

could not believe it. The policeman continued, laughing:

“I can only give you one proof. His right arm is tattooed.”

“His sleeve was rolled up. It was true. The policeman added, certainly in bad taste:

“Doubtless you will be satisfied without the other proofs.”

“And he led away my maid!

“Well, if you will believe it, the feeling which was uppermost in me was that of anger at having been played with in this way, deceived and made ridiculous; it was not shame at having been dressed,

undressed, handled, and touched by this man, but — a — profound humiliation—the humiliation of a woman. Do you understand?”

“No, not exactly.”

“Let us see. Think a minute— He had been condemned—for violation, this young man—and that—that humiliated me—there! Now do you understand?”

And Miss Simone did not reply. She looked straight before her, with her eyes singularly fixed upon the two shining buttons of the livery, and with that sphinx's smile that women have sometimes.

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## *The Wedding Night*

MY DEAR Genevieve, you ask me to tell you about my wedding journey. How do you think I dare? Ah! sly one, who had nothing to tell me, who even allowed me to guess at nothing—but there! nothing from nothing!

Now, you have been married eighteen months, yes, eighteen months, you, my best friend, who formerly said you could conceal nothing from me, and you had not the charity to warn me! If you had only given the hint! If you had only put me on my guard! If you had put one little simple suspicion in my soul, you might have hindered me from making the egregious blunder for which I still blush, and which my husband will laugh at until his death. You alone are responsible for it! I have rendered myself frightfully ridiculous forever; I have committed one of those errors of which the memory is never effaced—

and by your fault, wicked one! Oh! if I had known!

Wait! I take courage from writing, and have decided to tell you all. But promise me not to laugh too much. And do not expect a comedy. It is a drama.

You recall my marriage. I was to start the same evening on my wedding journey. Certainly I did not at all resemble Paulette, whom “Gyp” tells us about in that droll account of her spiritual romance, called, “About Marriage.” And if my mother had said to me, as Mrs. d’Hautretan did to her daughter: “Your husband will take you in his arms—and—” I should certainly not have responded as Paulette did, laughing: “Go no farther, mamma, I know all that as well as you—”

As for me, I knew nothing at all, and mamma, my poor mamma who is always

frightened, dared not broach the delicate subject.

Well, then, at five o'clock in the evening, after the collation, they told us that the carriage was waiting. The guests had gone, I was ready. I can still hear the noise of the trunks on the staircase and the blowing of papa's nose, which seemed to indicate that he was weeping. In embracing me, the poor man said: "Good courage!" as if I were going to have a tooth pulled. As for mamma, she was a fountain. My husband urged me to hasten these painful adieux, and I was myself all in tears, although very happy. That is not easy to explain but is entirely true. All at once, I felt something pulling at my dress. It was Bijou, wholly forgotten since morning. The poor beast was saying adieu to me after his fashion. This gave my heart a little blow, and I felt a great desire to embrace my dog. I seized him (you remember he is as large as a fist) and began to devour him with kisses. I love to caress animals. It gives me a sweet pleasure, causing a kind of delicious shiver.

As for him, he was like a mad creature; he waved his paws, licked me, and nibbled, as he does when he is perfectly content. Suddenly, he took my nose in his teeth, and I felt that he had really bitten me. I uttered a little cry and put the dog down. He had bitten, although only in play. Everybody was disurbed. They brought water, vinegar, and some pieces of linen. My husband himself attended to it. It was nothing after all but three little holes which his teeth had made. At the end of five minutes the blood was stopped and we went away.

It had been decided that we should go on a journey through Normandy for about six weeks.

That evening we arrived at Dieppe. When I say evening, I mean midnight.

You know how I love the sea. I declared to my husband that I could not retire until I had seen it. He appeared very contrary. I asked him laughing, if he was sleepy.

He answered: "No, my dear, but you must understand that I would like to be alone with you."

I was surprised. "Alone with me?" I replied, "but you have been alone with me all the way from Paris, in the train."

He laughed: "Yes — but, — in the train,—that is not the same thing as being in our room."

I would not give up. "Oh, well," said I, "we shall be alone on the beach, and that is all there is to it!"

Decidedly he was not pleased. He said: "Very well; as you wish."

The night was magnificent, one of those nights which bring grand, vague ideas to the soul,—more sensations than thoughts, perhaps,—that bring a desire to open the arms as if they were wings and embrace the heavens—but how can I express it? One always feels that these unknown things can be comprehended.

There was a dreaminess, a poesy in the air, a happiness of another kind than that of earth, a sort of infinite intoxication which comes from the stars, the moon, the silver, glistening water. These are the best moments of life. They are a glimpse of a different existence, an embellished, delicious exist-

tence; they are the revelation of what could be, of what will be, perhaps.

