; her eyes were not closed; her soul alone had ceased to perceive. She heard the sound of steps, she saw the leaves stirred, a man stood before her; she rose, looked at him some moments without recognizing him; then as if her soul had sprung from chaos,

“Guillaume,” she cried, and falling in his arms, she strained him to her heart one minute with the energy of a long-expected happiness, then suddenly repelling him, as if conscience-stricken, “Oh!” she cried, “you have killed my master!” The shock of her emotions recalled her to life. The remembrance of the oath which she had made to the man, arose between her and her overflowing love. Grief rendered her calm; she reseated herself, and extending her hand to Guillaume; “You are welcome; I needed to see you to pardon you; Guillaume, I do not bear you any ill-will. Are you happy?” and Marie's tears betrayed her emotion. Guillaume fell at her feet; he would have humbled himself before her, and could not find words to express the mingled sensations of pleasure and love which it was yet granted to his imperfect nature to feel; he looked upon her as formerly, but perhaps with less tenderness; she seemed to him less beautiful. Guillaume could not admire this pallid beauty, the saddened reflex of the soul, which strikes but few even of the chosen. Yet this divine charm still enchained his earthly desires, and he said to her with love;

“Marie, I return to you, after many years of misfortunes and follies; I will expiate the past, if you do not reject me; for, I feel it, near you, I can make myself everything that is good.”

He pronounced these words with that simple and true accent which enforces conviction.

Guillaume also was changed. If Marie's face bore traces of the lofty, passionate, and pure sentiments which filled her soul, his showed the ingress of the gross desires which degraded his life. His eyes were no longer brilliant; his brow was furrowed by untimely wrinkles; his mouth, thick and voluptuous, seemed to have retained the stamp of the strong drink and bad language of taverns. His sallow and hanging cheeks took from the nobleness and purity of his features. He was handsome still, but of a degraded beauty which no longer touched the soul. When she whose life he had blighted looked at him, she asked herself if this was indeed the ideal being, who for five years had kindled her soul, the man whose fatal power had enchained all her faculties, he for whom she died each day. Disenchanted by his presence, she felt herself strong to resist Guillaume, she who in the delirium of her passion, in the despair of solitude had given herself up as lost to the image which she invoked. The ascendancy which she regained over her own heart had rendered her calm and tranquil; she spoke to Guillaume with the interest of a sister; she asked him where had passed his years of absence, what were his wishes for the future. Touched in what of heart still remained to him, by that voice so full of kindness, he replied with eagerness that she was his future, that he would never leave her, whom he wished to surround with love and devotion. “Ah! let me unite my life to yours,” said he, “and I shall become better. Let your shadow shelter me, let me but feel you always near me, and I shall follow a noble path. Marie, do not reject me; you once named me your betrothed, call me now your husband.” Those words which Guillaume spoke with assurance, struck Marie's heart, and brought her new illusions. Yet, in the feeling which prompted Guillaume, there was more egotism than true love. Since he remained at Utrecht, abandoning to misfortune so basely the old man and the young girl, he had passed his vagabond life amidst the hardening influences of misery and shame. His indolent temperament preventing him from laboring to satisfy his wants and his vicious passions, he was reduced at times to the depths of poverty. Compromised by his losses at play, and his disputes in

taverns, he had shared the malefactors' gaol. In fine he had sullied, with all the impurities of the world, the genius with which Heaven had gifted him. He became weary of this life, because on the little pallet of a hospital or prison he had no longer the pleasure of vice; and then that sensuality, which had driven him to vice, recalled him to virtue. He had travelled in Italy, executed pictures ordered by princes, sojourned at the court of Tuscany, where he had been loaded with favors by the Grand Duke, who, one day, admiring one of his works, sent him, as a token of his satisfaction, a gold chain and medal of honor. Guillaume remembered Marie, and desired again to see his country. Marie, who was the pride of Holland, had gained, by her talents, fortune and independence. By uniting his life to that of this noble woman, a competency without labor he thought would be assured to him, and his nature led him instinctively to this calculation. Without penetrating the depth of this involuntary selfishness, Marie, resisting his entreaties, recalled the warning of her dying master, and the trial to which she had promised to subject Guillaume, before mingling her pure destiny with his sullied life. Resolute in opposing her oath to the impulses of her heart, she replied to the passionate words of Guillaume; "I believe in your love; the sentiment which has filled my life could not be a stranger to yours; the past unites us, and it depends on you, that the future should no longer separate us. You see that uninhabited house?" said she, pointing to the deserted mansion which we have described, "that dwelling awaits a master. From this evening, purchased for you, it belongs to you; this solitude which has looked gloomy to me will be animated by your presence. I have for a long time cherished this hope as a dream; God has realized it. We shall there be near each other; two fruitful sympathies, labor and love, will make us live in the same thought. In our hours of relaxation, this door, always hitherto closed, will be opened. You shall come to me, Guillaume, to breathe the sweet air of this garden, and behold the beautiful heaven which we shall look upon with eyes that understand one another. We will speak of the happiness which awaits us, when the trial shall be accomplished."

