

A New Orleans woman was thin. Because she did not extract sufficient nourishment from her food. She took Scott's Emulsion. Result: She gained a pound a day in weight.

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"Oh, no, Madame," she cried as to a queen—"not your woman but the crystal and yourself." The other threw up her head indignantly. "If you reveal," she said harshly, "that I have visited you—" "I never reveal who my visitors are," was the quiet answer, "they always reveal themselves." She sat down indolently, but there was almost insolent provocation in the simple grace of the movement.

Madame d'Etioles turned away. "And your pay?" she demanded sharply. "As Madame pleases," came the indifferent answer from the sofa. The visitor placed five pieces on the table, replaced her veil, and walked towards the door. "Adieu!" she said over her shoulder, but Andre could see she stepped as one intoxicated by a sublime vision. "And will Madame remember the wise woman," the sorceress pleaded in her soft voice, "if the crystal be found to speak the truth?"

"Yes," she had wheeled sharply, a merciless freezing vengeance glistered in her eyes and steered her voice. "I will have you burned for an insolent witch. I promise not to forget." "My thanks, Madame," she sang the hand-bell, and Madame was unceremoniously ushered out. The sorceress sat reflecting and then placed the crystal in her bosom and took away the screen. "It is the turn of Monsieur le Vicomte," she remarked pleasantly. "It is a pity I did not ask the lady to stay and hear."

"No, I thank you," Andre answered. "I am satisfied, and so was she." "Monsieur is not as Madame," the sorceress said, fixing a penetrating gaze on him, "he fears his fate." "Oh, no," was the quick reply. "My fate lies in my sword and my head. I am ready to face it without fear or remorse when and as it comes. But you do not know beforehand, not even for a crown reversed."

"For a brief second her eyes rested on him with approval, and indeed he looked very handsome and noble at that moment. "But Monsieur will permit me," she said merrily, and before he could refuse she had taken his hand. "I will not speak unless he wishes." While she studied it he studied her. What a subtle pathos seemed to lie in those blue eyes, those smiling lips, that dainty head almost touching him, a pathos like her perfume ascending into the brain. And how enchanting was that diamond cross rising and falling on that dazzling breast.

"What is it?" he asked, for she had dropped his hand with a faint sigh, and sat staring mysteriously at something far away. "I am forbidden to speak," she answered, averting her eyes, and she picked up her cat, and walked away. "You shall tell me," Andre said impatiently. "But she only laughed over the cat's body, stroking it softly with her chin till it purr echoed through the room. "Confess, confess," he said, "I will know."

to count she would not stay a week. "A week!" Madame threw up her nose. "Not twenty-four hours." But Andre, who had heard the crystal's story, had his good reasons. Already fertile schemes were fermenting in his brain; his ambition, too, was daily growing upward, and he firmly gazed that in this strange dwelling of Fortune's wheel the opportunity for what he thirsted would at last come. And so like the rest of the gay world he went that night to the grand ball given by the municipality of Paris at the Hotel-de-Ville in honor of the marriage of the Dauphin; for the King had promised to be present, and it was to be one of those rare occasions when the nobles had consented to rub shoulders with the middle class in doing honor to the royal bride and bridegroom. Coming events were in the air. Andre felt, though why he could not say, that to-night would somehow prove a decisive turning-point in the history of himself and of France.

For the purpose of dancing, the court of the Hotel-de-Ville had been converted into a ballroom, superbly festooned and illuminated, and the crowd that had gathered was immense. Nobles of the realm, great ladies, peers, peereses, and the Court here jostled in the wildest confusion with the gentlemen of the robe, with aldermen, shopkeepers, and even flower girls and the danseuses of the royal ballet. The company was so mixed that many had already discarded the flimsy covering; and for all who still wore it the disguise was the merest affectation. Most of the ladies of the middle class had donned fancy attire, but the noblesse for the most part showed the quality by refusing to imitate the canaille, and of course were content with his uniform of the Chevaliers de la Garde, that beautiful and famous livery of scarlet with white facings, silver buttons, spurs of gold, and hat with white plumes which itself conferred an enviable distinction, and about his neck, proudly still, he carried that Croix de St. Louis, whose possession sufficed to make any soldier happy.

For a few minutes he stood gazing at the brilliant spectacle presented by the moving throng,—one vast arena of human beings in the uniforms, the stars and ribbons, the jewels, the bright eyes, and the fair shoulders were bleaded into a magic and inspiring panorama, over which floated the tender music of harp, violin, and flute. And as he moved slowly forward kissing noble hands, receiving gentle congratulations, or looking into eyes to which in past days he had whispered devotion in the Omb de Bouef or beneath the balmy fragrance of a fete champetre at Rouelle, his ambition soared still higher. But dance he would not; he had come to watch, to teach, and to learn. The Chevalier to his joy was not here; he had been despatched, Andre discovered with grim satisfaction, on special business of the King. But yonder was Denize, holding a miniature court. As Andre edged his way towards her, her glance fell on the familiar uniform, and it plainly said: "Here at least let us forget the past—I have forgiven you—come let us be friends as we were before." And Andre replied to her graceful reverent smile with a smile, and then deliberately came to go, and then moved slowly off, but not before he had marked with a lover's joy the painful surprise in Denize's eyes, the angry flush that colored her cheek. But the lesson must be completed. A partner must be found and at once. He paused—looked about him—started. "You, Madame!" he ejaculated, checking his astonishment, for Denize was watching him.

