

THE WANDERING JEW.

BY EUGENE SUE

CHAPTER XLII
RISING.

To explain the arrival of Mdlle. de Cardoville at the garden-door of the house occupied by Djalma, we must cast a retrospective glance at previous events. On leaving Doctor Baleinier's, Mdlle. de Cardoville had gone to take up her residence in the Rue d'Anjou. During the last few months of her stay with her aunt, Adrienne had secretly caused this handsome dwelling to be repaired and furnished, and its luxury and elegance were now increased by all the wonders of the lodge of Saint-Dizier House. The world found it very strange, that a lady of the age and condition of Mdlle. de Cardoville should take the resolution of living completely alone and free, and, in fact, of keeping house exactly like a bachelor, a young widow, or an emancipated minor. The world pretended not to know that Mdlle. de Cardoville possessed what is often wanting in men, whether of age or twice of age—a firm character, a lofty mind, a generous heart, strong and vigorous good sense.

Judging that she would require faithful assistance in the internal management of her house, Adrienne had written to the bailiff of Cardoville, and his wife, old family servants, to come immediately to Paris: M. Dupont thus filled the office of steward, and Mme. Dupont that of house-keeper. An old friend of Adrienne's father, the Count de Montbron, an accomplished old man, once very much in fashion, and still a connoisseur in all sorts of elegances, had advised Adrienne to act like a princess, and take an equerry; recommended for this office a man of good rearing and ripe age, who, himself an amateur in horses, had been ruined in England, at Newmarket, the Derby, and Tattersall's, and reduced, as sometimes happened to gentlemen in that country, to drive the stage-coaches, thus finding an honest method of earning his bread, and at the same time gratifying his taste for horses. Such was M. de Bonneville, M. de Montbron's choice. Both from age and habits, this equerry could accompany Mdlle. de Cardoville on horseback, and, better than anyone else, superintend the stable. He accepted, therefore, the employment with gratitude, and, thanks to his skill and attention, the equipages of Mdlle. de Cardoville were not eclipsed in style by anything of the kind in Paris. Mdlle. de Cardoville had taken back her women, Hebe, Georgette and Florine. The latter was at first to have re-entered the service of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, to continue her part of spy for the superior of St. Mary's Convent; but, in consequence of the new direction given by Rodin to the Rennepont affair, it was decided that Florine, if possible, should return to the service of Mdlle. de Cardoville. This confidential place, enabling this unfortunate creature to render important and mysterious service to the people who held her fate in their hands, forced her to infamous treachery. Unfortunately, all things favored this machination. We know that Florine, in her interview with Mother Bunch, a few days after Mdlle. de Cardoville was imprisoned at Dr. Baleinier's had yielded to a twinge of remorse, and given to the sempstress advice likely to be of use to Adrienne's interests—sending word to Agricola not to deliver to Madame de Saint-Dizier the papers found in the hiding-place of the pavilion, but only to entrust them to Mdlle. de Cardoville herself. The latter, afterwards informed of the details by Mother Bunch, felt a double degree of confidence and interest in Florine, took her back into her service with gratitude, and almost immediately charged her with a confidential mission—that of superintending the arrangements of the house hired for Djalma's habitation. As for Mother Bunch (yielding to the solicitations of Mdlle. de Cardoville, finding she was no longer of use to Dagobert's wife, of whom we shall speak hereafter), she had consented to take up her abode in the hotel on the Rue d'Anjou, along with Adrienne, who, with that rare sagacity of the heart peculiar to her, entrusted the young sempstress, who served her also as a secretary, with the department of alms-giving.

Mdlle. de Cardoville had at first thought of entertaining her merely as a friend, wishing to pay homage in her person to probity with labor, resignation in sorrow, and intelligence in poverty; but, knowing the workgirl's natural dignity, she feared, with reason, that, notwithstanding the delicate circumspection with which the hospitality would be offered, Mother Bunch might perceive in it alms in disguise. Adrienne preferred, therefore, while she treated her as a friend, to give her a confidential employment. In this manner the great delicacy of the needlewoman would be spared, since she could earn her livelihood by performing duties which would at the same time satisfy her praiseworthy instincts of

charity. In fact, she could fulfill, better than any one, the sacred mission confided to her by Adrienne. Her cruel experience in misfortune, the goodness of her angelic soul, the elevation of her mind, her rare activity, her penetration with regard to the painful secrets of poverty, her perfect knowledge of the industrial classes, were sufficient security for the tact and intelligence with which the excellent creature would second the generous intentions of Mdlle. de Cardoville.

