

We had scarcely alighted at the inn, when the prince came to see us. A little embarrassment was painted upon his countenance, but he endeavoured to force a smile. “ Ernest,” I cried out, and threw myself into his arms. I felt it, I was in his power, and this cry of nature, expressed to him :—“ Here I am, prince ; here I am your victim and your lover.”

He embraced me, and questioned us upon the dangers of our route, our fears, our health, and our expenses ; he lavished praises upon the country in which we were, and amused himself for a moment with a history of the rats of his palace. However, he stammered and stuttered, as he frequently does when a thought importunes him ; and after searching a long time for terms to serve his purpose, he said to me :—

“ My poor girl ! dear Pauline ! I am not yet able to give you the place which I promised you.”

“ Oh my God !”

“ Don’t weep,—be calm ; it is only for a short time. The truth is, my mother detests the French ; they have caused so many misfortunes to our family. At present, she refuses to receive a

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50. MEMOIRS OF A YOUNG GREEK.

Frenchwoman at her court ; but she will see my amiable Pauline, and will appreciate her amiable qualities ; she will no doubt distinguish her from the other women of her country

“ Do not grieve pray ; I will entreat her, I will urge her, I will teaze her so much, that she will wish to know you ; I am sure she will add you immediately to the number of her ladies of honour ! Cheer up then, I know you are incapable of doing any thing which would give me pain ? My dear girl, I did calculate upon your resignation ; be guided by the man who is more interested for your welfare than any other man living. Leave to me entirely the care of watching over interests which are dearer to me than my own ; and what closer bonds can unite us !—my Pauline.”

I made no reply, but was overpowered by my emotions. I hid my face in my hands whilst the tears coursed each other down my cheeks. Here then was the enigma solved ! The prince had disguised the truth from me ; I had been deceived !

But what could I do ? One course alone remained for me. If prudence, the most consummate, could be supposed to have regulated the words and ac-

tions of a young girl of fifteen, cast in a strange country, without friends, without counsel, without assistance of any kind; surrounded by irritated enemies, to whose feelings the very name of French, recalled so many defeats and disasters; even such prudence would have bade me surrender myself blindly to an inevitable destiny, and expect from the generosity alone of the man who had insnared me into this abyss, that which I could not expect either from myself, or my friends, or my future prospects.

I shut my eyes to my fate ; for was not he, whom I rendered the arbiter of it a prince ? Was not the nobleness of his blood a guarantee for the integrity of his heart ? And did not the rights which he had usurped over me, and the advantage which he had taken of my inexperience, impose upon him the sacred obligation of protecting for ever my loneliness and my weakness ? At least I endeavoured to think so.

I expressed to him the confiding affection with which I surrendered myself to his wishes. He thanked me coldly, and gave me his advice ; it was rather singular.

“I had been observed,” he said, “and it was absolutely necessary that I should be concealed from every eye. He had been already rallied upon the arrival of these youths with the flowing locks, and pretty feet. I was on no account to show myself, or to make known my sex, or to speak to the people of the house where I was going to sleep, or to open the windows which looked into a large garden where the members of the household sometimes walked.”

I submitted without a murmur. I felt a sort of indescribable gratification in sacrificing my pleasures to the man who had me wholly in his power ; I fancied that by filling up the measure of my devotion, I should oppose an insurmountable obstacle to inconstancy, ingratitude, desertion, or forgetfulness on his part.

Ernest found it necessary to go upon a short journey. I remained in the mean time at the house of one of his gardeners, a recluse in the strictest sense of the word. A female servant who brought me every morning an immense bouquet of flowers, accompanied by several German salutations ; the music of the chateau, which I heard at a distance ; the appearance of some officers and

some ladies whom I saw through the lattices walking in the garden, these were all the interruptions which my solitude experienced, and the only amusements which awaited me at Co-burg.

I had much to render me uncomfortable. I scarcely paid any attention to the singular manners of the country in which I was: my own griefs absorbed my faculties. I must not, however, omit the history of a German bed, which caused me a great deal of embarrassment.

Imagine a young Frenchwoman accustomed to sleep between two sheets,—“which a Frieslander had woven,” and finding for her bed in her German bed-chamber a large feather mattress, under which was concealed a very small sheet. I called up my hostess, but was a long time labouring to make her understand my complaint. Her custom had been to sleep under the mattress. I made signs to her to fetch me a quilt: she did so, but with the most inconceivable obstinacy persisted in placing it under the mattress in question. This scene at length became so ridiculous, that I could no longer conceal my laughter, but I was obliged to make the bed over again, and

the surprise of my hostess was not a little at seeing me place the sheets *upon* the feather bed, and the quilt *over* the sheets. We parted in mutual admiration.

