

**PLEASURE.**  
BY EMILIE CLARE.  
Though Right for a season to Wrong may  
succeed,  
And Polly's gay trappings be envied by some,  
Remember the foam, as it dances and  
gleams  
Rides ever on shallow and turbulent  
streams:  
That deeper and purer the waters that flow,  
Less rapid the current, its murmurs more  
low.  
And though there be many all launched on  
the tide,  
Hope sitting at helm, her pinions spread  
wide,  
And Faith at the anchor—but Faith with-  
out Him—  
How soon must their sun in the mist become  
dim!  
Say, Pleasure, did ever thy votaries claim  
A title unmerited by sorrow and shame—  
A lease that extended till time is no more  
and  
And decided a welcome to Eden's blissed shore?  
ANTIA, IOWA.

**HIS  
OLDEST FRIENDS.**  
Her First Love and Her Second  
Husband.

BY MISS M. E. BRADDON.

**CHAPTER III.**  
Dr. Blanchon received M. de St. Vallier before any other patient, although even at 9 o'clock the great man's waiting-room was crowded. He had met his patient often in society, and received him as a friend.

"My dear St. Vallier, I have to congratulate you upon the improvement in your appearance. You look ten years younger since you were last in this room. In what Medea's cauldron have you been stewing?"

"My only Medea is my wife; my only medicine has been a year and a half of supreme happiness."

"Ah! that is a kind of physic we often prescribe, but there are no chemists who make it up. And so you have come to tell me how well you are, and to get a little friendly advice that will enable you to become a centenarian," concluded Blanchon, laughingly.

"A consulting physician has so often occasion to look grave that he gladly catches any excuse for being cheerful. I have come to ask you to make a thorough examination, and to find out if there is any hidden mischief in my constitution."

"Do you suspect anything?" asked the Doctor, with his keen look—a look which suggested that for him the outward semblance of a man, coat and waistcoat included, was but a glass case through which he saw the inner machinery.

"No; I never felt better in my life," and "And you deliver yourself over, of your own accord, to the stethoscope and the sphygmometer? Prudent man. Kindly take off your coat and waistcoat."

Dr. Blanchon made a most studious examination of his patient, scolded, rapped and listened, and then, with a smile, gave him a clean bill of health.

"Your pulse is capital, so we won't trouble the sphygmometer, which I find very useful with my alcoholic patients," said the Doctor. "I told you when you were here last that there was nothing organically wrong. I can tell you now, in all good faith, that you are as sound within as you are well-looking without—no whitened sepulcher here, non ami, with a friendly tap on the patient's chest."

"And there is no fear of my dying suddenly within the next three or four days?"

"Not unless you get yourself under the wheels of an omnibus, or by the side of some clever friend who will scramble through a hedge with the muzzle of his gun pointed at your ribs. Death by internal disease you have no need to fear—heart and lungs are as sound as a bell."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Maxime, fervently.

"What put these fears into your head—for you must have felt nervous about yourself or you would hardly have come all the way from your country place to see me?"

**VIVIAN DECLARES HIS LOVE.**  
"A foolish fancy. I am too happy in my surroundings not to fear. Good-by. Come and see me at St. Vallier, if ever you can find time."

"That is just the thing I never can find, but I should like to spend a couple of days at your chateau when all Paris is out of town. Unfortunately, when all Paris is away, there are generally some very interesting cases at the hospitals, and I take that opportunity to go on with my education."

Maxime and his wife possessed a pied-a-terre in the Rue de Varennes. It had been Lucie's house during her widowhood—a dainty little house, entrance at garden, and here a couple of old servants kept all things in order while their master and mistress were in the country. Maxime had sent his servant on before him and found a comfortable breakfast neatly set out in the well-furnished library, which his wife had given him as his own den.

car for himself and his valet. He was at the terminus half an hour before the train started, tired out with his rambles about Paris, and with the wretched night in the express; so he took off coat and boots, and laid himself down under a fur rug, with his servant arranged for him, and was soon asleep.



"GOD BLESS YOU, DEAREST," CRIED MAXIME, was the voice of the porters shouting "Tonnerre that awakes him, and most of them are getting out for supper. He did not care to eat or drink—felt weary in limbs and head, and composed himself to sleep again; but this time sleep did not answer his call. Two men in berths near his were gossiping in a subdued murmur, which was more expending to St. Vallier's nerves than the loudest talking might have been.

"I don't believe he will succeed with Madame de St. Vallier, irresistible as he may consider himself," said the other man.

