

AN-AUTHOR'S LOVE

BEING THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF
PROSPER MÉRIMÉE'S 'INCONNUE'

VOL. II

LONDON
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1889

IN MEMORIAM

GULBAI

FROM HER SON

FREDŪN D. MŪLLA.

AN AUTHOR'S LOVE.



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CLXXIV

PARIS, *Sunday, 25th April 1858.*

Do I miss you? *Mais je le crois bien*; however, it may be just as well that you are for the moment absent, as I can better attend to the wants of my numerous friends all of whom seem to have turned up at the same moment, and all of whom are prepared to see sights, and to shop, and to hear the new plays, under my personal supervision, so you see that my work is cut out for me for some time to come. Write me about your work in England, and of how you and M. Panizzi get on at the British Museum. During one winter that I spent in London I had a card of admittance for the reading-room of that venerable institution, but invariably a thick fog would come up as soon as I reached the building, and total darkness would come upon the inner rooms of the

library ; and into these rooms no light could be carried ; and the book I needed at the time was invariably to be found only in that corner of the place ; *ergo*, my card of admittance did not do much good, and the amount of reading I accomplished at the British Museum was of the smallest. At Madame Walewska's last ball the emperor paid marked attention to Madame Gréville, an extremely pretty woman. At last, after about an hour's conversation, he tried to convince her that he was the emperor, but without raising his mask. She was incredulous, when Cæsar finally said, "*Voyez ce petit salon de repos, il n'y a que l'Empereur et l'Impératrice qui puissent y entrer*"—and immediately he did enter !

CLXXV

PARIS, 30th April.

I have been studying one married life that seems absolutely and entirely happy. Mr. and Mrs. X—— have been here for a month, and I have seen them every day, sometimes several times a day during that time. They have been

married fifteen years, and are the cheeriest people and the best friends I ever saw. At the time of their marriage he was a young army officer on slender pay, she had some little money of her own. They divided everything; she gave him half of her interest as it fell due, he gave her half of his pay when it was received. If they went to the theatre together each bought their own ticket, if they took a friend they divided the expense of his between them. Half the household expenses came out of the husband's pocket, half out of the wife's, and when remonstrated with by other women who deplored this as a terribly bad precedent, little Mrs. X—— only laughed, and answered stoutly, "Why should Fred work all day and do all the paying besides? I don't call it fair;" and things went on as before, the same principle of equality entering into everything. Many a time it would have been more than easy for the pretty wife to have spent all her own portion of income, that actually belonging to her, and the half of his besides, but the idea of so doing never entered her head; it was share

and share alike as simply and lovingly as two children cutting an apple into two equal parts. He has now left the army, and is rapidly amassing a fortune, but the old principle holds good as it did when pay-day came for the young lieutenant. Two such cordial hearty good friends I have never seen, hopes, joys, fears, trials, and love shared equally between them even as the gold and silver is, and a great happy whole is the result. Why cannot more people live lives like this, instead of holding up marriage as the greatest failure of the age? Are you never coming home? The young leaves are growing to shady branches, and our woods are all fresh and sweet and cool in the glad spring which will so soon grow to summer. Let the very first words of your next letter tell me the day of your return.

CLXXVI

PARIS, *Thursday Morning.*

It was good to see you again ; letters are but a poor substitute for sight and touch and hear-

ing. I am glad that all my friends are gone, even Mr. and Mrs. X——, charming as they were; the time is ours now, with no outside interruptions to try one's temper and spoil one's days. *À demain.*

CLXXVII

PARIS, Thursday, 20th May 1858.

It does indeed seem *un siècle* since we had a good long old-fashioned talk such as we used to have in the days of long ago. This month of May has not fulfilled its promises. The picture of myself you shall have of course before I leave; let us hope the *demi-heure de patience* will be productive of a good result, artistically speaking, morally I find the time a trifle short for much result of any kind. M. D—— has just told me the following anecdote. I give it you for what it is worth. The Duc de Malakof in returning from the races met the Duc d'Aumale, who, standing up in his carriage and waving his hand, cried, "*Vive le Duc de Malakof.*"

The marshal stepped out of his carriage and thanked the Duc d'Aumale for his generous sympathy, when the duke made him a most flattering little speech. Be quite certain that you do return by the 29th, for having joined a party of friends for this summer trip I am no longer quite my own mistress, that is, I could not possibly put off our departure even for a day, if the penalty were to go without bidding you good-bye, so pray allow *nothing* to keep you beyond the promised time. Adieu, *mon ami*, *cher ami*, so loyal and so true.

CLXXVIII

G——, 10th June 1858.

The book is simply frightful, badly written and extremely immoral. How could you send me such a perverted view of human nature? The second portrait did not resemble me in the least, so why do you regret it?

Forgive me for . . . *mais n'en parlons plus*. Am too tired after my long journey to write more.

M.

CLXXIX

(Letter missing)

CLXXX

G——, 10th July.

Your mention of Innsbruck reminds me of an unsolved mystery in my life. It was during the first summer after I had studied German at Hannover, when I knew just enough of the language to understand almost all that I heard said, yet not quite all. My guardian had taken me for a month's journeying, allowing a school friend to be of the party. She also knew about the same amount of the language that I did, no more, no less. At Innsbruck the hotel was noisy and uncomfortable, so we took rooms for a week at a *pension* perched up on a hill away from the railway disturbances which on the first night of our stay had prevented us from sleeping. My friend and I shared a large room together, and far other noises, although not less disturbing ones, deprived us of all rest on the second night. Perhaps strictly speaking

I should not say all sleep, for tired out we had retired early, and slept at once, and it was between ten and eleven o'clock that a strange harsh laughter, and then the sound of bitter weeping, roused us both at the same moment. Through the chink of the door between our apartment and the one next to it came a line of light, and we could hear voices in the same direction. "No, no ; I will never do it! You may kill me, but I will never do it!"

This in German spoken in a high female voice, interrupted by sobs. Although we sprang out of bed and listened at the crack of the door, neither of us could hear the reply to this, but we could plainly distinguish two voices speaking, evidently those of a young man and an elderly woman. "*Ach lieber Himmel*, torment me no more!—Heinrich, Heinrich, *wo bist du?*" Again both voices answered her together, the man's loud and angry, and twice we could hear him ask tauntingly, "Thou wilt not do it? thou wilt not? But we shall see." A whole volley of abuse followed in the shaking uncertain tones of the old woman, but, strain our ears as

we might, we could comprehend not one word. Suddenly the man's voice changed entirely, his chair moved, and we imagined it to be drawn closer to the girl, while the words came softly—" *Liebe Meme ich liebe dich.*" The sobs ceased, but in their place came a laugh so mirthless, so dreary in its wordless woe, that it seemed to chill us with a sudden cold, warm as was the night. Then once again the girl moaned out the name she had already spoken—"Heinrich, Heinrich."—"Let her sleep now; go," the old woman said authoritatively; a chair moved, a sword clanked, and a man's step crossed the room quietly, the door closed.

He was an officer, then, the man. Who in the name of wonder could the girl be, and the woman, and what tragedy was being enacted within our very hearing? Wide awake and greatly marvelling we crept back to bed, and soon the light behind the communicating door was extinguished.

The next morning we told my guardian of the wonders of the night, and he, in course of conversation with the Hauss Wirth, mentioned

that anything said in the room adjoining ours could be heard. The man only shrugged his shoulders ; he evidently considered it no affair of his. " Who occupies the room ? " my guardian continued. Another shrug—" A young lady who is ill, and an attendant or nurse who is travelling with her."—" And who is the officer who visits this young lady at midnight ? " was the next question asked. At this the man scowled angrily, and answered shortly that he did not play the spy upon his guests, nor did he care to be questioned about them by others staying in the house ; if Monsieur did not like the rooms there were doubtless plenty of others to be had in Innsbruck. *Bref*, my guardian got decidedly the worst of it in the encounter with the landlord, and, manlike, showed his resentment of that fact by pitching into us, calling us a couple of imaginative young simpletons who had probably dreamed the whole thing. But when night came we proved him to be wrong, for although we went early to our room nothing was further from our intentions than going to sleep. Taking our

position near to the long-opening of the ill-fitting door, we listened. All was still at first, although we thought we heard some one turning the leaves of a book as though reading. About nine o'clock a knock came, and in a low tone the old woman said, "Herein;" then came the click of spurs, and the clanking of a sword which was quickly taken off and laid on the table. "*Sie schläft*," the woman almost whispered, and there was a long silence. Later the two talked together, but in too low a tone for us to catch a word; and at last the girl awoke. At first she did not appear to discover the presence of the officer, but asked whether she might go out the next day if the sun shone. "I am so cold, so cold; and will Heinrich never come?" This plaintively like a little child; then in frightened, shrieking tones—"Ach, mein Gott, mein Gott, is he here! Send him away, away, away!" The voice grew shriller and shriller, reaching almost to a scream, and then came the same weird dreadful laugh which had so startled us the night before. Just as it had been then, the same tragic

comedy was played: the girl swore that nothing would tempt her to do the thing, whatever it might have been, that they were urging upon her, while the man first threatened, then told her he loved her, then went softly away as she fell into the curious unnatural stillness. Quite worn out with excitement, both my friend and I slept far beyond the breakfast hour the next morning, and the first thing I heard was my guardian calling through the door, "Look quickly, girls, if you want to see your mysterious neighbours; they are just driving away." In very light attire we both rushed out upon the balcony as a closed carriage passed before it. At the window nearest us was a white face with dark wild eyes, and opposite sat a good-looking young Prussian officer. Was it the fancy of our imagination suddenly startled from dreamland, or was it truth, that the terrified face at the window seemed to look up to us in imploring despair? We never knew, and the travelling carriage was quickly out of sight.

Should I ever go to Innspruck again I would

hunt out that *pension*, and if that uncommunicative old Hauss Wirth still lives I would bribe him well if only I could persuade him to tell me the true story of the girl and the officer and the old woman.

I enclose you an exact drawing of what I want you to get for me at Venice, as you are so good as to offer to execute commissions there. There is an old curiosity shop in a tiny narrow street off the Grand Canal where I once saw something like it. If among the hundred different curiosity shops you can find this one, you will have no further trouble; if you think the commission too complicated do not bore yourself with it. Write soon to *votre amie sincère*.

CLXXXI

CHAMOUNIX, 12th August.

The people I am with are such conscientious sightseers that I am forced, whether I like it or not, to climb mountains and explore valleys, to rhapsodise over waterfalls and go into

ectasies over glaciers. As for finding a moment in which to write, that is an impossibility pure and simple; but you, by some method known only to yourself, seem to make time for letters which only grow longer and more delightful the more you have to occupy you, so do not curtail yours because mine may become shorter. Habit, they say, is the great master of our lives; you have accustomed me for so long now to receiving your letters that my life would seem barren indeed without them. So write quickly and often.

CLXXXII

1st September 1858.

Ah, what would I not have given to be with you at Venice when you assisted at the Funtione in honour of the archduke! Six hundred gondolas, with lights and music, on the Canal; why, it must have been fairy-like in the effect—a picture well worth remembering. I am glad that you thought of me and wished for me at Venice; it surely is the place of all

others where one needs a kindred soul. Moonlight falling in its magic witchery on those palaces which architecturally you find *sans goût et sans imagination*, turns them to dreams in stone; and the gliding noiselessness of the gondolas, the mysteriousness of the bridge-spanned water, the winged lion clearly outlined against a starry sky, the whole dreamy wistfulness of the scene makes one long to see it while close beside a heart that sympathises with the hushed beauty and needs no words to tell its sympathy. I know so well the touch of sadness in Venice air and Venice loveliness, and could we feel it together I am certain it would be no grief-laden sadness, but only one heavy with love. Let me know when you propose returning to Paris, and do not get back too late in the season for our walks.

CLXXXIII

4th October 1858.

No; the letter from Brescia never reached me, and I regret its loss. Impossible to get to

Paris just yet, so do put off your return. I have been rather ill, and do not care to exchange this bracing mountain air for Paris streets. You will, I suppose, soon be at Cannes, where, at this time of the year, I should think you would find yourself the sole inhabitant.

CLXXXIV

15th October.

. And less still do I like the English proverb which you so unblushingly apply to me—"You look one way and row another." Where, if I may ask the question, did you pick up such an elegant and refined expression? If I did not object to slang on principle I could quote another to you which would be a worthy answer; but you would carefully learn it, and I should be free from it never again, so I refrain. Of course you will be furious with me if I am not in Paris when you arrive, *mais, mon cher*, I much fear that is exactly what will happen; I shall be some several hundred miles distant, and you will lose your temper all to no

purpose. Trusting that by some good fortune you will have remained on at Cannes, I will send this letter there. If you have left, and it is forwarded too late for you to receive it before discovering for yourself that Paris is as yet not blessed with my presence—well, I can only say *tant pis* for Paris ; I being safely out of the way cannot come to much harm, and when we do finally meet you will have forgiven me, as you always do forgive.

CLXXXV

(Letter missing)

CLXXXVI

PARIS,

Saturday, 20th November 1858.

Eh bien, it is now my turn to be desperate ! I return to Paris hoping to find an answer to my last letter which has evidently missed you ; I send at once to ask whether you can give me to-morrow, and the answer comes back that monsieur is at Compiègne with their Majesties the emperor and empress ! *Me*

voilà l'antée. A whole long Sunday without you when I had so counted on your presence, and heaven only knows how much longer time you mean to play the courtier and bask in Imperial favour. It really is too trying. You will get this to-morrow morning, on the happy Sunday I had counted upon for us to pass together. If I write more I shall say something I may regret, so disappointed am I, so thoroughly upset by finding you gone. What could have become of my last note from G——? It told you that I was coming, and said many things which I flatter myself you would have cared to hear. But even if it had reached you I suppose an Imperial summons would have put aside its little humble claim, and this would have been almost worse than feeling certain that you never received the letter. Are their Majesties going to ask you very often, and just at the very times I want you? Much comment is being made, and not of a flattering kind either, over the rumoured appointment of Monsieur H—— as Minister of Public Works.

CLXXXVII

PARIS, *Thursday, 23d November.*

Finding that I must resign myself, I do so with as good a grace as possible. The whole morning of yesterday I spent at the Louvre, going first of all to see my beloved *Vénus de Milo*. The calm, passionless beauty of her face always throws a spell over me; it begins to work as I first see her from the end of the long gallery after mounting the staircase and turning to the left, and it grows in its subtleness at every step which brings me nearer to the fair still woman. Very strongly do I incline to the opinion that she is no Venus, there is too much restfulness, which tells of strength, in the face, too much meaning and depth of feeling to be the emblem of Love's goddess. If her beautiful lost arms could be found and fitted to her gracious figure, I feel sure they would never take the senseless pose given to the arms of the Venus of the Capitol, or to the *Vénus de Medicis*. After looking long and with satisfying fulness at the still, lovely woman in stone,

I went upstairs to the picture gallery, and passing by the general favourites around which there is always a crowd, I walked on until I came to two paintings which always attract me, they hang nearly opposite to each other, and are "The Angels' Kitchen" and the "Birth of the Virgin." The faces of the child-angels are bewitching and their wings so downy you can almost feel their soft young feathers. To-morrow I mean to go to a place I have often wished to see yet never have, in spite of the many years during which off and on I have found myself in Paris, and this place is the *Conciergerie*. If ever a spot was hallowed by human suffering it is that small low room within the frowning building by the bank of the Seine, the room where Marie Antoinette lived through hours of agony. Adieu. *Amusez vous bien, mais ne m'oubliez pas.*

CLXXXVIII

PARIS, 26th November 1858.

It is all very well, monsieur, to be sarcastic over my present state of resignation, but I ask

you, what else is left me? Is it not far better to employ my time profitably by seeing things of beauty and interest than it would be to tear my hair and wring my hands in vain bewailing of my lot, and in impotent ravings against the powers that be for their appreciation of your society, and their flattering detention of your person? Be sensible; if you cannot get away from Imperial society it is no doubt my loss; but being an unavoidable one, the next best thing that I can do is to occupy my time rationally until you are able to return, and this I propose to do. I went yesterday morning, as I told you in my last I meant going, to the prison of the *Conciergerie*, and the terrible days of the Revolution seemed to me more real than I ever felt them before. In all history there is to me no more pathetic, shudderingly horrible account than that of Marie Antoinette's cruel imprisonment and monstrous death. What mattered it to have been queen, to have had a powerful emperor for a brother, or Royal and Imperial relations, or a people who had shouted themselves hoarse at the coronation, or rank, or

worldly honour, or fulsome adulation ! The sufferings and humiliations of the woman's life so far outdid the joys and triumphs of the queen's, and the misery of the end was so widely disproportioned to the brilliancy of the beginning. To think of a proud delicate woman being shut up for months in that narrow cell, where even solitude was denied her, and a coarse brutal soldier was left to watch her day and night ! Think of the grated bars of the window through which came a little light, but with it such ribald obscene language that the light itself heralding this additional torture must have been almost a dreaded guest. And then the mockery of the so-called trial with charges brought more terrible than death in their unnatural horror ; the long suspense ; the burning disgrace of the common cart with a fiend in human form seated beside the daughter of the House of Hapsburg ; the long agonised progress through the crowded streets amid the hoots and jeers of a maddened populace ; the secret absolution falling from pitiful lips ; the place of execution saturated with the blood of hundreds ; the for-

saken loneliness ; the fear, the shame, the shuddering agony of the end ! God, to think of it all to-day, after long years have passed makes one tremble with grief, and pity, and amazement at the hellish cruelty of it all. France more than any country upon earth is surely the most ungrateful, the most forgetful of its own promises. The people shout *Vive le Roi !* with no greater enthusiasm than they will cry a little later *à bas la Monarchie !* and they hail a Republic with the same eagerness that they have shown before in acclaiming an emperor. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not succeed," was, I am convinced, spoken centuries ago as the rightful motto for the French nation. I have no patience with them as a nation, all my kindly feeling goes to one and one only of the race. Poor Marie Antoinette had better never have played at dairymaid in *Le petit Trianon*, or lent her beauty to grace the royal festivals at Versailles, when only the ghastly scaffold in the wide Place de la Concorde was to be the end. Does the Empress Eugénie, I wonder, ever tremble as she looks out over the Tuileries gardens at the

accursed spot, or query whether the day may yet come when she too shall gaze upon a sea of angry human faces, or fly from the execrations of an enraged Paris multitude? I should think it would be a trifle alarming even in these later days to mount a throne in France.

Montalembert has been condemned to six months' imprisonment, and a fine of three thousand francs, for an article comparing the government of France unfavourably with that of England. *Le Correspondant* was the journal in which the article appeared.

Your account of the temperature in which you pass your days at Compiègne is uncomfortable; do be careful, and do not come back all knocked up with the extreme sudden changes in which you seem to indulge. Are they not tired of you, the emperor and empress? Do be a little disagreeable and be sent away!

CLXXXIX

PARIS, *New Year's Day*, 1859.

The two books came safely. I can quite believe how you were hurried before leaving,

but am thankful that we had at least one long happy day ere you took your departure. "He only is rich who owns the day," is a sentence I came across some time ago in some miscellaneous reading, and very rich I feel even at the remembrance of this day, which I did indeed own, wholly and entirely. What an extraordinary custom this is in Paris of allowing the beggars free liberty to infest the streets on New Year's Day. I went to Notre Dame this morning, where the music was unusually good, but my patience was sorely tried during the walk there by the ceaseless application for *sous*, and coming back I took a *fiacre* to avoid the nuisance. We walked for some time along the Boulevards last night to see the temporary booths. What rubbish they sell at them, but I suppose the people are amused and would not think it the *jour de l'an*, if both booths and rubbish were not there. May every good and blessing come to you with 1859, health, wealth, happiness, and love. But no, I would not have that latter come to you, love, because it is yours already; I would only have it grow and

strengthen in faith and truth and loyalty; I would have you to say to me *Amigo de mi alma* in the years to come, as you have said it in the years that are gone. Your idea of our going together to Florence next winter is more than tempting. If I am to catch the post in order that you may get this at Marseilles before going on to Cannes I must stop writing, and send my letter at once. *Pas adieu, mais au revoir.*

CXC

PARIS,

Tuesday, 12th January 1859.

It was delightful to read in your letter from Cannes of the sunshine you are enjoying there, for here it is the dreariest of dreary winter weather, and I am very thankful that you and your throat are well out of it. The books I chose with all possible care, being doubly particular with those destined for Mademoiselle Olga, so I am very glad that she liked her share of them. The *Mémoires de la Margrave de Baireuth* I have read, but not those of

Catherine II of Russia, and I shall be glad to have them when you return. It is a horrid nuisance about your servant; I wish you could find a good English valet. Before you leave Cannes I will send you a list of the vases, shapes and colours, that I want you to get for me in the Valauries pottery. Remind me of this should I forget it. To-night I am going to a ball at the Tuileries.

CXCI

PARIS, 27th January.

I have read the *Dictionnaire du Mobilier de Viollet-le-Duc* which you sent in your last letter, but like it only indifferently well. There are ideas, certainly, but you write less in your usual style, and rather as though you were not thoroughly in sympathy with your subject. My criticism may be unjust, but there it is; this is the way in which the work strikes me. By what date are you obliged to have the article on Prescott's *Philip II* ready for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*? That I feel sure I shall like.

