

cutting rushes beside the pools under the poplars. They were arriving; he got out.

He leant over the wall of the bridge to look once more at the island and garden where they'd strolled one sunny day and, feeling dazed by the journey and the fresh air, in a sort of euphoria brought on by the weakness resulting from his recent shocks, he said to himself:

'Perhaps she's gone for a walk. Supposing I were to meet her!'

The bell of Saint-Laurent was tolling and in the square in front of the church there was a group of poor people gathered round a barouche—the only one in the district, which was used for weddings—when suddenly in the middle of a stream of gentlemen in white ties who poured out of the church door, a bridal couple emerged.

Frédéric thought he must be suffering from hallucinations but it was sober reality: Louise was standing there, shrouded in a flowing white veil from her red hair down to her heels; and there was Deslauriers!—resplendent in a Prefect's uniform, a blue coat embroidered in silver. What was it all about?

He hid round the corner of a house until the wedding procession had gone past. Then, battered and defeated, he sheepishly made his way back to the station and took the train to Paris.

His cabby assured him that the barricades had been set up from the Château d'Eau to the Gymnase Theatre and drove him round via the rue du Faubourg-Saint-Martin; at the corner of the rue de Provence, Frédéric got out and walked down to the boulevards.

It was five o'clock and drizzling. There was a crowd of middle-class bystanders on the pavement in front of the Opéra: the houses opposite were all closed up with nobody at the windows. Leaning over their horses' necks, dragoons with drawn swords were galloping along at full speed occupying the whole width of the boulevards; as they rode past, the plumes on their helmets and their large white cloaks billowing behind them stood out against the flare of

the gas lamps swirling in the mist. The crowd stood watching in terrified silence.

In between cavalry charges, squadrons of police came up to force people back into the side-streets.

But on the steps of Tortoni's, conspicuous in the distance by reason of his great height, one man stood stock-still like a caryatid, refusing to move: Dussardier.

A policeman marching in front, with his cocked hat pulled down over his eyes, threatened him with his sword.

At this the other man took a step forward and started shouting:

'Long live the Republic!'

With arms spread wide, he fell crosswise on to his back.

There was a scream of horror from the crowd. The policeman swung his eyes all around him; the crowd recoiled and Frédéric's jaw dropped: it was Sénécal.

CHAPTER VI

He travelled.

Chilly awakenings under canvas; dreary mail-packets; the dizzy kaleidoscope of landscapes and ruins; the bitter taste of friendships nipped in the bud: such was the pattern of his life.

He came home.

He went into society. He had more affairs but the ever-present memory of his first love made them insipid; in any case, desire had lost its edge, the very springs of feeling had dried up. His intellectual ambitions had also faded. Years passed, and he came to terms with his mental stagnation and the numbness in his heart.

One evening, towards the end of March 1867, as dusk was falling, he was sitting by himself in his study when a woman came in.

'Madame Arnoux!'

'Frédéric!'

She gripped his hands and led him gently towards the window, gazing at him and repeating:

'It's him! It's really him!'

From: A Sentimental Education
454
Gustave Flaubert

In the half-light, under the little black lace veil hiding her face, he could distinguish only her eyes.

She placed a small garnet-red velvet wallet on the edge of the mantelshelf and sat down; they faced each other, smiling, unable to find words.

Finally, he started asking her lots of questions about herself and her husband.

They'd settled in the wilds of Brittany, so as to live cheaply and pay off their debts. Arnoux was a sick man; he looked old now. Her daughter was married, living in Bordeaux, her son on garrison duty in Mostaganem.* Then she looked up at him:

'But now I've seen you again! Oh, I'm so happy!'

He made a point of telling her that when he'd heard about the disaster which had overtaken them, he'd hurried round to see them.

'Yes, I know!'

'How do you know?'

She'd caught sight of him in the courtyard and hidden.

'Why did you do that?'

Hesitantly, in a voice that trembled, she said:

'I was afraid! . . . yes . . . afraid of you . . . and myself!'

This revelation filled him with a kind of shocked delight. His heart was pounding. She went on:

'Forgive me for not having come before.' And pointing to the little garnet-red wallet with its gold palm-leaf decoration: 'I've embroidered it specially for you and put in it the money that was meant to be guaranteed by the building land at Belleville.'

