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"We are quite strangers; where are you going?"

"To call on Madame de ———."

"What! still the legitimist Marquis! Shall we dine together?"

"By all means. Meet me here at six."

O'Brien agreed, and so we parted. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon.

The day was intensely hot. Reflected backwards and forwards on the white stone

house-fronts, the sun's rays seemed to scorch up all that was breathable in the atmosphere. The stones of the streets

were hot to the tread. I entered the gardens of the Tuileries, hoping to find some

slight shade for my dazzled eyes. I know of few scenes brighter than those Tuileries

gardens. You have seen them often, of course. The water was mounting and

falling with its musical plash in the shallow basin, wherein two little boys, under

the superintendence of a black-eyed bonnet

were swimming their toy-boats. More children and more nurses were playing

among the orange trees. Two or three National Guards were lounging about.

Nor were other uniforms wanting to give color to the picture. The tri-colored

bunting flapped lazily over the dome of the palace. A man in a queer stuffy-

brown coat walked by; he had on green spectacles, and his button-hole showed a

shred of ribbon. You wonder how I remember all this? You have no idea how

indelibly the scene is stamped on my memory. It was the first time. But you

must hear all in order. I sat for perhaps twenty minutes listening idly to the

plashing fountain, wondering whether Auguste or Jules—he must have been either Auguste

or Jules—would get his boat within reach by judiciously shelling out with pebbles,

fancying now Napoleon pinching some honored ear, or the longed-for Louis

dozing over his favorite Horace in that very garden, watching the figure of the man in

the brown coat and the green spectacles, growing "fine by degrees" in the narrow-

ing vista of trees. Then I thought of Madame de ——— and my visit; but re-

membered that it would be more decorously paid in the evening than in the afternoon.

What should I do with myself? I felt strangely disinclined to move. And my

head? What is it that seems to weigh it down? Is it the sun and the heat?

I never felt anything like it before. The pain attacked me suddenly. Pain! It was hardly pain. Perhaps the sensation

cannot be described to those who have not felt it. I had suffered from violent head-

aches for some days; but my head did not ache now. It felt dull and heavy. My

natural impulse was to lift my hand to my brow. I willed the movement of my arm,

if I may so express myself; but no movement resulted. I had no power to stir.

I then became sensible that my respiration grew feebler, and that there was a kind of

lull in the pulsation of my heart. It is difficult for me, as I have said already, to

describe my condition. I can only say that I seemed suddenly to have less life in

me; my vital powers seemed to dwindle down to the smallest possible force. I

existed, because I was conscious, but that was all. My senses remained to me; but not all in equal strength. The plashing

of the fountain was as distinct as before the paroxysm; my eyesight was slightly

dimmed. Whether I could smell or taste, of course I could not tell. Of touch I had

hardly any sense at all. All this I tell you at this point, for at the moment of

my attack I seemed thoroughly aware of my condition. One thing only excepted. For ten minutes, as I should imagine, I

sat wondering at what had befallen me. Then I thought of calling for help. There were a score of people within the

sound of my voice. I willed to cry; but there was no sound. My tongue refused to articulate. I was horror-struck; but

I was sensible of none of the usual symptoms of horror. My heart did not beat

more quickly. I could feel no sweat on my brow. Was this death? No; it could not

surely be death. I had all my wits about me; and all my impressions were un-

dermanned. The life of Paris was moving round me just as it was wont. I

alone was motionless. Then there flashed across me the recollection of a strange tale

of cataleptic seizure, in which my grandfather's name had figured. I remembered

two mysterious expressions in the letters which I had received from my mother

immediately before my departure from England—expressions which, when read

in the light of my present brief experience, led me to the opinion that my family must

be cursed by some fearful hereditary evil, an evil which my mother had never

dared to communicate to me. "I am very anxious," she had written, "about your

journey. Of course you will not travel alone. Who is to be your companion?"

"Do I know him? I know that you like society, my dear boy, and I should be gory

to think of your wandering through strange cities alone. Nothing is more

melancholy. Pray let me know if you are intimate with my proposed companion

de voyage, and if you are likely to remain together for the whole of your tour." All

these thoughts flashed through my brain in a very few seconds. I knew that I

must have fallen into a kind of trance. I

felt horror and alarm, of a vague and indefinite kind; but I also felt intense

curiosity. What would befall me? How long should I sit in those Tuileries gardens? Would the fit soon leave me?

I was sitting on a seat with a back to it, a few feet removed from the main alley of the garden. My arms were folded, my

head was slightly drooped on my breast, my legs were crossed. There was nothing

in my attitude to attract attention, so I sat rigid and immovable for what seemed

to me an age. I imagined all kinds of possible terminations of my adventure. I

should be found, of course. I should be carried to my hotel; doctors would be sent

for, I should learn what was the matter, and I should probably recover; these fits

were rarely of long duration. Carried to my hotel! They would find my pocket-

book in my pocket, containing letters addressed to a Monsieur ———. Hotel de

———? Would they? Was my pocket-

book in its place? I could not feel. Suppose the pocket-book was left, as was

sometimes the case, in another coat? What other means of identification would remain?