Your empress looked quite lovely at the Tuileries ball of the 12th. She wore a gown of pale rose colour trimmed with chocolate brown, and as jewels, the diamonds given by the city of Paris. The crush was something awful, and every one was talking of an almost certain war.

CXCII

PARIS, 23^d March 1859.

To think that I shall see you back here again to-morrow ! It seems almost too good news to be true. I have just finished the review of Prescott's *Philip II*, and liked it immensely ; but will tell you all I think of it in person. Reports as to the chances of war are so contradictory that I hardly know what to write to you as the opinion here. In case you may not have seen this morning's *Moniteur* I copy its official announcement for your benefit :—" La Russie a proposé la réunion d'un congrès en vue de prévenir les complications que l'état de l'Italie pourrait faire surgir et qui seraient de nature à troubler le repos de l'Europe.

“Ce congrès composé de plénipotentiaires de la France, de l’Autriche, de l’Angleterre, de la Prusse et de la Russie, se réunirait dans une ville neutre.

“Le Gouvernement de l’Empereur a adhéré à la proposition du cabinet de St. Pétersbourg. Les cabinets de Londres, de Vienne et de Berlin n’ont pas encore répondu officiellement.”

God grant that they may answer favourably, and that the war with Italy may not be. My brother would of course be obliged to go with the army, and I cannot think of that without dread.

CXCIII

PARIS, 23d April 1859.

Is it not terrible, this news of certain war with Italy? My poor brother is off directly. The word poor is hardly the right one to use, or any expression denoting pity, for he is delighted at the prospect of some fighting, and would not if he had the chance be anything but a soldier. To me the very name of war is

terrible, being synonymous as it is with suffering and misery and death. I once saw a regiment march off to join an army, the men all well and strong, full of hope and eager for the fray, confident of victory and certain of glory, inspiring with their own courage and enthusiasm the wives and children and friends gathered to bid them God-speed; later I saw that same regiment return, all that was left of it; and I watched the faces of the widows and the fatherless and the desolate as they scanned each tired, wounded, travel-stained man only to find that the ones they sought were among the missing. In presence of their grief even those who had returned, and those happy ones who had found their own again, were sombre and silent. The contrast between the gay, hopeful going forth and the sorry coming back was too strong, and meant too much.

Tell me if you think this war will be of long duration. Is it possible as yet to know anything in regard to it? I thought I should have heard from you to-day before now, and I fancy each bell that rings brings news of you,

for you will not have forgotten that I leave for Turin early to-morrow. I must see my brother before he goes, but it is with a heavy heart that I leave on such a mission. Good-bye at any time is to me the saddest of words, but at a time like this it is doubly hard to say.

(Letters missing from CXCI^V to CC inclusive.)

CCI

—, 20th July 1859.

Oh, *mon ami*, if you could know the relief I feel at the declaration of peace and the safety of my brother! I know how remiss I have been during all this time of excitement in not sending you anything that could by the wildest stretch of the imagination be termed a letter; my hurried communications have been such mere scraps, and so few and far between, that I wonder at your loving patience in answering them as you have done. Your long letters with the latest news of the progress of the war from a Paris standpoint have been my greatest

comfort during the past three months, when I have had my sister-in-law's fears to calm as well as my own. Now the reaction has come after the long and trying suspense, I feel wildly gay, ready for anything, equal to most things. The discourse of the emperor at St. Cloud yesterday I find both noble and good, and devoutly do I trust that his last words, "*Le repos de l'Europe*," represent *un fait accompli*! A good many people one knows are here, and society is becoming quite dissipated after its forced seclusion. Why do you stop on in Paris so late? I hear that it is very warm there, and I cannot think it good for you to run the risk of extreme heat when you continue to complain of sleeplessness and want of appetite. Write me your plans.

CCII

—, 26th July 1859.

Yours of the 21st has this instant reached me. Are you quite mad to remain on in Paris feeling as ill as you do? Leave at once, I

entreat you, or if you insist upon staying there, and would like me to come on, I will do so. The tone of your letter is so depressed it has given me an attack of blue devils, and quite spoiled for me an expedition to which I had been looking forward with great pleasure. A party of six, including myself, are to go up the mountains on mules to-morrow afternoon, after it grows cool, spend the night at a little sort of shed on the top mountain, and see the sun rise the next morning. A couple of servants are to precede us with two extra mules laden with creature comforts in the form of bedding, food, etc., as the native accommodations are of the roughest. Could you only be of the party the expedition would be perfect, as it is, not only shall I miss you—that I should have done in all cases—but now since hearing how miserable you are my pleasure will be tempered down to a very mild degree indeed. I will, however, write you an account of the excursion should anything of interest occur. Adieu.

CCIII

—, 5th August.

The mountain trip was most successful, and just as I was preparing to write to you about it, and tell you the story of a peasant girl we met, and in whom we became much-intêrested, your letter of the 30th arrived. You are quite correct in your imaginings about me; I am terribly sun-burned, and I regret to be obliged to confess that I have grown fatter! However, with your written promise before me that no matter what changes have come to me you will still be charmed to see me, and that I may count upon being treated with great tenderness, I feel equal to any confession. Ah, *mon ami*, what strength is given by a great love and a boundless trust between two human beings! It places in one's heart a little fortress which outside influences assail in vain, and which is so securely stored with faith and confidence as ammunition, and assured affection as provisions, that no siege can weaken it, no attack prove dangerous. Do not be so depressed about

yourself, and do in pity give yourself a holiday. Come and see me here, and get a little of this life-giving air into your lungs ; I venture to say you would feel better within an hour after your arrival. And now I must tell you about our peasant girl, the beautiful pale contadina whom Lady M—— and I have adopted as a protégée.

Mazetti Marco, the miller, was the richest man in the Commune of C——, and all the young men for miles around knew that the dark-eyed Rosina, the miller's only child, would have fifteen hundred francs ; some of the village gossips even went so far as to whisper two thousand francs, as her marriage portion. This, added to the girl's beauty, made Rosina much sought after by the young men, and terribly envied by the young women, yet so sweet and lovable was the girl that even Betta Caproni, whose envy came very near to hatred, dared not openly say a word against the miller's daughter, who was beloved by the whole Commune. Rosina's greatest charm was the deep soft red colour which was like her name-flower,

the rose, and which came and went in her cheeks at every changing mood ; deepening at affectionate words, or paling with sympathy when a child was hurt, or a neighbour ill, or even if her little dog Rita hurt its foot and whined. For several years the girl Betta had loved a young contadino called Angelo, a fine strapping fellow who could sing and dance, and was always the gayest youth at a *festa*, and who could make love, so the gossips declared, faster than he could work to get an honest living. After a fashion of his own Angelo returned Betta's fierce love, which, truth to tell, he was half afraid of ; but on a certain feast-day he learned something which quite turned his head, and put all thoughts of Betta out of it. It was the roses in Rosina's cheeks which betrayed the secret in her heart, and told to Angelo's wondering astonishment that the miller's daughter, the pretty heiress of the Commune, did not look with any disfavour upon him as a partner for the dance, or as her companion afterwards, when by the light of a silver summer moon the village youths and maidens wandered under the per-

golas, and told in their soft Italian tongue the old old story which seems to grow young again in the telling. Olc' Mazetti at the mill was not overpleased when his child and his child's mother pleaded for Angelo, and said that they were sure that love for Rosina would cure him of all laziness and wildness and a few other little characteristics which were scarcely those which Mazetti had hoped to find in a son-in-law. Rosina's lovely rounded cheeks were whiter than her father had ever seen them, while he hesitated before consenting to give her Angelo as a *marito*, and he felt almost repaid for yielding against his better judgment when the roses came again, first in an uncertain flush of rosy pink, but always growing deeper and warmer in tone as the blood came back to the girl's anxious heart and leaped joyously through her veins. She was very happy as she sat under the vines with Angelo, whose black eyes burned with triumph when he thought how all the youths for miles around would envy him his good fortune in winning the miller's daughter and her fat dowry. But Betta, when the news

came to her, would not believe it; she said it was a silly lie which Angelo himself would be the first to laugh at. He had promised to marry her when he got work that paid, and he was too fine a fellow not to find work quickly.

Perhaps so, said the gossips, if he ever looked for it.

Some days passed before Betta saw Angelo, but when she did, and he told her half roughly that it was bad enough for a man to live on nothing, but no one could expect him to keep a wife, and the *bambino* heaven was sure to send, on the same, and he was tired of trying for work. The times were very hard, and soon, if all the new-fangled notions were acted on, there would be no work for any one. Betta listened in silence; she knew well enough that all he was saying in long sentences and twisted phrases could very well be put into two or three words as follows: Rosina has a dowry of fifteen hundred francs, and I need not work if I marry her. That was all; and the more roughly Angelo spoke, the more certain was Betta of one thing, which at least gave her a fierce

comfort in the midst of her sudden anger—Angelo loved her better than he did Rosina ; if she had the dowry, Angelo would be hers—Almost in silence Betta turned and left the man she cared for in her strong, ignorant way, but a new power seemed born within her heart, while a voice kept repeating more and more distinctly—"If I had the dowry, Angelo would be mine."

Rosina was happy, giving much in the generous simplicity of her affection, and not understanding that Angelo gave very little. And the time went on, and the gossips wagged their heads and said Mazetti Marco was a fool, and Rosina was throwing herself and her dowry away, and Betta had grown very black to look at, but no one minded the gossips. So the summer passed, and winter came on, and all the arrangements were being made ready for the marriage ; only two days now, and Angelo would take Rosina for his wife, and the dowry would be surely his. The miller had been to the town where the money was kept, and brought it back with him in a stout leather

bag,—this all the Commune knew,—and the feasting for the marriage was to begin the next day. There was no moon, and the night was very dark, but presently all the village was aroused by a lurid glare which reddened the heavens as though with blood, and brought out clearly the fright and terror in the people's faces as quickly they ran all in the same direction, towards the mill and the miller's home, which were wrapped in sheets of flame. Later the fright grew to ghastly horror, for although the miller's wife and daughter were safe, Mazetti Marco was only a charred and blackened form. "He had gone back for the money and could not escape!" so said all the gossips when talking together of the marriage that would never be, and the dowry that had been burned, and the pretty heiress who was now as poor as Betta herself.

There my story comes to a natural pause, so, like the Princess Shehrzad in the *Arabian Nights*, I will postpone the ending of it until "next time." Please take an interest in poor Rosina, for you will see her if you come

here, only you will find no roses in her cheeks.

CCIV

—, 16th August.

First of all will I answer your question as to what time you can come and see me. At *any* time. Choose your own date, and do not waste ink and paper in writing me nonsense about my talents for dilatory negotiations and my resemblance to Austrian diplomatists! The sooner you come the better I shall like it, for no other reason than the one you will know to be a true one, however reluctant you may be to acknowledge that fact, namely, that I long to see you; I weary for you.

And now for the end of my history of Rosina. Poor girl! from the night when she saw her father a lifeless mass of charred flesh, her home a heap of ashes, her dowry and promised husband lost to her for ever, and her mother a helpless wreck, with mind about gone from the succession of horrors she had lived through, every tinge of colour left the cheeks

of the miller's daughter, never to return. A strange, unnatural pallor overspread her face, from which the large, sad eyes looked out hopelessly at the changed life still left for her to live. A strange, new pride, too, seemed to have come to the penniless *contadina* who no longer ranked above the village girls around her, which pride had never belonged to the well-dowered maiden who was acknowledged to be above her associates. It was only a very little that those around her could offer, for the inhabitants of the Commune of C—— were terribly poor, but on all sides some gentle, kindly deed was remembered of the pretty Rosina, with the soft, deep colour like her blushing name-flowers ; and human nature is not all bad, especially when human beings are poor. But even this little the girl declined. A poor two hundred francs remained in the town where Mazetti Marco had kept his money, and with that Rosina first buried all that was left of the old man, and then bought a tiny building with two rooms, pretty enough in summer-time, when the vines twined lovingly over roof and

walls, but very cold and bare in the winter days, when the little *scaldino* would be placed close to the poor, half-witted old mother, while Rosina and the dog Rita sat close together, that a little warmth and comfort might come to both. "She ought not to keep the dog when they are so poor," the gossips said one to another, but only the girl herself and the dog knew that they would rather be hungry and be together than well fed and divided. Oh the scalding tears that fell on Rita's shaggy little yellow neck when the pale Rosina would drop the work she was trying so hard to make support them all, and would think of the little while ago when she and work were strangers, and the good old father shielded her from every ill, and Angelo her lover sat beside her under the vines. Only Rita knew, for the mother understood nothing now, and the neighbours never saw the girl save when she walked quietly but proudly among them, asking help from none, and still doing kindly acts for sick children or tired mothers. The work paid so poorly, and Rosina's fingers were cut and blistered with

plaiting the reeds for the basket-makers. Of Angelo she saw nothing; she never went to the *festas*, and music and dancing were still the things which Angelo did best. He had gone back to Betta in a shy, sheepish sort of way, and was more than astonished that the girl's old fierce love seemed changed, only finding expression now in sharp speeches or harsh answers to his questions, yet, strangely enough, Angelo had never liked her so well as now. Letta herself had been very quiet all these days when so much was happening in the village, but quiet with a quietness which is very apt to be synonymous with strength, or to indicate possession of that knowledge which is power. Twice lately she had gone away, her mother said to stay with an old uncle who had money, much money, which he sometimes thought he might leave to Betta when he died; and each time she came back after one of these visits the girl had a new kerchief pinned around her throat, or long ear-rings, or a string of beads around her neck, which the uncle had given her. "It is very strange," the gossips said,

“that we never heard of Betta’s uncle before,” but no one minded the gossips. One fine day a letter came to the post-office in the village for Betta’s stupid old mother, who had never had a letter in her life before. Her daughter read it to her, and all the neighbours soon knew that the rich uncle was dead, and his money, nearly two thousand francs, had come to Betta! She was the heiress now, with the fat dowry, and Rosina, with her strange, pale cheeks, wept bitter tears on Kita’s neck, while the little dog looked at her with kind, wise, brown eyes, and licked her pale hands. When Angelo asked Betta to marry him he was very humble, and the girl gave him her hand as she would have thrown a dog a bone, not looking at him, but with her sullen eyes turned the other way. There was music and dancing and feasting at the wedding, and all the village came to bring good wishes to the bride, all but the pale Rosina, who sat with the foolish mother and the dog in the little hut.

The winter came again, and life grew harder for the people of the Commune of C——;

they grew poorer and poorer; only Angelo and Betta had money, and queer tales were told of the life they led. "He can buy drink now, and he beats her, and never works." This the gossips said, shaking with cold the while, all huddled together around a *scaldino* which Rosina had bought long ago when she was rich, and had given to a poor old crone bent double with the rheumatism. Heaven had sent the *bambino* which Angelo had talked of -- a pretty dark-eyed baby thing, soft and dimpled and smiling, never dreaming what sort of a world it had come to. When it could just toddle on two little fat unsteady legs the end came for Angelo and Betta. He had drunk until he was more a beast than a man, and in a fit of drunken fury he stabbed her and stabbed himself, and no doctor in all the village could stop the life-blood flowing so fast away from both husband and wife. Betta's sullen eyes were growing dull, but she could speak still, and she bade those around send quickly for Rosina. When the pale face and sad eyes bent pitifully over her she roused herself and spoke

quickly, there was so little time. "I took it; I vowed, with the *Diavolo* for my witness, that I would have the dowry and Angelo; I watched the miller at dusk through the window; I stole the two thousand francs and locked the only door through which he could escape, and the house was already in flames—I had arranged all that before. Then I kept the money quietly and went to Turin and bought the beads and kerchiefs—the mother did not know—she thought it was—really—father's brother——" The blood gushed out afresh, and Betta's dull eyes closed; Angelo was already dead.

"*Mamma mia*," and a wee hand pulled Rosina's dress, while the baby shouted with delight at little shaggy Rita.

Just a little of the dowry was left, and the miller's daughter bought food and clothing for the child, and took him home to the hut, where the foolish old mother crooned love songs to him, and Rita tried to catch the sunbeams for him as they fell across the red brick floor.

The priest of the village told Lady M—— the story, and now Rosina, with her sad eyes

and strange paleness, lives in a pretty warm dry cottage by the great gate leading to the park in which stands this house; and the old mother and the child and the dog are happy all day in the sunshine. You shall see them when you come.

Unlike the Princess Shehrzad's tales, my story is finished. It may interest you when you come upon too much *rabachage* in Madame du Deffand's Letters. *Adieu, je vous embrasse bien tendrement.* M.

CCV

—, 7th September 1859.

Sorry as I am not to see you as soon as I hoped, I am too thankful to have you get away from Paris, and to know that you are going to have change of scene and change of air, to say a word against your new plan. Only get better, rest, amuse yourself, above all *forget* that you cannot sleep or eat, and merely do both without thinking about either! I send this

hurried note, as you tell me to, *chez M. le Ministre d'État, à Tarbes.*

CCVI

—, 18th September.

A la borne heure ! vous voilà almost yourself again after this little short trip to the Pyrenees, what will you not be should you take a longer voyage? Had I not promised Lady M—— to stay with her until she is ready to come to Paris, I would leave for that place to-day, so much do I want to see you now that "Richard is himself again."

CCVII

PARIS, 15th October 1859.

The agitation among the clergy seems to be increasing, and the Bishops of Orleans and Bordeaux have both addressed discourses to the emperor, the former being very violent. Have you seen them? The Cardinal Archbishop among other things reminded his Majesty of

what he had formerly said—“*La souveraineté temporelle du Chef vénérable de l'Eglise est intimement liée à l'éclat du Catholicisme, à la Liberté et à l'Indépendance de l'Italie.*”

By post to-day I send you a little souvenir which you will, I hope, find useful during your journeyings. Once more I envy you for being in Madrid—a place I have never yet been able to reach. Adieu.

CCVIII

PARIS, *New Year's Eve*, 1860.

Anniversaries are not thoroughly pleasant things, are they? They remind one of too many undertakings left unfinished, too many good resolutions broken; and they define too clearly the widening gaps in life never again to be filled, the circle of friends narrowing with such piteous speed and certainty. No, most distinctly I do not like anniversaries,—let us ignore the fact that this is one. There is little news, and the weather is vile; I feel stupid; it is the night of nights for reminiscences, and as

I refuse to indulge in them, I had far better leave you a fair white unwritten page than try and make conversation when the one subject I could most eloquently converse upon is *streng-
verboten*. I have sent the books, *et j'attends
une prompte réponse*.

CCIX

PARIS, 9th January 1860.

What a Satanic little story is this which you tell me of the farmer near Grasse who sent his objectionable neighbour to a better world merely by pronouncing a few mystic words over three needles boiling in a pot! — I know several people whom with the greatest disinterestedness I would cheerfully so aid in exchanging the troubles and trials of this life for the joys of an unknown state, were it not for fear of consequences. Your farmer apparently lives on unharmed; I suppose because no one really believes that the spells he invoked killed the neighbour, which proves that it is not things themselves which matter, only the opinion

other people have of them. It was a bad day to tell me such a tale, so wicked do I feel. If some one would only do something to put me into a passion it would be all right, I could then expend my cerebral agitations upon a legitimate object; as it is, I shall probably do much harm in a self-controlled and ladylike way, making victims of innocent fellow-beings. To relieve you of the embarrassment of a limited selection of moral literature for presentation to your young friends in coming years, I might offer to write some books myself, were it not for the remark an Irishman once made to me, that he verily believed if I ever did write a book it would be so improper my friends would refuse to let me read it!

Yes, I gave the choice in my selection to "Olga," as you requested, without asking why you so particularly distinguished her. This want of curiosity upon my part probably passed unnoticed, as so many of my good qualities seem to pass. Be careful when you go to Grasse on Tuesday next; the monuments *de toute sorte* are not worth any extra fatigue, and

you confess that the sun at Cannes and the surrounding country is treacherous. You once suggested that our letters might one day be published, in mercy to a future reading public. I hasten to close this one. Adieu. M.

CCX

PARIS, 30th January 1860.

Your comparison of the emperor with the shepherds of the Middle Ages who made wolves dance to the music of a magic flute is not bad. He is a wonderful man; he pipes a certain tune and the workmen apply themselves heart and soul to widening streets instead of barricading them; he changes the note and the journalists sing his praises instead of deriding his policy; and with all classes it is the same, his shrewdness in his dealings with foreign powers calls forth commendation from statesmen; his urbanity delights those called to counsel with him; his social gifts charm the brilliant crowds thronging the entertainments at the Tuileries, and with it all he is a dreamer. A wonderfully

practical dreamer if you will, but still a dreamer. You will see it and believe it one day, *mon ami*, perhaps too late.—I can quite credit the fact that if they did name all the members of the sacred college it would be to you "*fort égal*," providing you were not obliged to listen to their sermons, because, *ami infiniment cher*, you are not pious. It is with regret that I write the words, they are so painfully true. Were you so, even in the most superficial sense, you would remember the *fête* of la Sainte Eulalie, which, I feel convinced, you have forgotten. Do you not know that it comes on the 11th or 12th? Shall I get something pretty in the way of Byzantine jewellery, for your cousin, and send it to you?

