

Comédie d'Amour Series

THE BOHEMIANS

...OF...

THE LATIN QUARTER

(SCÈNES DE LA VIE DE BOHÈME)

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY MONTADER

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ORIGINAL PREFACE

THE BOHEMIANS of whom it is a question in this book have no connection with the Bohemians whom melodramatists have rendered synonymous with robbers and assassins. Neither are they recruited from among the dancing-bear leaders, sword swallows, gilt watch-guard venders, street lottery keepers and a thousand other vague and mysterious professionals whose main business is to have no business at all, and who are always ready to turn their hands to anything except good.

The class of Bohemians referred to in this book are not a race of to-day, they have existed in all climes and ages, and can claim an illustrious descent. In ancient Greece, to go no farther back in this genealogy, there existed a celebrated Bohemian, who lived from hand to mouth round about the fertile country of Ionia, eating the bread of charity, and halting in the evening to tune beside some hospitable hearth the harmonious lyre that had sung the loves of Helen and the fall of Troy. Descending the steps of time modern Bohemia finds ancestors at every artistic and literary epoch. In the Middle Ages it perpetuates the Homeric tradition with its minstrels and ballad makers, the children of the gay science, all the melodious vagabonds of Touraine, all the errant songsters who, with the beggar's wallet and the trouvère's harp slung at their backs, traversed, singing as they went, the plains of the beautiful land where the eglantine of Clémence Isaure flourished.

At the transitional period between the days of chivalry and the dawn of the Renaissance, Bohemia continues to stroll along all the highways of the kingdom, and already to some extent about the streets of Paris. There is Master Pierre Gringoire, friend of the vagrants and foe to fasting. Lean and famished as a man whose very existence is one long Lent, he lounges about the town, his nose in the air like a pointer's, sniffing the odor from kitchen and cook shop. His eyes glittering with covetous gluttony cause the hams hung outside the pork-butcher's to shrink by merely looking at them, whilst he jingles in imagination —alas! and not in his pockets—the ten crowns promised him by the échevins in payment of the pious and devout farce he has composed for the theatre in the hall of the Palais de Justice. Beside the doleful and melancholy figure of the lover Esmeralda, the chronicles of Bohemia can evoke a companion of less ascetic humor and more cheerful face—Master François Villon, the lover of “la belle qui fut haultmire.” Poet and vagabond, par excellence, is this latter, and one whose poetry, full of imagination, is no doubt on account of those presentiments which the ancients attributed to their vates, continually marked by a singular foreboding of the gallows, on which the said Villon one day nearly swung in a hempen collar for having looked too closely at the color of the king's crowns. This same Villon, who more than once outran the watch started in his pursuit, this noisy guest at the dens of the Rue Pierre Lescot, this spunger at the court of the Duke of Egypt, this Salvator Rosa of poesy, has strung together elegies the heartbreaking sentiment and truthful accents of which move the most pitiless and make them forget the ruffian, the vagabond and the debauchee, before this muse drowned in her own tears.

Besides, amongst all those whose but little known work

has only been familiar to men for whom French literature does not begin the day when “Malherbe came,” François Villon has had the honor of being the most pillaged, even by the big-wigs of modern Parnassus. They threw themselves upon the poor man's field and coined glory from his humble treasure. There are ballads scribbled under a pent house at the street corner on a cold day by the Bohemian rhapsodist, stanzas improvised in the hovel in which the “belle qui fut haultmire” loosened her girdle to all comers, which nowadays metamorphosed into dainty gallantries scented with musk and amber, figure in the armorial bearing enriched album of some aristocratic Chloris.

But behold the grand century of the Renaissance opens, Michael Angelo ascends the scaffolds of the Sixtine Chapel and watches with anxious air young Raphael mounting the steps of the Vatican with the cartoon of the Loggie under his arm. Benvenuto Cellini is meditating his Perseus, Ghiberti is carving the Baptistery doors at the same time that Donatello is rearing his marbles on the bridges of the Arno; and whilst the city of the Medici is staking masterpieces against that of Leo X. and Julius II., Titian and Paul Veronese are rendering the home of the Doges illustrious. Saint Mark's competes with Saint Peter's.