A seal with a coat of arms on it, a hat with an English maker's name; neither of

much use in Paris. But what matter was it who I was, or where I lived? I should

of course be taken to the Hotel Die. What will they do to me, I wonder? Will they

—ha! what was that?

It was the bonnie who spoke. Alphonse, or Jules, in his infantile grynations,

had stumbled against me. He knocked one leg off the other, and the shock threw

me into a posture so obviously unnatural, that I could no longer remain unnoticed.

The nurse stopped short in her exposition.

"Mais, mon Dieu! He is dead!"

No, I am not dead, I thought; but I am very glad that you have found out that I

am not wholly alive. Now I shall be properly cared for. In a very few moments I was the centre of a small crowd,

and presently two or three gentlemen shouldered their way through the stagers.

They lifted me up, and laid me along the bench. I felt no, I did not feel. I was

aware that I was quite stiff. One of them put his hand on my breast, and held it

there awhile.

"His heart does not beat—nor his pulse. He is dead!"

The little group of bystanders tell back some paces, and a search was commenced

in my pockets for some name or address. I was excited by the thought of this search.

You see how difficult it is for me to express myself. I cannot say "I trembled," "I

held my breath," "my pulse beat quicker;" there was no palpable evidence of my agita-

tion. But I was excited.

No, there was no pocket-book. My heart sank; at least I felt as though my

heart ought to have sunk. I cannot tell how long this search occupied. My con-

sciousness seemed now to become a little duller. Not by any means lost; only a

little less acute than in ordinary life. In the meanwhile a stretcher had been

brought to the ground. I was lifted thereon, something was put over my face, and

they bore me away. I could hear the fountain plashing, and the many children's

voices ringing through the avenues. Oh, that I could have spoken! Oh, for power

to say but one word!

We passed out of the garden; I could not be sure in which direction. By the

noise of traffic I perceived that we entered the crowded street. Presently we stopped,

a door was opened and shut, and the hum of the moving world ceased. I was sensi-

ble that I was no longer being carried along, and guessed aright that I was in

some office of the police. Here, I thought, the worst of my troubles must end. They

will send for a doctor; he will know of the probable duration of the fit, and will

take such measures as will mollify its own painful symptoms, or perhaps release me

from it altogether. From the confused murmur of several voices in conversation

which sounded in my ears, I gathered that in a room communicating with that in

which I lay the officials were deliberating on my condition. I could not distinguish

the words. Presently the voices grew plainer, and the speakers were evidently

approaching. The face-cloth was removed. There were the same gendarmes who had

discovered me in the garden, accompanied by several more. And with them—yes,

there was no doubt of it—with them entered the little old gentleman in the brown

coat and green spectacles, whom I remembered to have seen before my seizure.

This, then, was the long-desired physician; he would tell these blunderers that I was

not dead!

"He is still afraid. Such is not the

unfrequently the case in disease of the heart. I should have believed him dead

before the hour which you say. In the garden of the Tuileries? I made there a

promenade myself this afternoon. And neither name nor address? That is droll!

Ah! it is already six hours! And I am invited to dine in a quarter of an hour!

Poor young man! Close his eyelids, Louis; they have an expression quite liv-

ing. Monsieur will permit me to sign the process-verbal without delay! Let us go!"

So much for my hopes of the doctor. A door shut, and there was silence.

I began now to realize the awful horror of my position. Officially declared to be dead, I experienced all those emotions

which are said to be felt by the dying in cases where an accident plunges them from the enjoyment of health and life to the immediate prospect of passing to another world. My past actions rose in swift

succession in my thoughts. I reflected on the frivolity of many of my occupations, on the time I had thrown away, and the small use I had been to anybody. I remembered

that my mother's last letter, full as were all her letters, of expressions of the fondest

endearment, had not been answered. And that lie I had told at school—and my

young life cut off horribly and mysteriously, none to be near me dying, none to know what had become of me. And

O'Brien, he would be waiting to dine with me. "Where would he dine?" I wondered.

What would he do to find me? Perhaps I might yet recover before—before what? Frigorous, damning thought. I was dead;

I should be buried. I tried to pray. It was not death I feared, I said to myself; it

was the manner of death.

Yet through all this I must confess that my agony was not so intense as now, knowing the circumstances in which I was

placed, I should suppose it might have been. From apathy or hope, my mind

was very calm; and I was very curious. I speculated on what would befall me almost,

as though I had been the unconcerned spectator of the adventures of another.

And what did "la bas" mean? The voice of authority had spoken of carrying

me "la bas." The door opened again. My eyelids were closed now, and I could

not see who entered. I need hardly say that I could not open my eyes. The

voices were none of those which I had already heard. I was lifted again. The

sounds of the street fell on my ear with a sound slightly dulled, and I felt that I was

covered with some kind of cloth. My bearers walked for some ten or fifteen

minutes. There was a fresh sound of opening and shutting doors, and I was

thrown rudely on some hard surface; not laid decently as I had been in the office of

the gendarmes, but thrown down like a worthless burden. Could I complain!