I am engrossed in politics; they alternately bewilder and amuse me, they, being quite strictly interpreted, standing for politicians rather than politics proper. One, at least an humble-minded woman like myself with a proper reverence for the sterner sex, has such an exalted opinion of a male mortal who undertakes in whatever form to reform and regene-

rate mankind ; I look for something so much nobler than the mere ordinary man, with aims all pure and efforts all disinterested, and what I find bewilders me. Then I come closer and gravely investigate, and my discoveries turn the bewilderment to amusement. You will probably call this silly, but so much that I write must, from your standpoint, be more than silly. Do you know, I find it a great proof of your affection for me that you can endure so much nonsense from me, and when I stop to think seriously of the matter I am amazed that I dare write to you, not only as I do, but at all. Reflection, however, reminds me that I have so long now been your *ami féminin*, and that relationship solves so many wonderings. You ask me when my *fête* comes ; I have none. You ask my name, is it not *L'Inconnue* ?

CCXI

PARIS, 17th February 1860.

Do you remember the maxim which Madame de Sévigné says in a letter to her daughter that

she made off-hand, and liked so well she fancied she had taken it from M. de la Rochefoucauld. It was, if I mistake not, "Ingratitude begets reproach, as acknowledgment begets new favours."

You were so grateful for my offer to help you safely over the *fête* of Sainte Eulalie and its accompanying gift, that I hasten to send a Byzantine clasp, which will, I think, *faire votre affaire*. Let me know if you receive it safely. It complies tolerably well with all your conditions, is not too modern or too *voyante*, has the air of costing more than I paid for it, and has not given me any trouble at all. Am I comprehensive, do I reply as categorically as the neat little numbers in your letter would suggest, are you satisfied with me so far as executing commissions goes? If so, I have not lived in vain.

M.

CCXII

PARIS, 29th February.

'Tis good to be alive to-day for the spring has come to peep at us behind the skirts of

winter, and kissed her hands to us while the cold and sleet and snow were for a moment off duty. The little feathered lovers in the trees are as open in their wooing as though leafy foliage screened their indiscreet confessions, instead of bare brown branches holding them up to the derision of pessimists and cynics. Their chirpings and twitterings are all perfectly clear to me, while they know that I sympathise with them, and by the very way in which they turn their heads to one side and look at me with bright round eyes, I understand that they wish me well because of my sympathy. They are glad, as I am, that spring is coming soon to stay, and with it birds and travellers from the south; birds for them to twitter to, and one dear traveller for me to welcome home again. Do be careful not to overtire yourself on the journey.

I have at one and the same time been told a most exciting secret, and been bound over to keep the peace by not divulging it. For a daughter of Eve this is trying. Of course I mean to keep the solemn promises so solemnly

made that I will never, *never* repeat what I have heard, so do not ask me to share my knowledge with you. Personally I have a theory that a secret is safe only when known to three persons two of whom are dead, but really, I do mean to try and keep this particular one inviolate. I direct this to Marseilles, *poste restante*, as you tell me to, and I live for the first week in March. What a great thing it is to be happy, everything is then so possible. *À bientôt.*

CCXIII

LONDON, 1st April 1860.

It was just as well for me that I saw so much of you in Paris, as the agreeable remembrance of having done so may enable me to survive the *ennuies* I suffer here. I have been independent too long to live in other people's houses when the people are relations, and when those relations have valued old family servants to whom they are bound to show consideration. Such an one is at the present time turning a fairly comfortable world into a very unenvi-

able place as a residence, and rapidly converting an amiably-inclined individual (myself) into an irritable, distracted, and distracting specimen of outraged human nature. Write to me quickly, one of your long amusing letters, tell me of your dinners and balls and something enlivening, that I may be able to endure this compulsory visit of one whole month to uncongenial people. I would send you a *poisson d'Avril* did such things exist in London, but they do not; no one gives pretty or amusing presents on the 1st of April, they only sometimes perpetrate very stupid jokes. My April joke is to find myself where I am, and the proportions of it will last me for some time to come. You see I am diabolically cross, but I ask you how, under the circumstances, could I be anything else? You in Paris well, cheerful, and amusing yourself; I in London bound to consult the fancies and prejudices of a narrow-minded old aunt and four spinster cousins. Just why I allow myself to be so imposed upon is what puzzles your most moral and conservative

CCXIV

LONDON, *7th April* 1860.

Ah, why did I come here! The springlike weather makes me long for our woods, and your letter is too cheerful; you do not miss me half enough. Alfred de Musset's words haunt me—

“Le temps emporte sur son aile
Et le printemps et l'Hirondelle,
Et la vie et les jours perdus.”

I will not quote the last line of the verse; it would be equally untrue and ungrateful. But write to me.

CCXV

(Letter missing)

CCXVI

LONDON, *5th May*.

There is but one drawback in reading your letters, I so dread coming to the end of them. The last, telling of the ball at the Hôtel d'Albe,

was delightful; how good of you to spare so much time for the details which you knew would delight my feminine heart. If *you* found the women *décolletées d'une façon outrageuse*, it must have been a trifle strong for the rest of humanity. The fashion has not yet crossed the Channel; we are still very decent here, if not a trifle prudish. It often strikes me as odd that so narrow a stretch of water should separate such entirely different customs, manners, and moralities in the two nations of England and France. Even the shape of a Paris bonnet is modified before it pleases the London beauty, and a roomful of English *grande dames* will demurely look down their noses at a *risqué* French story which would merely make their *piquante* neighbours across the stream laugh heartily; and yet human nature is terribly alike wherever it exists. *Au fond*, we are not one bit more moral than you, only we are taught "properer manners," as my old nurse used to say. I have no equivalent exchange for your Paris scandals, although I rejoice to say that my visit to the aunts and cousins is

over, safely over too, for which I take no small credit to myself. I allowed my digestion to be thoroughly upset once a week by having the hour of every meal changed, and eating a cold meat dinner in the middle of the day on Sundays. I forbore to mention your name, or to dwell upon the little differences between foreign and English life. I came down to breakfast punctually; read my letters stolidly under fire of ten pairs of inquisitive eyes who darted silent disapprobation at the foreign stamps and thin paper; in short, by the miraculous aid of a kind Providence, I lived through a month of the dullest possible existence, formed of narrow respectability and respectable narrowness as regards life in its every phase. Now I breathe again, and the world seems alive once more. You will smile when you learn what kept me from absolute collapse during my duty visit; it was an almost daily stroll to that grand silent resting-place of the dead and shrine of worship for the living—beautiful, shadowy, dreamy Westminster Abbey. You see I was careful to seek out no worldly

acquaintances during my penitential retreat at the aunt's, who is a kind old soul after all said and done ; therefore much spare time remained upon my hands, and I employed it in wandering through the Poets' Corner and reading the names of those glorious gifted ones who have sung of joy and sorrow, love and death, touching men's hearts to quick sympathy and soothing many an hour of pain or weariness. To write something that will live after one ! To pen even a few words which, whenever read, must bring a throb of restful pleasure to a human heart, that may help one child of earth amid the endless grind of earthly toil ; is this not ambition well employed ? You who are doing all this, do you not feel glad that it has been given you to do ? From where the poets lie in the old Abbey it is not far to the tombs of kings and queens with heads uncrowned by death and laid low as any common commoner. Mere worldly greatness does not seem to me one-half so worth the having as greatness of mind and soul, yet see the crowd cheer and hail the one while the other is worshipped only

by a few. And when *tout le monde* approves, why, it is much, it is everything ; one is always fool enough to be governed by public opinion. If we are ever in London together, you and I, you must come with me to Westminster Abbey and explain it to me architecturally, for I regret to say I am painfully ignorant of the very first principles of architecture. I love the place, and love to ramble along its aisles and its quiet corners, to look far up among the arches and listen to the organ's peal rolling through the building from corner to corner and end to end ; but I love all this with sensation and feeling, not understanding—this latter you must teach me.

CCXVII

(Letter missing)

CCXVIII

LONDON, 1st July 1860.

The crossing to-day was, without exception, the worst I have ever made. It is a matter of positive amazement to me how the two nations

of the earth, professing to be the most civilised and to know how to live more comfortably than their neighbours, will, year in and year out, traverse that wretched Channel in boats which could not have been worse in the dark ages, if that period of time knew anything about boats. Two hours of mortal misery to be endured every time an Englishman wishes to dine in Paris or a Frenchman proposes to visit John Bull in his tight little island; it really seems absurd. To-day the sea was rough, and a cold drizzling rain made the misery more miserable. You could take your choice of shivering on a wet windy deck or suffocating in the bad air of a musty cabin, sights and sounds ghastly in their disgusting distinctness being thrown in gratis in whichever place you elected to put yourself. A young married couple were crossing, at least they looked young and very newly married when they came on board—fresh new travelling suits to match their fresh new conjugal manners and unmistakably new-married little ways—but oh, the change as we neared the white cliffs of Dover! The hapless Marie

Stuart could not have regretted leaving her "*belle* France" more bitterly than did the poor little rumpled sea-sick bride, while every illusion she had ever possessed as to the personal charms of her new husband must have been shaken to their very foundations with one glance at his green woe-begone countenance from which sea-sickness had driven all the assured air of the conqueror and successful proprietor. And to think of crossing again to-morrow when I go with Lady M—— to —— by the sea, where she fancies the air will do wonders for her! London is all mud, and the season is practically over; I shall like —— better, although the place is new to me. Let me know your plans. What a passion for separation we have, considering that we are supposed to care about one another. Adieu.

CCXIX

——, 7th July 1860.

I much doubt whether the get-up of a *croque-mort* would suit you, and all men in

deep mourning have a horribly suggestive appearance of undertakers, *donc*, not to see you in the funeral procession of Prince Jérôme does not bring the amount of regret with it which you seem to think it ought to. I can fancy you in other *rôles* far more to my taste than anything so melancholy as this, and on principle I dislike interments. Remember, when I die I wish to be cremated. This I write in all seriousness. To begin with, it is clean, and I hold strongly to the belief that cleanliness is next to godliness. Then, however fair dead persons may look in that last still sleep, the knowledge that the seeds of corruption are within them is too horrible. Think of the slow decay, the rotting of flesh, the hideous change, the loathsome gnawing worm, the foul creeping, slimy things——faugh! all these give the lie to the pure pale beauty of the dead, and if life must be false, in pity let its end end the falseness; have done with shams, and look and be what it really is! So burn me when I die, that I may at least be clean and not food for worms.

CCXX

(Letter missing)

CCXXI

—, 21st July.

When you are in a rage you are so delightful that the temptation to infuriate you is almost more than I can resist. For a long long time now I have not had so charming a letter as the one lying open before me, which closes with the words, "*Je suis vraiment de bien mauvaise humeur contre vous.*" My conscience tells me sternly that I deserve every one of your reproaches, while my vanity whispers in deliciously soothing tones, "See how he misses your letters when you fail to write—he so fears to lose them that angry as he is he tells you that you are the "*grand motif déterminant*" of all his plans, that no change of programme will be a sacrifice if it conduces to a speedy meeting with you; that he would throw over every engagement and return to Paris to-morrow if you said that you would be there. O dear

vanity, how could I live without her! It was not nice of me, I confess, to neglect writing, but how often have I told you that when living with the sea I am not responsible for my actions? If we have all existed in a previous state in some other form of animal or bird or spirit, I know what I was,—a mermaid. The whole thing becomes clear to me as I write the words. I was born in a grotto below the sea, the walls of a pale shimmering green with opal lights flashing through it, the roof of branching coral, the floor fine silvery sand. Great pearls lay here and there in dreamy moonlight whiteness, and faintly-tinted grasses waved lightly near the grotto's opening. What a gay careless life it was, playing with baby wavelets and sporting in the surf, the cool spray falling on hair and eyes and lips like kisses in a dream. And in the starlight how amusing it was to mount to the world above and watch the ships go by as we sat on the rocks and sang for the tired mariners. Oh no, it was not half a bad sort of a life, that of a mermaid under the sea. No care or responsibility, no fighting between

good and evil, that wearing ceaseless struggle which seems to know no end.

How can you regret an owl? What odd tastes you have in your selection of animal pets. Long ago, do you remember, in almost the first letter I ever wrote to you, I sententiously remarked that an owl which had been in your company had failed to impart its traditional wisdom to you? Oh what queer proper little letters I used to write! I feel sure that you must have smiled one of your fine cynical smiles when you read them. In those days we promised each other such amusing things; you swore never to make love to me, and gave me wise reasons to prove how impossible it was that I should find you lovable, and I treated with noble scorn your suggestions that if I married any one else I was bound to love you in the end. Do you remember?

Algiers still tempts me, and I have by no means abandoned the idea of wintering there, and I am very clear in my mind that I am not coming to England at present; on these two points you cannot say that I do not give you

information. No one is quite all bad, even I have a few redeeming points, one of which is that in spite of all your faults I love you still, as a greater mortal than I once said of England.

CCXXII

—, 5th August 1860.

Well, it is almost decided that we go to Algiers, and I am not wholly convinced that it is the best thing to do, which means that I am in a horrid state of uncertainty and am half sorry that I promised my valuable companionship for the expedition. I wish I could have helped you in selecting the dresses and bonnets, for I have no doubt that you made a fine muddle of it all, and agree with you that it is not unlikely the "dogs of France" will run after the unfortunates who are obliged to wear the garments of your unassisted choosing. *Voilà* an idea for this happy souvenir which is to remain with us after parting. . . .

Have you only just discovered that all men (not merely Englishmen) look uncommonly

alike when dressed in *habits noirs* and *cravates blanches*? *Mon ami*, if you had ever asked a noble guest to get you a glass of champagne, as I once did, mistaking him for a *domestique*, you would know that this resemblance reaches confusingly far. Will no man assert himself and refuse to dress like the twin of a *garçon de café*? Think how well you would look in velvet and point lace attired as a gentleman of the olden times, while no costume ever invented is so trying as the present regulation full dress for a man.

Surely you cannot be serious when you say that people in England speak of war and a French annexation! absurd. I send this to 18 Arlington Street, *et je vous embrasse*.

CCXXIII

(Letter missing)

CCXXIV

LESTAQUE, 12th September.

With this I send you a photograph of myself, which will make those adieux to you which it

is impossible for me to make in person. I regret that we could arrange no meeting; you will think it my fault—I find it a little yours also; but we will not quarrel just as a long journey is to part us still more completely, although we have a genius for parting even if the space be small. Send me your commissions, and I will do my best to execute them in the excellent manner you yourself employ. How I should dislike you if you were not generous. There ought to be a law putting all mean men to death—they are one of the most unseemly blots in a tolerably well regulated world. A mean woman is a pitiable sight enough, but a mean man seems to exceed it in pitifulness, he always produces upon me a sense of intense fatigue. I expect a photograph in return. Will you not please go promptly and have one taken?

CCXXV

13th September 1860.

No letters; of what are you thinking? I gave you a carefully-prepared plan of our route

on purpose that there might be no danger of missing news from you, and I hear nothing; write, or I will tell you nothing. Yesterday as we drove along just as the day was falling, Madame de C—— slept, and I, wide awake, dreamed. And my dream was that I was great and famous. I had won a name that echoed far and wide, conquered a place in this overcrowded world which was pleasantly apart from the toilers and strugglers still fighting for space. With a calm restful loftiness I watched them pressing and hurrying on, some with great gaunt eyes and hollow cheeks, fiercely determined to win or to die; others beaten back and trampled down so often that each effort they made to rise was feebler than the last; and more still crushed into a stupid stolid hopelessness. The men who spurned all these crowded to me, taking eagerly anything that I would give, grateful for the very words over which they once had cavilled and hesitated, and finally refused, a fact they now cleverly ignored. At first no child with a new toy could have been more hugely pleased than was I with this pretty

placethings called success. I laughed aloud when those before whom I once had trembled, waiting anxiously for their autocratic verdict, now with deep respect waited upon my whims, and it vastly pleased me to give them that which I knew my name alone made valuable, but which they took gratefully, reverently, as though all worth and merit were enfolded in its pages. All this at first amused me, but gradually a slow contempt came for the very people whose opinion I had once highly valued and conscientiously tried to win. That which I knew to be good honest work, written with a longing purpose to accomplish some good in the world, to give some help to humanity, even if it were only a smile to cheer, all this had been counted as nothing worth, I had no name to stamp upon the wares offered for sale, no patent sign to attract attention and win ignorant praise. But now—how all was changed. Any worthless trash I might scribble with thoughtless haste brought me gold, and men contended which should pay the most gold to capture it, and once obtained they treated it kindly, decked

it out bravely, and stamping it with my name, my famous world-wide name, they flattered it abroad and men hastened to share it with them, and pronounce loudly to all who would hear how wise and clever and brilliant a thing this was, this trash stamped with a name. And then I scorned myself more than the silly fools around me. After the scorn a bitter sadness came: what mattered now all this flashing notoriety and fulsome flattery from people who never cared before? Those who had lovingly followed every step I took along the thorny road to fame, who had helped me with a fond belief in me, a warm sympathy when disappointment came, a glad sincere delight at every little gleam of success, these, so many of them, were gone, and gone before they knew what the end would be. They would have cared so much, and they never knew; what did it matter now, what was the good of it all, it came so late!

Oh tell me, you who know, tell me, is this all that fame can do at the end? After years of hope and toil and strong belief and final victory, does all the warm glow and flush of

success flicker and pale and fade to dull regret that it comes too late? Hot smarting tears came as we drove on in the still twilight, the utter hopelessness of it all seemed to spread over me like a pall, and weigh me down with its stifling sadness, and it seemed so real, I was so wide awake that I could hardly persuade myself I had never struggled for fame, therefore why, in heaven's name, should gain or loss of fame disturb me? I had no wish to write for men's approval, for no man's, only one, and well I knew how kind a judgment every word I wrote for him was sure to win. And I wanted no name to stamp on anything, only the one he gave me, "*L'Inconnue*," which so long a time ago was graven on his heart. A silly, silly waking dream it was for me to dream at twilight, was it not?

CCXXVI

ALGIERS, 29th September 1860.

How can I tell you what I think of your lost letters when I have never seen them? Why, you ask a question almost as silly as my waking

dream! *Décidément, mon ami*, you have lost your head as completely as the good people of Marseilles did over the sight of the emperor, and they were painfully far gone. The *fêtes* were worth seeing, and his Majesty cannot complain of any want of loyalty on the part of his Marseillais. You ask me for descriptions of what I see and my impressions of Oriental life. Where can I begin and how properly answer? I am rather bewildered with the startling contrasts of pompous splendour and feeble absurdity in the things around me. The approach to this place was a thing of perfect beauty, for we arrived at sunrise, and the lines came at once to my mind—

“ Le soleil se levait, Alger nous apparut,
Salut terre d’Afrique, à ton beau ciel salut ! ”

As our vessel glided into the still waters of the port everything was shadowy, vague, mysterious; slowly a pale gold light spread over sea and sky and the indistinct outlines of an amphitheatre of hills rising behind and around a silent white town, which looked in the distance like a line of foam on sand. Then a tinge of

blue crept into the golden light, deepening in colour as it came, and a faint soft rose tint, which also deepened as it spread until the heavens were one refulgent glow of brilliant colour and the horizon grew more and more luminous as the god of light himself rose with slow majesty behind the Djurajura mountains. At this moment the full glory of an African sunrise was before us, bathing white Algiers as it rose from the sparkling waters in an exquisite rosy blushing light. Then came a motley crew of Arabs, Spaniards, Maltese, and Kabyles, shouting in an undistinguishable jargon of hybrid *patois*, men with dark faces and picturesque costumes, all clamouring for our goods and chattels. And oh the queer old Arab town with its modern French half that Algiers is when in spite of the polyglot confusion you at last reach it; and oh the palms, the graceful Eastern palms which until now I have only seen in my dream of the desert; and oh the plants and flowers, and orange and olive groves, and the beautiful vineyards! I ask again how am I to describe all these! One must see Algiers

to know its perfumed beauty, its luxurious wealth of wild flowers, its pepper trees and myrtle, its great bunches of scarlet poinsettias, and fragrant waxy magnolias, its lemon trees and cypresses. If you wish warm, fragrant, golden loveliness, you must come to Algiers, with sea in front and mountains behind and sunshine over all!

There is an immense difference in the old and the new part, the latter inhabited by the French being all excitement and bustle, gay, amusing, vivacious; the former silent and solemn, the people self-contained, with grave sad faces, while over all falls the veil of mystery which always envelops an Eastern people. The Arab women are graceful, but in their regular features there is but little expression or soul, and a strange resemblance exists in them all. Only two distinct passions gleam from their dark eyes, love and hate, there is nothing between, no finer shades. We have already been inside a harem and seen these Eastern beauties unveiled; poor things, what a life they must lead, it would be all hate with me if I were

unlucky enough to be in their place! But my letter is growing to an alarming length, and as I do not wish you to find it like a leaf out of a guide-book, I will write quickly FIN.

CCXXVII

ALGIERS, 3d October 1860.

No 5.

