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(From Chamber's Journal.)

POUDRE ROSE.

I.

A dark wintry day, in the year of grace 1839, was closing upon the final scene of one of those tragedies of real life which would be affecting, were they not, in France at least, of such every day occurrence. Eugene Beaudesert, the direct representative of a long line of courtiers, warriors, diplomatists, commencing with the Merovingian kings, and now for some time schoolmaster in Lyon, was dying in a mean apartment *au troisième* of a house in an obscure street of that wealthy and splendid city; not, however, of want, of physical destitution, as the wine, cordials, and various tempting delicacies by his bedside, the heaped-up blazing tapers on the hearth, the presence of an unexceptionable nurse, and, above all, of M. Vermont, a physician of eminence, whose minutes were Napoleonic, fully testified. Nor, still judging by its surroundings, ought unassisted soul-cravings, hunger of the spirit, to have been felt at that death bed, since two ministers to spiritual needs, one officious, the other official, were in attendance there. The first, a stout, somewhat rustic-looking man, past middle age, at the entrance of the Abbe Morlaix, the famous preacher at the Church of the Assumption, had hastily returned his balm for hurt minds, Plato's *Divine Dialogue*, to his pocket, and shrunk back to a corner of the room where the fire-brake revealed him with but fitful indistinctness. I, however, from knowing Jules Delpech so well, can easily identify, through the flashing gloom, that large head, fairly developed intellectually, and that face every way ordinary save for a pair of glittering gray eyes; which, from under cover of the pent-house brows, pierce to a very long way off—farther, deeper, indeed, than it is desirable to follow, even in imagination. The countenance withal has not what is usually termed a malignant expression. The most timid person, a girl, would hardly be scared at confronting it upon a lonely day as this; for plainly, vividly, as that subtle, bastard wisdom called cunning, caution, timidity, are written thereon for all eyes to read; there is also a certain air of *bonhomie*, assumed it may be—but, if so, habitually assumed—which does much to neutralize the vulpine craftiness of aspect which familiar observers were wont to say faithfully mirrored Jules Delpech's vulpine crafty soul. A rash judgment, let us hope, in submission to the divine injunction of charity—the charity that thinketh no evil, believeth no evil, with which M. Morlaix, a few minutes since, just before the arrival of the physician, rebuked the moribund's glare of rage, called forth by a somewhat eulogistic allusion to Madame la Baronne de Vautpre; the personage albeit to whom Eugene Beaudesert is indebted for the lay and clerical ministrations which console, or embitter—for there is no interpreting the changeable lights and shadows which fit across that constrainedly calm white face—these last supreme moments of parting life.

There was no warning of how few those moments were in the suave tones of Dr. Vermont as he felt the pulse and looked steadily into the eyes of his patient. He merely observed, addressing the nurse, that M. Beaudesert must be kept as quiet as possible; and then turned away with a slight gesture to the abbe, who followed him to the door, where a few whispered words passed between them. The look and manner of the abbe, as he again turned towards the sick man, revealed, clearly as speech, the significance of those whispered words; and Jules Delpech starting up, hurriedly embraced, and bade his friend adieu, as if for a brief time only, pressed one of the cold hands of a girl sitting by the head of the bed, in both his own, softly suggested hope and courage, and glided from the apartment. The nurse, at a sign from the abbe, did the same, and then the reverend gentleman requested the girl to permit him to speak for a few minutes with her father alone. The answer was an outburst of convulsive grief—passionate exclamations of refusal, which the abbe could only partially calm by consenting that she should remain whilst he administered the last rites of his church to the now awfully dying sufferer; whose thoughts, whilst fully comprehending, as he seemed to do, the abbe's meaning and purpose, were nevertheless—*if* one might judge by the feeble demonstrations permitted by his fast failing strength—with his child, with the earthly future of that young life; and but slightly impressed by the imminence of his own death, and the judgment to follow, announced by the symbolic ceremonial, and the solemn words of the priest.