Was I not officially dead?

But what was this? I felt rough pecks at my arms and legs. I was being strip-

ped of my clothes. Was this for the coffin? I thought now that all was over,

and I felt weary and confused. A partial blunting of my senses spared me much of

the pain I must otherwise have suffered. I waited, still perfectly conscious of all

that was going on around me, as far as any one can be conscious of what he does

not see, and wondering what would happen next. I was stripped of my clothes—

stripped entirely. Then I was carried through another door. A faint and sickly

stench immediately smote my sense of smell. I was laid down on my back on

an inclined surface, my head somewhat higher than my feet. A horrible chill ran

through me. Was this the grave? I could not tell. Nothing covered me, with

the exception of a cloth which had been thrown over my loins. Was I in a coffin,

waiting for a pauper's burial on the morrow? Oh, God! to what should I

awake!

No. It could not be the grave. It must be—the thought flashed across me in an

instant. How came it that I had not thought of it before? That of course was the destination of the unclaimed dead. That

of course was what was meant by the *la bas* of the gendarme. I was in the

Morgue!

You may think it strange, but my first feeling was one of relief. To be buried

alive was my great dread. That fate was certainly postponed. Perhaps I might be

saved from it altogether. So for some time I lay congratulating myself on the

renewed probability of my safety. I should lie here, perhaps, for days. It would be

remarked that my body showed no signs of decomposition. Possibly O'Brien would

seek me in this grim receptacle of the dead. At any rate, there was hope.

Should I starve to death? No; surely in cases of cataplexy the appetite is all but

dead. The little life left in the body requires but little sustenance. At least, I

felt no hunger. There was hope!

Then came a reaction. I bound hand and foot, as tightly as Lazarus in his

grave-clothes. A deadly cold seemed to chill all my frame. And always that faint

fetid stench telling me of my—hideous thought!—of my companions. I was not

alone. I began to speculate on the appearance of the place. I had heard what it

was like. I had never seen it. I pictured to myself the maimed and rotting

corpse of some unhappy suicide, recovered too late from the current of the Seine;

or from such suicide, I had heard, were the most frequent denizens of the Morgue.

How close was I to that loathsome body? Could I touch it if I were able to put out

my hand?

Filled with these fearful fancies, I hoped that the fit might not leave me till it was

day. My blind helplessness was a sort of

protection to me. To have all my horrors of life restored to me, and to be imprisoned

for hours in that hideous place, would kill me in reality, I thought. It was better to

lie there impotent as I was. If only I could sleep; if only I could escape from that

consciousness which was all that was left to me.

I lay tortured and distracted by these reflections for what seemed to me to be many hours. Soon, I expected, it would

be day. And then?

But now a strange shiver shot all over my frame. The blood seemed to rush to

my head and fill it with violent darting pains. A tingling, somewhat resembling that of cramp, ran along my extremities.

Did these mean that the paroxysm was coming to an end—that I could move—that I could speak? I hardly wished the

surmise to be true as yet. The pain in my head grew more acute. Instinctively

I willed to lift my hand, and press it on my aching forehead. The limb obeyed the

volition.

You will, perhaps, understand me when I say that, though this movement of my

arm came to me as a kind of order of release, I yet hesitated to make trial of my

recovered powers. I still kept my eyelids down. I held my hand fixed on my brow.

Then the idea sprang up in my brain of using all my force to try to effect my

escape from my foul prison. I made a low sound with my voice. I then mut-

tered several articulate words. My tongue obeyed me. I moved my arm to my side

again, and raised one of my legs. The pain in my head was less. The shivering

had altogether ceased. Still I was affected by a strange weariness—a disinclination

to use the smallest exertion. Courage! I thought—up and save yourself! I slowly

opened my eyes. A little light from a dull moon struggled in through a skylight

over my head, and by its help I could distinguish with tolerable clearness the

aspect of my lodging. Immediately in front of me it shimmered on panes of

glass. Through these, as I surmised, my friends would seek me. It fell on some

six or seven hard cold beds of stone or metal, like the slabs in a fishmonger's

shop. On several it showed nothing but the smooth shining surface. On two

others, besides my own, it rested with a dull gleam on something that had once

contained the spirit of a man. One of these corpses looked little more deadly

Select Miscellany.

A NIGHT'S LODGING IN PARIS.

The following tale was told to the writer of these lines, some years ago, by the person to whom the events therein narrated occurred. The writer immediately committed the story to paper. Though Lord ——— never showed any morbid horror at the possibility of general conversation turning on topics which might remind him of the strange incident in his life which forms the subject of the narrative, he was naturally desirous that the matter should be, as far as could be, confined to the circle of his immediate friends. As he is now dead, and has left no very near relatives, there can be little danger of causing distress to any one by the publication of his story. The names are, of course, suppressed. The tale is told, as far as possible, in Lord ———'s own words.