I still revel in all the beauty of nature and colour and picturesqueness, in this entrancing African warmth and brightness. To-day we visited the Mosque of Dja-ma-el-Djedid. Do you find the name musical? A commoner way of calling it is the Mosque of the Pêcherie. It is dazzlingly white, and oddly enough is built in the form of a Latin Cross. To explain this there is a legend telling that the designer of the building was a Genoese, a Christian slave who was forced by the Moslems to work. He revenged himself for their cruelty by an ingenious device, namely, the manner in which he designed this building, perpetrating in the Mahomedan temple the symbol of his own Christian faith. When the

Musselmen discovered in what fashion he had carried out their orders they were furious, and put him to a hideously cruel death by impalement.

Some of the Moorish houses here are the most luxurious and shadowy bits of seclusion, with cool open courts shaded by vines or ivy which is trained up the sides of the building. In these courts you see the dwellers in the house sitting on soft carpets, and splashing bare naked feet in the fountain which drips ceaselessly with a soothing monotony. But few of the windows of the houses open on the streets, and these few are jealously defended by bars and close gratings. There are quantities of Jews in the place, and some of the Jewish women are lovely. Their ordinary dress is a simple blue, or brown, or green garment confined under the breast with a girdle, while their long black hair is held together with circlets of silver or gold, or merely a simple ribbon. Their arms and feet are bare, and are sometimes very beautiful. We have seen some of the curious Eastern dances, where the women move their bodies entirely from the hips downward, and

we often hear the Arab girls singing as they accompany themselves on a mandoline. More guide-book! I fear you will exclaim after reading this letter, but you so constantly tell me to describe all that I see, and you become so abusive, and clamour so for details when I am not particular enough in my descriptions, that I feel I must risk the charge of copying from Baedeker. Is not the poor empress terribly distressed at the death of the Duchess d'Albe? How sad it was. Will the parties at Compiègne be given up this year? I hope not, as I know how much you always enjoy them. Could you only be with me on these "shining sands of Africa's shore" I should be quite quite happy.

CCXXVIII

ALGIERS, 15th October.

I once wrote you a description of a chapel in a wood where prayer was real and faith was not a dream. In quaint contrast to that quiet spot and the simple worship practised there, yet at once recalling it, is another tiny chapel

of an older faith, standing in a deserted garden, amidst a wild luxuriance of foliage and Eastern flowers, in this far-away land, in which a worship of signs and gorgeous symbols was once practised. We came upon it suddenly when going from Algiers along the sea-road to the village of St. Eugène, and immediately the contrast between the two places of worship struck me as more than curious, not only because of the difference in them, but in their odd resemblance, both so lonely and remote; one so bright and simple under the free dome of heaven, the other so dim and with such an old-world air inside its painted walls; both standing in a place of leafy beauty, the one fresh and cool, the other dark, the air seeming laden with memories of the past; both prayer-haunted, but from the one the balmy summer air seemed to have swept away all trace of unforgiven sin, while in the other, time seemed only to have accumulated the grief which sin had felt there, and piled it high until its woe oppressed you. We had left Algiers by the north gate, Bal-el-Oned, and as we passed it

we came upon a group which could a painter have transferred to canvas just as they looked at the moment, his fortune would have been made. The men, three of them, were very handsome; Moors, with pale, oval faces and stately figures. They wore a rich, embroidered dress, with a cloak gracefully draped over one shoulder, and on their heads the universal *fez* and white turban. All three stood like statues as we passed. Two Moorish women, enveloped in white draperies, were sitting near them; both of these wore the white striped shawl called *haik*, with the white linen handkerchief called *adjar* hiding all of their face save the fiery, dark eyes. Near them a Maltese sailor was disputing with a bloodthirsty-looking Spaniard in a velvet *sombrero*. The old gate, a group of palms, and the brilliant colouring of air and sky, completed the picture, which, had it hung framed on the walls of the *salon*, would have charmed all who looked upon it. But this is a land of pictures. I have already a whole gallery in my mind, which later, when I have more leisure at my command, I must ticket

and number for future reference. Let us one day come to Algiers together ; I begin to love it well.

Do send me some reliable information about the actual state of affairs in the political world. We hear strange rumours here of strained relations between Russia and Austria ; and to come nearer home, of a little discontent among a few about your emperor. Perhaps this latter is nothing more than the difficulty about M. H—— and the *beaux-arts* to which you alluded in your last letter. I feel terribly remote here ; when one lives in Paris, and is accustomed to hearing all the daily details of such things, one rather misses them when absent. Write me one of your long, comprehensive letters, full of men and things.

CCXXIX

ALGIERS, 25th October.

No. 7.

I am studying Arabic. It appears frightfully difficult, but I hope in time to conquer it as I

d'd German. I do so ardently wish to be able to converse with these people, who quite fascinate me, and are infinitely more interesting than the French colony of which we are obliged to see more than we quite fancy. Your *tartine politique*, as I presume you yourself would designate your last letter, was delightful. I feel quite myself again, and *au courant* with the affairs of all nations. Did ever a woman have such a correspondent before? that is the question I ask myself after reading your letters, which surely are the best ever written. You make me smile with your absurd insistence that I should give you fuller and still fuller descriptions of what I see here. "Donnez-moi des détails de mœurs et n'ayez pas peur de me scandaliser." This is the *motif* of your every letter now, and it is growing quite monotonous. Know then, once for all, that in spite of what you are pleased to term my *euphémisme*, I distinctly refuse to enlighten you as to a good many of the details of the manners in this part of the world lest they might not improve your own. We have just come in from a visit to

the market in the Place de Chatres under the arcades, and have also been up to the Casa'bah, which was the former residence of the Dey. It is not a particularly cheerful spot, and has high, battlemented walls around the place; but one thing is higher still, and is moreover very beautiful—this is a palm, the tree of my predilection. It rears its lofty, graceful head high up against the sky, and stands so fair and slim, with a dreamy Eastern loveliness which I find in no other tree that I have ever seen, and which appeals to something deep down in my heart, just what I am perfectly incapable of explaining; I only know that I love a palm, and I think of Heine's lonely pine-tree in the North, sleeping under its white covering of ice and snow, and dreaming of

“ . . . einer Palme
Die fern im Morgenland ;”

is lonely, and silent, and grieved, amid burning rocky cliffs. Beautiful as it is, there is something almost pathetic in a palm. Near this particular one to-day an Arab spread his carpet, and throwing himself on his knees, bent

his head to the earth as he heard the call to prayer. He had the dull, uninterested expression of his race—the look of a fatalist, who accepts all that comes, and with bowed head and total lack of interest repeats at every blow of fate, “The will of Allah be done.” Adieu, *cher ami*, I am not a fatalist ; are you ?

CCXXX

(Letter missing)

CCXXXI

ALGIERS, 5th December.

“*Je vous apporte ma tête coupable !*” as you tell me, in your letter of 1st November, the Emperor Francis Joseph said to the Emperor Alexander. If this is in reality the form of speech used by a serf when he approaches his master, fearing to be punished by him, it is an apt one for me to employ, for I know how guiltily remiss I have been lately in not writing and not acknowledging your two long and very charming letters. That I did not do so is no proof that I did not to the fullest extent ap-

preciate your epistles, I enjoyed every word of them, but this African climate must be responsible for my remissness; I am growing lazy with a laziness that would alarm me were I not too lazy even to feel afraid. How kind of you to think of sending me the little package, I shall value it highly. I look through your two last letters as I write, to see if any questions in them need answering. You were quite right as to the address of the jeweller, it was Rue d'Alger, No. 10, where I bought the sleeve buttons. How amusing that the Princess Clotilde should notice them. You are, not particularly encouraging about the Arabic, but I mean to persevere; how droll it would be if I could speak in a tongue unknown to you! I promise not to abuse my superior knowledge; I will not call you "dog of a Christian" at the very moment you are particularly generous to me, as these Arabs do when we give them small coins, hurling their contemptuous phrases at us with impunity, as they know we cannot understand a word they say.

Yes, poor Lady M—— did once write a

book, a novel, but it never had any success, and it was not a subject she cared to dwell much upon later in life. She was one of several warnings to me not to perpetrate a similar folly. I shall miss the old lady very sincerely ; she was a good friend up to the day of her death, and you know my idea as to friends, I prefer quality rather than quantity as their characteristic. A few, but those few very staunch and true, are better than half a hundred feeble half-hearted ones who blow hot and cold according to the social thermometer of the day. In the way of literature, I think you might find something better worth reading than the story of Mademoiselle Can and Mademoiselle Ling. If that is the best the Chinese can do, France will not gain much from these much-talked-of victories in China. The Celestials have never interested me, they are so little original, and originality appeals to me so very strongly. What was really the real reason of the empress's visit to Scotland ? Is it personal friendship for the Queen of England, or does it conceal a political meaning ? On all sides I hear differ-

ent motives assigned as an explanation of the journey, and if you will confide the truth to me I will not betray your confidence ; I shall only have the delightful satisfaction of knowing what all the world does not know, which is, I think, one of the most pleasantly-soothing sensations in life. You will insist upon hearing particulars of Algerian customs, here is one spicy one for you. .

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CCXXXII

ALGIERS, 10th December 1860.

So I do not acquit myself well in my *rôle* of *voyageuse*. I am very sorry, but what more or what less can I do to improve matters? I tell you of what I see (not quite all of it perhaps) in the best language I know how to command ; I give you a little bit of everything, sunrise, costumes, floral vegetation, descriptions of all kinds, to say nothing of my thoughts, and ambitions, and even my dreams. When I sum up all this, I find you a trifle unreasonable, for, on the whole, I think I might do worse.

When a man grows to have an *idée fixe* which nothing can turn to the right or to the left, naturally, he can see and appreciate nothing which does not in some way appertain to that idea. Might this not perhaps be your present case? I merely suggest the thought without the slightest *arrière pensée*. By a friend going directly to Cannes I send you a little souvenir worked with some rather good gold and coloured embroidery; just what it is I can hardly say, you might perhaps use it as a purse, or merely let it lie as a fine bit of delicate colour on your table with the "relics"; try the effect. Write to me but do not scold me; strive for a more contented and less inquisitive disposition, and leave the natives of this land and any little peculiarities which they may possess in an undisturbed peace. *Votre amie dévouée.*

CCXXXIII

ALGIERS, 7th January 1861.

I will answer your question at once about the *sacoches*. They are to be had here, they do

come from Constantine, and they are marvellously embroidered with silks of every shade. Shall I get you some? Further, there are most lovely stuffs and soft silken draperies, and a curious thing they call a *gebira*, a kind of case or bag worked and inlaid with gold inside and out. I will get you any or all of these things if you will deign to let me know your pleasure in the matter. It will be too late to catch the post to-day if I write one line more, so I will not delay the above information, but close this fragment of a letter at once with every loyal loving wish for the New Year upon which we are entering ; may it bring you only good.

CCXXXIV

ALGIERS, 30th January 1861.

Nizza la bella was a name so suited to the place that I cannot share your enthusiasm in finding it changed to Nice, a French annexation, although the absence of custom-house officers, gendarmes and passports on the Pont de Var must be a vast improvement. I am so glad

that you have been to see your friend Mr. Ellice at Nice, as I know your mutual admiration for each other. If you decide to leave Cannes about the 8th of February I will begin to think of tearing myself away from my beloved palms and the sad-faced Arabs, that we may meet again after this long separation. Perhaps I may tell you some of the things you so much wish to know, and which I declined to put on paper ; but this only if I find you very amiable, and if we meet soon while the "details" are fresh in my mind.

CCXXXV

ALGIERS, 10th March.

Really, that you should still need me to remind you of your cousin's *fête* and the annual *étrennes* for Madame Lagrené's daughters after all these years is *un peu fort* ; I believe you merely say so to permit of my feeling the pleasantness of being a necessity to you. I accept the subtle flattery, and repay it with the announcement that I have just the very thing

for your cousin, whom you can assure that only the fact of my negligence in sending it earlier prevented her receiving it in time. For the books I fear you will have to make your own excuses, unless you would like me to send you a few copies of the Koran!

I am to meet the Duchess of Malākof to-night at dinner, and will with pleasure speak of you and the theatricals in Spain; it will be a capital opening subject of conversation. I am tired with a long walk in the sun, therefore you must forgive a short letter. Adieu.

CCXXXVI

—, 29th March 1861.

Your last letter proved you to be in such an infamous temper against all men and things that I feared your health might become seriously affected through nervous agitation, and I at the same time decided that this eternal saying of adieu is not just the most profitable occupation that we can indulge in. From this

decision to a steamer bound for France was but a step, and *me voici*, a little browner perhaps than when you saw me last—you would never believe that I had been to Africa were not this the case—but neither fatter nor thinner, therefore you will have small difficulty in recognising me. I think you will like the *gebira*,—it is rather a good one. We shall quarrel delightfully over Wagner's music ; I like it, while you have evidently nearly died under it ; and you will see *Tannhäuser* will yet be a success, in spite of Auber and the Princess of Metternich and your irascible self. I must remain here for a short time, that I may get my affairs into some sort of order after so long an absence, and then I propose seeing Paris and yourself once more. With this hope strong within me I write no more adieu, but with much pleasure *au revoir*.

(Letters inclusive from CCXXXVII to CCXL missing.)

CCXLI

N——,

Thursday, 13th June 1861.

Have you ever had a moment of such complete aberration of intellect that in it you have done a thing which had the greatest fool of your acquaintance done you would be convinced that he was attacked with a sudden access of folly? Have you ever, during this same space of mental aberration, literally held within your hand an object most difficult to get, and which only by the greatest care and skill you have succeeded in obtaining, and then, always at this critical moment of the suspension of every faculty tinged with reason or common sense, have you allowed this ardently-desired and dearly-bought object to slip from your grasp? One moment will do it, and another moment will make you aware that you have done it, while in the two moments combined the object so hardly won has escaped you, it may be for ever, and you have only yourself to thank for your loss.

~ If you have ever suffered from a spasm of lunacy such as this, perhaps you will kindly tell me what you did to yourself by way of punishment. I am literally suffocating with rage against myself, and would willingly perform any act of self-abasement if it would effectually prevent me from a second attack upon any future occasion of this same momentary insanity. I can fancy being able to apply a good many things which might be of salutary effect were the delinquent any one but myself, but I can find nothing sharp enough or efficacious enough to meet such a case when it becomes personal. The whole story of the *sottise* which I have committed is too long to tell ; it may or may not be fatal to the ultimate design which I contemplated, but its immediate consequence is that I am obliged to stop on here indefinitely, and in spite of my *au revoir* I shall not be able to come to Paris or to meet you just yet. *En revanche* I send you a cigar-case which I had hoped to give you in person. Write to me, if you can do so after what I have just told you, as if I were still a reasonable

being, instead of what I feel myself to be, the most imbecile idiot ever allowed to go at large!

CCXLII

N——, 12th July 1861.

When I tell you that the domestic event in my sister-in-law's family is still awaited with no little anxiety you will understand why I have not written as regularly as usual. I devoutly hope that everything will soon be satisfactorily over, for this state of suspense is getting on my nerves, and the responsibility of the entertainment is, *malgré moi*, thrust upon me. If you have any moments left between the dinners and balls with which your time in London is doubtless almost entirely taken up, do write me something amusing; I am bored to death, as I was never intended for a *garde-malade*.

CCXLIII

(Letter missing)

CCXLIV

N——, 17th August 1861.

My next letter will be from D——, as we are just off—at least the children and I are—to that place; my sister-in-law is recovering very slowly, and will remain here for some time longer. Your account of the Bank of England made me feel quite avaricious of so much gold. I have once or twice passed it—the Bank, not the gold—when I had business calling me into the City, and have been amused at the magnificence of the porter at the door, with his trimming of gold lace and his imposing hat; farther than the door I have never penetrated.

So this time Mr. Gladstone pleases you more; for me he is a wonderful man who will go far. I meant to tell you another story of Lord B——, more amusing still than the one you tell in your letter of 16th July; but I quite forgot it when I wrote, and on second thoughts I think that it will tell the better if I can personally act the dramatic portions of it, which

could not be expressed on paper. Remind me to do this when we meet.

Direct your next to D——.

CCXLV

D——, 27th August 1861.

Nonsense! so you find that I have accustomed myself to submit to oppression, and that is why I enjoy having these children about me. Well, there are theories and theories, and the most amusing part about this particular one is that to make me submit the oppression must come from any one saving and excepting yourself! *C'est un peu fort, par exemple*, but all the same, as I said, amusing. I delight in children, always have, and always shall. They never bore me, and I like studying the still undeveloped traits of the human animal when very small. I like to play with children and to have them about me, and I thank God from the bottom of my heart that I have none of my own! The pleasure of them is very great, but the responsibility of them is too great. To

begin with, they may be so satisfactory in every way, and they may on the contrary be so miserably disappointing. If a boy, one would naturally wish him to be bright and plucky, clever at his books, a thorough little gentleman, honest and truthful, intelligent, responsive, affectionate. Fancy one's dismay should he turn out to be dull and sullen, awkward and untidy, without ambition or interest in things around him, given to a shifty sort of prevarication, unresponsive and selfish, a gloomy blot in the household instead of a bit of glad happy sunshine. If a girl, on the other hand, she should be pretty, loving and winning, with promise of future grace and accomplishments, holding strictly to truth and virtue—all of which things, by the way, the little one who so attracts me in Madame de P——'s brood is duly endowed with. Such a child is a constant delight, but were she the opposite of this, *quel malheur!* One human being less in the world would, under those circumstances, suit me better. No, no, *mon ami*, little people to be enjoyed should suggest no personal responsi-

bility. Who is the moralist who writes that but one woman in a hundred, at a very moderate calculation, is really fitted to be a mother? Think what the part of a conscientious mother really is. A child's soul and mind is given into her keeping—a pure white blank like a sheet of paper, easily impressed, responsive to the first words written upon it. You may later, if you will, rub out, and perhaps so far as the eye can see entirely efface, some of the original precepts and ideas traced upon the page, even successfully write others over them ; but, if carefully examined, the smooth surface of the paper will be found to be scratched and roughened ; you can see the blurred spot by holding it in the proper light, and beneath the second writing will be found the first, faint and colourless, but deeply marked. The ink or carbon may have been quite rubbed off, but the steel point of the pen or the weight of the pencil has imprinted indelible lines. And to whom but the mother is it given to write these first teachings upon the little white soul, the little blank heart and understanding ; and

Among the many mothers how few, how terrifyingly few, are those who write in wisdom, and firmness tempered with gentleness, and a patience unending?

It is so infinitely easier to spoil a child than it is to train him wisely, to give him the thing refused a moment before because he cries for it, and the noise he makes is a nuisance. To tell him crossly to hush up and not talk any more because the little brain, puzzling over many things and struggling to understand some of the mysteries around it, will ask troublesome and stupid questions just at the moment when your book is most interesting or your head aches. Heavens, the patience of all the angels combined is needed to make one perfect mother! The responsibility has no let up to it; it is line upon line, and precept upon precept, in season and out of season, and even then suppose one should fail? It must be terrible for a parent to see the unrestrained passions of a well-grown child, to watch his violent temper if angered, his sullen sulkiness if thwarted, his selfish uncheerful manner to

those around him, and to have conscience say —“That is all your work ; you spoiled him because it was too much trouble to train him properly. If you had instructed him in gentleness and forgiveness and self-control, he could never exhibit such ungoverned rage ; if you had denied him things with firmness, and taught him to bear disappointments, he would not to-day make your heart ache with those black looks and that sulky silence ; had you earlier taught him to be generous in thought and in deed, and had impressed upon him that a certain amount of cheery friendliness is due one mortal from another, you would not have been forced to blush for his loutish ungraciousness of demeanour.” And I believe conscience must say just this to parents very frequently. Too much responsibility is it all when one thinks of it seriously ; and did one so think, the subject would grow in magnitude until few would willingly face it. I have spoken only of the temporal side of the question—the child’s physical and mental training ; but think of that other spiritual side, of the child’s little

white soul which is to be guided and influenced, and remember the quick imitativeness of children, their retentive memories, the startling clearness with which they see through humbug, and the tenacity with which they remember example. *Ach lieber Himmel!* let me play with other people's pretty toddling things, but save me the horror of ever knowing that through any neglect or carelessness on my part I have made more difficult the life here, or impossible the life hereafter, to any child of my own!

We spend our days in excursions, going for long tramps, and eating our luncheon under the trees. There are Madame de P—— and myself, a clever little French artist who sketches, and the small fry. A donkey-boy goes to attend to the animals, as by turn the tired ones of the party ride on donkeys, and no less than five dogs accompany us; then the weather is perfect for out-of-door life, and I never saw the place looking so lovely. I wish you would leave Paris. How you can stand that white glare and the August smells I cannot under-

stand. Can you not get away to Biarritz?

Toujours fidèle.

M.

CCXLVI

D——, 15th September.

Delighted, *mon ami*, that you are out of the heat and glare of Paris and are being well amused, as I know you always are, in these visits to the empress. Write me a full account of your life at the Villa Eugénie, and, above all, tell me that you are feeling well and more yourself there. My letter must be brief, for we are just off to the R—— Valley for the day; even as I write the children are calling me, and their combined voices make a noise which you would pronounce insufferable! Adieu.

