MADAME BOVARY

(ILLUSTRATED)

By

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Translated from the French by Eleanor Marx Aveling

ILLUSTRATED & PUBLISHED

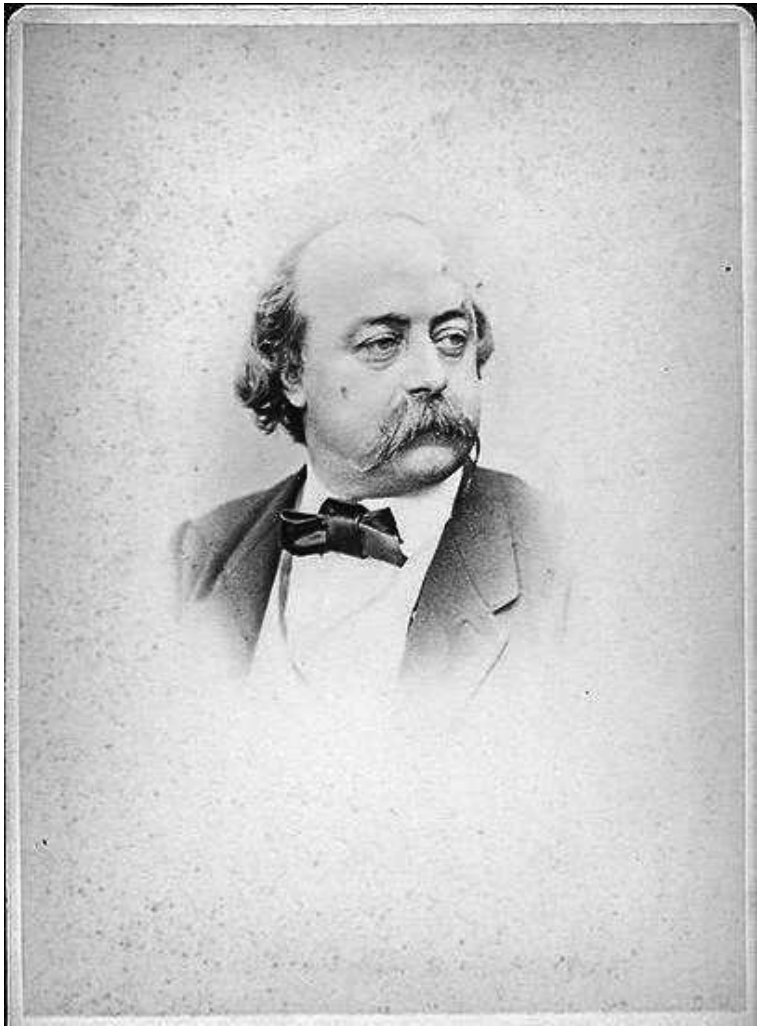
BY

SEVEN BOOKS

Aydın

ISBN: 978-9403-822-58-7

ABOUT AUTHOR



Flaubert, photographed by Nadar

Gustave Flaubert (French: December 12, 1821 – May 8, 1880) was an influential French writer widely considered one of the greatest novelists in Western literature. He is known especially for his first published novel, *Madame Bovary* (1857), for his *Correspondence*, and for

his scrupulous devotion to his style and aesthetics. The celebrated short story writer Maupassant was a protégé of Flaubert.

Life

Early life and education

Flaubert was born on December 12, 1821, in Rouen, in the Seine-Maritime department of Upper Normandy, in northern France. He was the second son of Anne Justine Caroline (née Fleuriot; 1793–1872) and Achille-Cléophas Flaubert (1784–1846), a surgeon. He began writing at an early age, as early as eight according to some sources.

He was educated at the *Lycée Pierre Corneille* in Rouen, and did not leave until 1840, when he went to Paris to study law. In Paris, he was an indifferent student and found the city distasteful. He made a few acquaintances, including Victor Hugo. Toward the end of 1840, he traveled in the Pyrenees and Corsica. In 1846, after an attack of epilepsy, he left Paris and abandoned the study of law.

Writing career

His first finished work was *November*, a novella, which was completed in 1842.

In September 1849, Flaubert completed the first version of a novel, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*. He read the novel aloud to Louis Bouilhet and Maxime Du Camp over the course of four days, not allowing them to interrupt or give any opinions. At the end of the reading, his friends told him to throw the manuscript in the fire, suggesting instead that he focus on day-to-day life rather than fantastic subjects.

In 1850, after returning from Egypt, Flaubert began work on *Madame Bovary*. The novel, which took five years to write, was serialized in the *Revue de Paris* in 1856. The government brought an action against the publisher and author on the charge of immorality, which was heard

during the following year, but both were acquitted. When *Madame Bovary* appeared in book form, it met with a warm reception.

In 1858, Flaubert traveled to Carthage to gather material for his next novel, *Salammbô*. The novel was completed in 1862 after four years of work.

Drawing on his youth, Flaubert next wrote *L'Éducation sentimentale* (*Sentimental Education*), an effort that took seven years. This was his last complete novel, published in the year 1869.

He wrote an unsuccessful drama, *Le Candidat,* and published a reworked version of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, portions of which had been published as early as 1857. He devoted much of his time to an ongoing project, *Les Deux Cloportes (The Two Woodlice)*, which later became *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, breaking from the obsessive project only to write the *Three Tales* in 1877. This book comprised three stories: *Un Cœur simple* (*A Simple Heart*), *La Légende de Saint-Julien l'Hospitalier* (*The Legend of St. Julian the Hospitaller*), and *Hérodias* (*Herodias*). After the publication of the stories, he spent the remainder of his life toiling on the unfinished *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, which was posthumously printed in 1881. It was a grand satire on the futility of human knowledge and the ubiquity of mediocrity. He believed the work to be his masterpiece, though the posthumous version received lukewarm reviews. Flaubert was a prolific letter writer, and his letters have been collected in several publications.

At the time of his death, he may have been working on a further historical novel, based on the Battle of Thermopylae.