And now, whilst the abbe is fulfilling his appointed function, I may briefly pass in review the previous and determining incidents of the life-career thus prematurely closing; closing prematurely, there can be no question, as far as life is reckoned by length of days, for it was no longer ago than the autumn of 1803, that the birth of Eugene Beaudesert, the first-born of a distinguished general of that name, and Estelle, his wife, *nee* Bresson, a rich heiress of Paris, was celebrated in that city with much pomp and *edat*. Clouds quickly overgrew and darkened the brilliant future that seemed to await the child. General Beaudesert was killed at Marengo; and his widow, to whom, by the provisions of the ante-nuptial contract, her whole fortune reverted, soon married again, became the mother of a numerous family, and gradually so estranged from her first-born, that after his tenth birthday, she never again beheld him, and died without expressing a wish to do so. It is probable that this unnatural feeling was excited and confirmed by the civilly contemptuous treatment which the plebeian wife of General Beaudesert had met with from her husband's family; one of that section of the Quartier St. Germain, which, always with an *arrière-pensée*,

capitulated with the Consulate and the Empire for the profitable honors, illegitimate as they might be, and, of course, were, with which it was the weakness of the Man of Destiny to always eagerly reward such condescension.—Madame la Baronne de Vautpre, General Beaudesert's widowed and childish sister, had especially never been at pains to conceal her disdain of her brother's ignoble alliance and no sooner was it ascertained that *ci-devant* Madame Beaudesert, *nee* Bresson, evinced a decided dislike of her son Eugene, than Madame la Baronne became his active partisan and patroness; and an arrangement was finally come to by which the guardianship of the last male scion of the ancient house of Beaudesert was legally transferred from the *roturier* mother to the aristocratic aunt. Madame de Vautpre discharged her new self imposed duties, everybody agreed, in the most liberal, exemplary manner. Eugene Beaudesert's education was conducted by the first masters; his purse was supplied without stint or grudge; and he had but just completed his eighteenth year, when Madame la Baronne obtained the high favor and honor of a commission in the *Garde Royale* for her fortunate nephew. But, as most of us know, or have heard, blood is stronger than water, especially that which wells up from the mighty arteries which nourish and sustain the common life of a people; and Eugene's precociously manifested tastes, antipathies, predilections—all clearly traceable to his maternal origin—proved to be diametrically opposed to the tastes, antipathies, predilections of the long line of Beaudesert celebrities dating from the Merovingian kings; not one of whom, that unflinching descendant of a noble race sneeringly remarked, could be justly accused of having stained his escutcheon by doing any thing useful or helpful to mankind. As examples of the young man's shocking heterodoxy in matters ancestral and armoial, I may instance his proclaimed opinion, that there were in the world men as capable of governing France as Louis le Desiré—an extravagance which cost him his *Garde Royale* epaulets; that Napoleon was at least equal as a general to the great Coude; and that to have created "a connoisseur in dry bones"—otherwise Cuvier the comparative anatomist—a baron, was not a detestable desecration by Bonaparte of that order of nobility! That atrocities like these should so frequently sully the lips of her nephew and heir, was naturally a source of disquiet to Madame de Vautpre; but, to do that lady simple justice, far too right-minded and sensible a person to take *au sérieux* the froth-follies which flow so copiously from the lips of vain and volatile youth; and she more than once took occasion to observe in his hearing, that so long as her nephew did nothing in derogation of his high lineage, whatever he might think or say, would not affect his present or future position as far as she had control over it. Eugene Beaudesert was in his twentieth year, when Madame la Baronne felt or fancied that it might be expedient to at once clearly define what it was that to do, or to leave undone, would fatally compromise the young man's future. She did so in the mild, impressive manner natural to her, after placing in his hand a draft on Lafitte for the large sum he had just intimated an immediate and pressing occasion for.

"You were conversing for some time, I noticed, at the ball the other evening, with the Count and Mademoiselle de Cevennes; what, frankly now, is your impression, Eugene, of the young lady?"