CCXLVII

PARIS, 2d November.

We reached here last evening. I am well up in metaphysics. Let me know when I can see you.

CCXLVIII

(Letter missing)

CCXLIX

PARIS, 19th November 1861.

Your letter was delightful. The little Prince Imperial must be a charming child, even if sometimes rather terrible. I laughed heartily over his reason for bowing to the people, but should fancy it must cause a smile when he gives it in public! By the dance which you describe I presume that the Duke of Athole and his companions treated you to the Highland Fling, and am not astonished that you found it alarming. Since many a long day your letters have not been so like yourself as this last one. I think our discussions on metaphysics must have done you great good, cheered away some of the cobwebs from your brain which have bothered you lately. Is my supposition correct?

CCL

R——, 9th January 1862.

Jamais de la vie! Of what can you be thinking? I know my Paris, know just what it will stand, and just where it draws the line: know the narrow crooked *escalier de service* in every *appartement meublé* up which mounts so much knowledge of *ces messieurs* so *comme il faut* who decorously mount the broad steps of the grand staircase. *Mais, mon cher, vous êtes fou!* *N'en parlons plus.* The lessons in botany have evidently gone to your head! Do you remember some lines of Heine—I must repeat the first four that you may understand the last two, and had I space I would quote the whole—

“Ich rief den Teufel und er Kam,
Und ich sah ihm mit Verwund' rung an!
Er ist nicht hässlich und ist nicht lahm,
Er ist ein lieber scharmanter Mann.

Und als ich recht besah sein Gesicht,
Fand ich in ihm einen alten Bekannten.”¹

¹ I called the devil and he came,
Can he be under heaven's ban!

There, *mein Freund*, you have the answer to the last page of your letter in more expressive language than any I could write. Ask me no more.

Pray do not waste all your affection on that cat which you seem to be so attentive to, or I shall grow as jealous of it as I was of the horrible beast you fed upon flies. It was really quite a relief to my mind when that repulsive creature died. I begin to believe that you are slightly jealous of these children who afford me so much amusement. Poor little mites, they have convinced me of one thing, and that is, that grown-up people talk a great deal of nonsense about the happy days of childhood. I do not believe that children are half as happy as they get the credit of being. Everything is so terribly real to them, and they are so absolutely ignorant that they have nothing to fall back upon. To say to a child "Not now, some

He is not ugly and is not lame,
He is a dear and charming man.

• • • • •
And as I looked him in the face
I found in him an old acquaintance.

other time you can do it," conveys to his mind nothing but black desolation, the crushing infinity of space and limitless ages. Each day I feel more convinced that thoughtless words or expressions, used by their elders, often give children hours of bitter puzzled thought, simply because the poor little things possess neither the knowledge nor the experience which would disentangle jest from earnestness. Further, to break a promise, however slight, made to a child I consider absolutely criminal, and another sin almost beyond forgiveness in my opinion, is to say to a little fellow, what only the other day I heard a mother say to her son, "No, go away, I cannot kiss a naughty boy good-night," and the poor little man, too proud to cry, but with a quivering lip, left the room and went to bed with a heart swelling with a sense of injustice, and his first baby realisation of what it is to have your hand against every man and every man's hand against you. I saw him later lying in his little cot, with hot flushed cheeks and two great tear-drops on the dark eyelashes, and even in sleep short sobs came now and then.

What hard thoughts must have come to the sore smarting little soul after he had been left alone in the dark and told to go to sleep. Poor little fellow, he at least had not found childhood all happiness. But you will call me maudlin if I write much more about small humans.

I will look out for the book you refer to of Max Müller, but doubt my intelligence being equal to the finding of it without knowing the title ; however, I will try. I am re-reading parts of Shakespeare ; how was it possible for a man to obtain the wonderful insight into human nature which every sentence of his writings shows ! A line in *Julius Cæsar* has haunted me all day, that one in Antony's speech to "Friends, Romans, Countrymen," the line which says—"The evil that men do lives after them." Ay, that's the worst of it. If only we could keep our favourite sins for ourselves, have them to live with us, and be decently buried with us, it might be all very well, but to know that when death, that one only certain thing in life upon which we can count never to fail us, has in turn come to us, laid us low, snuffed us out,

that *then*, we helpless and gone, *then* our sin-rampage the wor'd on their own account, we powerless to check their vagaries, but always responsible for them ; this staggers one. Well, here we are, put into the world, not at our own asking, but all the same bound to act out our part in the play as if we liked it. It seems endless sometimes, and deadly wearisome, but, to quote Shakespeare again, "The night is long that never finds the day."

Do not forget your cousin's *fête* ; do you want me to look up anything for her in this part of the world ? . . . I could not finish my letter until to-day, the 13th, having had no end of *ennuis*. *La petite* has been very ill, and is only now beginning to improve, and Madame de P—— has been suddenly called away, leaving me more responsibility than I quite fancy. The book has been ordered. I finally succeeded in unearthing the thing you wanted. Do write and give me some idea of when you think of returning to Paris. *Aufwiedersehn*.

CCLI

(Letter missing)

CCLII

HOMBOURG, 5th June.

In spite of the charms of this place which I always delight in, I am "exceeding vexed" with myself that I did not do as you advised, put off the "cure" here until later, and go to London while you are there for the exhibition. It really was very stupid of me to keep to my original programme; why did you not insist upon changing it, and, whether I liked it or not, prove to me how stupid I was? Your letter from London must come now in a few days, and I know the reading of it will complete my dissatisfaction with myself, and you, and the world in general! I am growing too cross to write, so will say adieu.

CCLIII

HOMBOURG, 10th June 1862.

Yours of the 6th has just come; what a crass idiot I was not to go to London! but there is

no use abusing myself now, it is too late, you are almost ready to return to Paris, where I will try to meet you, and moreover, as I am here I might as well get all the good I can from the waters ; I fancy temper is hardly a good assistant in establishing any sort of cure, so I will keep calm, in spite of knowing myself to have been a fool. It is provoking that the exhibition should be so small a success after all the trouble it seems to have given every one, yourself included. The restaurant arrangements I knew were quite safe to be bad—they always are in England. Did you ever try a cup of tea (the national beverage, by the way) at an English railway station ? If you have not, I would advise you, as a friend, to continue to abstain ! The names of the American drinks are rather against them, the straws are, I think, about the best part of them. You do not tell me what you think of Mr. Disraeli. I once met him at a ball at the Duke of Sutherland's in the long picture gallery of Stafford House. I was walking with Lord Shrewsbury, and without a word of warning he stopped and introduced

him, mentioning with reckless mendacity that I had read every book he had written and admired them all, then he coolly walked off and left me standing face to face with the great statesman. He talked to me for some time, and I studied him carefully. I should say he was a man with one steady aim: endless patience, untiring perseverance, iron concentration; marking out one straight line before him so unbending that despite themselves men stand aside as it is drawn straightly and steadily on. A man who believes that determination brings strength, strength brings endurance, and endurance brings success. You know how often in his novels he speaks of the influence of women, socially, morally, and politically, yet his manner was the least interested or deferential in talking that I have ever met with in a man of his class. He certainly thought this particular woman of singularly small account, or else the brusque and tactless allusion to his books may perhaps have annoyed him as it did me; but whatever the cause, when he promptly left me at the first approach of a mutual acquaintance, I felt

distinctly snubbed. Of the two men, Mr. Gladstone was infinitely more agreeable in his manner, he left one with the pleasant feeling of measuring a little higher in cubic inches than one did before, than which I know no more delightful sensation. *À Paris, bientôt.*

CCLIV

(Letter missing)

CCLV

—, *Thursday, 21st August.*

Methinks, *mon cher*, that we are growing old ; going gently down the hill together, you and I. That one word together takes whatever sting there may be from out the patent fact, for fact I fear it is. How little we quarrel now, how placid and tranquil we have grown. You say far less about the splendour of my eyes, but write instead about your doctor's diagnosis, and the remedies he hopes to cure you with ; *ycâr* palpitations, sleeplessness, and want of appetite.

And I, not one whit behind you, tell you my eyes are weak, and cry no longer in frantic passion-thrilled tones that even conscience shall be drugged for your dear sake because I cannot bring myself to say you nay in anything, only write calmly of the "cure" at Hombourg and the benefit I find from the use of mineral waters. Alack-a-day, how times do change! A sure proof of advancing years on my part is that I can no longer endure with even a semblance of patience the petty jealousies and squabbles in which the natives of this place pass their petty little lives. It gets upon my nerves, this constant wrangling and silly littleness; soon shall I quit the place and sever all connection with it if this sort of thing continues. I always knew that provincial life as a continued existence would be insupportable, but for a short space of time I liked it, now it begins to bore me inexpressibly. An American girl is singing in the villa next to mine with her windows wide open, and my poor unoffending ears are being tortured with those pretty lines of Heine pronounced too execrably—

“Dein Herzechen so süß und so falsch und so klein,
Es kann nirgend was süß' res und falscheres sein.”

Over and over again the little Yankee shrieks out the words, giving a worse intonation at every fresh attempt. She is half in love with a German baron who is here, and whether his little heart is really the sweetest and falsest that ever was, or whether by singing this statement to him in the most rasping German she hopes to convince him that he ought to be, I know not, I have merely the benefit of the practising. Adieu, *lieber alter Freund*.

CCLVI

—, 5th September.

Was it because you objected to my suggestions that we are neither of us quite so young as we were that you not only ignore them, but write two pages of natural history which you know I shall dislike to read? I am glad you have at least the grace to say that you are convinced I shall be furious at the stories you tell me, but why waste your time upon them?

Your letter really deserves no answer, and I shall not tell you when I mean to be in Paris, or any of my plans.

CCLVII

—, 1st October 1862.

We never shall agree as to Victor Hugo, so it seems senseless to discuss him. I find his language quite wonderful, even although he may coin words of his own to better express his thoughts. I read the speech he made at Brussels, and to which you refer, and liked it, but do let us leave him as a bone of contention to any other dogs inclined to quarrel over him. It was precisely Thiers's opinion of the great Napoleon which I particularly liked in his twentieth volume ; it struck me as being so just and unbiassed. I do not find quite so much time for reading as I could wish, for Madame de P—— and the children are with me, and I must make their visit as agreeable as possible. My little niece grows lovelier day by day.

Write to me when you get back to Paris, and tell me your plans.

CCLVIII

(Letter missing)

CCLIX

(Letter missing)

CCLX

PARIS, 10th December 1862.

Merci, cher ami, for a charming letter dated Cannes, 5th December. It is delightful merely to hear of all the flowers, and open windows, and floods of sunshine, and smiling country, while Paris is treating us rather harshly so far as temperature is concerned. But the winter promises to be a gay one ; there are quantities of strangers here, and skating out at the Bois has become the rage. Their Majesties often honour the ice sports with their presence, and even take part in them. The empress seems to be more admired than ever, and is certainly an extremely beautiful woman. The little prince is looked after with affectionate eyes

whenever he appears, and the emperor is keeping all classes in Paris busy. New streets and boulevards are being opened, workmen are kept employed with building, the shopkeepers are pleased at the impetus given to trade by the *fêtes* and entertainments at the Tuileries, society has already begun with dinners and small dances, and innumerable balls are to follow later. No one has time to grumble, and France seems at last contented and happy. God grant she may remain so, and close her history in peace. I will look up the Russian name about which you wish information. *Mille tendresses.*

CCLXI

PARIS, 9th January 1863.

Well, I will read *Salammbô* if you really wish it, but I do so detest horrors and executions in books, which ought only to rest, or amuse, or instruct. I will also look out for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of the 15th, and read M. Tourguénief's "Les Pères et les Enfants." And for you I have a delightful new book to recom-

mend,—George Eliot's *Romola*,—which I have just finished. I will send you two short, very short, extracts from it, both of which have a bearing upon our last conversation together, which I feel tolerably sure you have not forgotten. The first quotation is as follows:—
“As a strong body struggles against fumes with the more violence when they begin to be stifling, a strong soul struggles against phantasies with all the more alarmed energy when they threaten to govern in the place of thought.”
And the second one answers a question which you put to me during our farewell walk, in words far more to the point than any I could find at the moment:—“Savonarola said, with keener emotion than he had yet shown, ‘Be thankful, my daughter, if your own soul has been spared perplexity; and judge not those to whom a harder lot has been given.’ . . . ‘I do not believe!’ said Romola, her whole frame shaken with passionate repugnance. ‘God’s kingdom is something wider, else let me stand outside it with the beings that I love!’” But you must read the book; it is powerfully

written, and George Eliot cannot be judged by extracts.

No, do not change the date of coming. The 20th or 21st will suit me equally well. By that time I shall be able to get through the almost endless commissions with which absent friends honour me. Very flattering it may be for people to write that they have such perfect confidence in my taste that they are quite willing to leave the selection of their winter wardrobe entirely to me, but very trying it certainly is to spend hours in these crowded shops and dance attendance on fashionable dressmakers. Oh, why did Eve eat the apple and condemn us to wear clothes! gracefully draped fig-leaves might have been made so becoming, and would have shown off the figure to such advantage. *Au revoir*, I shall count the hours until the 20th.

CCLXII

PARIS, 31st January.

I am too much disappointed to write, for up to the last moment I had felt confident

that you could come. Do be more careful in future ; what is a sunset worth, the most exquisite one ever seen, if it must be an exchange for an illness? "*Je suis bien triste, bien désappointée.*"

CCLXIII

ROME, 1st May 1863.

How right you were in your description of this place ; of how impossible it is to carry out any premeditated plan for seeing the thousand and one things one ought to see, because of the "unexpected" which at every corner of the street distracts one's attention, and draws one on from sensation to sensation. I agree with you also in thinking it far wiser to have one wide, soul-filling memory of a great whole than to carry away a crowd of smaller details which must at a distance be more or less confusing. But how one's senses reel here with the souvenirs of the past which crowd through the mind and appeal to the eye, while an almost hopeless feeling comes over one of the

utter impossibility of taking in half of what there is to appreciate. I went to St. Peter's as you advised, just as the day was falling, when the great distances inside the building were dim and shadowy, and the light before the altar was but half defined. The cherubs holding shells of holy water near the door were barely outlined, and the few kneeling figures scattered about looked like bowed phantoms. All colour in the mosaics was of course lost, and no details of the vast edifice could be seen, but I know why you told me to go at this hour; I think I felt what you wished me to feel when you thought of it. We have wandered through acres of picture galleries, and seen endless palaces and ruins, the coliseum, many of the churches; in fact, all the things that every one sees. And to attempt to describe Rome would be only ancient history to you. Be content with knowing that I enjoy it as I have seldom enjoyed anything, and you may add that the one drawback to my perfect contentment is the fact that you are not with me. We are going to the Catacombs to-morrow, and if my courage

is equal to the experiment of putting out my candle and remaining quite alone in one of the little corridors I will try it, but it sounds a rather gruesome and uncanny proceeding. Adieu.

CCLXIV

L—, 10th June.

Yes, like the giant in a child's fairy tale, I am coming nearer with alarming speed. That I shall be able to write a comprehensive letter I much doubt, so dazed am I mentally by all that I have seen. I have not in any way "taken in" half of it. Whether a clearer comprehension will come with time, I cannot say; at present my mind is one great blur, one confused jumble of sights and sounds and impressions. Perhaps I may realise it all in the coming winter evenings by a sympathetic fire, which will burn low and darkly as I think of all the stains upon Pagan, and Christian, and Imperial Rome, all the dark blots on the history of Italy in olden days and the present time; and then will leap into glowing blaze

as the wonders of art and skill wrought in the proud city of the seven hills come clearly defined in a brilliant array of mind-pictures, and great names made sacred by the touch of genius stand out boldly from the common herd, and the memory of mighty deeds which have lived in fame thrills my soul with the knowledge that men worthy of the great gift of life have once lived! The fire will burn on with vivid heat and light as reminiscences such as these thicken and multiply, and I shall come at last really to understand what I now only dimly feel.

Your poor friend Bucci at Civita Vecchia tore himself in two for us. I never met such a complaisant, self-sacrificing individual. Your name acted like an open sesame with him, and he abjectly laid himself and his treasures at our feet.

CCLXV

PARIS, 28th June 1863.

I believe these hurried meetings are almost more unsatisfactory than actual absence, what

is your sage view on the subject? I never did quite agree with the opinion that half a loaf is better than no bread, but on the contrary have clung to the *tout ou rien* principle. That my mind is in an extremely vacuous state you will have already perceived, and lest I should be tempted to string a still longer chaplet of worn-out old proverbs, as an English clergyman who is not gifted with the art of sermon-making strings texts, I will close with the assurance that your *Cosaque* has pleased me immensely, and I prophesy for it *un grand succès*.

CCLXVI

DIEPPE, 10th August 1863.

I have been wondering this morning which were the most to be envied—people with strong capacities for enjoyment, and the corresponding powers of suffering; or people of a stolid, phlegmatic nature, feeling neither joy nor sorrow very keenly, taking things as they come, not eating their hearts out with intense antici-

pation, or exhausting them with devouring possession, or feeling them ache beyond bearing with the *Weltschmerz* which Goethe tells of in such comprehensive words—that world-weariness for which he tried every known cure, yet which cursed so large a part of his life? The natural disposition of man is to be happy, and if one thing fails in giving him happiness he tries another; only some do this in a calm methodical way, with no expense of heart's blood and the wine of life; while others drain both at one mad straining venture to compel fate to slake their burning thirst, no matter what may be the consequences. Dregs alone cannot be pleasant food and drink later on, when the thirst and hunger come again, especially if the years are long through which they must serve as daily sustenance. A short life and a merry one; is that, I wonder, the message which the cool salt sea brings as it rolls in on crested waves, leaving little lines of pearly foam on the sand at my feet? How I wish I could clearly decipher the meaning of the sea, with its many-toned voices and its hoary wisdom of

all time! It knows so much, if only it would speak.

Write to me from London, which place you will, I fear, find almost empty, save for the millions of toilers who, by the conceited decree of a select few hundred, are ignored, and not supposed to exist. Adieu, *cher ami*.

CCLXVII

(Letter missing)

CCLXVIII

—, 1st October 1863.

Three people lately have asked me if I have read the book you mentioned in your last letter, *Une Saison à Paris*, which did not particularly tempt me after your little story of its author and her curious attempt to make a favourable impression on his Majesty. I remember you fancied that this story might cause me to make the sign of the cross, which should I make each time your stories suggest its beneficial

effect, would, I fear, be brought into contempt by too frequent application. *La Vie de Jésus*, by Renan, I mean to read so soon as a little tranquillity creeps into my life again; it has lately been one continued racket, not conducive to anything so serious as this book. I wonder if Renan will explain a point which has always puzzled me; why, if Jesus in mercy really came into the world to save all sinners, does He so relentlessly limit the number to a paltry few?

You must by this time be at Cannes, or certainly *en route* for that place, so I will send these few lines there in hopes of a long letter full of news.

CCLXIX

—, 20th October 1863.

Pas possible to be in Paris in November. I have made an engagement with Madame de C—— to go wherever she fancies for that month. She is far from well, but always such a good friend that I would do much to keep her friendship. Besides, do I not know by sad experience what your "*peut-être*" means when

applied to Compiègne or to any of the Royal residences? You are growing to be too good a courtier, and in consequence I suffer. Is this not so?—own it frankly, and you will have a better chance of forgiveness.

I was reading only this morning what Stendhal says of *Don Juan*, that it must always be a popular poem because in it "*il y a du diable et de l'amour*." Odd, is it not, how often those two words find themselves in a close proximity? I do not feel in the least affectionate to-day—the softer passions look a little *fade* in the hard brightness of the autumn sunshine. You have grown to be such a sage I scarcely know you for my friend of the stormy days when our chief delight lay in the childish tormenting of each other. When you grow less wise perchance my affection for you may return.

CCLXX

26th November 1863.

You can no longer, *mon ami*, monopolise all the ills that flesh is heir to. I have a wretched

cold, and am as hoarse as a revolutionist who has injured his vocal cords for life by shouting *à bas la tyrannie !* Par exemple, vous vous amusez bien at Compiègne in your new rôle of impresario. What did I say about your "*peut-être*" ? and of what earthly use would it have been for me to come to Paris in order to see you, while you passed your time some dozens of miles away in instructing young ladies how to rival ballet dancers ? You might judge from my style of writing that I am not only cross but jealous, in which, however, you would be entirely mistaken. I am delighted that you are enjoying your visit, and your story of your young lady with *jambes* like *deux flageolets* made me laugh heartily ; but the *Hauptsache*, as the Germans say, is that you are well, and that your too attentive aches and pains seem for the moment to have forgotten you. Be careful, however ; do not overdo it, and lay up a nice little crop of consequences for future discomfort. You complain that I write too laconically, and do not answer your questions ; that I commit an indefinite number of other

indiscretions, including a non-mention of the charming child who so interests me. How difficult it is to please people! The tender conscience I possess having reproached me with writing too much about the little one, I have purposely abstained from boring you with her perfections, or dwelling upon my love for her. She spent some time with me at ———, delighting me as usual with her growing intelligence and beauty. At present certainly there seems no danger of her being *sotte*, and if any influence I possess can save her from that awful fate you may count upon its being exerted to do so. What a future contact with society in its present state may do for her it is of course impossible to say. Adieu.