I bore my solitude, hard as it would seem to a girl of my age, with all possible resignation. My troubles were, however, soon increased by an intimation which I received of an intention to transfer me to another place of abode. A man, whose name was *Eberhard*, and who was *director of the pasturages*, as the prince informed me in his letter*, and one of the best men that ever wore a dark visage and crooked eyes, came to conduct me to a farm-house which belonged to him, and which was to serve for my new habitation. Everything that surrounded me, the care which was taken to conceal me, the manner in which I was treated, all proved to me clearly that I was the victim of deception. I had not yet exhibited any symptoms of pregnancy. The prince had insnared me into Germany under one pretext or other of giving me an honourable rank in society. Now, however, I was doomed to see myself dragged into a miserable little carriage, by the director of the pasturages, across a country the most flat and un-

* See Supplement, No. 2.

interesting in the world, until the machine stopped at the portal of an old isolated ruin. It was the farm-house.

To give an adequate description of this edifice would baffle all my powers. It seemed built not only in defiance of all the rules of architecture, but of simple masonry ; and one was at a loss to know whether the grotesque confusion which met the eye was more the effect of original awkwardness, or of the hand of time. Upon entering, the first object that met the eye was a rude staircase, the steps of which, high, narrow and inconvenient, wound round an old beam of wood. From thence you descended by two or three stone steps into an apartment full of apertures on all sides, lighted by three windows, doors broken upon it in every direction, and into which the wind rushed by no less than a dozen openings. By the help of some steps I mounted into the saloon, it was clearly the most magnificent apartment which the director had prepared. It formed a very long parallelogram, which would be less scientifically called a corridor, it being about five feet wide by fifteen long. Eight immense windows admitted light, and

a huge stove placed in the midst at once warmed and encumbered it. There was, at one end a small couch, covered with brown calico, quite unadorned, and full of holes; a rude table stood in the middle of the floor, and three uncouth wooden chairs were disposed against the walls. An old-fashioned set of drawers completed the lumber of this apartment. Further on, upon the same floor, and without any door whatever, I observed a small room, which I understood was to be my bed-chamber. By way of compensation for the numberless openings which admitted the light in torrents into the rest of the house, there was in this humid chamber only one small window to perform the double purpose of admitting air and light. For the furniture of this place, all that appeared were two large beds, and a small table deprived of one of its legs, but which, nevertheless, was kept in an upright position by the aid of the wall.

M. Eberhard, who did not know a word of French, had recourse to signs, to make me understand that I was to sleep with my niece in this splendid building; and added that he would himself be within a quarter of a league's distance of us.

I expressed my terror by signs; but the good man replied by shrugs of pity and consolation, shewed me the rest of the house, which consisted of large rooms, without furniture, without windows, or doors, making a most horrible appearance, and then left me to such reflections as this amiable retreat was capable of inspiring.

The following day the prince came to see me. It was easy to judge, from his conversation, that he looked upon me as a helpless girl without resource of any kind, and who was too happy under the miserable roof which covered her.

I had committed a fault; I was weighed down with sorrow, and was, therefore, silent. Besides I was unwilling to give him pain; but like the generality of his sex, he misinterpreted my motives, and attributed that to insensibility, which flowed from my delicacy. I neither upbraided him with the hopes which he had held out, nor the solemn promises which he had made; nor did I remind him of the manner in which he had redeemed these pledges by immuring me in so melancholy and solitary a habitation. I had, however, mistaken him, for there are souls upon whom generosity falls, as the Scripture says, “the seed falls upon the rock.”

He made some slight apology for the state of seclusion in which he left me, called me his *dear girl* a thousand times, whilst he was turning on his heel, and adjusting his cravat before a broken glass which was in the apartment. We walked out together into the fields afterwards, and he terminated his visit by recommending to me, with a harsh air, not to quit my disguise, and upon no account to extend my rambles beyond a rising ground which he pointed out, and which rose directly before me.

I readily promised all that he asked, and he then left me. I sought for solacing reflections even in my very situation. If the house were old and miserable, that formed its best protection against robbers, who infested the country in great numbers. I shall not, thought I, be troubled with the presence of German beaux, or the intrusion of fashionable women; I can enjoy the beauties of nature, and traverse the fine meadows, and it may be in my power to do good to some unhappy inhabitant of this part of the world; I shall distribute the favours of the prince; he is noble, loves me, and must be generous. The prayers of the poor and unfortunate will invoke the blessings of heaven upon

him, and his young friend. What could one desire more in this world? tranquillity, love, healthy diet, an obscure and rural retreat. My imagination became exalted, and cast a charm about every thing which surrounded me, and if the duke knew how to turn this honest illusion of the heart to account, I think I should have lived happily in the wretched hamlet of Esslau, where tenderness and gratitude would not have left me even the recollection of my fault.

