

employed by the President: "Nor must Uncle Sam's web-feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, the rapid river, but also up the narrow, muddy bayous, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and made their tracks." Lincoln was amused by the discussion in the newspapers to which the use of the phrase "Uncle Sam's web-feet" gave rise. He explained that the remarkable feats performed by the gun-boats, in making their way through sloughs and bayous, heretofore considered unnavigable, reminded him of the stealthy passage of water-fowl. The pleasantry concerning light-draught steamers going where "the ground is a little damp" is familiar to everybody.

It will be a long time before our people will forget Lincoln's homely simile of "elder-squirts charged with rose-water," as applied to the conservative programme for prosecuting the war. This was used in a letter addressed to Cuthbert Bullitt, of New Orleans, in which letter he also said that the conser-

vatives were like complaining passengers on a ship—"The mutineers must go untouched, lest one of these sacred passengers should receive an accidental wound." His imagination was powerfully stimulated by any reference to the history of the republic. His address at Gettysburg, now one of the great historical speeches of the world, suggests, rather than expresses, a crowd of images. To Lincoln's mind, apparently, American history was filled with noble and pathetic figures. In some of the loftier flights of his eloquence may be found traces of a strong poetic fancy—an imagination fired by love of country, and inspired by the contemplation of the stirring events that have marked its history. No more striking example of this can be found anywhere than in the memorable words which closed his first inaugural address:

"The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

## LALAGE.

### PART I.

TEN o'clock of a burning summer morning. Ten o'clock in an Indian jungle. A tangle of rich green vines and many large-leaved shrubs and bushes, feathery palms, and the quaint huldoo, with its superb drooping branches, making heavy masses of shade. Velvety undergrowth of long, rich grass, strangely crushed and beaten down, as if by some struggle, or as if some heavy body had lain there. The tree trunks are worn and polished near the ground, as if by the whetting of a cat's claws; but what a gigantic cat! The sun is dripping down in golden flecks and patches through the interlacing boughs. On the right is a tree loaded with white, waxy blossoms, whose heavy sweetness fills the whole warm air. On the left, another tree, the semal with its red cup-shaped blossoms flaming among its glossy leaves. In the center, a saul-tree, whose trunk was cleft while young, and which now stands apart in two well-defined trunks. There is no cry of cockatoo or gay parouquet, no noisy chatter of nimble black monkeys running along the boughs. Everywhere a death-like quiet reigns. Everywhere the air quivers

with heat, and the sky burns blue and intense. Everywhere is that strange crushed look to the grass, and that polished look to the tree-trunks. What does it mean? Every Indian sportsman knows. This inclosed bit of jungle is a lair. Just before the cleft tree, lying along in splendid length in the rich, warm grass, is a royal tigress. Her tawny golden sides, marked with black velvety bands, swell slowly in and out; her tail sweeps from side to side with a slow motion, making the grass rustle under its weight; her noble head is drawn back slightly between her shoulders; she does not move it; her great, velvety fore-paws rest lightly before her; her mouth is slightly open, showing a gleam of strong white teeth; her cat-like whiskers move softly back and forward, back and forward; her great gray-green eyes look steadily, with an intense, level gaze, at one spot; their pupils are narrowed to mere black lines. At what are those wonderful, glittering eyes looking? On the opposite side of the lair is a man, whose smooth young face is browned by the fierce kisses of the Indian sun,—a tall, slight fellow, in full hunting gear. One hand pushes

back the bushes, the other is unslinging his rifle. He stands utterly still, his dark, magnetic eyes fixed full on those of the royal beast. The only sound that breaks the stillness of the warm, shady lair is the switch of the tigress's tail to and fro in the long jungle grass, and the strange, low, purring noise that comes from the brute's half-open lips. For a few long moments the silence continues; man and beast gaze, each fascinated by the other; then a strange thing happens. The tigress begins to move her head and shoulders uneasily from side to side; she stirs and thrills all down her superb length; her great green eyes open and close in an odd, dazzled way. The man's eyes never flinch. The tigress trembles, half rises, draws back, rises, turns, and, with a splendid velvety tread, winds slowly off through the grass, crushing it under her softly cushioned feet, and leaving behind her a winding path. Once or twice she pauses and looks back, half turning, then she goes on with her voluptuous, sinuous motion, until the long grass and undergrowth hide her, and the man stands alone in the silence of the Indian jungle.