"My impression of Mademoiselle de Cevennes? Frankly, then, no impression at all—except, *ma foi*, the vague one of a perfectly well-dressed, common-place young person, no wise distinguishable from the crowd of perfectly well-dressed, common-place young persons we met there."

"I have reason to believe," continued Madame de Vautpre, "that the proposal of an alliance by marriage of the Beaudesert and Cevennes families would be favorably entertained by Monsieur le Comte de Cevennes."

"*Plais-il, madame!*" exclaimed the startled nephew, flushing scarlet.

"In other, though scarcely plainer words," resumed Madame de Vautpre, "that were Eugene Beaudesert to become a suitor for the hand of Louise de Cevennes, he would not be exposed to the mortification of a refusal."

"You must be jesting, madame," rejoined the nephew with some temper. "What have I done, that it should be proposed to wed me with such an incarceration of ugliness, ill-temper, and Satanic pride, as Mademoiselle de Cevennes?"

"That is your *voque* impression of the lady, is it? It is not a flattering one, at all events; and do not fear, Eugene, that I shall ever urge you to blaspheme the holy sacrament of marriage.—I should here state that it had been for some time whispered in certain circles that Madame la Baronne de Vautpre was growing terribly devout—" by uniting yourself indissolubly with a woman you could not love or esteem; however—"

"*Mais c'est tant!*" interrupted Eugene, seizing Madame de Vautpre's hand, and kissing it with fervor—"you are so good."

"It is well, at the same time, to remind you, Eugene," continued Madame la Baronne, with her usual calm smile and quiet evenness of voice, "that I expect from you a similar abnegation of selfish feeling in the affair of marriage—which is to say that you will never think of uniting yourself with a person whom I could not love or esteem! Above and before all, Eugene"—and here the speaker's earnestness lent almost tragic force and depth to Madame de Vautpre's mild, steadfast look, and tranquil, measured tones—"do not fail to bear constantly in mind that to follow your father's unhappy example, by contracting a *mesalliance*, would be simply and definitively to pronounce irrevocable sentence upon yourself—not merely of immediate separation between you and me, but of the forfeiture of your else assured inheritance of the large possessions, which are, as you are well aware, at my absolute disposal."

"My dear madame," Eugene managed to enunciate without much stammering, and with an affectation of unconcern with which his changing color and altogether discomfited as-

pect did not harmonize, "you do not imagine, you do not suppose, that I—that you—that—"

"I suppose nothing, imagine nothing, Eugene," interrupted the stately baronne, locking her *ceinture*, and rising to terminate the interview; "I merely state as a fact to be carefully borne in mind, that were you so insane as to contract a discreditable marriage—and by discreditable marriage I mean one that I could not sanction—you from that moment would be my nephew in name only, assuredly in nothing more. Do you return to die? No; well, I shall be sure to meet you at Madame Morny's. Adieu."

An indifferent passer-by would have been struck by the extreme disquietude evinced by Eugene Beaudesert as he left his aunt's splendid mansion; but in life's careless April-time the clouds pass swiftly; and one little hour had scarcely elapsed since Madame de Vautpre's words had fallen so ominously upon his ear, when they were remembered only as the casual expression of a hasty resolve, which could never be carried out; for was not he, Eugene Beaudesert, the only living being through whom the name, the glory, and the greatness of the Beaudeserts could be preserved, and continued for the admiration and reverence of unborn ages! That great irreversible fact would necessarily outweigh all minor considerations, when poised in so very ancestral a mind as that of Madame de Vautpre, who had, besides, displayed such Christian kindness in relation to that abominable Mademoiselle de Cevennes—the young lady that had graciously, it seemed, intimated—the amiable Gorgon!—that she would not refuse him the blessing of her hand, should he venture to solicit the precious gift. Ugh!