The arrival of two youths at the old mansion of M. Eberhard, caused a great sensation in the village. I was at table, and tasting, for the first time, the milk and cream of Germany, when there were introduced to me, with a great deal of ceremony, all the young girls of the canton, who had come to pay me a visit. They made me an offering of flowers, and the effect which this gay group of young people, almost all of whom were very pretty, with countenances beaming with tenderness and naïveté, produced upon my spirits, was most agreeable. Their feet were bare, and they wore a round and short gown, after the German fashion. One presented me with a large bouquet of vio-

lets, another a tuft of roses mixed with wild flowers.

I made a conquest amongst these little girls. A little slender and delicate brunette, whose blue eyes were shaded by large black eye-brows, began to make fierce love to me; she betrayed a partiality too marked to be mistaken, for there were apparent upon her all those assiduous attentions and eloquent looks which bespeak the incipiency of passion; luckily, she was undeceived in time with regard to my sex, and thus she was enabled to get under, without difficulty, a passion which was so inappropriately inspired.

There was no small barbarity in drawing from her own country, and taking from her family a young Frenchwoman, to be treated thus. The duke seemed to be sensible of this. To console me a little, he made a proposition, which was to have the effect of enlivening my seclusion; I was accordingly presented, under my disguise, to his sister, the Countess of Meinstorff; by her I was kindly received; I passed for a young Frenchman, for such was the arrangement previously made between us. The countess addressed to me some questions, in such

a tone as one would speak to an urchin school-boy, and I replied with all possible simplicity. The duke did all in his power to make my answers plausible: but, upon the whole, I was not acquitting myself cleverly, and my sex, age, and situation seemed a thousand times upon the point of being discovered, when the following slip seemed to make further concealment impossible.

“Are you not weary of the country?” asked the countess.

“Oh no, madam,” replied I; “I occupy myself, I read, I work, I *sew*.”

At the mention of *sewing*, so unfortunately put into the mouth of a young man, I coloured deeply, the duke seemed quite disconcerted, and the conversation entirely flagged. The countess put an end to it, by motioning me to depart; but what surprised me most was, that she continued to treat me with kindness and respect. How happy I am to give this good lady my best acknowledgments, for it is really a relief in the course of my unhappy recital to recal to mind the kind conduct of two or three persons, who have done me service, or, at least, did me no injury.

The prince's scheme completely succeeded. This

introduction gave a new turn to my ideas, and I began to flatter myself that the prince only wished to save appearances, and that my confinement would be soon at an end. I resigned myself anew to pleasing illusions. The prince in the mean time seemed to be acting advisedly in all that he did. He did not fail to visit me the following day, and good God ! what promises did he not make me ? We spent a most delightful morning together. I saw what a lively interest he appeared to take in my fate ; and heard him swear, that within a few weeks I should be received at his mother's court. The countess, he said, was enchanted with me ; he bantered me upon my grace, my good nature, and even upon my sprightliness. He hinted at the probable circumstance of his being obliged to yield to the wishes of his family, and contract some political alliance, but deplored it. If such an event came to pass, he swore he would be eternally constant to me. He also explained at length the effect of a left-handed marriage. My reply was, that I confided entirely in him, that his love and his friendship were sufficient for me ; that I was not insensible to the unfortunate situation in which circumstances had placed him, but that I expected every thing

from him alone, and had devoted my existence entirely to him.

But what gave me the greatest pleasure, was the permission which he gave me to resume the dress of my sex. I flew to cast away the garb which I had so long worn against my will, and went through the business of the toilet with more pleasure and coquetry (I acknowledge it) than if I was preparing for the most brilliant concert. It fell to the lot of the good Eberhard to be the first to perceive the metamorphosis. He had knocked at my door according to his usual respectful custom before he entered, I called out to him “to come in.”

I was in the corridor, which I have already mentioned, leaning upon the chest of drawers, to which I alluded, in enumerating the articles of furniture in the house, when the good man entered. His first emotion was to burst into an exclamation of surprise, and then rubbing his eyes as if he doubted them, he seemed quite struck as if with a supernatural apparition. His looks, one moment fixed upon me, in the next wandered about the chamber, as if he would search in every corner in vain for the young man whose place I had taken.