This fever of genius that had broken out suddenly in the Italian peninsula with epidemic violence spreads its glorious contagion throughout Europe. Art, the rival of God, strides on, the equal of kings. Charles V. stoops to pick up Titian's brush, and Francis I. dances attendance at the printing office where Étienne Dolet is perhaps correcting the proofs of “Pantagruel.”

Amidst this resurrection of intelligence, Bohemia continued as in the past to seek, according to Balzac's expression, a bone and a kennel. Clément Marot, the familiar of the ante-chamber of the Louvre, became, even before she

was a monarch's mistress, the favorite of that fair Diana, whose smile lit up three reigns. From the boudoir of Diane de Poitiers, the faithless muse of the poet passed to that of Marguerite de Valois, a dangerous favor that Marot paid for by imprisonment. Almost at the same epoch another Bohemian, whose childhood on the shores of Sorrento had been caressed by the kisses of an epic muse, Tasso, entered the court of the Duke of Ferrara as Marot had that of Francis I., but less fortunate than the lover of Diane and Marguerite, the author of "Jerusalem Delivered" paid with his reason and the loss of his genius the audacity of his love for a daughter of the house of Este.

The religious contests and political storms that marked the arrival of the Medicis in France did not check the soaring flight of art. At the moment when a ball struck on the scaffold of the Fontaine des Innocents Jean Goujon who had found the Pagan chisel of Phidias, Ronsard discovered the lyre of Pindar and founded, aided by his pleiad, the great French lyric school. To this school succeeded the reaction of Malherbe and his fellows, who sought to drive from the French tongue all the exotic graces that their predecessors had tried to nationalize on Parnassus. It was a Bohemian, Mathurin Regnier, who was one of the last defenders of the bulwarks of poetry, assailed by the phalanx of rhetoricians and grammarians who declared Rabelais barbarous and Montaigne obscure. It was this same cynic, Mathurin Regnier, who, adding fresh knots to the satiric whip of Horace, exclaimed, in indignation at the manners of his day, "Honor is an old saint past praying to."

The roll-call of Bohemia during the seventeenth century contains a portion of the names belonging to the literature of the reigns of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., it reckons members amongst the wits of the Hôtel Rambouillet, where it takes its share in the production of the "Guirlande de

Julie," it has its entries into the Palais Cardinal, where it collaborates, in the tragedy of "Marianne," with the poet-minister who was the Robespierre of the monarchy. It bestrews the couch of Marion Delorme with madrigals, and woos Ninon de l'Enclos beneath the trees of the Place Royale; it breakfasts in the morning at the tavern of the Goinfres or the Epée Royale, and sups in the evening at the table of the Duc de Joyeuse; it fights duels under a street lamp for the sonnet of Urania against the sonnet of Job. Bohemia makes love, war and even diplomacy, and in its old days, weary of adventures, it turns the Old and New Testament into poetry, figures on the list of benefices, and well nourished with fat prebendaryships, seats itself on an episcopal throne, or a chair of the Academy, founded by one of its children.

It was in the transition period between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries that appeared those two lofty geniuses, whom each of the nations amongst which they lived oppose to one another in their struggles of literary rivalry, Molière and Shakespeare, those illustrious Bohemians, whose fate was too nearly akin.

The most celebrated names of the literature of the eighteenth century are also to be found in the archives of Bohemia, which, amongst the glorious ones of this epoch, can cite Jean Jacques Rousseau and d'Alembert, the founding of the porch of Notre Dame, and amongst the obscure, Maffiâtre and Gilbert, two overrated reputations, for the inspiration of the one was but a faint reflection of the weak lyricism of Jean Baptiste Rousseau, and the inspiration of the other but the blending of proud impotence with a hatred which had not even the excuse of initiative and sincerity, since it was only the paid instrument of party rancor.

