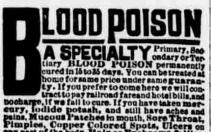




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WHAT can 1 do to convince you that I love you?"

For the fiftieth time, at least, Chillaye repeated this phrase to Mme. de Nymbe, who, skeptical and bored, replied:

'To begin with, don't tell me again; really, my dear Chillaye, nothing is more monotonous and less new than your perpetual cooing." "But you can't imagine how I love

you! If you demanded my heart's blood, I would give it to the last drop, gladly."

"Don't be alarmed; I won't demand it!" "Put me to the test-give a sign, a

mere sign, and I'll follow you to the ends of the earth, on my knees." "Really, now, would you?" asked

Mme. de Nymbe, suddenly thoughtful. "Wouldn't I!" cried Chillaye. "Indeed, I would?"

Berangere reflected an instant, then, looking fixedly at dazzled Chillaye: "I take you up."

Seeing his stupefaction, she contin-ued, laughing: "I don't quite demand that of you-you propose to follow me to the ends of the earth on your knees -I consent to your following me to Nice on horseback. It's not so far, nor so tiring."

"What! you intend-"

"Yes-you know I detest the railway, with its jolting, its smudges, the promiscuity, the hurried meals eaten at greasy tables, while waiters shout at your ear: 'Don't hurry, ladies and gen-tlemen, 15 minutes yet!' It is all odious and prevents my traveling."

"And so?" "So, as I want to go to Nice, I've decided to go by horseback, by slow

stages." "But it will take at least a fortnight." "Say three weeks-I'm in no hurry.

Well, are you not delighted at the prospect ?" "Of course - certainly - but, you

know, on horseback it is hard to talk. Why not by post carriage? Delightful, they say.'

"Are you really naif enough to think I'd start out with you like that en tetea-tete-like a wedding fourney?"

"I'm sure I'd ask nothing better." "Well, I do. You draw back-w

won't say anything more about it." "What makes you say I draw back?

I'm simply so overjoyed, so overcome, that I can't find words-'

"That will do. I can guess them."

"When shall we start?" "To-day is Tuesday; why not this day

week?" "I am entirely at your orders."

"Besides, before we start we will see each other again to talk the cam-

paign over." Kissing Mme. de Nymbe's taper fingers, Chillaye departed, like a conquer-ing hero. Toasting himself at the register in the hall, he saw himself already in the flowers and sunshine of Nice. The cold outside air brought him up short; turning up his collar, he grum-bled: "B-r-rr! it's freezing! What will it be on horseback? My hands and feet are always cold, even in July. Let's hope the weather will be decent. How

"They're across the river." "Where in the world are we? This fog

"I think we're near the Palais de l'Industrie. Be careful; you'll run into a tree!"

"Mon Dieu! how dangerous riding it is in such weather!'

"What if we should postpone starting till the day is more favorable?" timidly ventured Chillaye.

"Never! How easily you get discouraged! By the way, where shall we lunch?"

"Fifteen miles from Paris. We must not think of lunching before one or half-past."

"That's awfully late! Don't you know of any nice restaurant, near the Barrierre d'Italie?"

"No, I confess that quarter never attracted me; it never occurred to me to say: 'What if I should go and dine near the Barriere d'Italie?'

"So, then, you never thought of planning our stages?"

"But-"I guessed as much! So I am having Baptiste,my old coachman, follow me on horseback. He'll show us the way and not make the mistakes you're guilty of, my dear Chillaye. We must not go out at all by the way of Barriere d'Italie."

"Well, but Nice is near Italy, and it seemed to me-but I-1'd far rather follow Baptiste and avoid responsibilities. And, positively, in this fog, it's lucky you've provided yourself with a better guide than I, or we'd either get lost or have to turn back."

Mme. de Nymbe called Batiste, who detached himself from the two grooms. "Batiste, we will take the road we Turning toward agreed upon." Chillaye: "Now, since you've nothing more serious to do, amuse me a little. What's the news, les petits potins?"

I'll have to sparkle the whole way." "I'm all ears. Was Clotilde at the

opera house last night?" "Yes."

"With Du Ring?"

"I don't know. Perhaps he came after left-I went away early, you know. I'm not used to getting up at daybreak, and if you remember you said 'eight o'clock sharp.'"

"Ah! you're emphasizing 'sharp' to make me understand that I was late. You're complaining of having to wait a few moments in the drawing-room-"I wouldn't complain if-"

"If?"

"If there had been any fire-but-" "Oh, I beg your pardon! It must have been forgotten in the hurry of my departure. Were you very cold?"

"Rather, thank you!" At this instant White Cat, startled at the fog, and not pulled up promptly enough by the stiffened hands of her bit shaken.