Nevertheless, my husband appeared impatient to return. I said to him: "Are you cold?"

"No."

"Then look at the little boat down there, which seems asleep on the water. Could anything be better than this! I would willingly remain here until day-break. Tell me, shall we wait and see aurora?"

He seemed to think that I was mocking him, and very soon took me back to the hotel by force! If I had known! Oh! the poor creature!

When we were once alone, I felt ashamed, constrained, without knowing why. I swear it. Finally, I made him go into the bath-room while I got into bed.

Oh! my dear, how can I go further? Well, here it is! He took without doubt, my extreme innocence for mischief, my extreme simplicity for profligacy, my confident, credulous abandon for some kind of tactics, and paid no regard to the delicate management that is necessary in order to make a soul wholly unprepared comprehend and accept such mysteries.

All at once, I believe he lost his head. Then fear seized me; I asked him if he wished to kill me. When terror invades, one does not reason nor think further, one is mad. In one second I had imagined frightful things. I thought of various stories in the newspapers, of mysterious crimes, of all the whispered tales of young girls married to miserable men! I fought, repulsed him, was overcome with fright. I even pulled a wisp of hair from his mustache, and

relieved by this effort, I arose, shouting: "Help! help!" I ran to the door, drew the bolts, and hurried, nearly naked, downstairs.

Other doors opened. Men, in night apparel, appeared with lights in their hands. I fell into the arms of one of them, imploring his protection. He made an attack upon my husband.

I knew no more about it. They fought and they cried; then they laughed, but laughed in a way you could never imagine. The whole house laughed, from the cellar to the garret. I heard in the corridors and in the rooms about us explosions of gaiety. The kitchen maids laughed under the roof, and the bellboy was in contortions on his bench in the vestibule.

Think of it! In a hotel!

Soon, I found myself alone with my husband, who made me some summary explanations, as one explains a surgical operation before it is undertaken. He was not at all content. I wept until daylight, and we went away at the opening of the doors.

That is not all. The next day we arrived at Pourville, which is only an embryo station for baths. My husband overwhelmed me with little attentions and tender care. After a first misunderstanding, he appeared enchanted. Ashamed, and much cast down, over my adventure of the evening before, I was also amiable as could be, and docile. But you cannot figure the horror, the disgust, almost the hatred that Henry inspired in me, when I knew the infamous secret that they conceal from young girls. I was in despair, as sad as death, mindful of everything, and harassed by the need of being near my

poor parents. The next day after we arrived at Etretat. All the bathers were in a flurry of excitement. A young woman had been bitten by a little dog, and had just died of rabies. A great shiver ran down my back when I heard this story told at the hotel table. It seemed to me immediately, that I was suffering in the nose, and I had strange feelings all along my limbs.

That night I could not sleep; I had completely forgotten my husband. What if I were going to die too from rabies? I asked for some details, the next day, from the proprietor of the hotel. He gave me some frightful ones. I passed the day in walking upon the shore. I thought I could no longer speak. Hydrophobia! What a horrible death!

Henry asked me: "What is the matter? You seem sad."

I answered: "Oh! Nothing! Nothing!"

My staring eyes were fixed upon the sea without seeing it, upon farms, upon the fields, without my ever being able to say what came under my gaze. For nothing in the world would I have confessed the thought that tortured me. Some pain, true pain was felt in my nose. I wished to return.

As soon as I was back in the hotel, I shut myself up in order to examine the wound. There was nothing to be seen. Nevertheless, I could not doubt that it was working me great harm. I wrote immediately to my mother, a short letter which probably sounded strange. I asked an immediate reply to some insignificant questions. After having signed my name, I wrote: "Especially, do not forget to give me some news of Bijou."

The next day I could not eat, but I refused to see a physician. All day long I remained seated upon the beach looking at the bathers in the water. They came, the thin and the stout, all hideous in their frightful costumes; but I never thought of laughing. I thought: "They are happy, these people! They have not been bitten! They are going to live! They have nothing to fear. They can amuse themselves at will, because they are at peace!"

At that instant I carried my hand to my nose, touching it; was it not swollen? And soon I entered the hotel, shut myself in, and looked at it in the glass. Oh! it had changed color. I should die now very soon.

That evening I felt all at once a sort of tenderness for my husband, a tenderness of despair. He appeared good to me; I leaned upon his arm. Twenty times I was on the point of telling him my distressing secret, but ended in keeping silent.

He abused odiously my listlessness and the weakness of my soul. I had not the force to resist him, nor even the will. I would bear all, suffer all!

The next day I received a letter from my mother. She replied to my questions, but said not a word about Bijou. I immediately thought: "He is dead and they are concealing it from me." I wished to run to the telegraph office and send a dispatch. One thought stopped me: "If he really is dead, they will not tell me." I then resigned myself to two more days of anguish. I wrote again. I asked them to send me the dog, for diversion, because I was a little lonesome.

A trembling fit took me in the after-

noon. I could not raise a full glass without spilling half. The state of my soul was lamentable. I escaped from my husband at twilight and ran to the church. I prayed a long time. On returning, I felt anew the pains in my nose and consulted a druggist whose shop was lighted. I spoke to him as if one of my friends had been bitten, asking his advice in the matter. He was an amiable man, very obliging. He advised me freely. But I forgot to notice what he said, my mind was so troubled. I only remember this: "Purging is often recommended." I bought many bottles of I know not what, under pretext of sending them to my friend.

The dogs that I met filled me with horror, creating in me a desire to flee at top of my speed. It seemed to me many times, also, that I had a desire to bite them. My night was horribly disturbed. My husband profited by it.

The next day I received a response from my mother. "Bijou," said she, "is very well, but it would expose him too much to send him alone on a railroad train." Then they would not send him to me. He was dead.

I could not yet sleep. As for Henry, he snored. He awoke many times. I was annihilated.

The next day I took a bath in the sea. I was almost overcome in entering the water, I was so frightfully cold. I was more than ever shocked by this frigid sensation. I trembled in every limb, but felt no more pain in the nose.

By chance, they presented me to the medical inspector of the baths, a charming man. I led up to my subject with extreme skill. I then said to him that my little dog had bitten me several days

before, and asked him what was necessary to be done if we discovered any inflammation. He laughed and answered: "In your situation, Madame, I see only one remedy, which would be for you to make a new nose."

And as I did not comprehend, he added: "Your husband will see to that." And I was no better informed on leaving him than I was before.

Henry, that evening, seemed very gay, very happy. We went to the Casino, but he did not wait for the end of the play before proposing to me to return. As there was nothing of interest to me, I followed him. But I could not remain in bed; all my nerves were unstrung and vibrating. Neither could he sleep. He embraced me, caressed me, became all sweetness and tenderness, as if he had finally guessed how much I was suffering. I accepted his caresses without even comprehending them or thinking about them.

But suddenly an extraordinary, fearful crisis seized me. I uttered a frightful cry, pushed back my husband who took hold of me, ran into my room, and began to beat my head and face against the door. It was rage! Horrible rage! I was lost!

Henry raised me up, himself frightened and trying to understand the trouble. I kept silent. I was resigned now. I awaited death. I knew that after some hours of respite, another crisis would seize me, even to the last which would be mortal.

I allowed them to put me in the bed. At the point of day, the irritating obsessions of my husband caused a new paroxysm, which was longer than the first. I had a desire to tear and bite

and howl; it was terrible and nevertheless, not so painful as I had believed.

Toward eight o'clock in the morning, I slept for the first time in four nights. At eleven o'clock, a beloved voice awoke me. It was mamma, whom my letters had frightened and who had hastened to see me. She had in her hand a great basket, from whence came some little barks. I seized it, foolish in hope. I opened it, and Bijou jumped upon the bed, embraced me, gamboled about, rolled himself upon my pillow, frenzied with joy.

Ah! well, my dearie, you may believe me if you will, I did not comprehend all until the next day! Oh! the imagination, how it works! And to think that I believed— Tell me, was it not too foolish?

I have never confessed to anyone, you will understand why, the tortures of those four days. Think, if my husband had known! He has teased enough already about my adventures at Pourville. For my part, I cannot be too angry at his jests.

I am done. We have to accustom ourselves to everything in life.

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## *The Noncommissioned Officer*

QUARTERMASTER VARAJOU had obtained permission to pass eight days with his sister, Madame Padoie. Varajou, who was in garrison at Rennes and led a jolly life there, finding himself high and dry with his family, had written to his sister that he would devote his week of liberty to her. Not that he loved Madame Padoie so much, for she was a little moralist, devout and always irritating; but he was in need of money, in great need, and he remembered that of all his relatives, the Padoies were the only ones from whom he had never borrowed.

Father Varajou, an old horticulturist of Angers, now retired from business, had closed his purse to his rake of a son and had scarcely seen him for ten years. His daughter had married Padoie, a former employee of the Treas-

ury, who had since become collector at Vannes.

Varajou, then, on getting out of the train, took himself to the house of his brother-in-law. He found him in his office, in process of discussion with some Breton peasants of the neighborhood. Padoie raised himself from his chair, extended his hand across the table, which was covered with papers, and said: "Take a seat; I will be with you in a moment." Then he seated himself again and continued his discussion.

The peasants could not understand his explanations, the collector could not comprehend their reasoning; he spoke French, they spoke Breton, and the deputy who acted as interpreter seemed not to understand anyone.

It was long, very long. Varajou looked at his brother-in-law, thinking: "What an idiot!" Padoie must have