"Do you know the lady?"  
"I knew her when she was Madame Charles Colnet, and knew her to be a perfect wife; and yet I believe she was married to Comet by her parents, when she was young. He was hardly the kind of man a beautiful girl would have chosen for herself, a rough diamond, or cher Colnet, but she never allowed society to see that he was not the first man in the universe for her; and if this fellow Vivien brags of her favors, he must be an arrant scoundrel!"

"He does not actually claim to be favored, but declares that he will be. You know his boastful device: 'if not today, to-morrow.' I saw a letter he wrote to Juliet, of the Sancho Panza, in which he talked as if to-morrow were near at hand."

"They talked of other things, and by-and-by the murmuring ceased; but St. Vallier lay broad awake all the train steamed into Dijon, and he counted every minute that must pass before the tardy morning train would take him back, stopping at three village stations on the way, to St. Vallier le Roi.

His wife was at the station to meet him with a coupe and pair, more fur rugs and a bonnet.

She was there to meet him, radiant, loving; yet his soul sickened at the thought that her fondness might be a disguise to hide a heart that was already faithless. Yet no, he would not doubt her purity.

"Is Vivien still at the chateau?" he asked carelessly, as they drove away from the station.

He had lost so much time on the way with that accursed omnibus train that it was already daylight, and he could see his wife's face darken suddenly at the sound of the novelist's name, and he felt the arm within his own tremble slightly.

"Yes; but he leaves this evening by the same train by which you traveled. 'That is rather sudden, isn't it?' He talked of staying as long as we would have him, in order that he might finish his novel in the quiet of the country."

"He may have found that his novel made very little progress, and that the air of St. Vallier was not conducive to literary work."

"Lucie! I believe that man has been guilty of some impertinence to you!"  
"Not the least in the world," his wife answered, with a little laugh, which was meant to reassure him; but she had some what outstayed his welcome. Laure and I are of the same opinion; being tired of his company, and we ventured to let him perceive our sentiments—of course in the politest way—during your absence. Literary men are sensitive, and he was quick to understand the situation, and devise a sudden necessity to be in Paris."

"God bless you, my dearest!" cried Maxime, clasping his wife to his heart. "If Eve had been like you the serpent would have crawled out of Eden baffled and humiliated."

"Dear Maxime, I really don't know what you are thinking about. I have said, gaily, 'The whole business was as simple as bon jour, and I hope you will be especially polite to M. Vivien on the last day of his visit.'"

Maxime had not the slightest doubt that Hector Vivien had taken advantage of the husband's absence to declare himself to the wife, and that he had been repulsed with the fiercest scorn of unassailable purity. He took an opportunity to question Laure Evremonte in the course of the day, and though she would tell him very little, her admissions and even her reticence confirmed him in his belief.

Vivien and his host did not meet till dinner-time. The novelist was in his room all day, busy packing and arranging his papers. He traveled without a valet and refused all offers of assistance from St. Vallier's servants. He came with rage and agitation, he felt that he could not trust himself in the society of another man's servant. His irritation might break out at any moment and wreak itself upon some rustic wretch who had only offended by sheer stupidity.

Yes, he had wooed his friend's wife—he had found his opportunity in the afternoon solitude of the plaisance, screened from the windows of the chateau by ten-foot hedges of cypress and yew, as secure from observation as in a forest labyrinth. He had brought to bear all those arts and fascinations which he had always found irresistible with duchesses in his novels, and occasionally triumphant with middle-class matrons in actual life, and his reward had been the scorn of a woman such as a pure-minded woman who loves her husband must needs feel at the folly of any man who dares to suppose that he can supersede that husband in her affections.

The dinner-table was not so gay as it

had been on many another evening. Vivien talked as much as usual, but there was an angry light in his eyes and a keener cynicism in his conversation, which indicated latent irritation.

Maxime, who had been hysterically vivacious on the evening before his journey to Paris, was now grave and silently watchful. He and Tolpaches had talked together for half an hour before dinner, walking up and down the terrace on the edge of the moat in the wintry darkness; and Tolpaches, like his host, was silent and aux aquets.

The dinner was long, and the carriage was announced while then men were still lingering over coffee and cigarettes. Madame St. Vallier and her friends had retired to the music-room, whence came the sound of lightest opera bouffe melodies played by Madame Evremonte, who was passionately fond of the music that lives for a Parisian season, to be as completely forgotten afterward as the butterflies of last summer.

Vivien began his adieu with a cordial round of hand-shaking, taking the men at random as they happened to be standing. His host was almost the last to whom he came with sinister smile and outstretched hand.