"you almost lost your seat!"

"Not at all," said Chillaye, annoyed turned back already?"

"Ah ca! Certainly I would never have thought of riding to Nice by slow stages know a few allees in the Bois. Good-by, wouldn't 1 but with you, do? Dieu! How pretty you are this morning-fresh, rosy, rested-" "Not like you then, for you look-" "Ah! how do I look?" questioned Chillaye, nervously, fearing for his already contested prestige; "it's true I'm tite!" tired and-"

or did you have them made for so masked ball?"

"They're only fur-lined ones I've recently had made. "Recently ?" "Yes-s week ago."

"To wear to Nice ?" "Yes."

Mme. de Nymbe burst into a laugh; Chillaye felt annoyed. "Positively," he said, sulkily, "as soon as one leaves Paris, the country becomes hideously monotonous; these paths we've been following for the last hour look all alike."

"Well, but we don't complain of riding daily on the same roads in the Bois?"

"Yes, but the Bois is quite a different matter to this, and far prettier."

fliciency?

ments.

hurtful to them.

own merit.

tottering structure?

Chillaye began to be in a horrible temper. Mme. de Nymbe's good humor was irritating. And he envied everything about her-her thick well, the heavy, golden coils that protected her neck, even her position in the saddle, for he was getting a veritable cramp. The prospect of passing whole days together astride broad-flanked White Cat filled him with terror. Seeing old Baptiste forging ahead, turning to right and left without hesitation, crossing bridges, mounting slopes, Chillaye asked: "Has your coachman ridden to Nice before ?"

"Not all the way, but he knows the beginning. Isn't the country growing pretty? Look at that little island. There's nothing near Paris as pretty."

"it's an island like another, it seems to me. The Grande Yatte is far prettier."

"Do you think so? The day is improving. The fog has not entirely cleared yet, but the sun can be felt through it." "I should say so. It's given me an

awful headache; it must be a sun-"Why, sunstrokes drive people mad."

"That's about it, otherwise do you think I would jog to Nice by slow

"You certainly show no enthusiasm, y poor Chillaye."

"You didn't stipulate for enthusiasm you must admit that when one is suffering from a sunstroke, one's mood-" "Surely, you don't suppose a pale sun like that-'

"All the more dangerous, because one takes no precautions; I'm not used to the low hat I've got on. A tall hat heats the head less, because it is farther away from it."

"Yes, but it's nearer the sun, so that it amounts to the same thing." "Now you're chaffing me."

"Not at all. But you're in such bad form that I'm inclined to give you back your word and go to Nice without you. Good-by. Hurry back to Paris!" "Hurry? Why, we're three hours

from Paris." "Nevertheless, here we are at the

Boulevard Maillot and the Garden of Acclimatation; in a quarter of an hour you can be at home. For the last two hours we have been riding in the Bois. When you said just now that the Grande Yatte was prettier than the island I wanted you to admire, we were passing the Grande Yatte."

"It is this cursed fog!"

"Perhaps. But admit that even in fine weather you would not have guessed where you are, for you only



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hear from you soon, as I am in so much distress."-MRS. J. R. COMPTON, Eggbornsville, Va., May 16, 1898. Guaranteed to last longer your advice and I am now on the sec-ond bottle of your Vegetable Com-pound and I think it is going to cure me. If it does I will ever praise it, for I am, and have been, a great suf-ferer; but now I live in hopes of getting well."--MRS. J. R. COMPTON, Eggbornsville, Va., July 12, 1898. than any other plaster. is preferred to Adamant.

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an omnibus she had not made out in rider, came down on all fours, and sprang up so wildly that Chillaye was

"Mon Dieu!" cried Mme. de Nymbe,

"Yes, you did. I saw you. I hope you're not ill. Don't you think it's nice to go to Nice on horseback? Admit that if you'd been alone you'd have

stroke!" "Here goes," thought Chillaye; "now stages?"

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will poor White Cat take the road, I wonder? She's not fit; I feed her too high, till she's ready to burst. I'm big and heavy and like broad horses, otherwise they look as if I were breaking their backs-and looks are everything in the Bols. Why do pretty women have such absurd notions?"

In spite of Chillaye's timid suggestion that two o'clock, after lunch, was a good hour to start, Mme. de Nymbe had fixed the time at sharp eight. White Cat stepped out coquettishly, not guessing what was ahead of her. The coupe, filled with luggage, was standing in the courtyard. Chillaye was penetrated by a soft emotion when he saw his valise standing among Mme. de Nymbe's bags and his rug tightly rolled around one of her numreous wraps.