The repulsive idea thus suggested quickly gave place to another and very different one—that of *cette jeune et charmante Adrienne*, whom it would be impossible not to love, were her father, instead of being a *capitaine de dragons en retraite*, a Paris shopkeeper. At that moment, the church-clocks chimed half past two, reminding the young dreamer that by the time he had reached the jeweller's, and received in exchange for his magnificent aunt's draft the superb necklace upon which Adrienne Champfort had set her heart, it would be as much as he could do to reach Clichy by the hour he had appointed to be there. This was decisive; and by three o'clock, Eugene Beaudesert, with the necklace—a trifle, which cost him five thousand francs, no more—safe in his pocket, was rattling gaily along the road leading to the modest dwelling of his beautiful fiancée, and then onwards, downwards, to marriage, remorse, ruin, despair—finally, to the dark room *au troisième* in the Rue du Bac, Lyon, where the Abbe Morlaix is even now administering the *viaticum* to the heir of all the Beaudeserts! An old, sad story, of which I need only further give the headings of the chapters intervening between the bridal and burial.

Madame la Baronne de Vautpre was informed of the marriage of Eugene Beaudesert with Adrienne Champfort by a long and eloquent letter from the bridegroom; to which an immediate answer was returned, enclosing a draft for ten thousand francs, and briefly stating that Madame de Vautpre wished Monsieur and Madame Beaudesert happiness, in the state of life they had chosen for themselves; but, as Monsieur Beaudesert had been timely and emphatically warned would be the case, Madame de Vautpre no longer looked upon that gentleman as her nephew, or as one possessing the slightest further claim upon her.

It was all in vain, as the ten thousand francs, and at last the costly ornaments which he had lavished upon Adrienne, melted away, that the alarmed and anxious husband and father—two daughters, Adrienne and Clarisse, were born to him during the first three years of wedded life—put in practice every expedient, every art he was master of, to change his aunt's inexorable decision; Madame de Vautpre was impassable as marble, and as smooth and polished also; her words and manner, in the personal interviews which her nephew contrived to force upon her, whilst clearly expressive of unswerving resolve, never betraying the slightest irritation or anger.

Thus, step by step, poverty came upon the rash couple; the poverty, armed with serpent stings, that treads upon the heels of reckless self-gratification, and which, but for Captain Champfort's pension—a rather considerable one for his position, he being an inferior member of the Legion of Honor—would soon have been his destitution; for Eugene Beaudesert with all his worthy disdain of birth-privileges, persisted in keeping himself fiercely aloof from the contamination of *useful* employments, and none other were obtainable. And did the blind god that had lured them to such a pass, remain to gild the run he had made, to light up with his glowing torch the else drear dwelling where sat Indigence with his black feet upon the cheerless hearth; and wait, ever at the threshold, and waiting but for the death of that white-headed, feeble old man to enter in, deepened the thick gloom with his gaunt forecast shadow?—Alas! how could it be so? Was it possible that the enchanting smile with which Adrienne Champfort received the necklace we know of from her delighted lover, should cast its radiance upon the pawn-ticket of that same costly bauble, with her husband, then of some seven sad years' standing, placed in her hand with a sour, fretful caution to put it safely away? The truth was, neither had espoused the intended person. Eugene Beaudesert, Mademoiselle Champfort's idolizing admirer, was the nephew of Madame de Vautpre, heir to the splendid mansion in the Faubourg St. Germain, and the magnificent Chateau d'Em, near Lyon, of which she had heard so much—a young gentleman, moreover, having free warren of all the jewellers' shops and *madiste* establishments in Paris, the *entree* of Tuilleries balls, and possessed of a thousand other transferable and charming gifts and privileges—surely a very different person from the pale, care-worn, listless man, whose stockings she darned with delicate fingers, at the faintest pressure whereof, in the old fast-fading time, those now downcast, unregarding eyes had flashed with rapture! And though still retaining