We close with this epoch this brief summary of Bohemia

in different ages, a prolegomenon besprinkled with illustrious names that we have purposely placed at the beginning of this work, to put the reader on his guard against any misapplication he might fall into on encountering the title of Bohemians; long bestowed upon classes from which those whose manners and language we have striven to depict hold it an honor to differ.

To-day, as of old, every man who enters on an artistic career, without any other means of livelihood than his art itself, will be forced to walk in the paths of Bohemia. The greater number of our contemporaries who display the noblest blazonry of art have been Bohemians, and amidst their calm and prosperous glory they often recall, perhaps with regret, the time when, climbing the verdant slope of youth, they had no other fortune in the sunshine of their twenty years than courage, which is the virtue of the young, and hope, which is the wealth of the poor.

For the uneasy reader, for the timorous citizen, for all those for whom an i can never be too plainly dotted in a definition, we repeat as an axiom: "Bohemia is a stage in artistic life; it is the preface to the Academy, the Hôtel Dieu, or the Morgue."

We will add that Bohemia only exists and is only possible in Paris.

Like all callings, Bohemia admits of different degrees, various species which are themselves sub-divided, and of which it may not be useless to set forth the classification.

We will begin with unknown Bohemians, the largest class. It is made up of the great family of poor artists, fatally condemned to the law of incognito, because they cannot or do not know how to obtain a scrap of publicity, to attest their existence in art, and by showing what they are already prove what they may some day become. They are the race of obstinate dreamers for whom art has remained

a faith and not a profession; enthusiastic folk of strong convictions, whom the sight of a masterpiece is enough to throw into a fever, and whose loyal heart beats high in presence of all that is beautiful, without asking the name of the master and the school. This Bohemian is recruited from amongst those young fellows of whom it is said that they give great hopes, and from amongst those who realize the hopes given, but who, from carelessness, timidity, or ignorance of practical life, imagine that everything is done that can be when the work is completed, and wait for public admiration and fortune to break in on them by escalade and burglary. They live, so to say, on the outskirts of life, in isolation and inertia. Petrified in art, they accept to the very letter the symbolism of the academical dithyrambic, which places an aureola about the heads of poets, and, persuaded that they are gleaming in their obscurity, wait for others to come and seek them out. We used to know a small school composed of men of this type, so strange, that one finds it hard to believe in their existence; they styled themselves the disciples of art for art's sake. According to these simpletons, art for art's sake consisted in deifying one another, in abstaining from helping chance, who did not even know their address, and in waiting for pedestals to come of their own accord and place themselves under them. It is, as one sees, the ridiculousness of stoicism. Well, then, we again affirm, there exist in the heart of unknown Bohemia, similar beings whose poverty excites a sympathetic pity which common sense obliges you to go back on, for if you quietly remark to them that we live in the nineteenth century, that the five-franc piece is the empress of humanity, and that boots do not drop ready blacked from heaven, they turn their backs on you and call you a tradesman.

For the rest, they are logical in their mad heroism, they

utter neither cries nor complainings, and passively undergo the obscure and rigorous fate they make for themselves. They die for the most part, decimated by that disease to which science does not dare give its real name, want. If they would, however, many could escape from this fatal *denouement* which suddenly terminates their life at an age when ordinary life is only beginning. It would suffice for that for them to make a few concessions to the stern laws of necessity; for them to know how to duplicate their being, to have within themselves two natures, the poet ever dreaming on the lofty summits where the choir of inspired voices are warbling, and the man, worker-out of his life, able to knead his daily bread. But this duality which almost always exists amongst strongly tempered natures, of whom it is one of the distinctive characteristics, is not met with amongst the greater number of these young fellows, whom pride, a bastard pride, has rendered invulnerable to all the advice of reason. Thus they die young, leaving sometimes behind them a work which the world admires later on and which it would no doubt have applauded sooner if it had not remained invisible.