"Why a trial?" cried Guillaume; "time hurries on swiftly; why delay the hour of happiness?"

"To enjoy it more fully! I wish you to love me, and be illustrious; acquire the glory to which your genius entitled; one is year of labor, and my life belongs to thee!"

"One year," murmured Guillaume, "one year lost to love!"

"One year," cried Marie, with grief, "one year of sweet hope, of submission, of love; one year in expiation of five years of torture, which I have endured for thee, say, is it too much, Guillaume?"

He would have opposed and hurried away the unhappy one, but she was firm; misfortune had made her resolute. She required perfect happiness or death; the regeneration of Guillaume's soul, or his renunciation of her. Guillaume took possession of the house the same evening. By the cares of this angelic woman, the apartment which looked upon the garden, was quickly transformed into a studio, and furnished with works of art. Marie herself installed her friend in the house purchased for him, and of which she made him the gift. Guillaume wished to retain her, and speak to her of love; she resisted him; then approaching the balcony parallel with that of the opposite house on which would open her studio; "During our hours of labor," she said, "we shall see each other, we shall exchange looks of encouragement, and if you love me, Guillaume, you will not fail in the trial. According to the wish of our dying master, you should each day

during a whole year devote eight hours to the study of your art; you should execute the masterpieces of which you conceive the design, but which your idle pencil refuses to produce. You should renounce the bad passions, the indulgence of which has done you so much evil. Adieu; this shall be your initiation to happiness.”

Making an effort to tear herself from him, she quickly passed the door which opened into the garden and shut it after her. Then Guillaume, still leaning on the balcony, seeing her disappear under the shade of an alley, exclaimed with vexation; “Cold-hearted woman, in thee pride has destroyed love!” These words struck Marie's heart like the most cutting raillery; her strength gave way under her excitement; she leaned against the trunk of a tree and began to weep. “Cold,” cried she, in a hollow voice; “cold, because I do not yield to his desires; cold, while I am dying of a love which he has never been able to understand. My God, hasten for me that hour when the passions are quenched! my blood and my soul burn; I need repose. My God, make me cold by death!” And covering her face with her hands, she remained a long time motionless under the influence of her vehement thought. Seeing Guillaume, comparing him with her remembrance of him, with his image which she had embellished by her passionate reveries, he appeared to her at first like a fallen being, whom she had strength to resist; but when Guillaume spoke to her of happiness and love, when he revived in her the fresh hopes which had vanished, the man prematurely grown old suddenly regained his youth under the fire of his own words; under Marie's look, his face again became beautiful, and weary of suffering, she attached herself with infatuation to an illusion. “Must I yield myself up wholly to thee, to make thee believe in my love?” thought she; “must I renounce those sentiments which come to me from God? Well, debase me, profane my soul, make me die of grief and humiliation; since thou canst not render me happy, kill me. Come, I resist thee no longer! . . .” And the madness was in her brain and she demanded an hour of happiness at the expense of eternity. “Come, tell me that you love me, and I will take the intoxication of thy senses for the tenderness of thy soul. I need to be deceived, I need to feel my life confounded with thine, and to die believing that thou hast loved me.” Her heart broke under this ardent aspiration, her forehead burned within her hands; she raised her head to inhale the coolness of the night. Her eyes, wet with scalding tears, rested on the calm and radiant moon, which seemed to smile on her. Nature and Heaven were in harmonious repose. In the presence of this imposing serenity, Marie felt humbled by the agitation which devoured her. The contemplation of the heaven recalled to her the soul of her old master, who watched over her. Fortified by this thought, she hastened rapidly from this place so near to Guillaume's abode, and when she had gained her chamber, and when resting on the window, she looked anxiously on the balcony of the deserted house, where she had left him; he was no longer there. Guillaume felt not the restless delirium which overwhelmed his friend. The words, which he had uttered and which had touched so deeply the heart of the poor girl, had escaped from him as a selfish lamentation, as the complaint of the egotist, who saw escape from him the blessings which he had hoped to enjoy. Yet, pleased with the comfort with which he saw himself surrounded, he resolved to labor according to Marie's wishes, less in response to her love, than to make sure of a position of which he already tasted the sweets. For nearly a month, Guillaume worked with zeal; each morning, Marie opening the window of her studio, saw him, brush in hand, seated before the canvass on which he painted. They saluted from afar with a friendly nod, they exchanged some words of love, then said adieu, and returned to their work; when evening