much of her brilliant form and feature-beauty, was Madame Beaudesert, wife and mother, eternally busied with household cares, necessarily negligent of the elegancies of attire, impatient of the present, regretting the past, the fairy being being pictured in the youthful imagination of Eugene Beaudesert as the honored and admired mistress of his inherited splendors, the grace and genius of the courtly circles to which it would be his chief pride to have raised her? Clearly not. Do not suppose that biting, bitter words—hasty and quickly repented of, it may be—such as escaped Adrienne's lips, when, as she was walking with her husband and children in the hot, dusty Champs Elysees, Charles Baudin, the rich grocer's son, whose hand she had refused for that of Madame de Vautpre's nephew, dashed past in his new cabriolet with Madame Baudin his richly apparelled, very pretty wife by his side—words which ever after rankle in the memory, did not frequently pass between Monsieur and Madame Beaudesert. And yet she was not, as the world goes, an unaffectionate wife and mother, nor a bad, unloving husband and father. Both possessed amiable qualities—amiable qualities, I mean, of an ordinary degree—and we know that none but those supremely angelic, unflawed natures, whose only ascertainable dwelling-place, in my experience, is the brains of boys, girls, and authors, can illumine the bleak wastes of life with perennial radiance, make constant sunshine in the shadiest places, sing ceaseless songs of gladness upon empty stomachs, and delightfully disport themselves in the lowest social quagmires, from whatever height hurled down!

To that bright band, Monsieur and Madame Beaudesert assuredly did not belong. They, however, rubbed along disconsolately, till the death, in 1835, of Captain Champfort; when Eugene, roused to spasmodic exertion, left his wife and youngest child Clarisse, at Clichy with the widow, and set out on foot with his daughter, dreamy Adrienne, for the Chateau d'Em, where Madame de Vautpre had for some years constantly resided, determined upon one more effort—if not to regain her goodwill, at least to wrest from her by importunity the means of modest existence. His aunt refused to see him, and returned his letters unopened; wearied out at length, as well as seriously warned by the authorities, that to persist in his annoyance of Madame la Baronne de Vautpre, would bring unpleasant consequences upon himself, he—by the advice of his new friend, Jules Delpech, at whose house, distant about a league from the chateau, he had taken up his temporary abode—hired an apartment in the Rue du Bac, Lyon; and chiefly in the hope of touching his aunt's heart through her pride, advertised in the local papers that Eugene Beaudesert, ex-captain of the *Garde Royale*, gave lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic, and elementary mathematics. This notable expedient failed as completely as all previous ones. Madame de Vautpre was immovable by such feeble devices but a more potent agent than the disinherited descendant of the Beaudeserts was at hand, bringing fullest relief to the sufferer, and rebuke, remorse to his obdurate, pitiless relative. Eugene Beaudesert fell suddenly ill; the long fever of despair had at length consumed the golden oil of life, and the *sauveur de charite*, whose mission of mercy took her to that poor abode, saw that yet a few hours and the divine lamp would expire on earth, to be rekindled only in His presence whose breath first touched it with celestial fire.

Having clearly possessed herself of the melancholy story sister Agnes lost no time in endeavoring to secure the good offices of the Abbe Morlaix, who she knew, was the confessor of Madame de Vautpre, reputedly one of the most devout ladies of France. This was not a difficult task; and the abbe, first visiting the moribund, hastened at once to the great lady's presence. Never was the abbe's sonorous eloquence more vigorously exerted; and as he, with the authority of a church of which Madame de Vautpre was a fanatical adherent, entreated, menaced, commanded, her obduracy and pride of heart, insensible to the pleadings of humanity, yielded to religious terrors; before the interview terminated, it was settled that all money could do to avert or delay the stroke of the destroyer was to be essayed; and that should her nephew not recover, his eldest daughter, Adrienne, was to be received at the Chateau d'Em, avowedly as Madame de Vautpre's heiress. One condition, however, was peremptorily insisted upon, which was, that Adrienne should be separated from her family, who would be permitted to see her once only in each year; the mother and sister to be paid a yearly pension of four thousand francs during Madame de Vautpre's pleasure, which meant so long as they and Adrienne rigorously complied with the condition of separation from each other. This arrangement Eugene Beaudesert readily though ungraciously acquiesced in—I mean that he neither felt nor affected gratitude for the tardy and fear-extorted concession—and he commanded his reluctant daughter to comply therewith when he was gone, as she valued his blessing and her mother and sister's welfare.