Let us now speak of the divers events which, on that day, preceded the coming of Mdlle. de Cardoville to the garden-gate of the house in the Rue Blanche. About ten o'clock in the morning, the blinds of Adrienne's bed-chamber, closely shut, admitted no ray of daylight to this apartment, which was only lighted by a spherical lamp of oriental alabaster, suspended from the ceiling by three long silver chains. This apartment, terminating in a dome, was in the form of a tent with eight sides. From the ceiling to the floor, it was hung with white silk, covered with long draperies of muslin, fastened in large puffs to the wall, by bands caught in at regular distances by plates of ivory. Two doors, also of ivory, admirably encrusted with mother-of-pearl, led, one to the bath-room, the other to the toilet-chamber, a sort of little temple dedicated to the worship of beauty, and furnished as it had been at the pavilion of Saint-Dizier House. Two other compartments of the wall were occupied by windows, completely veiled with drapery. Opposite the bed, enclosing splendid fire-dogs of chased silver, was a chimney-piece of white marble, like crystallized snow, on which were sculptured two magnificent caryatides, and a frieze representing birds and flowers. Above this frieze, carved in open work with extreme delicacy, was a marble basket, filled with red camellias. Their leaves of shining green, their flowers of a delicate rosy hue, were the only colors that disturbed the harmonious whiteness of this virgin retreat. Finally, half surrounded by waves of white muslin, which poured down from the dome like a mass of light clouds, the bed was visible—very low, and resting on feet of carved ivory, which stood upon the ermine carpet that covered the floor. With the exception of a plinth, also in ivory, admirably inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the bed was entirely covered with white satin, wadded and quilted like an immense scent-bag. The cambric sheets, trimmed with lace, being a little disturbed on one side, discovered the corner of a white taffety mattress, and a light counterpane of watered stuff—for an equal temperature always reigned in this apartment, warm as a fine spring day.

From a singular scruple, arising from the same sentiment which had caused Adrienne to have inscribed on a masterpiece of goldsmith's work the name of the maker instead of that of the seller, she had wished all these articles, so costly and sumptuous, to be manufactured by workmen chosen amongst the most intelligent, honest, and industrious of their class, whom she had supplied with the necessary materials. In this manner she had been able to add to the price of the work the profit usually gained by the middle man, who speculates in such labor; this notable augmentation of wages had spread happiness and comfort through a hundred necessitous families, who, blessing the munificence of Adrienne, gave her, as she said, the right to enjoy her luxury as a good action. Nothing could be fresher or more charming than the interior of this bedchamber. Mdlle. de Cardoville had just awoke; she reposed in the middle of this flood of muslin, lace, cambric, and white silk, in a position full of sweet grace. Never during the night did she cover that beautiful golden hair (a certain recipe, said the Greeks, for preserving it for a long while in magnificence). Every evening, her women arranged her long silky curls in flat tresses, forming two broad bands, which, descending sufficiently low almost entirely to conceal the small ear, the rosy lobe of which was alone visible, were joined to the large plait behind the head.