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PREFACE (ABOUT THE BOOK)

Madame Bovary (1856) is the French writer Gustave Flaubert's debut novel. The story focuses on a doctor's wife, Emma Bovary, who has adulterous affairs and lives beyond her means in order to escape the banalities and emptiness of provincial life. Though the basic plot is rather simple, even archetypal, the novel's true art lies in its details and hidden patterns. Flaubert was a notorious perfectionist and claimed always to be searching for *le mot juste* ("the precise word").

When it was first serialized in *La Revue de Paris* between 1 October 1856 and 15 December 1856, the novel was attacked for obscenity by public prosecutors. The resulting trial, held in January 1857, made the story notorious. After Flaubert's acquittal on 7 February 1857, *Madame Bovary* became a bestseller when it was published as a single volume in April 1857. Flaubert's masterpiece is now considered a seminal work of realism and one of the most influential novels ever written. In fact, the notable British-American critic James Wood writes in *How Fiction Works*: "Flaubert established for good or ill, what most readers think of as modern realist narration, and his influence is almost too familiar to be visible".

Plot Summary

Madame Bovary takes place in provincial northern France, near the town of Rouen in Normandy. The story begins and ends with Charles Bovary, a stolid, kindhearted man without much ability or ambition. As the novel opens, Charles is a shy, oddly dressed teenager arriving at a new school amidst the ridicule of his new classmates. Later, Charles struggles his way to a second-rate medical degree and becomes an *officier de santé* in the Public Health Service. His mother chooses a wife for him, an unpleasant but supposedly rich widow named Heloise Dubuc, and Charles sets out to build a practice in the village of Tostes (now Tôtes).

One day, Charles visits a local farm to set the owner's broken leg, and meets his client's daughter, Emma Rouault. Emma is a beautiful, daintily dressed young woman who has received a "good education" in a convent and who has a latent but powerful yearning for luxury and romance imbibed from the popular novels she has read. Charles is immediately attracted to her, and begins checking on his patient far more often than necessary until Heloise's jealousy puts a stop to the visits. When Heloise dies, Charles waits a decent interval, then begins courting Emma in earnest. Her father gives his consent, and Emma and Charles are married.

At this point, the novel begins to focus on Emma. Charles means well, but is boring and clumsy, and after he and Emma attend a ball given by the Marquis d'Andervilliers, Emma grows disillusioned with married life and becomes dull and listless. Charles consequently decides that his wife needs a change of scenery, and moves from the village of Tostes into a larger, but equally stultifying market town, Yonville (traditionally based on the town of Ry). Here, Emma gives birth to a daughter, Berthe; however, motherhood, too, proves to be a disappointment to Emma. She then becomes infatuated with one of the first intelligent young men she meets in Yonville, a young law student, Léon Dupuis, who seems to share her appreciation for "the finer things in life", and who returns her admiration. Out of fear and shame, however, Emma hides her love for Léon and her contempt for Charles, and plays the role of the devoted wife and mother, all the while consoling herself with thoughts and self-congratulations for her own virtue. Finally, in despair of ever gaining Emma's affection, Léon departs to study in Paris.

One day, a rich and rakish landowner, Rodolphe Boulanger, brings a servant to the doctor's office to be bled. He casts his eye over Emma and decides she is ripe for seduction. To this end, he invites Emma to go riding with him for the sake of her health; solicitous only for Emma's health, Charles embraces the plan, suspecting nothing. A four-

year affair follows. Swept away by romantic fantasy, Emma risks compromising herself with indiscreet letters and visits to her lover, and finally insists on making a plan to run away with him. Rodolphe, however, has no intention of carrying Emma off, and ends the relationship on the eve of the great elopement with an apologetic, self-excusing letter delivered at the bottom of a basket of apricots. The shock is so great that Emma falls deathly ill, and briefly turns to religion.

When Emma is nearly fully recovered, she and Charles attend the opera, on Charles' insistence, in nearby Rouen. The opera reawakens Emma's passions, and she re-encounters Léon who, now educated and working in Rouen, is also attending the opera. They begin an affair. While Charles believes that she is taking piano lessons, Emma travels to the city each week to meet Léon, always in the same room of the same hotel, which the two come to view as their "home." The love affair is, at first, ecstatic; then, by degrees, Léon grows bored with Emma's emotional excesses, and Emma grows ambivalent about Léon, who becoming himself more like the mistress in the relationship, compares poorly, at least implicitly, to the rakish and domineering Rodolphe. Meanwhile, Emma, given over to vanity, purchases increasing amounts of luxury items on credit from the crafty merchant, Lheureux, who arranges for her to obtain power of attorney over Charles' estate, and crushing levels of debts mount quickly.

When Lheureux calls in Bovary's debt, Emma pleads for money from several people, including Léon and Rodolphe, only to be turned down. In despair, she swallows arsenic and dies an agonizing death; even the romance of suicide fails her. Charles, heartbroken, abandons himself to grief, preserves Emma's room as if it is a shrine, and in an attempt to keep her memory alive, adopts several of her attitudes and tastes. In his last months, he stops working and lives off the sale of his possessions. When he by chance discovers Rodolphe and Léon's love letters, he still tries to understand and forgive. Soon after, he becomes

reclusive; what has not already been sold of his possessions is seized to pay off Lheureux, and he dies, leaving his young daughter Berthe to live with distant relatives and she is eventually sent to work at a cotton mill.