In artistic struggles it is almost the same as in war, the whole of the glory acquired falls to the leaders; the army shares as its reward the few lines in a despatch. As to the soldiers struck down in battle, they are buried where they fall, and one epitaph serves for twenty thousand dead. So, too, the crowd, which always has its eyes fixed on the rising sun, never lowers its glance towards that underground world where the obscure workers are struggling; their existence finishes unknown and without sometimes even having had the consolation of smiling at an accomplished task, they depart from this life, enwrapped in a shroud of indifference.

There exists in ignored Bohemia another fraction; it is

composed of young fellows who have been deceived, or who have deceived themselves. They mistake a fancy for a vocation, and impelled by homicidal fatality, they die, some the victims of a perpetual fit of pride others worshippers of a chimera.

The paths of art, so choked and so dangerous, are, despite encumbrment and obstacles, day by day more crowded, and consequently Bohemians were never more numerous.

If one sought out all the causes that have led to this influx, one might perhaps come across the following:

Many young fellows have taken the declamations made on the subject of unfortunate poets and artists quite seriously. The names of Gilbert, Malfilâtre, Chatterton, and Moreau have been too often, too imprudently, and, above all, too uselessly uttered. The tomb of these unfortunates has been converted into a pulpit, from whence has been preached the martyrdom of art and poetry.

"Farewell mankind, ye stony-hearted host,
Flint-bosomed earth and sun with frozen ray,
From out amidst you, solitary ghost
I glide unseen away."

This despairing song of Victor Escousse, stifled by the pride which had been implanted in him by a factitious triumph, was for a time the "Marseillaise" of the volunteers of art who were bent on inscribing their names on the martyrlogy of mediocrity.

For these funereal apotheoses, these encomiastic requiems, having all the attraction of the abyss for weak minds and ambitious vanities, many of these yielding to this attraction have thought that fatality was the half of genius; many have dreamt of the hospital bed on which Gilbert died, hoping that they would become poets, as he did a quarter of an hour before dying, and believing that it was an obligatory stage in order to arrive at glory.

Too much blame cannot be attached to these immortal falsehoods, these deadly paradoxes, which turn aside from the path in which they might have succeeded so many people who come to a wretched ending in a career in which they incommode those to whom a true vocation only gives the right of entering on it.

It is these dangerous preachings, this useless posthumous exaltation, that have created the ridiculous race of the unappreciated, the whining poets whose muse has always red eyes and ill-combed locks, and all the mediocrities of impotence who, doomed to non-publication, call the muse a harsh stepmother, and art an executioner.

All truly powerful minds have their word to say, and, indeed, utter it sooner or later. Genius or talent are not unforeseen accidents in humanity; they have a cause of existence, and for that very reason cannot always remain in obscurity, for, if the crowd does not come to seek them, they know how to reach it. Genius is the sun, every one sees it. Talent is the diamond that may for a long time remain hidden in obscurity, but which is always perceived by some one. It is, therefore, wrong to be moved to pity over the lamentations and stock phrases of that class of intruders and inutilities entered upon an artistic career in spite of art itself, and who go to make up in Bohemia a class in which idleness, debauchery, and parasitism form the foundation of manners.

Axiom, "Unknown Bohemianism is not a path, it is a blind alley."

Indeed, this life is something that does not lead to anything. It is a stultified wretchedness, amidst which intelligence dies out like a lamp in a place without air, in which the heart grows petrified in a fierce misanthropy, and in which the best natures become the worst. If one has the misfortune to remain too long and to advance too far in

this blind alley one can no longer get out, or one emerges by dangerous breaches and only to fall into an adjacent Bohemia, the manners of which belong to another jurisdiction than that of literary physiology.