The strange contortions into which he writhed his figure, under other circumstances would have been a source of amusement to me, if situated as I now was, they were not calculated to add to my fears. At length he found language to express the sensations under which he seemed labouring. His words were few, and he uttered them in a hurried, though energetic manner, “ Oh, M. *August!*—*mein Gott!*—And he reeled back one pace. I burst into tears. *Mein Gott!* he repeated, and making me an obeisance, in which sadness was mixed with astonishment, he drew the door softly after him, and left the room. I heard him pacing down the stairs, and at length his voice alone enabled me to judge of the progress which he was making; for as he moved away from my chamber-door, the sounds *Mein Gott!* incessantly repeated became more faint, but I could still tell by the reverberation of the sounds what number of steps he had taken.

The little country girls were no less astonished than M. Eberhard. But the same discovery produced very different effects upon them. From the moment that the young tenant of the farm-house was metamorphosed into a girl, all offerings of

- p. 53, l. 8: *Duke of Saxe-Coburg*: see note to p. 5, l. 6, above. He and his brother, Leopold (see note to p. 88, ll. 4–5, below) were in Paris in late 1807 to secure from Napoleon an indemnity for the duchy's losses during the recent war between France and the combined Austrian and Prussian forces.
- p. 54, ll. 20–1: *his sister, the grand Duchess Constantine*: Princess Juliane Henriette Ulrike of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld (1781–1860) married the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich Romanov of Russia (1779–1831), grandson of Catherine the Great, in 1796. He treated her appallingly and she returned to Coburg in 1801, although their marriage was not formally annulled until 1820. She had several affairs and two illegitimate children in the meantime. In striking contrast to his neglect of his own son by PP, Duke Ernst ennobled Juliane's illegitimate son (Ernst's nephew), Eduard Edgar, in 1818.
- p. 55, l. 6: *Coburg*: in Bavaria, the capital of the duchy of Saxe-Coburg.
- p. 56, l. 19: *Madame D. de V.*: not further identified.
- p. 56, l. 23–p. 57, l. 12: *THE ELM AND THE SAPLING ... humble prayer*: no literary source for this poem (either in its English translation or the French original, 'L'Ormeau et L'Arbrisseau') has been found.
- p. 57, ll. 24–5: *the Tuileries*: a royal palace in Paris, built by Henry II's widow, Catherine de Medici, in the 1560s. It was destroyed during political upheaval in 1871, and now the name denotes the gardens built on the site of the palace, adjoining the Louvre museum.
- p. 59, l. 18: *enceinte*: French: pregnant.
- p. 59, l. 20: *accouchement*: French (though in common use in England): lying-in, delivery.
- p. 61, l. 4: *conducteurs*: French: drivers.
- p. 61, ll. 4–5: *diligence*: a French term also in common English usage: a public stage coach.
- p. 62, l. 23: *Tartuffe*: see note to p. 29, l. 18, above.
- p. 62, l. 24: *Callot*: Jacques Callot (c. 1592–1635), prolific French artist and engraver. His subjects ranged from soldiers, clowns and drunkards to participants in court life. His most famous works include two hard-hitting series on 'The Miseries and Misfortunes of War'.
- p. 62, l. 24: *Molière*: Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (1622–73), French actor and playwright, known by his stage-name of Molière, was probably the finest comic dramatist of his age.
- p. 62, l. 25: *Baron de Fichler*: not further identified.
- p. 65, l. 10: *religieuse*: French: nun.
- p. 66, ll. 15–16: *Bamberg to Coburg*: Bamberg is about twenty miles south of Coburg.
- p. 66, l. 18: *florins*: a generic and rather unhelpful English term for foreign coins, sometimes referring to valuable gold coins, sometimes to much less valuable silver ones.
- p. 67, l. 12: *leagues*: a measure of distance, varying in different countries, but usually estimated roughly at about three miles.
- p. 73, l. 13: *Frieslander*: an inhabitant of Friesland, a province in the northern Netherlands. Presumably Friesland linen was of high quality. The source for the apparent quotation here has not been identified.
- p. 74, l. 10: Eberhard ... director of the *pasturages*: *OED* defines 'pasturage' as the practice or fact of allowing animals to graze.
- p. 77, l. 25: *the seed falls upon the rock*: Luke 8:6: 'And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture'.
- p. 79, l. 8: *Esslau*: a manor in the vicinity of Coburg.
- p. 80, ll. 20–1: *his sister, the Countess of Meinstorff*: Sophia Frederica (1778–1835) married the Franco-Austrian Count Mensdorff-Pouilly in 1804. He had lost his lands when the French entered the Rhineland in 1793, so brought little wealth or status to the Coburgs.
- p. 82, ll. 20–1: *a left-handed marriage*: Literally, one in which the bridegroom gives the bride his left hand instead of his right (as was the custom at morganatic weddings in Germany); hence, morganatic (meaning that neither the wife nor any children of the marriage have any claim to the possessions or title of the husband).
- p. 84, l. 9: *mein Gott!*: German: my God!