Chapter-by-chapter

Part One

1. Charles Bovary's childhood, student days
2. First marriage, Charles meets Rouault and his daughter Emma; Charles's first wife dies
3. Charles proposes to Emma
4. The wedding
5. The new household at Tostes
6. An account of Emma's childhood and secret fantasy world
7. Emma becomes bored; invitation to a ball by the Marquis d'Andervilliers
8. The ball at the château La Vaubyessard
9. Emma follows fashions; her boredom concerns Charles, and they decide to move; they find out she is pregnant

Part Two

1. Description of Yonville-l'Abbaye: Homais, Lestiboudois, Binet, Bournisien, Lheureux
2. Emma meets Léon Dupuis, the lawyer's clerk
3. Emma gives birth to Berthe, visits her at the nurse's house with Léon
4. A card game; Emma's friendship with Léon grows
5. Trip to see flax mill; Lheureux's pitch; Emma is resigned to her life
6. Emma visits the priest Bournisien; Berthe is injured; Léon leaves for Paris
7. Charles's mother bans novels; the blood-letting of Rodolphe's farmhand; Rodolphe meets Emma

8. The *comice agricole* (agricultural show); Rodolphe woos Emma
9. Six weeks later Rodolphe returns and they go out riding; he seduces her and the affair begins
10. Emma crosses paths with Binet; Rodolphe gets nervous; a letter from her father makes Emma repent
11. Operation on Hippolyte's clubfoot; M. Canivet has to amputate; Emma returns to Rodolphe
12. Emma's extravagant presents; quarrel with mother-in-law; plans to elope
13. Rodolphe runs away; Emma falls gravely ill
14. Charles is beset by bills; Emma turns to religion; Homais and Bournisien argue
15. Emma meets Léon at performance of *Lucie de Lammermoor*

Part Three

1. Emma and Léon converse; tour of Rouen Cathedral; cab-ride synecdoche
2. Emma goes to Homais; the arsenic; Bovary senior's death; Lheureux's bill
3. She visits Léon in Rouen
4. She resumes "piano lessons" on Thursdays
5. Visits to Léon; the singing tramp; Emma starts to fiddle the accounts
6. Emma becomes noticeably anxious; debts spiral out of control
7. Emma begs for money from several people
8. Rodolphe cannot help; she swallows arsenic; her death
9. Emma lies in state
10. The funeral
11. Charles finds letter; his death

Characters

Emma Bovary

Emma is the novel's protagonist and is the main source of the novel's title (Charles's mother and his former wife are also referred to as Madame Bovary, while their daughter remains Mademoiselle Bovary). She has a highly romanticized view of the world and craves beauty, wealth, passion, and high society. It is the disparity between these romantic ideals and the realities of her country life that drive most of the novel, most notably leading her into two extramarital love affairs as well as causing her to accrue an insurmountable amount of debt that eventually leads to her suicide.

Charles Bovary

Emma's husband, Charles Bovary, is a very simple and common man. He is a country doctor by profession, but is, as in everything else, not very good at it. He is in fact not qualified enough to be termed a doctor, but is instead an *officier de santé*, or "health officer". Charles adores his wife and finds her faultless, despite obvious evidence to the contrary. He never suspects her affairs and gives her complete control over his finances, thereby securing his own ruin. Despite Charles's complete devotion to Emma, she despises him as he is the epitome of all that is dull and common.

Rodolphe Boulanger

Rodolphe is a wealthy local man who seduces Emma as one more addition to a long string of mistresses. Though occasionally charmed by Emma, Rodolphe feels little true emotion towards her. As Emma becomes more and more desperate, Rodolphe loses interest and worries about her lack of caution. After his decision to escape with Emma he resigns and feels unable to handle it especially with the existence of her new daughter, Berthe.

Léon Dupuis

Léon is a clerk who has an affair with Madame Emma Bovary. He is the second person Emma has an affair with, after Rodolphe Boulanger.

Monsieur Lheureux

A manipulative and sly merchant who continually convinces people in Yonville to buy goods on credit and borrow money from him. Having led many small businesspeople into financial ruin to support his own business ambitions, Lheureux lends money to Charles and plays Emma masterfully, leading the Bovarys so far into debt as to cause their financial ruin and Emma's subsequent suicide.

Monsieur Homais

Monsieur Homais is the town pharmacist. He is vehemently anti-clerical and an atheist. He also practices medicine without a license, and although he pretends to be Charles Bovary's best friend, he actively undermines Bovary's medical practice by luring away his patients and by setting Charles up to attempt a difficult surgery, which fails and destroys Charles's professional credibility in Yonville.

Madame Homais

The wife of Monsieur Homais, Madame Homais is a simple woman whose life revolves around her husband and four children.

Justin

Monsieur Homais' apprentice and second cousin. He had been taken into the house from charity and was useful at the same time as a servant. At one point he steals the key to the medical supply room, and is tricked by Emma into opening a container of arsenic so she can "kill some rats keeping her awake". She however eats the arsenic herself.

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MADAME BOVARY
By Gustave Flaubert
Translated from the French by Eleanor Marx-Aveling

To Marie-Antoine-Jules Senard Member of the Paris Bar, Ex-President of the National Assembly, and Former Minister of the Interior Dear and Illustrious Friend, Permit me to inscribe your name at the head of this book, and above its dedication; for it is to you, before all, that I owe its publication. Reading over your magnificent defence, my work has acquired for myself, as it were, an unexpected authority.

Accept, then, here, the homage of my gratitude, which, how great soever it is, will never attain the height of your eloquence and your devotion.

Gustave Flaubert, Paris, 12 April 1857

MADAME BOVARY

PART I

CHAPTER ONE

We were in class when the head-master came in, followed by a "new fellow," not wearing the school uniform, and a school servant carrying a large desk. Those who had been asleep woke up, and every one rose as if just surprised at his work.

The head-master made a sign to us to sit down. Then, turning to the class-master, he said to him in a low voice—

"Monsieur Roger, here is a pupil whom I recommend to your care; he'll be in the second. If his work and conduct are satisfactory, he will go into one of the upper classes, as becomes his age."

The "new fellow," standing in the corner behind the door so that he could hardly be seen, was a country lad of about fifteen, and taller than any of us. His hair was cut square on his forehead like a village chorister's; he looked reliable, but very ill at ease. Although he was not

broad-shouldered, his short school jacket of green cloth with black buttons must have been tight about the arm-holes, and showed at the opening of the cuffs red wrists accustomed to being bare. His legs, in blue stockings, looked out from beneath yellow trousers, drawn tight by braces, He wore stout, ill-cleaned, hob-nailed boots.

We began repeating the lesson. He listened with all his ears, as attentive as if at a sermon, not daring even to cross his legs or lean on his elbow; and when at two o'clock the bell rang, the master was obliged to tell him to fall into line with the rest of us.