came, they passed some hours together in the garden, whose space had separated them all the day. Marie then spoke of the future; she told her dreams as a woman and an artist, the happiness and glory that awaited them, all that she would do for him; he replied gratefully, and this sentiment lent tenderness to the tone of his voice. But the feeling was no longer in his heart; for Guillaume, the feeling was as we have seen, a kind of desire which was no longer excited in the presence of Marie, each day more languid and pale. She seemed to die while waiting for happiness. Her frame, now frail and drooping, had no longer that beauty of blood and life which had attracted the gross organization of the young man, and had drawn from him formerly words of passion. Marie soon perceived the change in the feelings with which she inspired him. She had never felt assured of being beloved, but at times, some expressions of tenderness uttered by Guillaume had renewed her illusion. Now these flashes of hope, these occasional gleams came only to deceive her; pained by the presence of him whom she had so much loved, she would have fled from him, the better to suffer. She felt, with a kind of consolation, that her life was ebbing away. One day she told Guillaume, that repose was needful to her to regain her strength, and that she should not see him for some time. Without doubt, he did not understand that she was about to die, for he quitted her without emotion. In the first day of this seclusion which she imposed on herself, Marie watched eagerly the house opposite hers where Guillaume lived; she followed him with her looks into his studio; she counted his hours of labor, and when he was faithful to his promise, a feeble hope awoke in her heart; but the morning dissipated the illusion of the evening. Soon, she saw Guillaume but a few minutes; he even forgot to place himself at the balcony to salute her; finally, he ceased entirely to make his appearance; he no longer came to the dwelling of his benefactress to inform himself if she were better; and Marie, weary with suffering and hoping in vain, implored death as a deliverer.

One evening she was devoured by fever; she left her bed, and opening her window, she exposed herself half-dressed to the cold night-air. Resting on the balcony, she fixed her looks on the house where Guillaume lived; one window was lighted; her burning eye darted there with avidity; she thought she saw two shadows glide past the window; one of them was Guillaume's, the other, . . . she leaned out of the balcony as if this movement would have cleared the space, . . . the other was the shadow of a woman!

Urged on by emotions of rage and jealousy, to which her pure and resigned nature had heretofore been a stranger, regaining her strength in the excitement of her grief, Marie rushed into the garden, devoured the space, passed the door which communicated with the formerly deserted house, and with one bound ascending the staircase, she placed herself like a shadow on the threshold of the lighted room. Pallid, erect, she resembled a spectre whose haggard eye comes to interrogate the living. You would have said that she demanded an account from that man for the profanation of her life. He was there miserably crouched at a table covered with empty bottles. With purple face, drunken eye, drooping and besotted lips, he smiled on a young villager, seated near him, vigorous, beautiful, but of a merely carnal beauty. The furniture was in disorder about them; the most precious works of art had been profaned; upon pictures of great price lay some remnants of the food; Etruscan vases were filled with liquor and wine, and this apartment, adorned by the love of a noble woman, was now stained by orgies and debauchery. Marie remained motionless; consternation took from her all power of speech; she thought herself mad. Suddenly Guillaume raised his eyes; he saw this white form, this face where there was no

longer life; he was affrightened. The girl who was near him turned her head to the same side, and full of fear pressed close to Guillaume, saying; "what does that phantom want of us?" Marie remained motionless; Guillaume trembled; "Pardon," cried he with altered voice, "I knew that you were dying, that you were dead, and I have chosen in life a woman who resembled you; this girl is beautiful as thou wert when I saw thee at Utrecht; she grants me the happiness that you have always refused me; I love her in memory of thee. Oh! Marie, do not curse me! . . ."

Intoxication plunged Guillaume in a kind of hallucination which showed to him, as a spectre escaped from the tomb, her whom he had killed by his outrages. At these words, Marie turned her ardent eye on the young girl, who rested on the heart where she alas! could never repose; she eagerly scanned her features; and, recalling her own face before grief had faded it, she recognised the resemblance which Guillaume had remarked; there was the same carnation, the same form, the same outline; but the seal of feeling and intellect was wanting in this effigy. Marie comprehended then clearly with what love Guillaume knew how to love; and casting on the man of flesh a last look, a look of pity for himself, she said to him slowly; "I pardon thee, adieu. . . . Then she vanished like a shadow. At these words, which they believed pronounced by a spectre, struck with terror, Guillaume, and she whom he held, fell fainting.

Marie van Oosterwich died that night; her hand was stiffened while writing the testament of her last wishes; she bequeathed to her family half of her fortune, and left the other half to the hospital at Delft, with the reservation that they should pay yearly an alimony to Guillaume van Aelst, leaving him always ignorant of the hand which imparted the benefit. She did not wish that he, whom she had once loved, should pass through the last degrees of misery and shame.

A.

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