This head-dress, borrowed from Greek antiquity, set off to admiration the pure, fine features of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and made her look so much younger, that, instead of eighteen, one would hardly have given her fifteen years of age. Gathered thus closely about the temples, the hair lost its transparent and brilliant hues, and would have appeared almost brown, but for the golden tints which played here and there, amid the undulations of the tresses. Lulled in that morning torpor, the warm languor of which is so favorable to soft reveries, Adrienne leaned with her elbow on the pillow, and her head a little on one side, which displayed to advantage the ideal contour of her bared neck and shoulders; her smiling lips, moist and rosy, were, like her cheeks, cold as if they had just been bathed in ice-water; her snow-white lids half veiled the large, dark, soft eyes, which now gazed languidly

upon vacancy, and now fixed themselves with pleasure upon the rosy flowers and green leaves in the basket of camellias. Who can paint the matchless serenity of Adrienne's awaking—when the fair and chaste soul roused itself in the fair and chaste body? It was the awaking of a heart as pure as the fresh and balmy breath of youth, that made her bosom rise and fall in its white, immaculate purity. What creed, what dogma, what formula, what religious symbol, oh! paternal and divine Creator! can ever give a more complete idea of Thy harmonious and ineffable power, than the image of a young maiden awaking in the bloom of her beauty, and in all the grace of that modesty with which Thou hast endowed her, seeking, in her dreamy innocence, for the secret of that celestial instinct of love, which Thou hast placed in the bosom of all Thy creatures—oh! Thou whose love is eternal, and goodness infinite!

The confused thoughts which, since her sleep, had appeared gently to agitate Adrienne, absorbed her more and more; her head resting on her bosom, her beautiful arm upon the couch, her features, without becoming precisely sad, assumed an expression of touching melancholy. Her dearest desire was accomplished; she was about to live independent and alone. But this affectionate, delicate, expansive, and marvellously complete nature, felt that God had not given her such rare treasures, to bury them in a cold and selfish solitude. She felt how much that was great and beautiful might be inspired by love, both in herself, and in him that should be worthy of her. Confiding in her courage, and the nobleness of her character, proud of the example that she wished to give to other women, knowing that all eyes would be fixed enviously upon her, she felt, as it were, only too sure of herself; far from fearing that she should make a bad choice, she rather feared, that she should not find any from whom to choose, so pure and perfect was her taste. And, even had she met with her own ideal, she had views so singular and so just, so extraordinary and yet so sensible, with regard to the independence and dignity of woman, that, inexorably determined to make no concession upon this head, she asked herself if the man of her choice would ever accept the hitherto unheard-of conditions that she meant to impose. In recalling to her remembrance the possible suitors that she had met in the world, she remembered also the dark, but true picture, which Rodin had drawn with so much caustic bitterness. She remembered too, not without a certain pride, the encouragement this man had given her, not by flattery, but by advising her to follow out and accomplish a great, generous, and beautiful design. The current or the caprice of fancy soon brought Adrienne to think of Djalma. Whilst she congratulated herself on having paid to her royal kinsman the duties of a kindly hospitality, the young lady was far from regarding the prince as the hero of her future.

And first she said to herself, not unreasonably, that this half-savage boy, with passions, if not untameable, transported on a sudden into the midst of a refined civilization, would be inevitably destined to fiery trials and violent transformations. Now Mdlle. de Cardoville, having nothing masculine or despotic in her character, had no wish to civilise the young savage. Therefore, notwithstanding the interest, or rather because of the interest, which she felt for the young Indian, she was firmly resolved, not to make herself known to him, till after the lapse of two or three months; and she determined also, that, even if Djalma should learn by chance that she was his relation, she would not receive his visit. She desired, if not to try him, at least to leave him free in all his acts, so that he might expend the first fire of his passions, good or bad. But not wishing to abandon him quite without defence to the perils of a parisian life, she requested the Count de Montbron, in confidence, to introduce Prince Djalma to the best experience. M. de Montbron had received the request of Mdlle. de Cardoville with the greatest pleasure, taking delight, he said in starting his royal tiger in drawing-rooms, and bringing him into contact with the flower of the fine ladies and gentlemen of Paris, offering at the same time to wager any amount in favor of his half-savage pupil.