When we came back to work, we were in the habit of throwing our caps on the ground so as to have our hands more free; we used from the door to toss them under the form, so that they hit against the wall and made a lot of dust: it was "the thing."

But, whether he had not noticed the trick, or did not dare to attempt it, the "new fellow," was still holding his cap on his knees even after prayers were over. It was one of those head-gears of composite order, in which we can find traces of the bearskin, shako, billycock hat, sealskin cap, and cotton night-cap; one of those poor things, in fine, whose dumb ugliness has depths of expression, like an imbecile's face. Oval, stiffened with whalebone, it began with three round knobs; then came in succession lozenges of velvet and rabbit-skin separated by a red band; after that a sort of bag that ended in a cardboard polygon covered with complicated braiding, from which hung, at the end of a long thin cord, small twisted gold threads in the manner of a tassel. The cap was new; its peak shone.

"Rise," said the master.

He stood up; his cap fell. The whole class began to laugh. He stooped to pick it up. A neighbor knocked it down again with his elbow; he picked it up once more.

"Get rid of your helmet," said the master, who was a bit of a wag.

There was a burst of laughter from the boys, which so thoroughly put the poor lad out of countenance that he did not know whether to

keep his cap in his hand, leave it on the ground, or put it on his head. He sat down again and placed it on his knee.

"Rise," repeated the master, "and tell me your name."

The new boy articulated in a stammering voice an unintelligible name.

"Again!"

The same sputtering of syllables was heard, drowned by the tittering of the class.

"Louder!" cried the master; "louder!"

The "new fellow" then took a supreme resolution, opened an inordinately large mouth, and shouted at the top of his voice as if calling someone in the word "Charbovari."

A hubbub broke out, rose in crescendo with bursts of shrill voices (they yelled, barked, stamped, repeated "Charbovari! Charbovari"), then died away into single notes, growing quieter only with great difficulty, and now and again suddenly recommencing along the line of a form whence rose here and there, like a damp cracker going off, a stifled laugh.

However, amid a rain of impositions, order was gradually re-established in the class; and the master having succeeded in catching the name of "Charles Bovary," having had it dictated to him, spelt out, and re-read, at once ordered the poor devil to go and sit down on the punishment form at the foot of the master's desk. He got up, but before going hesitated.

"What are you looking for?" asked the master.

"My c-a-p," timidly said the "new fellow," casting troubled looks round him.

"Five hundred lines for all the class!" shouted in a furious voice stopped, like the Quos ego*, a fresh outburst. "Silence!" continued the master indignantly, wiping his brow with his handkerchief, which he had just taken from his cap. "As to you, 'new boy,' you will conjugate 'ridiculus sum'** twenty times."

Then, in a gentler tone, "Come, you'll find your cap again; it hasn't been stolen."

*A quotation from the Aeneid signifying a threat.

**I am ridiculous.

Quiet was restored. Heads bent over desks, and the "new fellow" remained for two hours in an exemplary attitude, although from time to time some paper pellet flipped from the tip of a pen came bang in his face. But he wiped his face with one hand and continued motionless, his eyes lowered.

In the evening, at preparation, he pulled out his pens from his desk, arranged his small belongings, and carefully ruled his paper. We saw him working conscientiously, looking up every word in the dictionary, and taking the greatest pains. Thanks, no doubt, to the willingness he showed, he had not to go down to the class below. But though he knew his rules passably, he had little finish in composition. It was the cure of his village who had taught him his first Latin; his parents, from motives of economy, having sent him to school as late as possible.

His father, Monsieur Charles Denis Bartolome Bovary, retired assistant-surgeon-major, compromised about 1812 in certain conscription scandals, and forced at this time to leave the service, had taken advantage of his fine figure to get hold of a dowry of sixty thousand francs that offered in the person of a hosier's daughter who had fallen in love with his good looks. A fine man, a great talker, making his spurs ring as he walked, wearing whiskers that ran into his moustache, his fingers always garnished with rings and dressed in loud colours, he had the dash of a military man with the easy go of a commercial traveller.

Once married, he lived for three or four years on his wife's fortune, dining well, rising late, smoking long porcelain pipes, not coming in at night till after the theatre, and haunting cafes. The father-in-law died, leaving little; he was indignant at this, "went in for the business," lost

some money in it, then retired to the country, where he thought he would make money.

But, as he knew no more about farming than calico, as he rode his horses instead of sending them to plough, drank his cider in bottle instead of selling it in cask, ate the finest poultry in his farmyard, and greased his hunting-boots with the fat of his pigs, he was not long in finding out that he would do better to give up all speculation.

For two hundred francs a year he managed to live on the border of the provinces of Caux and Picardy, in a kind of place half farm, half private house; and here, soured, eaten up with regrets, cursing his luck, jealous of everyone, he shut himself up at the age of forty-five, sick of men, he said, and determined to live at peace.

His wife had adored him once on a time; she had bored him with a thousand servilities that had only estranged him the more. Lively once, expansive and affectionate, in growing older she had become (after the fashion of wine that, exposed to air, turns to vinegar) ill-tempered, grumbling, irritable. She had suffered so much without complaint at first, until she had seem him going after all the village drabs, and until a score of bad houses sent him back to her at night, weary, stinking drunk. Then her pride revolted. After that she was silent, burying her anger in a dumb stoicism that she maintained till her death. She was constantly going about looking after business matters. She called on the lawyers, the president, remembered when bills fell due, got them renewed, and at home ironed, sewed, washed, looked after the workmen, paid the accounts, while he, troubling himself about nothing, eternally besotted in sleepy sulkiness, whence he only roused himself to say disagreeable things to her, sat smoking by the fire and spitting into the cinders.