Frédéric thanked her for her present but told her she ought not to have taken all that trouble.

'No, that's not why I'm here! I was anxious to come and see you and then I shall go back to Brittany!'

She talked about the place where she was living.

It was a low single-storied building with a garden full of huge box trees, and a double avenue of chestnuts going right up to the top of the hill from where you could see the sea.

'I go and sit up there on a bench that I call Frédéric's bench!'

Then she began to look at the furniture, the knick-knacks, the pictures, greedily, so as to be able to carry them away in her mind's eye. The Marshal's portrait was half hidden behind a curtain but her attention was attracted by its whites and golds which stood out against the shadow.

'Isn't that someone I knew?'

'Impossible,' said Frédéric. 'It's an old Italian painting.'

She confessed that she'd like to go for a stroll round the streets, holding his arm.

They went out.

Now and again her pale face stood out in profile against the bright shop-fronts and then once more was wrapped in shadow; they went slowly on their way, amidst the carriages, the crowd and the noise, intent only on themselves, deaf to everything, like a couple walking side by side in the country, over a bed of dead leaves.

They reminisced over days gone by, the dinner parties at the time of *L'Art industriel*, Arnoux's little quirks, the way he used to tug at the points of his collar, smear wax on his moustache, and other more personal and significant matters. How delighted he'd been the first time he heard her sing! How lovely she was on her name-day in Saint-Cloud! He reminded her of the little garden in Auteuil, evenings at the theatre, a meeting on the boulevard, former servants, her black maid.

She was amazed at his memory. However, she said to him:

'At times, your words come back to me like a distant echo, the sound of a bell carried on the wind, and when I'm reading about love in a book, you seem to be there with me.'

'You made me feel everything they criticize as being far-fetched in that sort of book,' he said. 'I can understand men like Werther who aren't put off by Charlotte's sandwich-making.'*

'Oh, you poor dear man!'

She sighed and then after a long pause:

'Never mind, we shall really and truly have loved each other!'

'But without ever being lovers!'

'Perhaps it's better that way,' she said.

'Oh no, it's not! We'd have been so happy!'

'Yes, I think so, with the sort of love you felt!'

And it must have been very strong to survive such a long separation.

Frédéric asked how she'd discovered he loved her.

'It was one evening when you kissed my wrist between my cuff and my glove.* I said to myself, he loves me, he loves me! But I didn't dare find out if that was true. Your discretion was so charming, so adorable, a kind of involuntary confession of your lasting devotion for me.'

He had no regrets. He felt repaid for all he'd suffered in the past.

When they'd gone back to his room, Madame Arnoux took off her hat. In the light of the lamp on the pier table, he saw her hair was white. It was like a punch over the heart.

To hide his disappointment, he sat down on the floor at her knees and, stroking her hands, began to caress her with words:

'For me, the world revolved around you, around your slightest movement. My heart used to be stirred like dust under your feet. You seemed to me like a moonlit summer's night, full of scents and soft shadows, whiteness and infinity; for me your name represented the joys of the flesh and of the spirit, I would keep on repeating it to myself, trying to kiss it with my lips as I spoke. I just couldn't imagine anything beyond that, only Madame Arnoux with her two children, exactly as you were, loving, responsible, dazzlingly beautiful and so kind! That picture blotted out all the others. Not that I even thought of them, for deep down inside me, I could always see your wonderful eyes and hear the music of your voice!'

She listened entranced to these adoring words for the woman she'd once been. Intoxicated by his own rhetoric, Frédéric was beginning to believe what he was saying. With

her back to the lamp Madame Arnoux bent over him; he could feel her breath gently caressing his forehead and the vague contact of her whole body through her clothes. Their hands clasped; the tip of her bootee was sticking out a little from under her dress; he felt faint. He said:

'The sight of your foot is disturbing me.'

She blushed and sprang to her feet. Then, standing stock-still and in a strange tone, like a sleepwalker:

'At my age! Frédéric! No woman has ever been loved like I have! Why worry about not being young? I don't care! I despise all the women who come up here!'

'Oh, there aren't very many,' he said kindly.

Her face lit up. She asked him if he'd be getting married.

He swore he never would.

'Really? Why not?'

'Because of you!' said Frédéric taking her into his arms and holding her tightly.

She stayed there, leaning backwards, looking up at him with her lips parted, and then suddenly pushed him away with a look of despair. As he begged her to answer, she lowered her eyes and said:

'I wish I could have made you happy!'

Frédéric suspected Madame Arnoux of having come to give herself to him and once again felt a wild, frantic surge of lust more violent than ever. Yet he had an indefinable feeling of repugnance, a sort of terror of incest. And there was something else, too, a fear of revulsion later on. And how inconvenient it would be! So, out of caution and from a desire not to tarnish his ideal, he turned away and began to roll a cigarette.

She looked at him wonderingly.

'Oh, I don't know anyone like you, anyone at all, you're so kind and considerate!'

It struck eleven.

'So soon!' she said. 'At quarter past I must go.'

She sat down again but kept her eyes on the clock; he continued to smoke as he walked up and down. Neither could find anything to say. There comes a moment during leave-taking when the loved one is no longer with us.

Finally, when the hand had moved beyond twenty-five past, she slowly gathered the ribbons of her hat.

'Goodbye, Frédéric, my dear, dear Frédéric! I'll never see you again. This is the last thing I'll ever do, as a woman. But I'll always be with you in spirit! And may God bless you and keep you all the days of your life!'

She kissed him on the forehead like a mother.

But she seemed to be looking around for something and asked for a pair of scissors.

She loosened her comb and all her white hair came tumbling down.

Savagely she hacked off a long lock at the roots.

'Keep it! Goodbye!'

When she'd left, Frédéric opened his window. On the pavement, Madame Arnoux signalled to a passing cab. She got in. It drove off.

And that was that.

CHAPTER VII

Towards the beginning of that winter, Frédéric and Deslauriers, reconciled yet again, were sitting chatting by the fireside, fated by their natures to be perpetually meeting and feeling drawn towards each other.

One of them briefly explained how he'd fallen out with Madame Dambreuse who'd then found a second husband, an Englishman.

The other man, without saying how he'd come to marry Mademoiselle Roque, revealed that one fine day his wife had run off with a singer, making him the laughing stock of his prefecture. His attempt to live this down by fanatical devotion to his government duties had led to trouble and he'd been sacked. After that, he'd been put in charge of a colonization project in Algeria, been secretary to a Pasha, chief editor of a newspaper, an advertising agent, and ended up as legal adviser to an industrial firm.

As for Frédéric, after squandering two-thirds of his fortune, he'd settled down to a humdrum middle-class life. They exchanged information about their friends.

Martinon was now a senator.

Hussonnet had got a senior job where he had control of all the theatres and the whole of the Press.

Cisy was steeped in religion, the father of eight children, and living in his ancestral home.

After going in for Fourierism, homeopathy, table-turning, Gothic art and humanitarian painting, Pellerin had become a photographer and he could be seen on posters all over Paris, wearing evening dress, with a huge head and a diminutive body.

'And what about your pal Sénécal?' asked Frédéric.

'I've no idea, he's disappeared. And how about your great passion, Madame Arnoux?'

'She must be in Rome with her son, who's a lieutenant in a light cavalry regiment.'

'And her husband?'

'He died last year.'

'Well, well,' said the lawyer.

Then, rapping his forehead:

'And talking of her, who did I meet in a shop the other day but our good old Marshal, holding the hand of a little boy she's adopted. She's the widow of someone called Oudry and she's got very fat, huge in fact. What a come-down, she used to be so slim.'

Deslauriers didn't hide the fact that he'd taken advantage of her despair to undertake a personal inspection of her slimness.

'As you'd given me permission to, of course.'

This confession was meant to make up for omitting to mention he'd chanced his arm with Madame Arnoux; as it hadn't come off, Frédéric wouldn't have been too put out.

Although rather annoyed at his disclosure, Frédéric pretended to laugh it off; thinking of the Marshal led him on to Vatnaz.

Deslauriers hadn't ever met her, any more than lots of others who used to go to Arnoux's; but he did remember Regimbart very well indeed.

'Is he still alive?'

'Just about. Every evening without fail, he totters along

bent double past all the cafés from the rue de Gramont to the rue Montmartre, just an empty ghost of a man.'

'And how about Compain?'

In a jubilant voice, Frédéric asked the former commissioner of the Provisional Government to explain the mystery of the calves' head.

'It's an English import, a parody of the ceremony which the Royalists used to celebrate on 30 January: Independents* organized an annual banquet when they ate calves' head and drank red wine out of calves' skulls to toast the extermination of the Stuarts. After Thermidor* some Terrorists set up a similar sort of club, which goes to show that stupidity is very catching.

'You seem to have calmed down a lot in your politics.'

'It's age,' replied the lawyer.

And they went back over their lives.

They'd both been failures, the one who'd dreamed of Love and the one who'd dreamed of Power. How had it come about?

'Perhaps it was lack of perseverance?' said Frédéric.

'For you maybe. For me, it was the other way round, I was too rigid, I didn't take into account a hundred and one smaller things that are more crucial than all the rest. I was too logical and you were too sentimental.'

Then they blamed it on their bad luck, the circumstances, the times in which they'd been born.

Frédéric went on:

'It's not what we expected to become, back in Sens, when you wanted to write a critical history of philosophy and I was going to write a grand medieval novel about Nogent on a subject I'd found in Froissart: "How Sir Brokars de Fenestrage and the Bishop of Troyes assailed Sir Eustache d'Ambrecicourt". Do you remember?'

And as they exhumed their youth, at every sentence they kept saying:

'Do you remember?'

They could see the school playground, the chapel, the parlour, the fencing room at the foot of the stairs, the faces of masters and pupils, a certain Angelmarre from Versailles,

who used to cut his trouser-straps out of old boots, Monsieur Mirbal and his red whiskers, the two teachers of geometrical and free-hand drawing, Varaud and Suriret, who were at daggers drawn, and the Pole, the fellow countryman of Copernicus, with his planetary system made out of cardboard, an itinerant astronomer whose lecture fee was a free meal in the dining-hall; and that dreadful booze-up, on an excursion, their first pipe, Speech Day, the thrill of the holidays . . .

It was in the course of the summer holidays in 1837 that they'd paid a visit to the Turkish woman.

Her real name was Zoraïde Turc and many people thought she was a Muslim, an actual Turk, thus adding to the poetic charm of her establishment, which was situated down at the water's edge, behind the ramparts; even in high summer, there was shade round the house, which could be recognized from its goldfish bowl standing on the window-sill, next to a pot of mignonettes. Young women in white bed-jackets with rouged cheeks and long ear-rings would tap on the window-pane as men went by and at night would stand in the doorway, gently humming in husky voices.

This den of vice projected an amazing aura throughout the whole district. People would refer to it indirectly as 'that place you know', 'a certain street', 'below the bridges'. Farmers' wives in the neighbourhood used to tremble for their husbands, middle-class ladies were terrified for their maids, because the Deputy Prefect's cook had been caught there; and, needless to say, it was the secret obsession of every adolescent.

So one Sunday, while everyone was at Vespers, Frédéric and Deslauriers, having previously got their hair curled, picked some flowers in Madame Moreau's garden, left by the back way over the fields, took a roundabout path through the vineyards, came back via the fishery and slipped down to the Turkish woman's house, still clasping their large bouquets.

Frédéric held his out like a sweetheart offering flowers to his bride-to-be. But the heat, fear of the unknown, a vague

logic =
Oesl
Sant =
Prod

Nostalgia
Ramus

feeling of guilt, and even the thrill of seeing, at one glance, so many women at his disposal, upset him so much that he went very pale and stood rooted to the spot, unable to speak. The women were all laughing, amused by his embarrassment; thinking they were making fun of him, he turned tail and fled; and since he was holding the money, Deslauriers was obliged to follow him.

They were seen leaving the house; the scandal this aroused still lingered on three years later.

They told each other the story at great length, each filling in the details left out by the other, and when they'd reached the end:

'Ah, that was our best time!' said Frédéric.

'Could be? Yes, that was our best time!' said Deslauriers.

* Aspirations to Flaubert were far better than
Actuality, And for that matter far more
Reliable.

* This is shown at the end of novel, where it
two old friends (Frédéric & Deslauriers) reminiscing
about things that never happen to them
One was too logical the other too sentimental.

* Realism vs. Idealism

HISTORICAL SKETCH

- 1830 July Republican-led uprising in Paris forces abdication of Charles X. With support of Thiers, Lafayette, and Laffitte, Louis-Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, proclaimed King of the French under a more liberal constitutional Charter. Thwarted republicans form anti-monarchical secret societies.
- 1831 Anti-clerical working-class riots in Paris and first of several uprisings of Lyons silk-workers put down.
- 1832 The Duchesse de Berry (Charles X's daughter-in-law) makes futile attempt to restore her son the Duc de Chambord, the Legitimist Pretender (Henri V). Anti-monarchical riots at funeral of a republican general.
- 1833 Secret republican Société des Amis du Peuple suppressed; Société des Droits de l'Homme formed.
- 1834 Failed uprising in Lyons; Paris uprising ruthlessly repressed by order of interior Minister Thiers; massacre of the rue Transnonain (p. 253).
- 1835 Fieschi's attempted assassination of the king. September Laws muzzle the Press (p. 62).
- 1836 Louis Napoleon (Napoleon I's nephew and Bonapartist pretender) makes abortive coup. *La Presse* and *Le Siècle* (popular democratic newspapers) founded (pp. 115, 173, 341).
- 1839 Major insurrection, organized by the extreme revolutionary Société des Saisons, captures the Paris Hôtel de Ville but is crushed. Ringleaders (left-wing republican Barbès, the terrorist Blanqui, Austen, Steuben) imprisoned on Mont-Saint-Michel. Little further organized republican activity but criticism in Press and in books continues. Socialist Louis Blanc publishes *L'Organisation du travail* asserting the right to work.

1840

Louis Napoleon makes another failed coup. Socialist Proudhon publishes *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* (*What is property?* His answer: Property is theft).

Diplomatic defeat of France over Egyptian-Turkish conflict (pp. 62, 285). Guizot (conservative centre-right) replaces Thiers as virtual head of government until 1848.

1841

La Revue indépendante founded by humanitarian socialist Pierre Leroux and republican feminist George Sand.

1842

Cabet publishes *Voyage en Icarie* (p. 148).

1845

Ledru-Rollin (radical parliamentary leader) becomes leading republican on death of Godefroi Cavaignac (brother of General Cavaignac, see under 1848).

1846

Attempted assassination of king by Lecomte. The Spanish marriages (p. 151) and the Pritchard affair (p. 31). Harvest failure in large areas of France (p. 150).

1847

The Duc d'Aumale (the king's fourth son) accepts Algerian surrender. Lamartine publishes *Les Girondins* (p. 252). Financial scandals involving government officials. As political meetings are banned, campaign of banquets seeking electoral reform is launched.

1848 February
and March

Demonstrators in favour of final banned banquet fired on. Fighting breaks out; the king abdicates; Second Republic proclaimed, with Provisional Government including Ledru-Rollin, Lamartine, Flocon (editor of extreme left-wing republican newspaper *La Réforme*). National Workshops to counter unemployment set up but soon unable to cope with increasing number of workless. Louis Blanc made chairman of government commission on labour relations sitting in the Luxembourg Palace. Clubs of all factions (including a *Club des Femmes*, see pp. 324, 337) proliferate.

April
and May

Constituent Assembly to draw up new constitution elected by universal male suffrage and contains mainly moderates. Provisional Government replaced by an Executive Commission.

June

15 May: Assembly invaded by left-wing revolutionary mob; its attempt to dissolve it and set up a new government fails.

Assembly votes to close National Workshops; ensuing working-class insurrection crushed with heavy bloodshed by War Minister General Cavaignac and General Lamoricière (both fresh from North Africa); Cavaignac given dictatorial powers. Louis Blanc takes refuge in England; Barbès, Blanqui, and Albert (former working-class representatives in the Provisional Government) arrested. Many clubs and newspapers closed.

December

Louis Napoleon, with support of Thiers and reactionary rue de Poitiers Committee (p. 395), is elected President of the Second Republic under the new constitution.

1849 May

Constituent Assembly dissolves itself (p. 387, Râteau motion); a new, strongly right-wing Legislative Assembly elected.

June

French expeditionary force despatched to help crush the newly established Roman Republic; republican demonstration against this action put down (see note to p. 395 on Conservatorium also note to p. 433 on Roman Republic).

1850

Reaction continues (p. 433).

1851 2 December

Louis Napoleon seizes power in military coup with little opposition (pp. 452-5).