Of that young girl—of Adrienne Beaudesert whom we just now saw passionately refuse to abandon for a moment the post assigned to her by filial love and duty—I have not as yet spoken, though it is around her the interest of this narrative will mainly gather. It will, however, be only necessary in this place to premise that Adrienne Beaudesert will be thirteen on her next birthday, that she is well formed and tall of her age, and that her nose death-pale complexion, eyes swollen and red with weeping, loose untended hair, obscure a beauty as exquisite as that of her mother at the same age; whilst even through that clouding veil of tears and terror, the infantine candor, the faith—how shall I express myself?—the simple trustfulness, verging upon credulity, that marks her character, is strikingly apparent. There are lines, however faint, nascent as yet, indicative of firmness about her sweet, rose-lipped mouth, which cannot be too soon developed and confirmed. That simple, credulous predisposition has unhappily been fostered, exaggerated by the education, if it can be called one,

she has received, chiefly from her grandmother; an honest, simple-minded native of Provence, who has peopled the child's mind with the thousand and one legends of fairies, demons, witch-charms, potent alike for good and evil, received as gospel-truth in that part of France; and in which her grand-daughter believes as firmly as in the ogre-like instincts of the dreaded relative to whose abhorred companionship or custody her father's last commands have doomed her. Childhood's common dreams, it may be said. Yes, but will they, as such illusions usually do, extol and pass away in the expanding light of reason, or remain hidden, latent in the mind of Adrienne Beaudesert, till, under stimulating conditions, they start into fatal life and activity? This is the yet unsolved enigma of the story of the Poudre Rose.

II.

The prayers are done; the holy oil has dried upon the forehead of the anointed, tenacious clay, by the side whereof Adrienne Beaudesert is lying in a stupor of despair, which the nurse, gliding noiselessly about the room, does not think it prudent to disturb. We also will depart, following the abbe, who goes straight to the Chateau d'Em. The face of Madame la Baronne de Vautpre whitens visibly through the thick rouge, as she listens to the reverend man's tidings; and the moment his voice ceases, she hastens to place in his hands a large sum to be expended in masses for the dead man's soul. As to the funeral of the last male heir of the Beaudeserts, who is to be entombed in the catacombs of the Church of the Assumption, Madame de Vautpre desires that no expense shall be spared thereon; and the child Adrienne is to be assured that the heart of her too long estranged relative is yearning to embrace, to love, to cherish her. Monsieur Morlaix, moreover, who is shortly going to Paris on business, undertakes to be the bearer of one year's pension in advance, with the donor's good wishes, to Madame and Clarisse Beaudesert at Clichy.