When she had a child, it had to be sent out to nurse. When he came home, the lad was spoilt as if he were a prince. His mother stuffed him with jam; his father let him run about barefoot, and, playing the philosopher, even said he might as well go about quite naked like the

young of animals. As opposed to the maternal ideas, he had a certain virile idea of childhood on which he sought to mould his son, wishing him to be brought up hardily, like a Spartan, to give him a strong constitution. He sent him to bed without any fire, taught him to drink off large draughts of rum and to jeer at religious processions. But, peaceable by nature, the lad answered only poorly to his notions. His mother always kept him near her; she cut out cardboard for him, told him tales, entertained him with endless monologues full of melancholy gaiety and charming nonsense. In her life's isolation she centered on the child's head all her shattered, broken little vanities. She dreamed of high station; she already saw him, tall, handsome, clever, settled as an engineer or in the law. She taught him to read, and even, on an old piano, she had taught him two or three little songs. But to all this Monsieur Bovary, caring little for letters, said, "It was not worth while. Would they ever have the means to send him to a public school, to buy him a practice, or start him in business? Besides, with cheek a man always gets on in the world." Madame Bovary bit her lips, and the child knocked about the village.

He went after the labourers, drove away with clods of earth the ravens that were flying about. He ate blackberries along the hedges, minded the geese with a long switch, went haymaking during harvest, ran about in the woods, played hop-scotch under the church porch on rainy days, and at great fetes begged the beadle to let him toll the bells, that he might hang all his weight on the long rope and feel himself borne upward by it in its swing. Meanwhile he grew like an oak; he was strong on hand, fresh of colour.

When he was twelve years old his mother had her own way; he began lessons. The cure took him in hand; but the lessons were so short and irregular that they could not be of much use. They were given at spare moments in the sacristy, standing up, hurriedly, between a baptism and a burial; or else the cure, if he had not to go out, sent for his pupil after the Angelus*. They went up to his room and settled

down; the flies and moths fluttered round the candle. It was close, the child fell asleep, and the good man, beginning to doze with his hands on his stomach, was soon snoring with his mouth wide open. On other occasions, when Monsieur le Cure, on his way back after administering the viaticum to some sick person in the neighbourhood, caught sight of Charles playing about the fields, he called him, lectured him for a quarter of an hour and took advantage of the occasion to make him conjugate his verb at the foot of a tree. The rain interrupted them or an acquaintance passed. All the same he was always pleased with him, and even said the "young man" had a very good memory.

*A devotion said at morning, noon, and evening, at the sound of a bell. Here, the evening prayer.

Charles could not go on like this. Madame Bovary took strong steps. Ashamed, or rather tired out, Monsieur Bovary gave in without a struggle, and they waited one year longer, so that the lad should take his first communion.

Six months more passed, and the year after Charles was finally sent to school at Rouen, where his father took him towards the end of October, at the time of the St. Romain fair.

It would now be impossible for any of us to remember anything about him. He was a youth of even temperament, who played in playtime, worked in school-hours, was attentive in class, slept well in the dormitory, and ate well in the refectory. He had in loco parentis* a wholesale ironmonger in the Rue Ganterie, who took him out once a month on Sundays after his shop was shut, sent him for a walk on the quay to look at the boats, and then brought him back to college at seven o'clock before supper. Every Thursday evening he wrote a long letter to his mother with red ink and three wafers; then he went over his history note-books, or read an old volume of "Anarchasis" that was knocking about the study. When he went for walks he talked to the servant, who, like himself, came from the country.

*In place of a parent.

By dint of hard work he kept always about the middle of the class; once even he got a certificate in natural history. But at the end of his third year his parents withdrew him from the school to make him study medicine, convinced that he could even take his degree by himself.

His mother chose a room for him on the fourth floor of a dyer's she knew, overlooking the Eau-de-Robec. She made arrangements for his board, got him furniture, table and two chairs, sent home for an old cherry-tree bedstead, and bought besides a small cast-iron stove with the supply of wood that was to warm the poor child.

Then at the end of a week she departed, after a thousand injunctions to be good now that he was going to be left to himself.

The syllabus that he read on the notice-board stunned him; lectures on anatomy, lectures on pathology, lectures on physiology, lectures on pharmacy, lectures on botany and clinical medicine, and therapeutics, without counting hygiene and materia medica—all names of whose etymologies he was ignorant, and that were to him as so many doors to sanctuaries filled with magnificent darkness.

He understood nothing of it all; it was all very well to listen—he did not follow. Still he worked; he had bound note-books, he attended all the courses, never missed a single lecture. He did his little daily task like a mill-horse, who goes round and round with his eyes bandaged, not knowing what work he is doing.

To spare him expense his mother sent him every week by the carrier a piece of veal baked in the oven, with which he lunched when he came back from the hospital, while he sat kicking his feet against the wall. After this he had to run off to lectures, to the operation-room, to the hospital, and return to his home at the other end of the town. In the evening, after the poor dinner of his landlord, he went back to his room and set to work again in his wet clothes, which smoked as he sat in front of the hot stove.

On the fine summer evenings, at the time when the close streets are empty, when the servants are playing shuttle-cock at the doors, he

opened his window and leaned out. The river, that makes of this quarter of Rouen a wretched little Venice, flowed beneath him, between the bridges and the railings, yellow, violet, or blue. Working men, kneeling on the banks, washed their bare arms in the water. On poles projecting from the attics, skeins of cotton were drying in the air. Opposite, beyond the roots spread the pure heaven with the red sun setting. How pleasant it must be at home! How fresh under the beech-tree! And he expanded his nostrils to breathe in the sweet odours of the country which did not reach him.

He grew thin, his figure became taller, his face took a saddened look that made it nearly interesting. Naturally, through indifference, he abandoned all the resolutions he had made. Once he missed a lecture; the next day all the lectures; and, enjoying his idleness, little by little, he gave up work altogether. He got into the habit of going to the public-house, and had a passion for dominoes. To shut himself up every evening in the dirty public room, to push about on marble tables the small sheep bones with black dots, seemed to him a fine proof of his freedom, which raised him in his own esteem. It was beginning to see life, the sweetness of stolen pleasures; and when he entered, he put his hand on the door-handle with a joy almost sensual. Then many things hidden within him came out; he learnt couplets by heart and sang them to his boon companions, became enthusiastic about Beranger, learnt how to make punch, and, finally, how to make love.