CCLXXI

PARIS, 3d January 1864.

We arrived here yesterday, just missing New Year's Day, which I am rather glad to have escaped. I had hoped to find a letter from you, but there is none, and I am most anxious

to hear how you are. Do write at once. I am reading Aristophane, but expect to be much shocked by it. Did the Athenian women in olden times assist at public *représentations*? In mad haste. M.

CCLXXII

PARIS, 16th January.

First of all, are you better? In pity answer yes, for I suffer with you to the extent of being miserable when you tell me that you are ill. For my idea as to the *fête* of *la Sainte Eulalie*, *la voici*: I am obliged to send to London very soon for several things, let me include your gift to your cousin, and try and find something quite different from your former offerings, something made in England and essentially English. Let me know what you think of this. Yes, we are freezing here, and banked in snow. There has been horrible suffering among the poor, and the empress as usual has been the first to make an effort to relieve it. Naturally with such a lead many have followed suit from reasons best

known to themselves, but, whatever the reasons, the result has been favourable, and a fair share of organised charity is working well and doing much good. How fortunate that you are not here, but are instead basking in scented sunshine ; your constant mention of the quantities of flowers, and the balmy air at Cannes, makes me long to go there some time in the near future. So soon as I am a little settled and have leisure for anything really worth doing, I will read *Les Nuées*, and pay particular attention to the dialogue *du Juste et de l'Injuste* which you mention, trusting it may be less shocking than this terrible Aristophane, which is, I grant, spiritual, but with an *esprit* encased in mud ! Adieu, *ami toujours chér*.

CCLXXIII

PARIS, 20th February 1864.

But of course you shall have your things from London whenever you like. Send your order to Poole, and let me know when he will have the clothes ready, the rest I can manage

easily. The gift for the Sainte Eulalie is already ordered. I am more distressed than I can say at what you tell me of your cough, which I had hoped was much better in the Cannes sunshine. Do not think of venturing near Paris at present ; *les grippes sont partout*, as you have heard, and you would run great risk in coming here. I am off to London in a day or two, but trust I may not be detained there longer than a fortnight. Adieu.

CCLXXIV

PARIS,

Saturday, 19th March 1864.

It was good to pass once again a long happy afternoon with you, and from now until the 12th of April, almost a month, we shall be able to prove that the best of letters is a bad substitute for "live intercourse." Only do not let us spoil these hours of possession in dwelling upon the swift-coming ones of separation. That is a *bêtise* we have more than once committed, and is unworthy of two such highly-gifted mortals as we profess to be! *À demain.*

CCLXXV

17th July 1864.

Merely a line to beg a commission should you go off to Madrid before I see you again. You remember the *mouchoirs de Nipi*—I am most anxious for some, and you are so good about getting me all sorts of out-of-the-way objects which no one else would be able to discover that I do not hesitate to remind you of these. Please do not forget them. At a venture I will send this to the British Museum, London, where you are probably working far harder than you ought to work. If amiably inclined you might send me your actual address ; it is not every letter that I should care to send off as a chance shot !

CCLXXVI

Wednesday, 25th July 1864.

What marvels you write me about Lady F—— P——'s marriage. No wonder it has caused a sensation, but personally I should be inclined to think Mr. C—— rather fortunate

in discovering the tendency of the lady's predilections before instead of after matrimony with himself. I once saw Lady H——, as I suppose one must now call her, and found her very lovely to look at, but most of the P——s are credited with possessing beauty; perhaps it is their strongest recommendation. Other characteristics which they possess it is as well to keep strictly within the limits of the P—— family circle. As you are returning so quickly to Paris I will not write again to London unless I hear that you are still there.

CCLXXVII

(Letter missing)

CCLXXVIII

(Letter missing)

CCLXXIX

PARIS, 29th December 1864.

^ Impossible to write to-day, as I have taken cold in my eyes. No handkerchiefs as yet.

Shall hope to send you a longer letter on New Year's Day.

CCLXXX

PARIS, *New Year's Day*, 1865.

The rain and hail are hurtling against the windows, the trees, snow-sheeted and spectral, are gleaming white against a low-hung despondent sky, and the hooting wind sounds like owls at play in the chimneys. A more utterly dreary day could not well be imagined; and while shivering and depressed myself, I rejoice that you are probably enjoying sunshine and a cheerful beginning of the year 1865. Your constant mention of ill health distresses me beyond measure, and I hope much from the climate of Cannes, which always suits you.

Who do you think has taken the apartment above us? Mr. G—— and his erratic wife, and his eight still more erratic children! Only to know that the same house contains them and me is enough to induce mental collapse upon my part, and I devoutly wish that they had estab-

lished themselves and their erraticness anywhere else. It is, I know, always a mistake to feel more for people than they feel for themselves; but in this case it is so difficult not to believe that they must on the face of things feel a very great deal, and yet how can they, and still continue to go on in the same senselessly erratic way? Poor things, I am sorry for them, but they irritate me, and I should be so glad if they would live in some other house, and some other town, and some other country!

Do not worry over those handkerchiefs. They will probably turn up all right, and if they do not, no great harm will be done. I will go out just as soon as this mad wind and rain have finished their wild games, and find you a nice lot of English books, for you are quite right, at Christmas-time there are generally plenty to choose from, good, bad, and indifferent, mostly the latter. I too have been reading Madame du Deffand's *Letters*, which I found amusing. She must have been a delightfully witty and wicked old woman. Her opinions and readings of character are some-

times uncommonly shrewd. I hope that you finished the thirty-five letters still left for you to write after concluding your last to me. Is it strange that the rest you go away to obtain does you little or no good? How can it benefit you in any way when you will persist in working whether you feel equal to it or not? Come now, begin this New Year wisely, take care of yourself first, and let work come second. Ah love, love, remember that you are yourself. In all this crowded world no one could ever take your place in any way, least of all in the heart and devotion of

MARIQUITA.

CCLXXXI

PARIS, 23d January.

I have heard nothing in regard to your works or the proofs. Shall I go to Michel Lévy and make inquiries or in any way hurry them? I did not like to do so without asking you. I once told you that the actual meaning of the word aggravation was an English lawyer, but I was wrong; make it publisher every time, choos-

ing any nationality you like, one seems as bad as another. They are maddening, infuriating, exasperating. Let me hear at once just what steps you would like me to take. Delighted as I should be at seeing you back here, do not, I beg of you, run any risk in leaving Cannes too soon. You will find me here whenever you come, because I shall wait here for you, but do get all the good that Cannes air and Cannes sunshine can give.

CCLXXXII

PARIS, 17th April 1865.

Cher ami, your letter has caused me such unhappiness that I think I could not bear the same were it to come often. It is cruel that you of all men should be thus doomed to a life of suffering, and I would not blame you for feeling neither courage nor resignation, even if this were true, whereas I know how much injustice you do yourself by saying that it is. There are such relative degrees of courage, and such different phases of resignation. But you

will see, I feel quite sure of it, that this return of steady fine weather will make a difference. You *must* be better when it is dry and sunny than when there is wind and rain, and it is, I feel convinced, from the ill effects of the long-continued bad weather that you are still suffering ; just the first few fine days cannot counteract that at once, but you will see, as it continues fine you will continue steadily to improve. It must be so. You know that really you have immense courage, more than most people, your depression is merely the effect of this unusual state of the atmosphere at Cannes, where by all the rules of equity and justice there ought to be only the bluest and sunniest and most beautiful effects. All unusual things upset one, the human animal being naturally unpliant and set in his ways, to use a good old-time expression.

Your account of the scandal connected with Lord Brougham interested me, as I know several members of the family. When the English do indulge in scandals what monsters they are ! None of your little petty delinquencies or half-hearted misdemeanours, but the

whole *flagrante delicto*; no reading between the lines, but the complete three-volume novel; large print, wide margin, brilliant cover, with the price marked in legible figures. They go in pretty thoroughly for the comprehensive saying that one might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, and I think it is perhaps a question whether they are not tolerably right.

Send me better news as soon as you feel up to writing, but never attempt a letter to me unless you are sure that a chat will do you good, and the act of chatting not do you harm.

CCLXXXIII

MUNICH, 15th July.

We have followed strictly the plan of voyage which you laid out, going by Bâle, Constance, Lindau, and Kempton, and now for the past ten days we have been settled at the Hôtel Bavière, "doing" Munich most conscientiously but spending most of our time in the galleries, the new and the old Pinacothek. Do you remember in the former such a pretty little modern pic-

ture called "The First Snow," where the old grandfather holds up a baby wrapped in a blanket, while a second child stands beside him, and the soft star flecks fall over them all? It is a most simple composition, but for some reason it touched me, perhaps because as a child I always had dreamy fancies about the snow. I saw so much in the star-shaped flakes, and it seemed so wonderful to me that such small soft things could mass together into broad white silvery sheets, covering field and meadow and all trace of path and road, and could go on mounting higher and higher and packing closer and closer, and all so silently; the little feathery stars coming finally to resist in their cold white strength powerful men, and beasts, and iron ploughs. I think my first realisation of accumulated strength from small beginnings came from this childish impression of the snow, which, like so many other impressions, fall into the mind and lie hidden there until some practical application hunts them out. They told us too, such wonderful nursery tales about the snow, that Mother Carey was picking her

chickens when it fell ; or that downy feathers from angels' wings were fluttering through the skies ; or that all the plants and fruits were dead and Dame Nature made them every year a shroud to cover them for the winter's burial. What an odd conglomeration of wisdom and nonsense children's minds are fed on ! Poor little wretches, life is puzzling enough to their half-awakened minds without confusing them still further by the rubbish grown-up people seem to think the only food suited to their poor little starving mental stomachs. But I have wandered very far from Munich and the present time, and all because of having looked at a little wistful child gazing at the snow.

I laugh whenever I see a pair of green woollen stockings and the "*jambes bavaroises*" encased within them ! Should you really like to see me wear such things ? *J'en doute.*

CCLXXXIV

BERNE, 29th August.

Your letter from London has been forwarded to me here, where we are detained on account

of Madame de C—— having sprained her ankle. Why in your account of your visit to Mr. Gladstone did you not tell me more of the man himself? You know the immense interest which I take in him, the intense admiration which I have for him. If ever a man had a future it is he, and one of his characteristics appeals peculiarly to me, I mean his strong personal influence, magnetism it may almost be called, so great a hold does it take upon one's imagination. I felt it myself during the one or two days when I met him long ago at Lady G——'s, I should feel it again, I am certain, if I could again be in his society. A man with that gift must, I think, always be a leader of men. What do you mean by the sentence you use in describing him, that "*Il y a en lui de l'enfant, de l'homme d'État et du Fou*"? What a combination! I think I know what you mean by the touch of the child about him; it is a trait which I have noticed more than once accompanying great intellect and genius. The signs of a madman were certainly not discernible when I saw him; they may have developed

since. If you really return to Paris next week I will try my best to meet you there. My doing so, however, will depend entirely on the state of Madame de C——'s ankle, which is a positive nuisance. And it was so quickly done and so senselessly. We were watching the bears in the pit; the creatures were so absurd that we grew quite excited over their ungainly antics. There was a crowd around the place as usual, and in trying to get nearer to the edge in order to look over at a fascinating little beast quite at the bottom of the great round space, where he was hugging a little brother as if he held his worst enemy to his heart, and did not mean to release him until every bone cracked, poor Madame de C—— stepped on a loose stone, and, *presto change!* the deed was done, she was laid up a prisoner, and I necessarily am a captive with her.

CCLXXXV

BÂLE, 5th October 1865.

How good of you to keep a proof for me of your article on the *Life of Julius Cæsar*; I

shall prize it highly ; I like the outline you give me of your treatment of the subject, and so far as I can judge it seems to me you have cleverly attained the *juste milieu*, a most difficult point to reach in anything. No, frankly, I do not understand a word of your story of the son of Prince C—— who died at Rome. The wording of his will would certainly incline one to think him a little mad, but who is not, upon one point or another? It strikes me altogether as being a mad world, peopled by madmen. Looking at things in general from this standpoint, one may be able to comprehend one's fellows, not otherwise. Does it not, for instance, argue acute mania as the malady from which I suffer, that years may come and years may go and Time go on for ever, yet still, in spite of all, my creed never changes, and can still be read in three short words—"I love you"? Would any college of physicians hesitate to declare this madness of the most hopeless kind? Are you, too, not mad in trusting to my love? Surely you never can have read that wise proverb—"Trust your dog to the

end, a woman till the first opportunity." Much wisdom is here condensed in quantity, but eloquent with truth. Mad, mad, mad! yes, all the world is mad, and all the men and women in it! Only little children are really sane, and they merely because the shock has not yet come which will knock reason from her throne. They have not yet trusted and been deceived; not yet loved and been deserted; not yet learned that civility means self-interest; that fame is in reality only a worthless tinsel badge; that honour, in the eyes of men, may be bought at the cost of self-respect; that gold can turn to rust, and success grow bitter as the apples of Sodom; that all earth's promises, which glitter so temptingly, never yet have stood the test of time. When knowledge such as this comes home to the human breast, then all that is childlike and sane falls tremblingly away, and men grow mad with knowing what life really is. Perchance a few may find an honest thing to take the place of life's delusions. If so, no longer mad, but happy trusting fools, they would show rare wisdom could they hold

it tight, trust to it, believe in it, love it, pray to it, live by it, die in its blessed hope of rest and eternal good with holy confidence in its reality.

Mad friend, good-night. So madly have I loved you, ay, so love you still, that the mere fact of writing it proves me mad!

CCLXXXVI

(Letter missing)

CCLXXXVII

PARIS, *New Year's Eve*, 1866.

Are you lost, *mon ami*? Do you never mean to write to me again? That you are not suffering I feel almost sure, so strong a belief have I in the fact that ill news never tarries in the telling. Let me begin the coming year with the assurance of your wellbeing and your continued affection for myself; no other commencement of this fresh era of existence would suit my mood. Not a line have I had from you since your letter dated somewhere in

the early existence of the month of November, when you asked me conundrums about Victor Hugo's mental state. Some time ago I told you all the world was mad, why should you wish to isolate the poet from this list? You know well, however, that you did not mean what you said when writing that you were inclined to think he had always been "*fou*." I have more than once heard you express a very different opinion of him and of his works. As to the *Chansons des Rues et des Bois*, I grant you, there is a good deal of feebleness about parts of them, but there is still sufficient matter left in the subject of Victor Hugo and his madness to afford us several battles royal when we meet, if that happy event ever again takes place. You speak in joke about the book dealing with Moses, David, and Saint Paul, but there is more truth than you imagine in a later sentence of your letter where you say that you know I do not like conversation upon such subjects. No, it may be weak, and doubtless shows great want of intellect upon my part, but the only faith I have any faith in, is the

blind unquestioning one of a child. Did I once seriously investigate it, once apply the tests of reason, intellect, common sense if you will, to the foundations of it, I should be lost in the hopeless labyrinth of it. The vision of that Anglican priest I met in such curious fashion at D—— comes before me as I write this. Tempt me not. If I could *honestly* believe the teachings of the Catholics and their Church, then would I unhesitatingly be of them; but as yet I cannot, therefore in pity leave me what you call the silly credulity to which I yet cling—the old devil with cloven hoof, the crucified God man Christ Jesus, a hell where bad people go, and a heaven peopled with good angels. Crude it may be, utterly senseless you believe it to be; all quite true the child thinks it. She is again with me, Madame de P—— having consented to the plan, and I delight in her.

I have heard Père Hyacinthe several times lately, and find him both earnest and eloquent. Adieu, *tachez d'écrire plus souvent à votre amie toujours,*

M.

CCLXXXVIII

PARIS, 15th February.

Oh, how lazy you are to write so seldom ; you deserve that my letters should cease entirely ; but a forgiving disposition forbids my treating you with such severity. I will try other means, will be so seductive in my language and withal so chary of my news, that in very self-defence you will "beg for more." There are more ways than one of treating refractory mortals, and always there remains the old saying to fall back upon—"Birds that can sing, and won't sing, must be made to sing." *Eh bien, mon oiseau, chantez.* Tell me of yourself, your occupations, your surroundings. It is odd that I have never been to Cannes, never been tempted there even by your presence. I know the place is delightful, the society, as a rule, charming, the climate perfection ; still, as I say, it has never yet tempted me.

On reading this production of my pen I find it quite as insipid as I intended to make it—no news, and nothing in the least entertaining ;

but when I tell you that my thoughts by day and my dreams by night are all tinged with rosy-tinted hopes of hearing from you, of receiving a letter quickly, telling of repentance upon your part for the past, and resolution of amendment for the future, I know that you will show by your speedy answer that I have not written in vain.

CCLXXXIX

PARIS, 23d February.

Endlich, as the Germans say. At last a letter of the right sort with but the one drawback—where you tell me in it that you have found means to take fresh cold in spite of the fine weather. Badly managed this, my friend, very badly; still you assure me in the same sentence that you are better this year than you were last, and that, at least, is something. Yes, for the moment crinoline and the monstrosities in which it has indulged during the past few months are condemned; you will find us all far less voluminous on your return, *mais toujours*

femmes ! Your letter deserved a far longer and more worthy answer, but it is the old story, my wretched eyes have given out, and I dare not tax them too severely.

CCXC

CHATEAU DE ———,
Midnight, 12th April.

Ah but worse, ten thousand times worse than mere *fatalite* ! I find no word in my dictionary strong enough to describe the situation. Not to meet for months, and then to miss each other in the same spot by just two hours—No, no expression I have ever heard is adequate to tell what I think of this. My visit is spoiled, *cela va sans dire*, but it will soon be over, which is a cause for thankfulness. And you are right in your supposition that I shall return to Paris at once, contrary to the customs of common mortals at this season of the year. To those who will the country and all its delights, Paris holds at present that which I most care for, and to Paris my steps will follow my already

departed heart as promptly as the decencies of social life permit, and I can say adieu to my pleasant host and hostess. I fear they find me but tepidly exciting as a guest! To-night so many memories come to me, fresh and living, not as ghosts of the past. "Only one thing really counts," this they say one and all the same. "Only one thing; love. It's the only thing that tells in the long-run; nothing else endures to the end; nothing else is of any worth." And to-night I think with them; to-night I firmly believe that there are more deeply-dyed sins than those of love; I believe that many sins can be washed away by love or become purified and redeemed. What is there that love cannot hallow? Barren places of the earth blossom and become green if love smiles upon them; darkness turns to light; loneliness to a peopled world of sympathy and union; doubts become blessed truths; all things mortal and tangible, shadowy and unreal, touched by the magic of love, lose every power of evil and turn each ill to good. To-night I say I believe all this. Should I doubt it when day brings

the sun and piercingness, I will think how few the hours now are which still remain to die before I and conviction are reunited, for if once we meet again, you and I, face to face, love's triumph is assured, and all things else must fall helplessly defeated.

CCXCI

TOURS, 24th August 1866.

My very best congratulations ; the little red rosette of the Légion d'Honneur has never been more appropriately bestowed ; I am most anxious to see it in your button-hole. Pray do not grow conceited as these increasing honours are showered upon you ! I have always believed that a moment comes in the successful life of a mortal, man or woman, when if it is passed with wisdom and dignity, that mortal becomes delightful ; he has deserved all that fortune has brought him, and can bear without embarrassment fortune's favours ; or else he becomes odious, if this critical turning has not

been well passed ; and his nature develops a weak spot which success has proved too much for. The time that we have just spent together was, I think, almost the happiest of my life. Ah, love me, *mon ami*, whatever comes, love me ! Has the world changed since men thought it good to love, natural to trust, wise to believe ? I sometimes think it has when I am away from you, and hear men talk with cynical scepticism of all that I hold most sacred and most dear. But I know that one man at least is wise, and natural, and good, when I am with you, and feel the strong affection which has lasted through long years and remained unchanged.

Tell me what is best worth seeing in this part of the world. Have you restored any of the buildings here, and if so, which are they ? I will visit them and see what I think of your restorations. Do you not tremble at the thought of a critic who does not know the A B C of architecture ?

I feel rather lost in this place, so write

CCXCII

D——, 19th September.