## PART II.

BRITTANY. Brittany and Dinan. Dinan, with its quaint, pointed roofs, its narrow streets, stone-paved courts, and old houses, rich with dark carving; its dusty calf-market, its shady chestnuts and blossoming limes. Dinan, with its clattering sabots, and shrill market-day cries and calls, and the squares, filled with the high confusion of English, Irish and French voices. A warm market-day in June; but neither noise of sabots, nor market-day cries, nor dust, nor heat, can penetrate into the shady stone-paved court, through the closed venetians, and into the charming little *salon* of Madame Raymond, an English invalid in Dinan for rest and enjoyment, with her daughter Clare, and her niece Lalage. Madame Raymond's little *salon* is dim and cool; sweet with the breath of flowers, and musical with the splash and murmur of the fountain, falling into the old stone basin in the garden. The closed venetians admit no heat, but allow the faint breeze to enter. There are great fans scattered here and there; books half open; a filmy trifle of work in a basket of sweet grasses woven cunningly; but the room seems to be left to the shrinking Venus in her shadowy niche, standing still, white, cold, with that slow, faint, sleepy smile upon her lovely face,

which has lived there unchanged for so many years.

But the room is not quite deserted, for, on a low, wide lounge in a dim alcove, Lalage is lying. She is lying at full length, showing all the gracious, rounded curves of her figure, a sleepy languor expressed by her position and her soft half movements. Her thin white sleeves fall back, showing her rounded arms as she clasps them above her head; her long green eyes, green as beryl, are half closed; her teeth gleam white between her parted lips, her bosom rises and falls with full, slow grace; not asleep, but in the sort of half-sleep, which is her delight. She does not move when the bell at the gate rings sharply, and a firm, quick step crosses the hall. It is only Jack,—Jack Macorie, the young British officer, home from India on sick leave. Idling through Brittany in general, and lazing in Dinan in particular. Clare Raymond's playmate in childhood, almost her accepted lover now, why should Lalage make herself uncomfortable for him? As he enters, she looks up with a faint, sweet smile, a smile with a vague suggestion of cruelty somewhere about it. Macorie seats himself by a table, and begins to spoil some of Clare's dainty work with his clumsy fingers.

"What have you been reading?" he asks, glancing at the little volume that has dropped to the floor.

"The 'Lotos Eaters,'" she answers. "What else could one read, on such a day as this?"

"It seems to me," he says bluntly, "like carrying coals to Newcastle. I should prefer to read it in winter; to-day is too warm."

"But you know," says Lalage, "I like the heat myself. I luxuriate in it, it is like life to me; besides, no heat that we have here in Brittany seems like heat to me. I seem to have known a greater at some time; a heat where man sleeps in the day, and only dares come out when the sun sets; a heat where the very air is white and quivering."

"And yet you came from England here, Miss Raymond?"

"Yes, from England here, as you say. It must have been in some other sphere and cycle that I knew this heat I speak of."

Macorie gazes curiously at the beautiful face. For his life he could not tell you what his real feeling is for Lalage. At times she is almost repulsive to him, and again he half fancies himself in love with her. Usually when he has just found

her most fair and charming, most wonderful in her beauty and her strange, slow grace, just then comes that strange sense of repulsion, and he can in no way explain what it is. Presently comes the click of little boot-heels, and the swish of long skirts on the bare oak stairs, and Clare comes into the room. Pretty Clare Raymond, with her fair, high-bred face, her gentle ways, her quiet, brown eyes! Lalage calls her cold. Perhaps only Macorie knows how her eyes can flash and her face brighten.

"Jack," she says in her pretty, pleased way, "how good of you to come over in all this heat! I hardly expected you until evening. Babette shall bring us some tea. Mamma has one of her bad headaches to-day and will not be down."

Babette comes in,—a sturdy, cheery Breton woman, in black worsted petticoat plaited to ugly fullness on the hips, and kerchief pinned across her broad chest. Her face, under the snowy Breton cap, looks like an apple left all winter on the tree,—brown, and wrinkled, and crabbed, yet somewhat spicy and sweet withal, when once thawed out. Clare looks very gentle and womanly to Macorie, as she sits at the little round table and pours into the tiny cups the clear amber liquid, with bits of ice tinkling against the sides, and circles of golden lemon-peel floating on top. She is a pleasant contrast just now to Lalage, lying indolently on her low couch, yawning and smiling. For the first time, Macorie notices how rough her tawny hair is, and how crushed and tumbled her gown. Clare's gown is fresh and dainty, her pretty head as sleek as a robin's. Presently Lalage rises and leaves the room.

"I am tired of watching you two drinking Russian tea; you weary me. I am going to dress."

She yawns as she speaks, and allows herself to stretch luxuriously, as a cat does when it awakens. Macorie watches her departure with no shadow of regret in his handsome eyes. One of the revulsions of feeling of which we have spoken comes over him, and he is by no means averse to an hour's *tête-à-tête* with Clare.

In the evening, however, his state of mind is changed. Clare is seated at the piano, in a dim corner, softly playing the tender, wonderful music of the "Moonlight Sonata." Lalage rises slowly and passes out through the glass doors standing open, into the moonlit garden beyond. The fountain is falling with low cadence into its old stone basin,

the glossy-leaved trees rustle and whisper in the cool, light wind, a silver-voiced nightingale is singing her heart out in the shrubbery, and Macorie, scarce knowing why, rises and follows the glint of Lalage's white gown, along the garden walks. He finds her leaning on the old stone parapet that bounds the garden; she is bending forward, looking down upon the gleaming Rance which winds below, like a glittering serpent, between its shadowy banks.

"I came out here for a picture to accompany Clare's music," she says. "Only look at it!"

She bends slightly toward him as she speaks, her beryl-colored eyes expanded. The pupils of Lalage's eyes are always dilated at night, like those of a cat; at high noon they narrow to mere black lines. The air is full of the sweet, intoxicating odor of the lime blossoms. Macorie catches the subtle fragrance of some Indian perfume; his cool, clear head swims; his eyes are fixed on Lalage's fair face.

"Don't look at me so," says the girl, turning her head uneasily away from the steady gaze of Macorie's clear, keen eyes. "I cannot bear that steady way you have of looking at me; why do you do it?"

The music within has ceased. Babette's high shrill voice is heard:

"Mamzel! mamzel! the *maman* wants you!"

"She is always working," says Lalage, with slow scorn. "She does not know the meaning of repose—Clare."

"Poor little Clare!" says Macorie, gently; "she is sorely tried with her mother. I fancy she has little time to rest, even if she would. I have always thought," he continues, idly watching the flow of the river below, "that Clare is a woman for whom love will do much; she has lived thus far a life of repression; but I fancy I know what love would do for Clare."

Lalage turns her head slowly toward Macorie. Probably this woman has never made a rapid movement in her life.

"What love would do for Clare?" she says, softly. "What would it do? Give her rest and peace, perhaps; freedom from the fretful demands of her mother. Do you know what it would do for me? Clare is cold and calm; her blood is like water, pure and cold; mine runs like fire in my veins. Love would save me from something worse than death, Macorie—worse than death!"

She turns and walks away behind the trees.

"Lalage! Lalage!" cries Macorie. "What do you mean?"

But no sound comes to him of voice or footstep. The river flows on through the moonlit night; the nightingale has fallen asleep in the thicket; but Macorie stands alone in the quiet beauty of the slumbering night.

The summer waxes and wanes and grows late, and still Macorie lingers at Dinan. The long days slip by, full of work for the sturdy Breton peasants,—toil by sea, and labor by land; full of idle and dreamy enjoyment or energetic sight-seeing to the summer visitors in Dinan. Not of the latter class are the young people at Madame Raymond's. Their days are passed lounging in the dim, pretty *salon*; idling in the old garden, listening to the rustle of the trees and the cool splash of the fountain. Macorie reads aloud, Clare sews busily, and Lalage, as usual, does nothing. There are whole evenings spent upon the moonlit Rance, rowing through the gleaming water, stopping opposite Lehon Abbey, and the flight of steps where of old the Lehon monks used to bathe. Often, when Madame Raymond's head troubles her, Clare has to stay at home, and it is Lalage alone who floats down the river in the tiny boat with Macorie.

One warm, still morning, Macorie comes in to Madame Raymond's, springing lightly up the stair, humming "*Casta Diva*" beneath his breath; Fanchette, Lalage's white Angora cat,—a sleepy, vicious animal,—steals along beside him. When he reaches the half-open door of the *salon* he pauses a minute. He has been away from Dinan for a day, and wonders how Lalage will greet him; he recalls just now the picture of Lalage as he last saw her, sitting at the piano in the evening. He recalls her beauty; the glimmering tints of her gown; the gleam of her red-gold hair; the soft, rounded curves of her figure; the low, sweet Spanish song she sang, with its tender rippling accompaniment; the sweet, strange perfume about her hair and dress; the rounded whiteness of her perfect arms.

"Do you ever," she had said, laughing, "feel tempted to set your teeth in your own flesh? I do. Clare, now, does not tempt me, she is too brown; but look, am I not white?" She bit her arm gently with her short white teeth; then she laughed at Macorie's puzzled face. "I vex you now," she said. "I will not vex you any more; besides it hurts my arm to bite it, and I do not like to be hurt."

Macorie's hands are filled with flowers

he had brought, not to Clare; Clare Raymond has no fancy for flowers like these,—heavy-scented, glossy-leaved, brilliant blossoms, tropical in their rare warmth of color. He stands a moment unobserved looking at Lalage. There is a tiger-skin rug spread on the dark-shining floor,—a huge skin, tawny gold, with rich black markings; and on this rug Lalage is reclining, her head supported on her bare white arms, which are thrown above it. She has drawn the rich skin about her, and rubs her cheek caressingly against it; a sort of thrill of pleasure passes down her figure; now and then she utters a low, strange sound, almost like a cat's purr. She is simply perfect, as a picture of sensuous enjoyment, but as a woman—Macorie turns away with a sudden cold qualm, a faint thrill of half-defined disgust and personal revulsion. The rich flowers drop from his careless hand; he cannot stay; he would not see Lalage now for worlds. "She is not like a woman," he declares to himself; "she is half brute. I never saw any one like her!" and that day Lalage waits in vain for Macorie. She found Fanchette, however, asleep on the rug in the hall, among the scattered flowers.

"I wish, Lalage," says Macorie one day, "that you would move your chair from that rug. I hate a tiger-skin!"

"But you sent it to Clare yourself," says Lalage, wonderingly; "you sent it home from India on the *Harpy*, with Major Devine; have you forgotten?"

She moved her chair, however, and came and seated herself beside Macorie on the low lounge.

"I know that I sent it," he says; "but I wish I never had. I never wish to see one again; they are not fit for Christians to use; they are fit only for some barbaric Indian princess. I hate them!"

"And I love them," says Lalage, softly and slowly; "they remind me of pleasant things; they bring lovely pictures to my mind; shall I draw one for you? Shall I tell you what I see?"

"Yes," says the young man, softly.

Lalage sits bending slightly toward him. He can feel her warm breath on his face; her slender hand is on his wrist; her wonderful glittering eyes are fastened upon his; the pupils of them are narrowed to upright black lines.

"I see," says the girl, speaking slowly and under her breath,—*"I see a little open space in an Indian forest, a jungle, Macorie*



—an Eastern jungle! The air trembles and quivers with the intense white heat; the sky blazes blue and fierce overhead. There is grass in the jungles,—long, warm, tangled grass, all torn and crushed and beaten down, as if some struggle had taken place, or as if some heavy body had lain there. Everywhere are rich tropical trees and shrubs; they make the place shady, though it is high noon. On the right, there is a tree loaded with white waxy blossoms; they have a heavy intoxicating odor, like orange blossoms. On the left, another tree with red cup-shaped flowers and an odd buttressed stem. In the middle of the open space is a tall tree with glossy, dark-green leaves. I do not know its name; but the trunk has been cleft while the tree was young, and it has grown up tall and graceful, but with two distinct trunks; and all the trees are marked and polished near the ground, as if some great cat had been sharpening her claws upon it, just as Fanchette does upon the acacia. It is a strange place, Macorie,—a strange, warm, shady, luxurious place."

"Lalage!" cries the young man, "what do you mean? You never were in India! You have always lived in the North—you never can have seen that place!"

"No," says Lalage, softly, rising and bending down toward him, an odd light in her eyes, "I have always lived in the North, as you say, but I have dreams sometimes!"

"Do you think it's a possible thing, Kotzchmar?" says Macorie, as the two friends sit together after dinner.

Kotzchmar is lighting his pipe—a deep-bowled meerscham; the first deep drawings and the clouds of blue smoke prevent his speaking at first. Lighting one's after-dinner pipe is no small and idle task, but one to be entered upon with due care and solemnity. Kotzchmar lifts his fair German face from his pipe.

"All things are possible, Macorie. There are brutes endowed with almost human intelligence, and there are human beings of no more than brute intelligence. You ask if I think it possible for a brute to become, through long generations, human—human through its desires and longings. I answer, that I cannot tell. Strange things have happened. You can class this idea of yours with those rather unpleasant beliefs of the middle ages,—the Berserker rage, for instance, and the were-wolf superstitions of France and North Germany. Your theory is a sort

of inversion of the old heathen doctrine of metempsychosis; the transmigration is inverse, you see, from brute to human. However, Macorie, if your theory be a good one, it must admit of the converse. If a brute can be raised to human form and level by superior intelligence and by some great human passion, why, certainly, the transformed brute would at once lose its human form by yielding to any of its brute instincts. Æsop, you know, has a fable of a young man who fell in love with a white cat, and prayed the gods to change it to a woman. His prayer was granted; but you remember that something strange and most disagreeable occurred when, while holding his bride in his arms, the sound of rats came from the wainscot—*voilà!* —"

"*Voilà!*" says Macorie, coolly; "my cigar has gone out; good evening!" and he saunters up the street to Madame Raymond's. Clare is at the piano, playing softly in the dusk.

"You are tired to-night," says Macorie, gently.

"A little," she answers quietly. "I was up last night with mamma, and I did not sleep much; but it is nothing."

"Is it nothing, Clare," he says tenderly, "that you are wearing out your sweet young life, working and watching and caring for others, with no one to care for you? Clare, my darling, will you come to me? Will you let me care for you, my dearest, all my life? I am not half good enough to dare say all this to a saint like you; but I love you, Clare; that is my only excuse."

"You must never, never talk that way, Jack," says Clare, her eyes shining with happy tears; "never talk as if you were not a thousand times wiser, and stronger, and better than I."

And neither of these two happy young people know that Lalage, behind the heavy window-curtains, has heard and seen all this, and stands looking at them fiercely; her glittering green eyes half closed, her nails cutting the tender clenched hands.

An hour later, there comes a low, terrible cry from the old garden, where Clare has gone to breathe the cool night air, while Macorie is with old Madame Raymond, lying ill and querulous on her couch. Babette hears the cry, sitting on the stone bench outside her kitchen door, knitting and smelling the lime-blossoms,—hears the cry, and runs through the court-yard, her long gold ear-rings rattling like castanets.

"Ah Monsieur! Monsieur Jacques, come

very quickly! Ah! the sacred lamb! the pure white chicken! Holy Maria! what is this thing? Some beast has done it—*cruelle!* The wicked Fanchette! she has done it with her claws and teeth! Oh! the naughty beast, what big claw marks! Yes, yes; bear her in gently, monsieur, gently, and do not let the *maman* see!"

Clare is lying by the fountain, with marks of cruel teeth and claws about her tender throat; but surely it was done by larger, keener claws than those of sleeping Fanchette!

"What was it, my darling?" begs Macorie, trying to silence the voluble Babette. "For God's sake, my dearest, tell me what terrible thing has happened."

"Jack," says Clare solemnly, with the shadow of a great horror in her deep, clear eyes, "if I live to be a thousand years old, I never will—I never can tell you what strange, awful thing happened to me in the garden!"

The morning sun shines gayly on Dinan; over the pointed roofs and quaint windows and chimneys; over the narrow streets, the old gardens and the shining river. Clare Raymond is lying on a couch by the open window; the slight fresh breeze blows from the curtains, and lifts the light hair on Clare's forehead. She is not dead,—not even dying, thank God! Her mother sits beside her, forgetting for once her own ills, now that Clare can no longer foster them. As for Lalage, she is nowhere to be seen; she has a habit of going across to the neighbors if anything unpleasant happens at home.

"Monsieur, come here," beckons Babette

mysteriously to Macorie. "I must show you something."

In the garden, the grass is long, beyond the old fountain.

"Look there," says Babette, pointing with her thin brown hand.

Through the long rich grass, wet and glistening with the night dews, runs a sinuous path, where the grass is crushed and bent as if some heavy body had dragged itself along there to reach the chestnut grove.

"Pierre Latour told me, that at one o'clock this morning, when he and his cousin were coming down the river in their boat, with fruit and vegetables,—to-day is market-day, monsieur knows,—just below our garden, a strange animal came softly out from the chestnuts, and stole along the bank. It was a large dark beast, says Pierre; they could see its sides in the light of the moon, marked with black stripes and bands like velvet. It kept its shining eyes on the men, but did not offer to swim out to them, and walked along the bank as softly as the juggler who danced on eggs last fête day; but it left behind it a trail in the long grass, like this, monsieur, in our garden. What do you make of it? you who are wise, what manner of beast is this, with velvet-striped sides, and shining green eyes, and a step like a great cat? Perhaps you will know, monsieur; as for old Babette, she must run round to the English neighbors, and see where the selfish Mamzell Lalage spent the night. Wicked, selfish one! she fled away when my white lamb was hurt, and not a soul has seen her since!"

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## INFLUENCE.

THE fervent, pale-faced Mother ere she sleep,  
Looks out upon the zigzag-lighted square,  
The beautiful bare trees, the blue night-air,  
The revelation of the star-strewn deep,  
World above world, and heaven over heaven.  
Between the tree-tops and the skies, her sight  
Rests on a steadfast, ruddy-shining light,  
High in the tower, an earthly star of even.  
Hers is the faith in saints' and angels' power,  
And mediating love—she breathes a prayer  
For yon tired watcher in the gray old tower.  
He the shrewd, skeptic poet unaware  
Feels comforted and stilled, and knows not whence  
Falls this unwonted peace on heart and sense.