Thanks to these preparatory labours, he failed completely in his examination for an ordinary degree. He was expected home the same night to celebrate his success. He started on foot, stopped at the beginning of the village, sent for his mother, and told her all. She excused him, threw the blame of his failure on the injustice of the examiners, encouraged him a little, and took upon herself to set matters straight. It was only five years later that Monsieur Bovary knew the truth; it was old then, and he accepted it. Moreover, he could not believe that a man born of him could be a fool.

So Charles set to work again and crammed for his examination, ceaselessly learning all the old questions by heart. He passed pretty well. What a happy day for his mother! They gave a grand dinner.

Where should he go to practice? To Tostes, where there was only one old doctor. For a long time Madame Bovary had been on the look-out for his death, and the old fellow had barely been packed off when Charles was installed, opposite his place, as his successor.

But it was not everything to have brought up a son, to have had him taught medicine, and discovered Tostes, where he could practice it; he must have a wife. She found him one—the widow of a bailiff at Dieppe—who was forty-five and had an income of twelve hundred francs. Though she was ugly, as dry as a bone, her face with as many pimples as the spring has buds, Madame Dubuc had no lack of suitors. To attain her ends Madame Bovary had to oust them all, and she even succeeded in very cleverly baffling the intrigues of a port-butcher backed up by the priests.

Charles had seen in marriage the advent of an easier life, thinking he would be more free to do as he liked with himself and his money. But his wife was master; he had to say this and not say that in company, to fast every Friday, dress as she liked, harass at her bidding those patients who did not pay. She opened his letter, watched his comings and goings, and listened at the partition-wall when women came to consult him in his surgery.

She must have her chocolate every morning, attentions without end. She constantly complained of her nerves, her chest, her liver. The noise of footsteps made her ill; when people left her, solitude became odious to her; if they came back, it was doubtless to see her die. When Charles returned in the evening, she stretched forth two long thin arms from beneath the sheets, put them round his neck, and having made him sit down on the edge of the bed, began to talk to him of her troubles: he was neglecting her, he loved another. She had been warned she would

be unhappy; and she ended by asking him for a dose of medicine and a little more love.

CHAPTER TWO

One night towards eleven o'clock they were awakened by the noise of a horse pulling up outside their door. The servant opened the garret-window and parleyed for some time with a man in the street below. He came for the doctor, had a letter for him. Natasie came downstairs shivering and undid the bars and bolts one after the other. The man left his horse, and, following the servant, suddenly came in behind her. He pulled out from his wool cap with grey top-knots a letter wrapped up in a rag and presented it gingerly to Charles, who rested on his

elbow on the pillow to read it. Natasie, standing near the bed, held the light. Madame in modesty had turned to the wall and showed only her back.

This letter, sealed with a small seal in blue wax, begged Monsieur Bovary to come immediately to the farm of the Bertaux to set a broken leg. Now from Tostes to the Bertaux was a good eighteen miles across country by way of Longueville and Saint-Victor. It was a dark night; Madame Bovary junior was afraid of accidents for her husband. So it was decided the stable-boy should go on first; Charles would start three hours later when the moon rose. A boy was to be sent to meet him, and show him the way to the farm, and open the gates for him.

Towards four o'clock in the morning, Charles, well wrapped up in his cloak, set out for the Bertaux. Still sleepy from the warmth of his bed, he let himself be lulled by the quiet trot of his horse. When it stopped of its own accord in front of those holes surrounded with thorns that are dug on the margin of furrows, Charles awoke with a start, suddenly remembered the broken leg, and tried to call to mind all the fractures he knew. The rain had stopped, day was breaking, and on the branches of the leafless trees birds roosted motionless, their little feathers bristling in the cold morning wind. The flat country stretched as far as eye could see, and the tufts of trees round the farms at long intervals seemed like dark violet stains on the cast grey surface, that on the horizon faded into the gloom of the sky.

Charles from time to time opened his eyes, his mind grew weary, and, sleep coming upon him, he soon fell into a doze wherein, his recent sensations blending with memories, he became conscious of a double self, at once student and married man, lying in his bed as but now, and crossing the operation theatre as of old. The warm smell of poultices mingled in his brain with the fresh odour of dew; he heard the iron rings rattling along the curtain-rods of the bed and saw his wife sleeping. As he passed Vassonville he came upon a boy sitting on the grass at the edge of a ditch.

"Are you the doctor?" asked the child.

And on Charles's answer he took his wooden shoes in his hands and ran on in front of him.

The general practitioner, riding along, gathered from his guide's talk that Monsieur Rouault must be one of the well-to-do farmers.

He had broken his leg the evening before on his way home from a Twelfth-night feast at a neighbour's. His wife had been dead for two years. There was with him only his daughter, who helped him to keep house.

The ruts were becoming deeper; they were approaching the Bertaux.

The little lad, slipping through a hole in the hedge, disappeared; then he came back to the end of a courtyard to open the gate. The horse slipped on the wet grass; Charles had to stoop to pass under the branches. The watchdogs in their kennels barked, dragging at their chains. As he entered the Bertaux, the horse took fright and stumbled.

It was a substantial-looking farm. In the stables, over the top of the open doors, one could see great cart-horses quietly feeding from new racks. Right along the outbuildings extended a large dunghill, from which manure liquid oozed, while amidst fowls and turkeys, five or six peacocks, a luxury in Chauchois farmyards, were foraging on the top of it. The sheepfold was long, the barn high, with walls smooth as your hand. Under the cart-shed were two large carts and four ploughs, with their whips, shafts and harnesses complete, whose fleeces of blue wool were getting soiled by the fine dust that fell from the granaries. The courtyard sloped upwards, planted with trees set out symmetrically, and the chattering noise of a flock of geese was heard near the pond.