We will also cite a singular variety of Bohemians who might be called amateurs. They are not the least curious. They find in Bohemian life an existence full of seductions, not to dine every day, to sleep in the open air on wet nights, and to dress in nankeen in the month of December seems to them the paradise of human felicity, and to enter it some abandon the family home, and others the study which leads to an assured result. They suddenly turn their backs upon an honorable future to seek the adventures of a hazardous career. But as the most robust cannot stand a mode of living that would render Hercules consumptive, they soon give up the game, and, hastening back to the paternal roast joint, marry their little cousins, set up as a notary in a town of thirty thousand inhabitants, and by their fireside of an evening have the satisfaction of relating their artistic misery with the magniloquence of a traveller narrating a tiger hunt. Others persist and put their self-esteem in it, but when once they have exhausted those resources of credit which a young fellow with well-to-do relatives can always find, they are more wretched than the real Bohemians, who, never having had any other resources, have at least those of intelligence. We knew one of these amateur Bohemians who, after having remained three years in Bohemia and quarrelled with his family, died one morning, and was taken to the common grave in a pauper's hearse. He had ten thousand francs a year.

It is needless to say that these Bohemians have nothing whatever in common with art, and that they are the most obscure amongst the least known of ignored Bohemia.

We now come to the real Bohemia, to that which forms

in part the subject of this book. Those who compose it are really amongst those called by art, and have the chance of being also amongst its elect. This Bohemia, like the others, bristles with perils, two-abysses flank it on either side—poverty and doubt. But between these two gulfs there is at least a road leading to a goal which the Bohemians can see with their eyes, pending the time when they shall touch it with their hand.

It is official Bohemia so-called because those who form part of it have publicly proved their existence, have signalized their presence in the world elsewhere than on a census list, have, to employ one of their own expressions, "their name in the bill," who are known in the literary and artistic market, and whose products, bearing their stamp, are current there, at moderate rates it is true.

To arrive at their goal, which is a settled one, all roads serve, and the Bohemians know how to profit by even the accidents of the route. Rain or dust, cloud or sunshine, nothing checks these bold adventurers, whose sins are backed by a virtue. Their mind is kept ever on the alert by their ambition, which sounds a charge in front and urges them to the assault of the future; incessantly at war with necessity, their invention always marching with lighted match blows up the obstacle almost before it incommodes them. Their daily existence is a work of genius, a daily problem which they always succeed in solving by the aid of audacious mathematics. They would have forced Harpagon to lend them money, and have found truffles on the raft of the "Medusa." At need, too, they know how to practice abstinence with all the virtue of an anchorite, but if a slice of fortune falls into their hands you will see them at once mounted on the most ruinous fancies, loving the youngest and prettiest, drinking the oldest and best, and never finding sufficient windows to throw their money out

of. Then, when their last crown is dead and buried, they begin to dine again at that table spread by chance, at which their place is always laid, and, preceded by a pack of tricks, go poaching on all the callings that have any connection with art, hunting from morn till night that wild beast called a five-franc piece.

The Bohemians know everything and go everywhere, according as they have patent leather pumps or burst boots. They are to be met one day leaning against the mantelshelf in a fashionable drawing-room, and the next seated in the arbor of some suburban dancing place. They cannot take ten steps on the Boulevard without meeting a friend, and thirty, no matter where, without encountering a creditor.

Bohemians speak amongst themselves a special language borrowed from the conversation of the studios, the jargon of behind-the-scenes, and the discussions of the editor's room. All the eclectisms of style are met with in this unheard-of idiom, in which apocalyptic phrases jostle cock and bull stories, in which the rusticity of a popular saying is wedded to extravagant periods from the same mould in which Cyrano de Bergerac cast his tirades; in which the paradox, that spoilt child of modern literature, treats reason as the pantaloons is treated in a pantomime; in which irony has the intensity of the strongest acids and the skill of those marksmen who can hit the bull's-eye blindfold; a slang intelligent, though unintelligible to those who have not its key, and the audacity of which surpasses that of the freest tongues. This Bohemian vocabulary is the hell of rhetoric and the paradise of neologism.