"As for myself, my dear Count," said Adrienne to M. de Montbron, with her usual frankness, "my resolution is not to be shaken. You have told me the effect that will be produced in the fashionable world, by the first appearance of Prince Djalma, an Indian nineteen years of age, of surprising beauty, proud and wild as a young lion arriving from his forest; it is new, it is extraordinary, you added; and, therefore, all the coquetries of civilized life will pursue him with an eagerness which makes me tremble for him. Now, seriously my dear count, it will not suit me to appear as the rival of so many fine ladies, who are about to expose themselves intrepidly to the claws of the young tiger. I take great interest

in him, because he is my cousin, because he is handsome, because he is brave, and above all because he does not wear that horrible European dress. No doubt, these are rare qualities—but not sufficient to make me change my mind. Besides, the good old philosopher, my new friend, has given me advice about this Indian, which you, my dear count, who are not a philosopher, will yet approve. It is, for some time, to receive visits at home, but not to visit other people—which will spare me the awkwardness of meeting my royal cousin, and allow me to make a careful choice, even amongst my usual society. As my house will be an excellent one, my position most unusual, and as I shall be suspected of all sorts of naughty secrets, I shall be in no want of inquisitive visitors, who will amuse me a good deal, I assure you."

And as M. de Montbron asked, if the exile of the poor young Indian tiger was to last long, Adrienne answered: "As I shall see most of the persons, to whom you will introduce him, I shall be pleased to hear different opinions about him. If certain men speak well of him, and certain women ill, I shall have good hope of him. In a word, the opinion that I come to, in sifting the true from the false (you may leave that to my sagacity), will shorten or prolong the exile of my royal cousin."

Such were the formal intentions of Mdlle. de Cardoville with regard to Djalma, even on the day she went with Florine to the house he occupied. In a word, she had positively resolved not to be known to him for some months to come.

After long reflecting that morning, on the chances that might yet offer themselves to satisfy the wants of her heart, Adrienne fell into a new, deep reverie. This charming creature, so full of life and youth, heaved a low sigh, raised her arms above her head, turned her profile towards the pillow, and remained for some moments as if powerless and vanquished. Motionless beneath the white tissues that wrapped her round, she looked like a fair, marble statue, visible beneath a light of snow. Suddenly, Adrienne raised herself up, drew her hand across her brow, and rang for her women. At the first silver tone of the bell, the two ivory doors opened. Georgette appeared on the threshold of the dressing-room, from which Frisky, a little black-and-tan dog, with his golden collar, escaped with a joyful barking. Hebe appeared at the same time on the threshold of the bath-room. At the further end of this apartment, lighted from above, might be seen, upon a green mat of Spanish leather, with golden ornaments, a crystal bath in the form of a long shell. The three only divisions in this masterpiece of glasswork, were concealed by the elegant device of several large reeds in silver, which rose from the wide base of the bath, also of wrought silver, representing children and dolphins playing among branches of natural coral, and azure shells. Nothing could be more pleasing than the effect of these purple reeds and ultramarine shells, upon a dull ground of silver; the balsamic vapor, which rose from the warm, limpid and perfumed water, that filled the crystal shell, spread through the bath-room, and floated like a light cloud into the sleeping-chamber.

Seeing Hebe in her fresh and pretty costume, bringing her a long bathing-gown, hanging upon a bare and dimpled arm, Adrienne said to her: "Where is Florine, my child?"

"Madame, she went downstairs two hours ago; she was wanted for something very pressing."—"Who wanted her?"

"The young person who serves Madame as secretary. She went out this morning very early; and, as soon as she returned, she sent for Florine, who has not come back since."

"This absence no doubt relates to some important affair of my angelic minister of succor," said Adrienne, smiling, and thinking of the hunchback. Then she made a sign to Hebe to approach her bed.

About two hours after rising, Adrienne, having had herself dressed, as usual, with rare elegance, dismissed her women, and sent for Mother Bunch, whom she treated with marked deference, always receiving her alone. The young sempstress entered hastily, with a pale, agitated countenance, and said, in a trembling voice: "Oh, madame! my presentiments were justified. You are betrayed."

"Of what presentiments do you speak, my dear child!" said Adrienne, with surprise. "Who betrays me?"—"M. Rodin!" answered the workgirl.

CHAPTER XLIII.
DOUBTS.

On hearing the accusation brought against Rodin, Mdlle. de Cardoville looked at the denunciator with new astonishment. Before continuing this scene, we may say that Mother Bunch