"I, Monsieur le Vicomte," was the serene reply. "This is more fun than spelling the truth from a crystal," and she laughed wickedly. "And she indeed the wise woman from 'The Cock with the Spurs of Gold,' wearing her diamond cross and dressed in adorably pale blue satin, just such a color as her eyes covered by the pale blue mask. Strangest of all, Andre felt at that moment, there was not a woman in all this throng who carried herself with more of the true air of the noblesse than did this young sorceress, who plied a charlatan's trade for hire. "The Vicomte looks to-night as the Vicomte de Nercac," he thought, and he remarked quietly. "But is it my presence here or is it my perfume that perplexes you?"

Andre started again at her unerring divination. "Surely it is very simple," she proceeded. "Recall, if you please, a supper part him silent. The perfume was there then—now it is here. That is all." "What?" He stopped in sheer amazement. "You are that—that woman?" "Certainly. The same, only a trifle disguised. In London I was dark, in Paris I am fair, because," she shrugged her shoulders. "I love change and I hate being recognized unless I choose. You will not betray my secret, will you?"

"No. But why are you in Paris?" "Women like myself," she answered cynically, "are always dying of ennui, and they would rather die than live a Parisienne life without Paris? Well, I cannot London, mon Dieu! Those suffocating English! They make love as they eat beef and drink beer. Their women are prudes, their men heavy as bull-dogs made of lead. London is a lifeless province. I have no ideas, no life. Here," she pointed with her hand, "it is far different. Where will you find the like of that for gaiety of heart, and sparkle of the soul? It is the city of breeding, of philosophers, of poets, of chivalry, and of lovers. Why, that gristle over there can be more spirituelle than an Englishman of genius. And when you and the lovers who make love with ardour and in couplets that sing of themselves become annoying I go elsewhere."

Andre listened with a puzzled delight. It was not the perfume—it was the mystery that enveloped her which attracted him. He was a quiver on his shoulder and a jeweled half-moon in her powdered hair. It was—yes, it was—the fair hantress of the woods of Versailles, to-night a matchless spectacle of majestic beauty which rippled over into the gayest, most provocative and yet the most adorable. Juno and Venus in one, and defying you to say which was the more divine. And that cunningly arranged row of glittering white, with its artificial jewels to suggest every curve and line, was just what witchery would have chosen to be the woman's attire. Her eyes and her subtle smile had won it. But for the one who dared, it was the homage of a woman's art to the triumph of nature's womanhood.

Andre watched her with absorbing interest. Fate had ordained that this woman, with her hands holding a crystal ball, should have been bound up with him. But how? What other woman could have won it? But for the one who dared, it was the homage of a woman's art to the triumph of nature's womanhood.

"She has a mind," his companion was saying, "as well as incomparable beauty. That Abbe at her elbow is Monsieur de Bernis, a poverty-stricken poet who writes her love-letters for her, whom she will make great some day, perhaps a 'conseiller de Voltaire' cared much for her. The other woman, he would be snarling his honeyed venom in her ear. She can act and dance and sing. She will not always be Madame d'Etioles."

The plans of years were sweeping through Andre's brain. What if the crystal ball had been wrong, what if a stately flourish of trumpets and the loud hum of applause. "See," the sorceress whispered, "the King has arrived." Men and women pressed to the entrance and then fell back—on all sides the lowly reverences. The King, the master of France, and the grand facade he made in his splendid dress, for Louis XV. knew how to present himself as a worthy grandson of the Sun God who had created Versailles and made monarchy in Europe sublime: the pose of his handsome head, the dignity of his carriage, the matchless air of command that conveyed an air of stately ease as could only belong to one whose wish since boyhood was law, whose words were orders, whose will was the inspiration of a nation. And when you marked that faint mysterious smile, those blue eyes delicately dull, was he not just like his grandfather, indefinable and impetuous? What was the real man concealed behind that regal presence? What were the real thoughts masked by that gaze, slightly bored yet caressing and sweet?

"You do not like the King?" Andre asked quickly, for he had caught behind the pale blue mask a swift glance that sent a shiver down his spine. "I love him," she answered, "as all we women do. But I was thinking of the day when I am to be burnt for a witch."

It was not the truth and Andre knew it. A woman's jealousy, he thought—but that, too, he knew it was not. "My friend," she said, "go you and salute Madame de Nercac. Perhaps you will see something later on to amuse you," and as if to assist him she glided from him and was lost in the crowd.

She had divined his mind again. To speak with the fair hantress was the resolve that had mastered him. And to his satisfaction Madame no sooner recognized him than she beckoned with her hand, smiling a shy and intoxicating welcome.

Andre kissed her hand, looking into her eyes, imperial eyes in which slumbered imperial ambitions, such wonderful eyes, now blue, now grey, now softly dark as the violet, now glittering with the lightest mockery. "On morrow, God be roil," he muttered. "Yes, by God! a morrow do I roll!"

"Conduct me to yonder pillar," she said presently, "we can talk better there." But that was not her pass, for to reach the pillar they must pass near the King. Clearly Madame d'Etioles was bent on playing to-night the same

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