Such is in brief that Bohemian life, badly known to the puritans of society, (described by the puritans of art, insulted by all the timorous and jealous mediocrities who cannot find enough of outcries, lies, and calumnies to

drown the voices and the names of those who arrive through the vestibule to renown by harnessing audacity to their talent.

A life of patience, of courage, in which one cannot fight unless clad in a strong armor of indifference impervious to the attacks of fools and the envious, in which one must not, if one would not stumble on the road, quit for a single moment that pride in oneself which serves as a leaning staff; a charming and a terrible life, which has its conquerors and its martyrs, and on which one should not enter save in resigning oneself in advance to submit to the pitiless law *via victis*.

H. M.



who was young and pretty, had never consented to be the mistress of any man who was not like herself young and handsome. She had been known bravely to refuse the magnificent offers of an old man so rich that he was styled the Peru of the Chaussée d'Antin, and who had offered a golden ladder to the gratification of her fancies. Intelligent and witty, she had also a repugnance for fools and simpletous, whatever might be their age, their title and their name.

Musette, therefore, was an honest and pretty girl, who in love adopted half of Champfort's famous aphorism, "Love is the interchange of two caprices." Thus her connection had never been preceded by one of those shameful bargains which dishonor modern gallantry. As she herself said, Musette played fair and insisted that she should receive full change for her sincerity.

But if her fancies were lively and spontaneous, they were never durable enough to reach the height of a passion. And the excessive mobility of her caprices, the little care she took to look at the purse and the boots of those who wished to be considered amongst them, brought about a corresponding mobility in her existence which was a perpetual alternation of blue broughams and omnibuses, first floors and fifth stories, silken gowns and cotton frocks. Oh! charming girl! living poem of youth with ringing laugh and joyous song! tender heart beating for one and all beneath your half-open bodice! Oh! Mademoiselle Musette, sister of Bernerette and Mimi Pinson, it would need the pen of Alfred de Musset fitly to narrate your careless and vagabond course amidst the flowery paths of youth; and he would certainly have celebrated you, if like me, he had heard you sing in your pretty false notes, this couplet from one of your favorite ditties:

CHAPTER VI.

MADEMOISELLE MUSETTE.

MADEMOISELLE MUSETTE was a pretty girl of twenty who shortly after her arrival in Paris had become what many pretty girls become when they have a neat figure, plenty of coquettishness, a dash of ambition and hardly any education. After having for a long time shone as the star of the supper parties of the Latin Quarter, at which she used to sing in a voice, still very fresh if not very true, a number of country ditties, which earned her the nickname under which she has since been immortalized by one of our neatest rhymesters, Mademoiselle Musette suddenly left the Rue de la Harpe to go and dwell upon the Cytherean heights of the Breda district.

She speedily became one of the foremost of the aristocracy of pleasure and slowly made her way towards that celebrity which consists in being mentioned in the columns devoted to Parisian gossip, or lithographed at the print-sellers.

However, Mademoiselle Musette was an exception to the women amongst whom she lived. Of a nature instinctively elegant and poetical, like all women who are really such, she loved luxury and the many enjoyments which it procures; her coquetry warmly coveted all that was handsome and distinguished; a daughter of the people, she would not have been in any way out of her element amidst the most regal sumptuousity. But Mademoiselle Musette,

"It was a day in Spring
 When love I strove to sing
 Unto a nut-brown maid.
 O'er face as fair as dawn
 A dainty cap of lawn
 Cast a bewitching shade."

The story we are about to tell is one of the most charming in the life of this charming adventuress who wore so many green gowns.