A young woman in a blue merino dress with three flounces came to the threshold of the door to receive Monsieur Bovary, whom she led to the kitchen, where a large fire was blazing. The servant's breakfast was boiling beside it in small pots of all sizes. Some damp clothes were drying inside the chimney-corner. The shovel, tongs, and the nozzle of the bellows, all of colossal size, shone like polished steel, while along

the walls hung many pots and pans in which the clear flame of the hearth, mingling with the first rays of the sun coming in through the window, was mirrored fitfully.

Charles went up the first floor to see the patient. He found him in his bed, sweating under his bed-clothes, having thrown his cotton nightcap right away from him. He was a fat little man of fifty, with white skin and blue eyes, the forepart of his head bald, and he wore earrings. By his side on a chair stood a large decanter of brandy, whence he poured himself a little from time to time to keep up his spirits; but as soon as he caught sight of the doctor his elation subsided, and instead of swearing, as he had been doing for the last twelve hours, began to groan freely.

The fracture was a simple one, without any kind of complication.

Charles could not have hoped for an easier case. Then calling to mind the devices of his masters at the bedsides of patients, he comforted the sufferer with all sorts of kindly remarks, those caresses of the surgeon that are like the oil they put on bistouries. In order to make some splints a bundle of laths was brought up from the cart-house. Charles selected one, cut it into two pieces and planed it with a fragment of windowpane, while the servant tore up sheets to make bandages, and Mademoiselle Emma tried to sew some pads. As she was a long time before she found her work-case, her father grew impatient; she did not answer, but as she sewed she pricked her fingers, which she then put to her mouth to suck them. Charles was surprised at the whiteness of her nails. They were shiny, delicate at the tips, more polished than the ivory of Dieppe, and almond-shaped. Yet her hand was not beautiful, perhaps not white enough, and a little hard at the knuckles; besides, it was too long, with no soft inflections in the outlines. Her real beauty was in her eyes. Although brown, they seemed black because of the lashes, and her look came at you frankly, with a candid boldness.

The bandaging over, the doctor was invited by Monsieur Rouault himself to "pick a bit" before he left.

Charles went down into the room on the ground floor. Knives and forks and silver goblets were laid for two on a little table at the foot of a huge bed that had a canopy of printed cotton with figures representing Turks. There was an odour of iris-root and damp sheets that escaped from a large oak chest opposite the window. On the floor in corners were sacks of flour stuck upright in rows. These were the overflow from the neighbouring granary, to which three stone steps led. By way of decoration for the apartment, hanging to a nail in the middle of the wall, whose green paint scaled off from the effects of the saltpetre, was a crayon head of Minerva in gold frame, underneath which was written in Gothic letters "To dear Papa."

First they spoke of the patient, then of the weather, of the great cold, of the wolves that infested the fields at night.

Mademoiselle Rouault did not at all like the country, especially now that she had to look after the farm almost alone. As the room was chilly, she shivered as she ate. This showed something of her full lips, that she had a habit of biting when silent.

Her neck stood out from a white turned-down collar. Her hair, whose two black folds seemed each of a single piece, so smooth were they, was parted in the middle by a delicate line that curved slightly with the curve of the head; and, just showing the tip of the ear, it was joined behind in a thick chignon, with a wavy movement at the temples that the country doctor saw now for the first time in his life. The upper part of her cheek was rose-coloured. She had, like a man, thrust in between two buttons of her bodice a tortoise-shell eyeglass.

When Charles, after bidding farewell to old Rouault, returned to the room before leaving, he found her standing, her forehead against the window, looking into the garden, where the bean props had been knocked down by the wind. She turned round. "Are you looking for anything?" she asked.

"My whip, if you please," he answered.

He began rummaging on the bed, behind the doors, under the chairs. It had fallen to the floor, between the sacks and the wall. Mademoiselle Emma saw it, and bent over the flour sacks.

Charles out of politeness made a dash also, and as he stretched out his arm, at the same moment felt his breast brush against the back of the young girl bending beneath him. She drew herself up, scarlet, and looked at him over her shoulder as she handed him his whip.

Instead of returning to the Bertaux in three days as he had promised, he went back the very next day, then regularly twice a week, without counting the visits he paid now and then as if by accident.

Everything, moreover, went well; the patient progressed favourably; and when, at the end of forty-six days, old Rouault was seen trying to walk alone in his "den," Monsieur Bovary began to be looked upon as a man of great capacity. Old Rouault said that he could not have been cured better by the first doctor of Yvetot, or even of Rouen.

As to Charles, he did not stop to ask himself why it was a pleasure to him to go to the Bertaux. Had he done so, he would, no doubt, have attributed his zeal to the importance of the case, or perhaps to the money he hoped to make by it. Was it for this, however, that his visits to the farm formed a delightful exception to the meagre occupations of his life? On these days he rose early, set off at a gallop, urging on his horse, then got down to wipe his boots in the grass and put on black gloves before entering. He liked going into the courtyard, and noticing the gate turn against his shoulder, the cock crow on the wall, the lads run to meet him. He liked the granary and the stables; he liked old Rouault, who pressed his hand and called him his saviour; he like the small wooden shoes of Mademoiselle Emma on the scoured flags of the kitchen—her high heels made her a little taller; and when she walked in front of him, the wooden soles springing up quickly struck with a sharp sound against the leather of her boots.

She always accompanied him to the first step of the stairs. When his horse had not yet been brought round she stayed there. They had said "Good-bye"; there was no more talking. The open air wrapped her round, playing with the soft down on the back of her neck, or blew to and fro on her hips the apron-strings, that fluttered like streamers. Once, during a thaw the bark of the trees in the yard was oozing, the snow on the roofs of the outbuildings was melting; she stood on the threshold, and went to fetch her sunshade and opened it. The sunshade of silk of the colour of pigeons' breasts, through which the sun shone, lighted up with shifting hues the white skin of her face. She smiled under the tender warmth, and drops of water could be heard falling one by one on the stretched silk.

During the first period of Charles's visits to the Bertaux, Madame Bovary junior never failed to inquire after the invalid, and she had even chosen in the book that she kept on a system of double entry a clean blank page for Monsieur Rouault. But when she heard he had a daughter, she began to make inquiries, and she learnt the Mademoiselle Rouault, brought up at the Ursuline Convent, had received what is called "a good education"; and so knew dancing, geography, drawing, how to embroider and play the piano. That was the last straw.