I write to Paris not knowing whether you have yet left there for Biarritz. Something odd always happens to me at this place ; invariably I meet people here who interest me beyond the common herd. Will you be kind to a little friend of mine who has stupidly ruined her life ? You remember the pretty little Mademoiselle G—— who was a good deal in Paris the winter before last ? I am certain that I have spoken to you of her often, even if you never met her. She was one of the most fascinating little beings I have ever encountered, extremely pretty, with a sad plaintive voice which, whether she spoke or sang, carried one's heart with it. She married Mr. T——, a cold uninteresting Englishman who was sadly in need of a wife with a *dot*. Fond as I was of Louise T—— both before and after her marriage, I was perfectly aware that she was not very clever, that is, she had no worldly wisdom of

any kind, and a good deal more heart than head. The end proved this, for one fine morning about eighteen months after her marriage she went off to Biarritz with the young Comte de B—— who had been dangling about her for years. You know the sort of man he is, with a list of conquests rather longer than Don Giovanni's *mille e tre*, and you can understand a pretty little simpleton being as wax in his hands. To my thinking the husband is very much to blame. He never in any way looked after his wife, or tried to amuse her, or make her any sort of companion, but left her entirely to herself, or to the seductive charms of the Comte de B——. It was not difficult to foresee who would win in that race, and I am sometimes tempted to believe that Mr. T—— was well content to let things take their course. Poor Louise, I can see her now as I write, with her sweet face and loving heart, her great wide innocent eyes like a child's, and her low touching voice which thrilled with a passion she herself could hardly have understood. Well, it was the old story, only if possible the Comte de

B—— after ruining her life treated her a little worse than they generally do in old stories. He simply *planté* her after spending all the money he happened to have about him, left her as he would have hesitated to leave a third-class actress, and telegraphed his wife that he was coming home. The prodigal of the Scriptures met with a no less flattering welcome back ; the fattened calf was killed, and Monsieur was *fêted* by a dutiful wife and admiring family and a host of friends and acquaintances, while my poor little Louise is left to eat her heart out at Biarritz while her husband gets his divorce. Will you not go and see her and say some friendly words to her for me? It was here at D—— that I first met her, and where I now hear what has happened to her. I wrote at once when I heard it, and her answer was such a sad, heart-broken little letter that I long to do something for her. She is far more sinned against than sinning, but as usual the punishment falls upon the one least guilty. I much fear that her own family will not be very kind to her in her trouble, and how she is to

pass the rest of her young ruined life alone,
God knows !

CCXCIII

D——, 27th September 1866.

Our letters must have crossed each other, for the one from you just received bears the date of the 24th, the very day I wrote. By this time you have mine begging you to play the good Samaritan as far as it is possible to my poor unhappy little misguided friend. Be very gentle with her for my sake.

Your account of your visit to the grotto was charming. I am sure that Biarritz will do you immense good, for you have to be out in the open air so much of the time when there ; you cannot say no, and plead work as an excuse, when the empress commands your attendance, as I have known you capable of doing when a more humble mortal begged for your company ! *Au fond*, I believe I am just a trifle jealous of your beautiful empress. I fear me there is little chance this year of my being in Paris in October, or even November ; I have half pro-

mised to join some friends in a trip to the Italian Lakes.

CCXCIV

PARIS, 1st January 1867.

Only one word to say that I still live ; and, in spite of your long and strange silence, I wish you every good thing in the coming New Year.

M.

CCXCV

PARIS,

Wednesday, 3d April 1867.

I have just arrived from London, and much hope that you will get here to-morrow. You did not write to me that you were coming, and my only information is from the newspapers, which assure me that you have left Cannes, and will reach Paris on the 4th.

CCXCVI

PARIS,

Thursday, 29th April.

I could not come to you to-day, *cher ami*, as I promised, for my sister-in-law and two of

her children are ill, and take up all my time. It is the first day that I have missed seeing you since our expedition to the gallery of the Louvre on Friday the 5th of April, a day marked in my calendar with red letters spelling happiness. To-morrow I will meet you at our old and favourite trysting-place, unless I hear that you are unable to come.

MARIQUITA.

CCXCVII

(Letter missing)

CCXCVIII

PARIS, 27th June.

Do try and get tickets for the distribution of the prizes; I am most anxious to see the ceremony. The sultan and all the foreign princes are to be present, and the whole affair is, they say, to be very brilliant.

CCXCIX

PARIS, 4th July.

But where were you? I searched everywhere, and was much disappointed at not seeing you. I was amused, and everything went off very well, but I missed you.

CCC

—, 23^d July 1867.

The state of your health is at present the subject nearest to my heart, therefore let us begin at once upon that. Are you still confined to your room, still suffering, still low-spirited? Oh, *mon ami*, these last happy months have proved more vividly than ever before how dear you are to me. Get well quickly; there is so much still left in life for both of us. I have only just arrived, my maid is ill, and I cannot find anything I want, but I do not even stop to dress before writing to you, so anxious am I for better news than when I left you. Write to me as soon as you feel equal to the exertion.

CCCI

——, 1st September 1867.

I do indeed pity you with all my heart, but pity is such a poor, unsatisfactory sort of thing when one does nothing, can do nothing, to better the pain and suffering. Cannot something be done for this dreadful sleeplessness? What are doctors worth if they cannot find some help for you? Why did you send off the miniature of Marie Antoinette to the empress before I had the chance of seeing it? You know my adoration for that most unhappy queen, and my great interest in anything and everything relating to her. I have not your horror of sad antiquities. Quite right are you to abuse me for my stupidity about the proofs, but when I say, like the children, "I am so sorry, and will never do it again," you will, I am sure, be merciful. I make a note of the articles you wish me to read. You ask when I return to Paris. Just so soon as I can possibly do so, and in the meantime I will look up everything of interest that I can find which

may amuse you. Yes, Luther did hate the devil with a good deal of honest consistency. Which old castle is it in Germany where they show you a large splash of ink on the wall, and tell you that the Reformer threw his ink-bottle at his Satanic majesty, who came to tempt him as he worked away at his perfected Bible? I have seen the ink-stain, but forget the name of the *Schloss*. I shall hope for a better account of you in a day or two. Your last letter made almost the *tour du monde* before it reached me, which must explain the length of time I have seemingly taken to answer it.

CCCHII

(Letter missing)

CCCHII

—, 23d October 1867.

Cher ami, could you see me you would never recognise me, for I am fast turning into a vegetable. I no longer have ideas. My brain

has either shrivelled up, or evaporated, or *tout bonnement* died ; it certainly gives no sign of existence. It is a dreadful thing to stand by and watch your own brain depart, and yet it rather fascinates me. As a prisoner counts the hours by the sunlight on the wall of his cell mounting higher and higher, I count the time still left to my mental being by finding each day more ideas wanting, more empty spaces left. I should like to choose my vegetable when the moment comes for the final transformation scene. I would not be a potato, for the little elevations on its brown skin always look to me like warts ; neither would I be a red tomato, its veins are sometimes hideous ; peas, beans, Brussels sprouts, all these are *mesquin* ; beets are too winey, spinach much too soft, carrots look bilious ; no, on the whole, I choose corn, it is so clean, with smooth, pearly-white, even grains, and it has some presence about it while growing, with its dark green leaves so tall and cool, and itself so closely folded in the tasselled silk and outer protection cover. Pray choose corn also, if

the day ever comes when you too, from force of circumstances, grow to be a vegetable.

Do what I will, I cannot get away at present, and in this dreary spot my one only comfort is hearing from you. Go at once, I implore you, to Liebreich, and see what the trouble really is with your eyes. It is so foolish to neglect or put off a thing of this kind, when a few minutes might make everything all right. But do not contemplate any such horror as losing your sight. I do not believe there is anything serious the matter with your eyes, and no danger of such a calamity as this. You are over-worked, and the nerves of the eye are very sensitive to too long-continued action of the brain ; that is all, I feel certain, but all the same, do not lose another day before consulting Liebreich.

CCCIV

—, 2d November 1867.

Of course I read the first part of Tourguenief's romance in the *Correspondent* after you told me

In your last letter about correcting the proofs, but your extreme care in retaining all the improprieties which the piously-inclined Prince Augustin Galitzin had in his translation purposely left out, called for no comment. I saw that your effort to be immoral had been snubbed as it deserved to be, when in the printed story that interview between Litvinof and Irène was cut down to an hour, although as a matter of fact I should think the exact time might under the circumstances be an unimportant detail, one, or two hours, the result would probably have been the same. For your sake I much regret M. Fould's death, but I cannot agree with the idea suggested by your words that his exit from life was too sudden a one. To fall asleep here and awake in whichever world we are destined to inhabit hereafter, is surely the best and least troublesome way of making the exchange of domicile. One gives no trouble to one's friends, there is no time for any hurried making up with Providence, which to my mind is simply offering Providence a gratuitous insult, and there are no heart-breaking good-byes.

If you are ready to die, death does not find you unprepared ; if you are not ready, no frightened entreaties at the last moment can help you. No, could I choose, I would not hesitate between a lingering illness and a sudden death, I would ask humbly for the latter. Devoutly hoping to reach Paris before you leave, always your loyal friend.

CCCXV

PARIS, 10th December 1867.

I have not yet recovered from the disappointment of arriving here just as you had left, but you were so right to go when the sudden cold came. Are the Pope, Garibaldi, and M. de Bismarck still the three fates who are to decide your destiny ? if so, from the present outlook of affairs your work is cut out for you. Why France continues to *dorloter* His Holiness while he treats her devotion so cavalierly I cannot understand. Paris is detestable.

My poor old friend M. D—— is very ill, and I think the chances are that he will bid

the world adieu very shortly, and without getting any farther on his journey to Rome than this place where he now is. After all, he is eighty years old and his life is a burden, yet the poor old boy still clings to this mortal coil as though youth and pleasure were both at his command. It is passing strange this love of life for mere life's sake, yet one sees it every day in wretched infirm diseased creatures who, one would think, might be only too glad to exchange it for anything else. It is the old story, I suppose, of a comfortable familiarity with the ills one is accustomed to, and the dread of a bad bargain if they are given up for something unknown and uncomprehended, even with the chance of its being better. M.

CCCVI

(Letter missing)

CCCVII

PARIS, 2d February 1868.

Cher ami, I have sustained a great loss in the death of my poor old friend M. D——, and

although I had small hopes of his recovery. I did not think he would leave us quite so soon as he has. A still larger space is now left in my heart which your love and friendship alone can fill; a still larger share of affection is left for me to bestow, and I give it all to you. I do indeed know you well enough to understand how this daily dragging monotony of suffering must try you and be far more difficult to bear than a sharper but less continued pain. Oh, what would I not give to be able to do something to lessen this trial for you! I can only try and help you to bear it by cheering you as much as possible, and I feel sure one smile at least will come to your lips when I tell you that I once in travelling met a Mormon Elder, and nothing Dixon can say in his *New America*, which you tell me you have just been reading, can possibly be more funny than were the "little ways" of this animal. He was a long lank Yankee, loose-jointed, fishy-eyed, and altogether about as unattractive a looking specimen of the genus man as it is possible to imagine. With him were perhaps a dozen women and girls of

different ages, and one pretty delicate young thing of about nineteen with sweet large blue eyes, whose manner and appearance proved her condition in life to be far above that of the rest of the party. To this girl the Elder's whole attention was devoted; the other recruits for Salt Lake City experienced but scant consideration from the saint, as he spent his time in instructing the beauty of the party in the doctrines of the Mormon faith. A fellow-traveller of mine grew much interested in the state of affairs, and finally interviewed the Elder and learned several curious facts. To begin with, very many of the unfortunate females who go out to Utah and join the Mormons are respectable English girls from the large manufacturing towns, who are persuaded to do so by just such brethren as this lank-limbed specimen whose gift of speech by the way must very greatly have outweighed his charms of person. Once arrived at the Mormon settlement, Brigham Young has the first choice of the new aspirants for the place of wife; after he has chosen, the Elders follow in order of rank and select the

new members of their households. My fellow-traveller asked the saint in question if he meant to marry the pretty girl he was so attentive to, and looking very sheepish the great awkward fellow said, if Brigham Young did not take her for himself he certainly meant to speak for her! No, Talleyrand's *mot* about the Americans was severe, but I rather fancy the severity to have been tempered with justice.

I was much pleased with your *tartine sur Pouchkine*. Trusting that this may find you really better, your friend always, M.

CCCVIII

PARIS, 15th February 1868.

I sincerely hope that you will find me in Paris when you return, and I shall make all my arrangements with that object in view. You are far too melancholy at present to be left to your own devices, and it shall be my first care to amuse you; also, we must try and have some walks as in the olden days. What a difference there is in the way different people

and things, even memories, grow old. Some events, which at the time they happened seemed to be the veriest trifles, grow unpleasant, repulsive, absolutely loathsome, as time passes and they persistently take their places in our life as unmovable hateful souvenirs ; while others equally unimportant at the time of happening grow more tender, more winning, and infinitely more dear with each day that separates them from the actual moment of occurrence, until to part with them would be pain inexpressible.

I shall like *Fumée* in book form, *mille remerciements* for having it bound for me ; but do not send it, keep it and bring it with you ; when I thank people whom I like, it is a pleasure to thank them in person. Do you know, I begin to think that we have had too much pen, ink, and paper in our mutual lives—you and I. Once, long ago, I asked you if you did not think a friendship based upon those three things rather too much of an experiment. As an experiment, I am fain to confess that it has succeeded ; but I have an idea which rather haunts me, that we could have been just as

good and loyal friends without this triple group—with fewer letters and less absence from one another. What think you?—does your fear of too close companionship bringing weariness and satiety shrink at this idea? Have you already exclaimed, "*Jamais de la vie ! Elle est folle*"? It is only an idea, which, as I said, rather haunts me, but the very fact of its being haunting proves it to be of another spirit world, the wandering ghost of a lost and dead possibility. Let it pass unharmed.

CCCIX

P——, 16th June 1868.

I am here to attend the marriage of Madame de C——'s niece—a timid, gentle little thing, who is bound to be miserable with the man who has been chosen for her—a *boulevardier* of the most pronounced type. When she weeps, as weep she most assuredly will, long and often, let us hope the vicomtesse's coronet embroidered in the corner of the handkerchief with which

she dries her eyes will bring her consolation solid enough to make up for a life which I should not call worth living. *Chacun à son goût !* What a mercy it is that every one has not the same tastes. But to marry for the mere sake of marrying seems to be the craze of the moment, and if people like to take jumps in the dark, why should one officiously torment them with turning up the gas? The 15th of July will find me in Paris ; that is, at this moment I see nothing which can possibly prevent me from going there ; but it seems to me that lately *le diable lui-même se mêle de nos affaires*, so often has the unexpected and unwished-for arrived to prevent us from meeting ; however, I hope for the best. And now to go and wish happiness to the little bride who, I know for a certainty, is going to be miserable !

CCCX

(Letter missing)

CCCXI

BOULOGNE, 7th August 1868.

You ask whether our last promenade left an impression on my mind? Let me repeat your own words and say that I find it a "*très-doux souvenir*"—one of those memories which steal over one as the long summer twilight deepens, and the first pale stars come shyly out into heaven's blue; which makes one long to be quiet and alone, that no word may disturb the after-glow of a deep warm joy which has passed, but which has left a light of happiness like the lurid fire of red gold lighting an evening sky after the sun that caused it has sunk out of the sight. Ah, love, how well you have loved me back!

Every one I ever knew or heard of who has indulged in the uncertain pleasure of living beyond his income I now find established in this place. Lord Henry P—— and his pretty wife are here, absolutely bankrupt; and from the number of captains and colonels one meets I should judge that the better part of the

English army live in fear of arrest for debt. The rock you ask about is, as you say, a monstrosity, but just what it was intended for I do not know. I will ask some of these valiant officers who know the place.

Did you, when passing through Boulogne, ever visit the Aquarium? It amuses me extremely, and you who delight in uncanny creatures of all kinds would positively revel in some of the distorted and demon-like fish and crabs which nearly give me the nightmare. I have arranged to remain here until the 3d of next month, when I must go to London for at least a fortnight on business.

CCCXII

LONDON, 4th September 1868.

Frankly, I do not like your story of the *Ours*. It is in its ideas as distorted and unpleasant as the nightmare crabs I told you of. Do change the plot—the composition is too good to be expended upon such a subject; at least modify the experiences of the *Ours*, and

leave out some of the suggestive phrases. 'Ch no, the idea is too awful; how could you imagine such a plot? I am so afraid that you will publish it at once that I stop to write no other word, and send these hurried lines to beg you to reconsider the story. Direct to me No. — Clarges Street, Piccadilly.

CCCXIII

LONDON, 1st October 1868.

I am still detained here, and am very impatient at the delay. Do tell me where a person can with the greatest propriety insult another? Etiquette forbids that it should be in the house of the one insulted; common politeness, not to say decency, decrees that it may not be in the habitation of the insulter; and still less is it possible for the process to be accomplished at the dwelling of a mutual friend. What spot, then, is available, save the open street or the high seas, both of which would present manifest difficulties, the foremost of them being the slender chance of encountering

the person for whom the insult is all prepared and ready before time has a chance of lessening the wholesome effect intended to be wrought by it!

Still another question—my mind is, you see, in an inquiring mood to-night—who originated the expression “false as hell”? Whoever did so had not, to my thinking, a logical brain. Surely hell is more consistent and true in its promises than are most things in this mutable world of ours. It pledges itself to punish, and we are distinctly given to understand that we obtain punishment at its hands. It clearly states upon what terms a dwelling within its precincts can be obtained, and those fulfilling the conditions are apt to find themselves denizens of its halls. It says plainly, in the words of the poet, “Leave hope behind all ye who enter here,” and once inside the gates, hope and hell’s inmate are parted for ever. It stipulates that evil shall take the place of good, that despair shall drive out trustful confidence, that eternal woe shall stand in the place of everlasting joy,—and in which of these

agreements does it fail us? Not one. False as hell!—should the saying not rather be “true and certain as hell, steadfast as Satan”?

Why I ask you these questions I cannot tell, unless it is that in thinking of this lengthened absence from you, such a bitter aching loneliness has swept over my whole being that I feel engulfed, choked, swallowed up in it, while all the solid foot-holding landmarks in life seem at the same time to be swept away by it. It appals me when I remember how few out of the millions of human beings who exist in the world, would care if I were literally annihilated and wiped out from the face of the earth. Would one single one? would you, tried friend as you are? Look how quickly the gaps are filled up; see the short space of time it takes men and women to forget. They glibly put all responsibility of replacing the lost upon Time, poor old Time, with his back already bowed and bent, who yet must bear all that coming generations may elect to put upon him. In turn they flatter and abuse him, trust to him to heal all wounds, and effusively give him

the credit when the scars grow fainter and fainter until they are lost to sight; or else belabour him, and say it is he who with relentless and unseemly haste demands that new faces shall replace the old, fresh lives fill the void left by those that are ended. Poor, patient old Time. But abused as he is, how many lessons he can teach; how many rough corners grow smooth under his care, what jagged edges are polished down, and how wise we grow, and tolerant with a great weariness which is too tired to care very much for anything. What does it matter, we cry bitterly, when it must all end? Satan is true and death is certain, and no man can tell what comes after. Now be cheerful (if you can); make plans, take keen interest in the trifling petty things around you, force them to grow to great matters of importance big with possibilities; set your whole mind upon obtaining some paltry thing which you know secretly is not worth a single thought; be ready to circumvent others who are fighting to outwit you in the great social game; bring all your intelligence, your intellect, if you chance

to have any, to bear upon social effects and success; emulate and outdo the struggling striving wretches around you who are spurring on in the mad race which all hope to win. To "get on in life," that is what they are, one and all, trying to do; get on, no matter by what means. If rudeness pays, be rude; snub your best and oldest friend; forget the kindly deed another may have done you long ago if now he stands in your way; put aside and crush under foot relentlessly; be blind and deaf when people from whom you can obtain nothing, and for whom you have no further use, are within sight and hearing. On—on at any cost to self-respect, or conscience, or manhood, or true womanhood; what are these but mere high-sounding phrases which mean nothing to sensible creatures whose aim in life is to "get on;" wise prudent souls who know what they want, and mean to obtain it by fair means or foul! Doubtless you are wondering why I should rave in this manner, and probably you have already decided that I am delirious. I begin my letter by asking at what place I can best insult a fellow-mortal,

and-continue by a scathing denunciation of people who after all are only living up to what they have chosen as their ideal. A recent insight into the utter hollowness and heartlessness of London life has suggested this train of thought, not that I did not know it all before—the vanity of vanities of London's social struggle; but a friend came to see me to-day who gravely undertook to prove that it was right, and wise, and just as it should be; and the worst of it all is that he honestly believes what he says, and with zeal worthy of a better cause religiously endeavours to live up to his creed—"Get on at any cost." It all seemed so pitifully small and narrow that it depressed me, and induced this sensation of overwhelming loneliness which I ought not to have attributed solely to your absence. The solitude which separation from you brings, has never the acrid tinge of bitterness which my dreary loneliness of to-night is weighted with. But London social life is too intricate a subject to be treated lightly. It is a fiercely hardening process, and if the rule of demand and supply can be

adapted to it as it can to most things, the hardening is necessary in order to withstand the pressure. The great social machine grinds on steadily and relentlessly, and if the material brought under its sharp points and heavy weights is soft and yielding, it is simply crushed to shapeless pulp and disappears, while the hard resisting substance, on the contrary, grows bright and polished. In the slang used by the English lower animals, *i.e.* the domestic servants, you must "stand up" to London society if you intend to hold your own against its insolent aggressiveness. Belinda is the romantic name of the lodging-house "slavey" who is at present the presiding genius of my apartment. Now slaveys ought, by every rule of English life, to restrict their remarks to "Yes'm," "No ma'am," and "Thank you," this latter upon all occasions and *à propos* to nothing at all; Belinda, however, is an original, and difficult to suppress. She will talk, and you may just as well make up your mind to the fact, and take it as you would the screeching of a steam-engine—stop your ears and let it blow. I close my mental

ears while the girl tells me of her grievances against her mistress, the smooth-tongued landlady who to me is all subservient civility. This morning my understanding caught a phrase while the girl was speaking which remained with me—"You must just stand up to her, ma'am, or she'll grind you." Yes, Belinda has supplied me with the words which describe best how London society must be treated. I shall certainly watch Belinda carefully during the remainder of my stay here, and see how this "stand up to" process works. But oh, how all this makes me long still more for my peaceful cheery little *pied à terre* in Paris, and my half Bohemian, wholly pleasant life! Let others struggle if they will, and "get on" until there is no farther goal to reach, but, for myself, I would choose a few good tried friends and a free existence.