Maxime looked straight and stern in front of him, and did not take the hand. "You know the old saying, Monsieur: 'Speed the parting guest?'" he said, grimly. "I have the utmost pleasure in speeding your departure, which, I believe, was hastened by the particular request of my wife."

A gust of surprise shook Vivien for a moment; but in the next he collected himself, and accepted the situation with all its consequences.

"I am leaving hurriedly, I admit," he said; "but although I am in some haste to leave this part of the world, I can spare you an hour to-morrow morning, in the wood on the other side of the railway. I shall spend to-night at the Inn in your village, and shall be at your service at whatever hour may suit your convenience and that of your friends."

"Tolpache, you were prepared for this. Listen, I know I rely on you," said Maxime, turning to his two most intimate friends. "For my own part I have only one desire to express. Let our meeting be at sunset to-morrow; weapons as you please. That delay will give me time to arrange my affairs."

He turned on his heel and went to the music-room, leaving Vivien to choose his own seconds and settle details.

He felt, in his choice of the sunset hour, that he was obeying an old friend's summons, and accepting his fate.

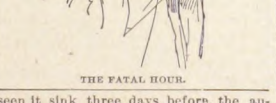
The next day passed like a peaceful dream, Maxime and his wife were alone together for the greater part of their time. Lucie having excused herself from an excursion to a village race-course, in order to be her husband's companion. No cloud upon his brow forewarned her of approaching doom. He wanted that day to be cloudless—that day which he told himself would be his last of love and of life. He parted with her at half-past 3 o'clock, straining her to his breast, with one long passionate kiss, as he bade her good-by.

There was despair in that embrace; and for the first time since his return she was startled from her happy security.

"Why good-by?" she asked. "How pale you are, Maxime! Is there anything wrong?"  
"Wrong? No, dearest. I am only going as far as the village to settle some farming business with my bailiff."

"You will be back to dinner?"  
"I hope so."

When the sun dipped at the bottom of that wooded hollow where Maxime had



**THE FATAL HOUR.**  
seen to sink three days before, the agony of the earnest face and the pointing hand had been fulfilled.  
[THE END.]  
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He learned something.  
"Men don't climb the ladder of fame at a single bound," the passenger in the salt-and-pepper suit was saying. "Success, like character, is a thing of slow growth."

"I think you are mistaken," said the passenger in the salt-and-pepper suit, with a smile. "Men sometimes get up to the top of the ladder by one jump, and they don't have to jump very hard, either."

"Do you happen to think of any instances in your own knowledge where a man was enduring fame by one act?"  
"Well yes. An instance occurs to me in which one speech made not only a man but a city famous."

"Oh, yes. You are speaking of J. Proctor Knott and Duluth. Well, I'll admit that Proctor Knott is an exception. There are just two characters in history that made themselves famous by one speech."

"Indeed? Who are they?"  
"J. Proctor Knott and Balaam's ass." The man in the skull-cap smiled a rather sickly smile and went away presently to the other end of the car.

"Do you know who that chap is?" inquired the man in the salt-and-pepper suit of the passenger on the seat in front.  
"Yes. That is J. Proctor Knott."—*Pittsburg Dispatch.*

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No. 6, Alton Express, 11:50 A. M.  
No. 7, Kansas City Express, 4:47 A. M.  
No. 8, Dwight-Streator Accommodation, 7:10 A. M.  
No. 9, Local Freight, 11:30 P. M.  
No. 10, Freight, 9:30 P. M.

TRAINS SOUTH  
No. 2, Mail, 11:50 A. M.  
No. 4, Lightening Express, 11:50 P. M.  
No. 5, Alton Express, 11:50 A. M.  
No. 10, Dwight-Streator Accommodation, 7:45 P. M.  
No. 15, Freight, 9:15 A. M.  
No. 22, Local Freight, 11:30 P. M.

TRAINS EAST  
No. 9, Accommodation, 7:10 A. M.  
No. 12, Mail, arrives, 10:20 A. M.  
No. 17, Freight, 9:30 P. M.

TRAINS WEST  
No. 1, mail, 2:15 P. M.  
No. 3, express freight, 4:25 P. M.  
No. 5, express freight, 4:15 P. M.

TRAINS EAST  
No. 2, mail, 9:44 A. M.  
No. 4, express freight, 11:50 A. M.  
No. 6, express freight, 11:30 P. M.

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No. 3, express freight, 4:25 P. M.  
No. 5, express freight, 4:15 P. M.

TRAINS EAST  
No. 2, mail, 9:44 A. M.  
No. 4, express freight, 11:50 A. M.  
No. 6, express freight, 11:30 P. M.

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