The chief facts just related having been throughly worthy of more than one paragraph in the local papers, and being skillfully marveled to suit the public taste, had the effect of attracting a numerous concourse of curious spectators to the funeral—one of the most imposing, it was on all hands agreed, the *Promesse d'Amour* had got up for many years. The *catafalque*, especially, was magnificent; so much so, that the crowded congregation were divided in opinion as to which was most solemn and effective—it, the *catafalque*, or the Abbe Morlaix's funeral oration, grounded upon the scripture verse, "Whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him." The abbe's eloquent illustrations of his theme were also variously interpreted. Some held that they applied to the relentless cruelty of Madame la Baronne de Vautpre, punished by the untimely death, without male issue, of the heir to her house's honors; others, that preacher had in mind the nephew's sin of ingratitude and disobedience towards his guardian and benefactress, resulting in misery and an early grave. Of this last opinion was Adrienne Beaudesert, upon whose heart the words of the abbe smote like so many swordblasts aimed at her dead father, exciting in the mind of the wounded, sensitive girl a feeling of resentment towards the reverend orator, not, unhappily, to be soon or easily effaced. Of all the obsequious attendants surrounding her, there was not one who felt, or successfully assumed to feel, the slightest sympathy with her bitter grief. It was the less surprising, therefore—terribly indecorous in the heiress of Madame de Vautpre as it might be—that, upon recognizing Jules Delpech in the crowd, as she was leaving the church, Mademoiselle Beaudesert darted away from her *entourage*, and threw herself sobbing violently into the gray-headed man's arms.—She was of course, promptly plucked back to her proper place in the procession, and a few minutes afterwards driven rapidly off to her future residence, the Chateau d'Em. Jules Delpech seemed to be not a little disconcerted as well as astonished, at so sudden and public a demonstration of the young lady's regard; but the first flurry over, the emotion it excited, colored, shaped, by an elastic, sanguine imagination, assumed a hopeful, brilliant hue, as those telescopic eyes of his, piercing, as I have said, far into the dim future, desisted the yet distant possibilities suggested by such pregnant facts as Mademoiselle Beaudesert's partiality or respect for himself so openly manifested; the well-remembered and marked partiality evinced towards Paul, his young and handsome son, by the unsophisticated heiress of an ailing lady long since passed her grand climacteric, when she, the heiress, was domiciled with her father at his cottage, furnishing, with minor collateral facts or fancies, ample material for castle-building. The subtle brain of Jules Delpech was glowing, palpitating with the crowd of images it had coajured up by the time he reached his own door; whence, looking up towards the direction of the Chateau d'Em, it seemed to him that the central tower of the splendid pile, high overtopping the intervening belt of forest trees, looked haughtily and contemptuously down upon the lowly hut whose habitant dared to lift himself even in imagination to that lordly eminence! "For all that," muttered the white lips of Jules Delpech, as he entered his cottage and closed the door, "worse cards than we hold have won as great a game." "What," said the great orator of the Mountain, "is the secret and condition of an else impossible success?—*de l'audace, et encore de l'audace!*"—and moral audacity, where failure incurs no peril, niggard nature has not denied me."

Jules Delpech was a *capitaine de douanes en retraite*, or, as we say a superannated officer of customs. His retiring pension was a small one but the cottage in which he lived, and about three acres of adjoining land, where his own by inheritance; and as both himself and son—a really fine lad, about three years older than Adrienne Beaudesert, of pleasant manners and somewhat superior education—were sufficiently skillful and industrious cultivators, the retired *douanier* was looked upon, and really was, for his social status, a thriving, prosperous man. In one respect, Jules Del-

pech deserved commendation, though it may be that his conduct was governed by no higher motive than a wholesome dread of the penalties of the law—he refused, to the huge chagrin of many of the neighbors, to add to his income by the traffic which had helped his widowed mother, the late Madame Delpech, to keep house and land together, her son at school, and a wellfilled purse of silver crowns always at hand for an emergency. Madame Delpech in brief, ostensibly a herbalist, had for many years derived an income, though of no very considerable amount, probably, from the practice of a species of charlatanism, common in the French rural districts—that of selling to simple rustics, and not infrequently to as simple-minded townfolk, certain charms, love-powders, vegetable preservatives of various kinds from harm, spiritual or corporeal, and magical compounds wherewith to compel the favor, else despaired of, of some obdurate Jeannette or Jennot, as the case might be. One of those love-charms, called *poudre rose*, had, from some accidental coincidence, attained so wide a celebrity as to engage the attention of the Correctional Police Court of Lyon, a distinction which had the effect of compelling the cheating old beldam to be more discreet and wary in the sale of her magical wares and more particularly of colored bean-meal, *alias* poudre rose, at the rate of five francs the half-ounce. This nefarious traffic was, as I have intimated, all events ostensibly, publicly repudiated by the retired officer of customs, albeit it was confidently hinted that upon more than one occasion, when tempted by a sufficiently considerable fee, he had violated that wise resolution, and dispensed his mother's nostrums—especially the poudre rose—with the best effect. This, I say, was the common scandal or gossip of a district on the left bank of the Rhone, not far from the city of Lyon, no longer ago than the thirty-seventh year of this enlightened nineteenth century; and I greatly doubt whether a rural commune could be pointed out in all the vast extent of France where a like credulity is not more or less prevalent at this very day. This is a sad, undeniable truth; but it is not from our English glass house that we can contemptuously cast stones, in scornful reprobation of such hurtful follies, at our neighbors; for superstitions all as gross are to be found in as vigorous vitality in many of the rural districts of Great Britain. Impure and credulity are unfortunately indigenous to all countries and climes, as well as marvelously self-adaptive to varying exigencies and conditions.