"What a delicious intimacy this journey will bring about!" he exclaimed to himself, looking at his watch to see if he was on time. He was, but she was net. A message came asking him to wait a few moments. How altered the drawing room looked. No fire, no flowers, no tumbled cushions, no opened score on the piano, no bonbons, nothing! How often he had drawn up his big pout before the bright hearth and listened to Berangere talk, half hidden and curled up in the dim brocade arms of her favorite chair! In spite of industrious pacing up and down, he was literally frozen when Mme. de Nymbe appeared at nine.

The sight of her in her riding-habit, pretty enough to eat, warmed him up a bit. Preoccupied as she was, she ran gayly down the stairs without discovering that he was blue. The maid got into the loaded coupe. The valet got up by the coachman, and the grooms led out the horses. Here was poor Chillaye's first discomfiture. He expected to give Mme. de Nymbe's little foot a bit of a squeeze as he assisted her to mount, but when he approached to perform the agreeable task, she said that only her old coachman knew her movement, and, putting her hand on the old fellow's shoulder, she was up like a bird.

"What an awful fog there is!" she exclaimed. "I hate it! don't you?"

"Still, perhaps it is better than cold." "Yes, but I wanted sunshine, at least for our first day. What road shall we follow? I suppose you've traced our itinerary?"

"No, I haven't traced anything. But I suppose we go out by the Barrierre d'Italie."

"Where is that?"

"Oh, a long way off; near the Gobe lins."

"But I haven't the faintest idea where the Gobelins are!"

"You can rest to-night; go to bed at eight if you like."

"No, I don't like-I never can go to sleep carly."

"Well, it's a pity, for I intend to retire every night directly after dinner."

"Allons," reflected Chillaye, more and more depressed; "this little expedition is not going to be very amusing, decidedly."

They rode into a wood.

"Where are we?" he asked. "I looked at a military map before starting, and I saw no wood on our road."

"It's the forest of-of Ville d'Av-TRT-"

"How is that? Are we going to Nice by way of Ville d'Avray?"

"Don't worry; I tell you Baptiste knows the road. Don't you breathe quite a new air?"

"I can't breathe at all in this smothering fog."

"And then this wood is wilder than the Bois de Boulogne-what a different scent it has."

"It's not half so pretty as the Bois, and the scent is that of soot, just as in all fogs."

"Are you less cold trotting?" "No, my hands and feet are icy."

"Why, have you got hands and feet like a fish?"

"You are unkind, madamet If you knew how ill at ease I am, perhaps you wouldn't chaff me."

"But, really, you know, you look prepared for cold, and brigands, too. Dien me pardonne!" She pointed at a yellow leather case fastened to the saddle. "I took that revolver along-"

"I'm not finding fault. An excellent idea, on the contrary. What's that oth-

er thing?" "Some madeira and a cup."

"Another good notion, more practical than the revolver. I say! You're enormous! How much clothing have you got on?"

"But-"

"Speak up, be honest!"

"I've got on a vest, a thin one and over that a warmer one; a huntingvest-you know-one of those English concerns, knitted angora rabbit; then a coat and an overcoat." "Only one overcoat?"

"Oh! I have got on another one, but it's very thin; besides, it's bitterly

your advice exactly, and thanks to you, I am cured of that dreadful Chillaye, don't propose to anyone else to go to the ends of the earth with them -they might take you at your word!" "And you-are you going to Nice?"

"I never thought of such a thing! I'm going back to lunch. Good appe-

And off she rode at a brisk trot.

The fog having cleared, the weather was radiant; swarms of riders, detained by the thick morning, were now coming to the Bois at the usual hour for leaving it. Chillave, recovering from his stupefaction, rode slowly down the avenue, reflecting that he had been done. 'Mme. de Nymbe is mad. She has cooled me off, and I am glad of it. She's pretty, of course-devilishly prettybut she's far too original. Ah ca! What are all those simpletons staring at me for? Do I look like a man who has just been made a fool of? Do they read it in my face? Positively, Xaintrailles laughed as he passed me. What's wrong about me? Ah, sapristi! It's my ridiculous get-up; my boots, and my flask, and my hat, and the revolver-especially the revolver! Hang of the revolver. Good enough! Here! are the Flirts-and one of the little Rirfrays, and D'Oronge. I must get rid

of it, at all cost." And sidling up to the edge of the road, in spite of the efforts of those who wanted to keep to their right, he managed to fling the revolver into a bed of gilly-flowers. Just as he passed the Flirts and their escort, a policeman ran after him, brandishing the revolver.

"M'sieu, m'sieu! You have lost some thing!" - Adapted for the Argonaut from the French of "Gyp."

Slept Four Hours a Day. Alexander von Humboldt, the great German philosopher and traveler, 80, thought that to spend more than

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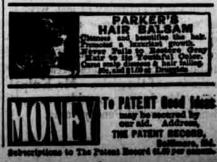


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