Such a delightful story has just been told me of an old Quaker, one of the "Society of Friends," who said to his wife—"All the world is queer except thee and me, and thee is a little queer."

What a dear that old Quaker must have been. You cannot say in regard to this letter what you wrote in yours of 2d September—
"Ne lâchez pas tant vos lettres, de façon à ne mettre que trois mots à la ligne." If you only do not find my epistle of to-night too long and rambling, I shall be content. Write to me quickly that the baths at Montpellier are doing you no end of good. *A vous de cœur.*

MARIQUITA.

CCCXIV

—, 1st December 1868.

Merci! You are really very amiable to make the changes in the story, and it may be, after all, that your *Ours* will not be so horrible. I think you were wise, however, not to send so dangerous an animal to roam at will among the brilliant company at Compiègne; the empress might not have been particularly gratified by your attention.

I am here until Christmas, and quite a pleasant party are staying at the *château*. About

the 27th of December Madame de T—— and I are going by a circuitous route to Italy, making Florence our final destination. I feel sure that some of your letters have miscarried, for I refuse to believe that you have not been well enough to write. *Cher ami*, do you sometimes think that I do not write minutely enough of your health, or refer often enough to what you tell me of it? Would you know the truth? it is that there are some thoughts I cannot think, some words which even to myself I dare not speak. I am so grieved that the baths at Montpellier did not help you as much this second time as they did the first, and it makes my heart ache when you tell me of your continued fight with this terrible cough and the fits of suffocation. Do not dread so that the winter may prove a cold one; only enjoy the fine weather while you have it, and remember how often it continues through the whole year at Cannes. You could not be in a better place, and I hope much from its climate, which always suits you. *Dieu vous garde*. Rosini's death was sad. I had not heard of the illness

of Lamartine and Berryer. I send you not only the name of one amusing book, as you ask for, but a whole list, almost all of which I find more than readable.

CCCXV

FLORENCE, 6th January 1869.

One sentence of your letter makes me forget all the rest—" *Que faut-il faire ? je n'en sais rien, mais souvent j'ai grand désir que cela finisse.*"

O *mon ami*, do you know what that means to me? So often now thoughts come to me which I dare not put in words, but they haunt me after reading that you suffer, that you make no progress, that you grow worse; and now you tell me this, that you wish the end might come. Oh, love, love, love, I could not live without you! Do you know what the world would be for me with you not here? A leaden sky, with stars and moon and sun gone out, flowers without scent or colour, trees bare of foliage, birds with no note of song, all glad

things turned to mocking memories ; days of utter weariness, with longing, aching arms stretched out to empty space ; a heart starved and hungry, with only stones for food ; nights when lying dreams would cheat me to believe that once again you clasped me in a warm, living embrace, only that when the waking came my sense of loss might grow anew with double bitterness ! Surely hell has no torture greater than a heart can feel when its other better, dearer self is taken, and it is left with all the tired restlessness and weary, poisoned, passionate pain. If we could but go together, you and I, hand in hand through the dark valley and down into the deep, dark waters which lead to the great unknown. Dear God, was it good to decree this awful, final trial of tearing asunder lives grown to one, of wrenching nerves and fibres joined and twined together with years of daily loving sympathy, only that one may go forth bruised and bleeding to a new, uncomprehended life all solitary, while the other is left to live on the old existence, with all its charm crushed out and ended ? It

is so hard, so terribly hard, to believe the words spoken by a voice never yet heard, as it says to the first, "Be not afraid, for I am with you," and to the other, "Weep not, I will comfort you." We know so well the voice we have loved and lived with, and feel so certain that it understands our every want, that if we might only go together we must be happy, whatever strange, new thing be waiting for us, but this grave, far-off, unseen One who promises, Him we cannot really know, and we fear to meet Him all alone. No, I cannot, will not, live without you. Every night will I pray that if there be a God in heaven merciful and loving, let Him take me first, that I may never know the irremediable loss of losing you. I could not bear the torture. I should go mad with grief, and do some frantic, senseless thing far better left undone. No, you must not die before me; it cannot, shall not be!

Wer besser liebt? You asked this once, and I promptly answered that I loved best; but as I think of that, another thought comes with it. Shall I leave to you the pain I am afraid to

bear myself? You have told me more than once that you could not now, after so long, live your life without me; and, ill and suffering as you are, I would pray to leave you here alone, because I cannot face the coming years should you go first! *Wer besser liebt?* Oh, is it not the one who up to the last would tend and cheer, and guard from extra pain of mind or body, bearing her own woe silently, that no tear or sob may disturb the few short hours left, or distress the heart to which she has long since given her own? Would this not be more loyal love and friendship than to save herself from pain and leave the loneliness to him she loves?

Ah, love!-I would bear it all, and say no word, if by so doing you might be saved one hour of weary solitude.

CCCXVI

(Letter missing)

CCCXVII

PARIS, 20th April 1869.

I have returned here, as I could not remain so far away with such continued bad news from you. If you are not well enough to come to Paris I will join you at Cannes. I am very anxious, and long to see you. *Dieu vous bénisse.*

MARIQUITA.

CCCXVIII

(Letter missing)

CCCXIX

PARIS,

Monday, 3d May 1869.

They told me that they thought you were sleeping when I called this afternoon, so I would not allow them to disturb you, and merely left the book. Are you rested after your journey, and better? I have so many plans and ideas for amusing you, and no end of funny stories to tell you. You remember Mr. X——, whom you met in London; that

handsome, clever, agreeable man. Well, his son came to see me yesterday, so absurdly like his father, and so disappointingly unlike. Do you not hate an inferior copy of a good original, be it of man, beast, or thing? I do; I detest it, as I mortally detest anything verging on a sham. A mistake which this promising youth made in his French positively convulsed me; it is too good not to repeat. He has come here to remain some time, has taken an apartment in the Boulevard Malesherbes, and was telling me of his experiences with French *fournisseurs*, and the difficulty he had had in engaging servants. The *valet de pied*, he thought, asked him too high wages, but after a good deal of haggling he consented to give him so much *par mois, et la blanchisseuse!* After telling me the story, during the telling of which my guardian angel kindly kept my face straight for me, I having lost all control over its expression, *cet imbécile*, with the greatest calmness, assured me that the French language did not trouble him in the least; he found it perfectly easy!

I will come and see you whenever you wish me to.

CCCXX

PARIS,

Friday Evening, 11th June.

The weather is so threatening at present that I much fear our little expedition for to-morrow does not stand a very good chance. Let me know in the morning how you feel, and what you would like to do. With this I send you some violets, and devoutly trusting that you did not take cold at the Exposition yesterday, am yours lovingly and loyally.

CCCXXI

—, 26th June 1869.

Naturally I am cross at being obliged to leave you in Paris in order to see about an unpleasant business here; but as it is one of those things which is nobody's fault, and is disagreeable with an abstract, impersonal kind of disagreeableness, there is absolutely nothing to

be done but bear the affliction with as good a grace as possible. I think matters can be settled between the conflicting parties, only it may take time besides, . . . Do not tell me that you have the same detestable weather in Paris that we have here,—it would be really too cruel. Is not hypocrisy the most displeasing quality allowed for the use of mortals, or do I overrate its unpleasantness?

CCCXXII

—, 3d July.

And so to-day, in the year of grace 1869, you think it a miracle that it is possible for people to talk of love in the woods when the weather is bad! How I laughed, as a few amusing dates came to my mind. One, a certain day when after hours spent out at Versailles in a pouring rain, I was asked upon coming home whether I had a fever. And again, a windy afternoon at Saint Germain; and still another stormy morning, when we found the gardens of the Luxembourg a

paradise! Have you forgotten? No, nor have I; and a miracle like this will be worked for generations, yet to come, as it was worked for us, and for those long long before us. Happy miracle, ever new and for ever unforgettable!

But it is, I repeat, too cruel that just when you most need sunshine this miserable weather should last so persistently; let us hope that it is almost over. I am so glad that you are going to Saint Cloud; when there *penses un peu à moi*.

CCCXXIII

—, 15th August 1867.

"*Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse!*" It is not a cheerful quotation, but how unpleasantly true it is! You must have met that pretty little Blanche H——, who threatened to go into a rapid decline if she were not allowed to marry Sir Harry ——; and the popular M. de G——, who threatened a general extermination of the race if he were not permitted to wed the beauty of the London season, Lady Violet

— —. Well, just these two particulars sat directly behind me at the play the last time I was in Paris ; not, *bien entendu*, with their corresponding halves, for whom they had been ready to undergo so much ; not at all, but with each other—a devoted couple ; while the husband of Blanche and the wife of Sir Harry were God knows where. Are we really a remarkable example, *cher ami*, in that our affection has so well stood the test of time, and can it be that it has done so from the reason you so unhesitatingly give . . . ? It is a queer world, a very queer one. Should there really be no other life after this, as you would have me believe, I query much whether one makes just the best use of it, or gets all the most out of it. I am delighted that your visit to Saint Cloud has done you so much good ; this eucalyptus remedy may be the very thing, —have faith in it, I beseech you, and never mind the man who fell from the fifth story and grew philosophical while descending.

It is a bad day for me to give you my honest opinion about the *Ours*, as the beginning of

my letter may suggest to you, and you will not be pleased at it. Why try and circulate a thing you know to be *risqué* merely because you find the riskiness so cleverly veiled that an ordinary reader would fail to discover it? You who with your pen might so easily make men better, not worse—instruct them as well as amuse. Of course you are disgusted with this idea, and will call it narrow-minded, not moving with the times, etc. etc. Well, do not give it a second thought; to-morrow, or, no, the next time I see you, I may think differently; it would not be the first time that a few words from you had changed my ideas, would it?

The last sentence of your letter reproaches me as I re-read it. You ask me to write you something gay, because you are very melancholy, and instead I plainly show you that blue devils and I are *très-liée* to-day, and that anything further removed from "gay" than is the state of my personality it would be hard to imagine. If I cannot cheer I had better not depress you, which I feel that I am doing with

every line I write ; so I will say adieu before I do further harm.

CCCXXIV

(Letter missing)

CCCXXV

PARIS, 3d December 1869.

Madame Dosne as a mother-in-law certainly, proved the exception to the general rule, and like so many exceptions to rules, grammatically speaking, was a far more valuable thing than the rule itself. Poor M. Thiers must indeed be quite lost without her. To me it is a thing not possible to understand that the wife of a man should not share in his ambitions and plans ; should not help them in every way, make herself perfectly *au fait* of the situation whatever it may be, and aid her husband in every known manner permissible ; I had almost added "or not permissible." It is my belief that a woman can do so much, accomplish such marvels, in assuring the success of a man if she will but

devote her mind to doing so—use her tact, her common sense, every fascination she may possess, to win friends and influential support for her husband in whatever line of life he may happen to find himself. It is a pet theory of mine,—I believe in it thoroughly. I *know* it is possible for a woman to do all this, and surely there could be no better way for her to employ any talents which may have been bestowed upon her. And yet look how the generality of men's wives hamper rather than help them. Look at Madame Thiers herself. To me it is inexplicable; I gaze at women in a sort of stupefaction, they seem so blind to their opportunities. Thank God! I can honestly lay the flattering unction to my soul that while I had a husband I was true to him in both letter and spirit, and did for him in every sense "the best that in me lay." It is not a bad memory to have stored in a quiet corner of my mind, that when the end came he still called me the best friend that he had ever had. And I told you once that I thought I could be a good friend; have I proved my words?

Tell me that you are better, and that you suffer less. Would that I could give you my health and strength, and suffer in your place.

There is an uneasiness in the political air which grows steadily, at least so it appears to me. A half-defined restlessness, an uncertainty, that is almost impossible to seize in words, but which one feels in every vein. O this France, "unstable as water"! Will there never be a permanent quiet for her—a more solid basis? I doubt it.

CCCXXVI

PARIS, 10th January 1870.

Your letter has almost broken my heart. *La mort!* dear God, I cannot say that name and yours together! I am blinded as I merely write the letters which have no meaning for me, blinded with salt smarting tears which burn my brain before they fill my eyes, and scorch and bear my heart; your heart it is, and with you gone how can it beat again or ever throb, save to a dull dead agony which means a ghastly

living death? "*Une mort lente et très douloureuse,*" you say, and I read the words but cannot grasp the sense. Not this for *you*! Oh no, it cannot, cannot be! Let it be mine if you will; I will bear it all and more, if by so doing I can save you from one single pang; but not this for you! With your brilliant intellect, your keen fancy, your delicate appreciation, your love of life! It is again this sudden cold which makes you feel worse, and once passed, and with warmth and sunshine back again, you will be better. Tell me it is nothing more than this, take back those dreadful words and think no more of them; I cannot give you up!

You wish me *une bonne année*—could any year be good or any gift it brought me be worth the having if only ill were the portion it gave to you? O heart, dear heart of mine, take away the mortal sadness your words bring me; tell me that this fear of yours has no foundation in reality, that it is a mere fancy which the chill of the east wind and the icy breath of the frost have cruelly breathed over you, and which the first glad burst of sunshine

will melt and thaw away, when you will be yourself again, brilliant and well and loving as of old. It must be so; no other thing is possible.

CCCXXVII

PARIS, 15th February 1870.

I try to think that much wisdom lies concealed in the old saying, "No news is good news," and to fancy you almost strong again, and not sad and suffering. The *émeute*, with so pitiful a hero as Victor Noir, must have confirmed your opinion of the general degeneracy of the times. The word revolution is one not unmentioned now, and the under-current of restlessness of which I spoke to you some time ago seems to pervade all classes, taking various forms of expression. At the Tuileries, everything is gay and *insouciant*, outwardly at least; but there are those who pretend that the gaiety is assumed, and the carelessness more of a mask than a reality. The world and men seem more mad than ever, and seem not to know what

thing they really want. Some speak of a *plébiscite*. I have been reading Motley's *Dutch Republic*, renewing my contempt for the Duke of Alva and my pity for Count Egmont and Count Horn. Their tragic death was the first thing I thought of when I stood in the great square at Brussels, whose architectural effects suggest, as Motley says, "in some degree the meretricious union between Oriental and a corrupt Grecian art, accomplished in the mediæval midnight;" with the splendid Hôtel de Ville and its daring spire, the "graceful but incoherent" *façade* of the *Brood-huis*, and the lesser palaces and buildings near.

You say that you are writing for yourself, and *perhaps* for me, a little history where love plays the principal part. Would it be possible for you to write such a tale for yourself alone, leaving me out? Ah no, not if your fiction is founded upon truth. Two lives entwined with mutual hopes and joys, sorrows shared together, pleasures doubled by being divided, love glorified and intensified by reflection from heart to heart, faith and loyalty made living truths from

a great mutual trust—is not this the *motif* of your history, and could it treat of only one alone?

CCCXXVIII

(Letter missing)

CCCXXIX

PARIS, 20th May 1870.

I have, I think, found just the apartment you wish for, not far from me, *au premier, no entresol*, and with a moderate amount of steps. Shall I have your books, etc., moved for you before you come, and all things, so far as possible, in readiness for you? I had promised to spend the entire summer with my sister-in-law at P——, but have written to her that I will instead join her at once, as I must get back to Paris about the middle of June; thus I shall be here when you return. Later, if you are better, I can rejoin her and remain with her during the autumn. Let me know of any changes you may wish made in regard to the

apartment, and I will do my best to have everything comfortable for you.

CCCCXX

P——, 1st July 1870.

Oh, to be kept here day after day when all my thoughts are with you, and I long with every fibre of my being to follow them! It is very, very hard, yet I cannot leave when my poor brother depends so entirely upon me in his trouble. To lose two children within a fortnight, and to have your wife at death's door, is too great a trial for a man to be left to bear alone. I must remain with my brother for the present; it would be heartless to desert him, but nothing less than this would detain me an hour longer from your side.

You must be glad to be in Paris at this moment of excitement, with the keen interest which you take in the political situation. Do you think it possible that war with Prussia can be avoided? I tremble at the thought of it, and at the remembrance of the military man-

œuvres which I witnessed in Germany. Can French soldiery stand an attack from such machines of war as all Prussians wearing uniforms are? It is a terrible question when one thinks what it really means, and what the result must be if the answer is unfavourable.

CCCXXXI

P——, 25th July 1870.

Cher ami, do not dwell so much upon the coming cold which you always seem to dread; there cannot be two successive winters as severe as the last one, and once at Cannes you will certainly be better.

My poor sister-in-law is still dangerously ill, and her husband is wellnigh distracted with the loss of his children, to whom he was devoted. The world looks very bleak and drear to me to-day in spite of summer sunshine, and my courage begins to fail me. I am not by nature superstitious, yet, when for the first time I wrote 1870, the figures seemed to enclose some sinister meaning, some warning of woe

which made me shudder even as I smiled at the foolish silliness of the fancy. Perhaps this atmosphere of danger in the political world, added to the depressing effect of illness all about me, is the cause of this odd sense of impending sorrow. I am sorry that you think the war with Prussia cannot be prevented; alas, will France never be content to let well alone!

The assurance of the physicians that you are better is a great comfort to me; they must know, and even if you yourself cannot see the change there must still, be one and on the favourable side. Thank God for this encouraging news; it removes part at least of the heavy weight on my heart, and I begin to dream of happy days still in store for us, long walks, and heart-communing as in the earlier times when love came smiling with so many promises. To-day it is good to know that with the love still ours, there is also rich fruition of the promises; deep fulness of perfected love is as much dearer than its dawning dreams as the flower in perfect beauty is lovelier than the

opening bud, or as the hope fulfilled is better than the first faint half-formed wish. Tried, true, and perfect friend, good-night.

CCCXXXII

P—— 19th August 1870.

There is but little change in my sister-in-law, whose health still causes us the very gravest anxiety. The war news is the great topic of interest here, as I presume it must be throughout France. It is well for the country to be hopeful, but it strikes me that there is an over-confidence in the tone taken. I never believe in under-rating an enemy, and that I think is precisely the danger now to be feared. It seems terrible that at this late day in the civilisation of the world so much bloodshed is necessary among such nations as Germany and France; the fact appears to be an ironical comment upon modern progress and nineteenth century Christianity.

The longing to be with you grows on me;

I feel each day a stronger wish to be near you, to see you, and to hear your voice, to feel your hand in mine and to look into your eyes as you tell me it is good to meet again. Only a little time now and all this will be. A change must soon come in my poor brother's wife; if for the better, I shall leave at once and come to you; if an end comes to the poor thing's sufferings, my brother will at once join his regiment, and then equally will I come to you if you wish me to do so. *Je vous embrasse de cœur, cher ami*, trusting that this may find you stronger and better, no blue devils, no melancholy, no bodily pain. I linger before writing the word adieu; we have said it too often, dear friend, let us erase it from our dictionary, and until we choose another to take its place say only *au revoir*.

CCCXXXIII

P—, 16th September 1870

Do you recollect my once telling you,

you should join the Immortals (if verity and truth) the light of life would cease to shine for me?—Why, I wonder, does the remembrance of that saying obtrude itself so persistently upon my thoughts to-day? Your last letter was so much more like your old self, and in it you tell me that for some days past you have felt better, and you write with so much interest of the exciting events going on around us. If only our letters did not take so long in going and coming! It is hard to wait patiently for news of you, but I feel sure that you are really improving, and that we shall meet again shortly. I will follow your advice and remain for the present at this place, but if I thought you were not so well, nothing could keep me from you. It would be cruel of you not to tell me should this be the case. Would it not be better for you to go to Cannes even if the journey is a long one? Do think of it seriously. I will join you there if you like, and in fancy we will live the old days over again, the happy old days of storm and sunshine, quarrels and loving reconciliations. Let me hear soon, and remem-

ber that to-day as in long days past I am
always MARIQUET

Even as she wrote these words, the beautiful *Inconnue*, her other self to whom she spoke was fast nearing the dusky horizon, where eternal night was drawing on apace. The eyes she had kissed so often were soon to feel that last soft kiss, unlike all others, which seals from tears and soothes to everlasting dreamless sleep. He would read her words, perchance press the fast paling lips to the characters her hand had traced, and then would pen once more an answer, but only once. It is no good-bye, this last response of his, only a few words saying that he is ill, but mentioning at the same time a slight improvement. He tells her that he will write to her soon again, and adds that she must send to his house at Paris for some books which he ought to have sent her before his departure, but there is not much in the short letter, none of his usual wit or sparkle. He wr

AN AUTHOR'S LOVE

though tired, very tired. The last words are,
"adieu, je t'embrasse."

A footnote to the *Letters* states that two
hours later Prosper Mérimée died; thus almost
his last thought, perhaps his very last, was for
his love, his faithful friend, *L'Inconnue*.

ÉPILOGUE