

sie, now, of her wrinkled crash outing-dress, her dust-powdered shoes, her damp forehead, her tumbling curls. But even if he had caught her dressed for the evening, she would n't have looked like them.

At last the tea-cups stood empty, and he was taking his leave. "You must come again," Aglaia said. With a gentle, wistful look she put out her hand in a movement that changed for the better the pose of her willowy form. Thallie's smile expressed an unconscious, yet even sweeter, allurements. He turned to Euphrosyne. She decided bitterly that her sisters had been seductive enough for all three.

"Good afternoon."

A painful modesty kept her from extending her hand. Indeed, throughout his call those words of farewell were the only ones she had uttered!

He walked to the gate, turned round, bowed again, departed. Aglaia remarked:

"I must say, Frossie, you might have been more polite!"

"If I did n't gush enough, you surely made up for it."

"Children!"

"One moment, Dad. Let me tell you something, Frossie. Because you imagine he tried to flirt with you once in the street, you need n't have given him a frost when he was our guest. Be as prim as you want by yourself, but don't interfere again with our social chances. I understand these cavalry officers know the best people in town. Who is he, anyhow?"

"His mother," said Frossie, "is a marchioness. You might even yet call him back and give him a flower for his button-hole!"

"Soldiers don't have buttonholes, my dear," drawled Aglaia, calmly.

"Too bad! Sticking flowers in buttonholes is one of the best things you do."

Leaving the rest aghast, she took herself off to her room.

She went straight to the looking-glass. Her hair had never seemed so flagrantly red. The strong sunshine of Florence had brought back all her freckles. The pince-nez clips had cut deep marks in each

side of her nose, and she believed that the constant use of glasses had made her eyes smaller. If only she were better-looking, —not beautiful,—just comely enough to be sure! If only she knew how to smile on young men like Aglaia, or else, at least, escape her unfortunate awkwardness! Her sister was right: she had given him an impression of disapproval. And now he would never come back, never know her as she had meant to be!

That night more than once Thalia heard Frossie rise from her bed to sit by the window. Was this restlessness due only to the throes of literary production? Or could it be that steady, sensible Frossie was falling in love? Thallie knew that a sign of love was to lose one's sleep. Of late she had lost so much sleep herself!

In fact, Thallie had also lost weight. Her coloring was less brilliant, and under her sky-blue eyes were drawn two tiny violet streaks. Nowadays she was listless, too, and often fretful. Her appetite had failed. When Federico brought round the *risotto*, the *spaghetti*, the *zuppa Inglese* she made an involuntary gesture of disgust.

Mr. Goodchild believed it was the heat. He awaited anxiously the thunderstorms, already overdue, on which the Florentines depended for relief in August. Meanwhile it might be well for Thallie to interrupt her painting till the autumn? He knew from experience how high a toll was demanded of vitality by "creative effort"! But Thallie cried:

"If I did n't have something to occupy my mind, I should go crazy in this place!"

She found a bitter satisfaction in suggesting that the others were to blame for her distress, that life in Florence was a martyrdom for her. Yet when Aurelius, in desperation, asked her where she would rather be, Thalia could not say. To her eyes all prospects appeared desolate, without the promise of one thrill of joy. Even Paris had ceased to be desirable; for of course the young man of the boat-deck was no longer there.

Or else, tossing on her hot bed, she

would mutter: "No more nonsense! I have my work to do, my name to make. Is n't it enough that I 'm going to be another Rosa Bonheur?" But it was not enough that she was going to be another Rosa Bonheur.

Besides, if that hope should crumble, too! At such apprehensions, so plausible in the deep silence of the night, her brow became cold and moist. All at once she saw her canvases with a stranger's eye: their errors expanded to efface their merits; in mocking contrast there closed round them the masterpieces of the Uffizi and the Pitti Palaces, noble falls of drapery, gestures of an inspired grace, torsos that swelled with life, heads that mirrored living souls. Contemplating in memory the flesh of Titian's "Flora," the eyes of Rubens's wife, the hands of the clavi-chord-player attributed to Giorgione, she moaned, "I still know nothing, nothing, nothing!" And time was fleeting, and already she was nearly twenty-one!

Still, at nine o'clock every morning, she entered the studio of M. Alphonse Zolande, which had taken on the melancholy of a place where one has known only disappointment.

The painting-master had got his varnished boots resoled. He wore a new coat of purple velveteen already highly scented with Virginia cigarettes and chypre. His gray mustaches somehow looked less elderly these days. One morning, after staring for a moment, Thallie realized that he had shaved off his imperial. For the summer months, no doubt?

She had learned enough French to understand most of what he said, and even to reply. He, praising her accent, made her repeat a sentence. His eyes, small and sharp, surrounded by yellowish sclerotics, were focused on her young lips, ripe, vivid, moving with exquisite self-consciousness as she pronounced those unaccustomed sounds. "Brava!" he cried, and sprang up with a strained, gay look. But while he paced the floor, with neck bent, wriggling his fingers, his leathery, jaundiced visage was gradually distorted by a supreme dejection. When at last he re-

turned to her easel, M. Zolande declared in tones unnaturally harsh:

"Mademoiselle, how many times must I tell you the supreme test of paint is a luminosity extending even to the shadows! Regard Bronzino! His flesh-tones are so because he made first a clean white under-painting, with very little oil. In Andrea del Sarto's portraits the shadows are painted light, on cool *grisaille*; the successive glazes give them depth, together with transparency. But when I say luminosity I do not mean these shiny whites, so easy to slop on, which remind me of that animal of a Bouguereau! Did the golden age of Titian stoop to them? No, Mademoiselle! Only moderns—these lazy, ignorant confectioners! True art has no subterfuges, no evasions, no labor-saving tricks. True art does always the large thing, the thing vastly difficult, that appears to those who do not know so simple!"

He brandished his fist; his wiry figure became tense and vibrant; he looked upward, as if glimpsing for an instant a fair mirage not seen since youth; his crackling voice resounded through the bare studio like a conjuration. The model followed his gesture with the dull gaze of a hypnotist's subject. But Thallie could not respond to-day even to that cry. She began to have a sense of unreality, as if all this were extraordinary, mad, and futile, like a dream. Bronzino, Andrea del Sarto, Titian! Why did people work so hard to imitate them? Why was she here, taking lessons from an eccentric "old man of fifty," to whom no other pupils ever came? Why did she want to learn painting, anyway—to spend her life daubing colors on a piece of cloth for folks to stare at? A knock rattled the door. M. Zolande was called into the corridor.

The visitor, a man whose face Thallie never saw, came often, like that, for a moment's conversation. On the landing he and the painting-teacher wrangled in French and in Italian. At times the latter's voice rose indignantly. One heard, "What, the same for a Correggio? But the panel alone costs fifty francs!" Or: