

and marry girls of eighteen?

For three hours I wandered about the grounds. I waited for this rival with the same impatience with which I once waited for Irinel to come quickly from school. Am I deceiving myself or not? The same sensations, identically the same, were present with me, waiting thus for the object of my hatred as when I waited for her I loved. I wanted to see him as soon as possible; for a second; just to know him; to find out who he was.

At ten o'clock a carriage drew up in front of the door. Some one got out. When I saw him I began to laugh. He was very feeble, he was very old. No doubt he was smart with his black coat and red tie. I greeted him with respect, I might almost say with affection, and then, sorry at having felt hatred for such an old man, with such snowwhite hair, I went quietly into the garden. I turned down one of the paths. How sad and drear do the most beautiful natural surroundings become when they are reflected by a sad and lonely heart? What indifference everywhere!

The garden gate was opened rather hastily as though the wind had forced it. Irinel appeared. She looked all round, then, seeing me, she flew towards me. The breeze which she made by her flight fluttered her thin gown of white batiste with black spots.

She was pale. She took my hand. Her own trembled. She tried to speak, and said several times:

"Wait, wait, wait while I get my breath----"

Then she became silent and looked at me. Oh, what a look! Her eyes flashed sparks. Their blue depths seemed to me like an incomprehensible ocean, tempest driven, without bottom, without boundaries. I looked down, overwhelmed by an inexplicable fear, by a powerful emotion. I noticed my boots, and I thought to myself: "Have they cleaned my boots to-day or not? Of course, they must have. Don't they clean them every day?"

"Iorgu, do you know why that old man has come?"

"No," I answered her, with a stupid calm.

Had they cleaned my boots? Perhaps the dew was still on the grass.

"Iorgu, do you know what Father said to me?"

"No."

"Put on your foulard gown."

"Your foulard gown? The one I like so much?"

"But do you know why he wanted me to?"

"Of course I do."

She trembled.

I continued, as I took out my handkerchief and flicked the dust from one of my boots:

"Of course I know. Isn't to-day a great festival?"

"Ah," she replied as she withdrew the hand I was holding, "you understand nothing! What an indifferent and non-understanding man you are!"

Indifferent? I understood everything from her look and her emotion, and with a calmness which I was certainly far from feeling I bent down and dusted the other boot.

"The old man has come, Irinel----" I said, glancing at her for