But in stopping to explain or moralize, the story perforce halts also; and dismissing for awhile Jules Delpech, and his visions, schemes, nostrums, I regain its current, at the moment of Adrienne Beaudesert's arrival at the Chateau d'Em, where she was received with every demonstration of regard; and it really seemed that Madame de Vautpre's heart was touched by the sorrow of the interesting grand-niece, in whose features she discerned, or fancied, a striking resemblance to General Beaudesert, the brother, whose memory, spite of the Bresson *mesalliance*, she had always tenderly cherished. The establishment of the chateau was an extremely well-ordered one; its disciplinary march perfect in a mechanical point of view; but it was unfortunate for a girl of Adrienne Beaudesert's temperament and tendencies that Madame de Vautpre had already reached so far into the vale of life, as not only to have lost sight of the busy, practical world in which she had passed her youth and prime of days, but that it no longer lingered in her memory save as a far-off dream of acted vanities; illusions—excepting always the halloving verity of high lineage—hurtful, if not sinful to voluntarily dwell upon, because tending to lure her mind from the contemplation, through the dusky glass of polemical dogmatism, of the eternity upon the brink of which she stood. Now, it is quite clear to me, from what I have heard read of Madame la Baronne de Vautpre, that her ascetic piety was of the sincerest kind, as assuredly her charity—thereby meaning almsgiving—was liberal and comprehensive; but the adoption of a profitable piety by dependents not only frequently stops at, but exaggerates the externals of devotion; and as might be expected in such a household, most of the persons in attendance upon the heiress, in their anxious affections of a religious fervor they did not feel, were enthusiastic about forms, attributed supernatural efficacy to beads, if not to the prayers they measured to the image, though careless or unthoughtful of the prototype. In a mental atmosphere so generated and maintained, it is hardly to be wondered that the faith in charms, amulets, and the like *fantasie*, imbibed by Adrienne Beaudesert in her childhood, instead of being rebuked, gathered force and authority from the countenance afforded it by apparently sincere religious convictions. Had the Abbe Morlaix, now chaplain to the household, possessed her confidence his wise teaching might have dissipated such noxious illusions; but since that, as she deemed it, heartless, cruel funeral oration, Mademoiselle Beaudesert, despite the abbe's strenuous endeavors to oscillate her good-will, ceased not to regard him with mingled feelings of aversion and mistrust. Instead of complaining to Madame de Vautpre that the sensitive girl resolutely declined his spiritual guidance, the abbe left it to time to remove her unjust antipathy—*but* alas! time frequently halts in the accomplishment of his errands, and arrives with the healing remedy only to witness the death of the patient.

Thus grew in years, in beauty, in guileless simplicity of heart and mind, Adrienne Beaudesert; Madame de Vautpre continuing the while towards her the stately courtesy, the regulated, unvarying kindness which she had from the first imposed upon herself. Madame la Baronne never went into society, no encouraged visitors at the chateau. Adrienne's education in the accomplishments of music, painting, history, foreign languages, etc., was intrusted to the sisters of an Ursuline convent in the neighborhood, whither and back she was daily escorted in a carriage; and the only male persons, except servants and M. Morlaix, with whom she ever held the slightest converse, were Jules Delpech and his son Paul, one or the other of