At a time when she was the mistress of a young Counsellor of State, who had gallantly placed in her hands the key of his ancestral coffers, Mademoiselle Musette was in the habit of receiving once a week in her pretty drawing-room in the Rue de la Bruyère. These evenings resembled most Parisian evenings, with the difference that people amused themselves. When there was not enough room they sat on one another's knees, and it often happened that the same glass served for two. Rodolphe, who was a friend of Musette and never anything more than a friend, without either of them ever knowing why—Rodolphe asked leave to bring his friend, the painter Marcel.

"A young fellow of talent," he added, "for whom the future is embroidering his Academician's coat."

"Bring him," said Musette.

The evening they were to go together to Musette's Rodolphe called on Marcel to fetch him. The artist was at his toilet.

"What!" said Rodolphe, "you are going into society in a colored shirt?"

"Does that shock custom?" observed Marcel quietly.

"Shock custom, it stuns it."

"The deuce," said Marcel, looking at his shirt, which displayed a pattern of boars pursued by dogs, on a blue ground. "I have not another here. Oh! bah! so much the

worse, I will put on a collar, and as 'Methuselah' buttons to the neck no one will see the color of my linen."

"What!" said Rodolphe uneasy, "you are going to wear 'Methuselah'?"

"Alas!" replied Marcel, "I must, God wills it and my tailor too; besides it has a new set of buttons and I have just touched it up with ivory black."

"Methuselah" was merely Marcel's dress coat, he called it so because it was the oldest garment of his wardrobe. "Methuselah" was cut in the fashion of four years before, and was, besides, of a hideous green, but Marcel declared that it looked black by candlelight.

In five minutes Marcel was dressed, he was attired in the most perfect bad taste, the get-up of an art student going into society.

M. Casimir Bonjour will never be so surprised the day he learns his election as a member of the Institute as were Rodolphe and Marcel on reaching Mademoiselle Musette's. This is the reason of their astonishment. Mademoiselle Musette who for some time past had fallen out with her lover the Counsellor of State, had been abandoned by him at a very critical juncture. Legal proceedings having been taken by her creditors and her landlord, her furniture had been seized and carried down into the court-yard, in order to be taken away and sold on the following day. Despite this incident Mademoiselle Musette had not for a moment the idea of giving her guests the slip and did not put off her party. She had the court-yard arranged as a drawing-room, spread a carpet on the pavement, prepared everything as usual, dressed to receive company, and invited all the tenants to her little entertainment, towards which Heaven contributed its illumination.

This jest had immense success, never had Musette's evenings displayed such go and gaiety; they were still dancing

and singing when the porters came to take away furniture and carpets, and the company were obliged to withdraw. Musette bowed her guests out, singing:

"They will laugh long and loud, tralala,
At my Thursday night's crowd
They will laugh long and loud, tralala."

Marcel and Rodolphe alone remained with Musette, who ascended to her room where there was nothing left but the bed.

"Ah, but my adventure is no longer such a lively one after all," said Musette; "I shall have to take up my quarters out-of-doors."

"Oh! madame," said Marcel, "if I had the gifts of Plutus I should like to offer you a temple finer than that of Solomon, but—"

"You are not Plutus. All the same I thank you for your good intentions. Ah!" she added, glancing round the room, "I was getting bored here, and then the furniture was old. I had had it nearly six months. But that is not all, after the dance one should sup."

"Let us sup-*pose*," said Marcel, who had an itch of punning, above all in the morning, when he was terrible.

As Rodolphe had gained some money at the lansquenets played during the evening, he carried off Musette and Marcel to a restaurant which was just opening.

After breakfast, the three, who had no inclination for sleep, spoke of finishing the day in the country, and as they found themselves close to the railway-station they got into the first train that started, and which landed them at Saint Germain.

During the whole of the night of the party and all the rest of the day Marcel, who was gunpowder which a single glance sufficed to kindle, had been violently smitten by

Mademoiselle Musette and paid her "highly-colored court," as he put it to Rodolphe. He even went so far as to propose to the pretty girl to buy her furniture handsomer than the last with the result of the sale of his famous picture "The Passage of the Red Sea." Hence the artist saw with pain the moment arrive when it became necessary to part from Musette, who, whilst allowing him to kiss her hands, neck and sundry other accessories, gently repulsed him every time that he tried violently to burgle her heart.

On reaching Paris, Rodolphe left his friend with the girl, who asked the artist to see her to her door.

"Will you allow me to call on you?" asked Marcel; "I will paint your portrait."

"My dear fellow," replied she, "I cannot give you my address, since to-morrow I may no longer have one; but I will call and see you, and I will mend your coat, which has a hole so big that one could shoot the moon through it."

"I will await your coming like that of the Messiah," said Marcel.

"Not quite so long," said Musette, laughing.

"What a charming girl," said Marcel to himself, as he slowly walked away; "she is the Goddess of Mirth. I will make two holes in my coat."

He had not gone twenty paces before he felt himself tapped on the shoulder. It was Mademoiselle Musette.

"My dear Monsieur Marcel," said she, "are you a true knight?"

"I am. 'Rubens and my lady,' that is my motto."

"Well, then, hearken to my woes and pity take, most noble sir," returned Musette, who was slightly tinged with literature, although she murdered grammar in fine style; "the landlord has taken away the key of my room and it is eleven o'clock at night. Do you understand?"

"I understand," said Marcel, offering Musette his arm. He took her to his studio on the Quai aux Fleurs.

Musette was hardly able to keep awake, but she still had strength enough to say to Marcel, taking him by the hand, "You remember what you have promised."

"Oh! Musette, charming creature!" said the artist in a somewhat moved tone, "you are here beneath a hospitable roof, sleep in peace. Good-night, I am off."

"Why so?" said Musette, her eyes half-closed; "I am not afraid, I can assure you. In the first place, there are two rooms, I will sleep on your sofa."

"My sofa is too hard to sleep on, it is stuffed with carded pebbles. I will give you hospitality here, and ask it for myself from a friend who lives on the same landing. It will be more prudent," said he; "I usually keep my word, but I am twenty-two and you are eighteen, Musette,—and I am off. Good-night."

The next morning at eight o'clock Marcel entered her room with a pot of flowers that he had gone and bought in the market. He found Musette, who had thrown herself fully dressed on the bed, and was still sleeping. At the noise made by him she woke, and held out her hand.

"What a good fellow," said she.

"Good fellow," repeated Marcel, "is not that a term of ridicule?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Musette, "why should you say that to me? It is not nice. Instead of saying spiteful things offer me that pretty pot of flowers."

"It is, indeed, for you that I have brought them up," said Marcel. "Take it, and in return for my hospitality sing me one of your songs, the echo of my garret may perhaps retain something of your voice, and I shall still hear you after you have departed."

"Oh! so you want to show me the door?" said Musette.

"Listen, Marcel, I do not beat about the bush to say what my thoughts are. You like me and I like you. It is not love, but it is perhaps its seed. Well, I am not going away, I am going to stop here, and I shall stay here as long as the flowers you have just given me remain unfaded."

"Ah!" exclaimed Marcel, "they will fade in a couple of days. If I had known I would have bought immortelles."

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For a fortnight Musette and Marcel lived together, and led, although often without money, the most charming life in the world. Musette felt for the artist an affection which had nothing in common with her preceding passions; and Marcel began to fear that he was seriously in love with his mistress. Ignorant that she herself was very much afraid of being equally smitten, he glanced every morning at the condition of the flowers, the death of which was to bring about the severance of their connection, and found it very difficult to account for their continued freshness. But he soon had a key to the mystery. One night, waking up, he no longer found Musette beside him. He rose, hastened into the next room, and perceived his mistress, who profited nightly by his slumbers to water the flowers and hinder them from perishing.