"So it is for this," she said to herself, "that his face beams when he goes to see her, and that he puts on his new waistcoat at the risk of spoiling it with the rain. Ah! that woman! That woman!"

And she detested her instinctively. At first she solaced herself by allusions that Charles did not understand, then by casual observations that he let pass for fear of a storm, finally by open apostrophes to which he knew not what to answer. "Why did he go back to the Bertaux now that Monsieur Rouault was cured and that these folks hadn't paid yet? Ah! it was because a young lady was there, some one who know how to talk, to embroider, to be witty. That was what he cared about; he wanted town misses." And she went on—

"The daughter of old Rouault a town miss! Get out! Their grandfather was a shepherd, and they have a cousin who was almost had up at the assizes for a nasty blow in a quarrel. It is not worth while making such a fuss, or showing herself at church on Sundays in a silk gown like a countess. Besides, the poor old chap, if it hadn't been for the colza last year, would have had much ado to pay up his arrears."

For very weariness Charles left off going to the Bertaux. Heloise made him swear, his hand on the prayer-book, that he would go there no more after much sobbing and many kisses, in a great outburst of love. He obeyed then, but the strength of his desire protested against the servility of his conduct; and he thought, with a kind of naive hypocrisy, that his interdict to see her gave him a sort of right to love her. And then the widow was thin; she had long teeth; wore in all weathers a little black shawl, the edge of which hung down between her shoulder-blades; her bony figure was sheathed in her clothes as if they were a scabbard; they were too short, and displayed her ankles with the laces of her large boots crossed over grey stockings.

Charles's mother came to see them from time to time, but after a few days the daughter-in-law seemed to put her own edge on her, and then, like two knives, they scarified him with their reflections and observations. It was wrong of him to eat so much.

Why did he always offer a glass of something to everyone who came? What obstinacy not to wear flannels! In the spring it came about that a notary at Ingouville, the holder of the widow Dubuc's property, one fine day went off, taking with him all the money in his office. Heloise, it is true, still possessed, besides a share in a boat valued at six thousand francs, her house in the Rue St. Francois; and yet, with all this fortune that had been so trumpeted abroad, nothing, excepting perhaps a little furniture and a few clothes, had appeared in the household. The matter had to be gone into. The house at Dieppe was found to be eaten up with mortgages to its foundations; what she had placed with the notary God only knew, and her share in the boat did not exceed one

thousand crowns. She had lied, the good lady! In his exasperation, Monsieur Bovary the elder, smashing a chair on the flags, accused his wife of having caused misfortune to the son by harnessing him to such a harridan, whose harness wasn't worth her hide. They came to Tostes. Explanations followed. There were scenes. Heloise in tears, throwing her arms about her husband, implored him to defend her from his parents.

Charles tried to speak up for her. They grew angry and left the house.

But "the blow had struck home." A week after, as she was hanging up some washing in her yard, she was seized with a spitting of blood, and the next day, while Charles had his back turned to her drawing the window-curtain, she said, "O God!" gave a sigh and fainted. She was dead! What a surprise! When all was over at the cemetery Charles went home. He found no one downstairs; he went up to the first floor to their room; saw her dress still hanging at the foot of the alcove; then, leaning against the writing-table, he stayed until the evening, buried in a sorrowful reverie. She had loved him after all!

CHAPTER THREE

One morning old Rouault brought Charles the money for setting his leg—seventy-five francs in forty-sou pieces, and a turkey. He had heard of his loss, and consoled him as well as he could.

"I know what it is," said he, clapping him on the shoulder; "I've been through it. When I lost my dear departed, I went into the fields to be quite alone. I fell at the foot of a tree; I cried; I called on God; I talked nonsense to Him. I wanted to be like the moles that I saw on the branches, their insides swarming with worms, dead, and an end of it. And when I thought that there were others at that very moment with

their nice little wives holding them in their embrace, I struck great blows on the earth with my stick. I was pretty well mad with not eating; the very idea of going to a cafe disgusted me—you wouldn't believe it. Well, quite softly, one day following another, a spring on a winter, and an autumn after a summer, this wore away, piece by piece, crumb by crumb; it passed away, it is gone, I should say it has sunk; for something always remains at the bottom as one would say—a weight here, at one's heart. But since it is the lot of all of us, one must not give way altogether, and, because others have died, want to die too. You must pull yourself together, Monsieur Bovary. It will pass away. Come to see us; my daughter thinks of you now and again, d'ye know, and she says you are forgetting her. Spring will soon be here. We'll have some rabbit-shooting in the warrens to amuse you a bit."

Charles followed his advice. He went back to the Bertaux. He found all as he had left it, that is to say, as it was five months ago. The pear trees were already in blossom, and Farmer Rouault, on his legs again, came and went, making the farm more full of life.

Thinking it his duty to heap the greatest attention upon the doctor because of his sad position, he begged him not to take his hat off, spoke to him in an undertone as if he had been ill, and even pretended to be angry because nothing rather lighter had been prepared for him than for the others, such as a little clotted cream or stewed pears. He told stories. Charles found himself laughing, but the remembrance of his wife suddenly coming back to him depressed him. Coffee was brought in; he thought no more about her.

He thought less of her as he grew accustomed to living alone. The new delight of independence soon made his loneliness bearable. He could now change his meal-times, go in or out without explanation, and when he was very tired stretch himself at full length on his bed. So he nursed and coddled himself and accepted the consolations that were offered him. On the other hand, the death of his wife had not served him ill in his business, since for a month people had been saying, "The

poor young man! what a loss!" His name had been talked about, his practice had increased; and moreover, he could go to the Bertaux just as he liked. He had an aimless hope, and was vaguely happy; he thought himself better looking as he brushed his whiskers before the looking-glass.

One day he got there about three o'clock. Everybody was in the fields. He went into the kitchen, but did not at once catch sight of Emma; the outside shutters were closed. Through the chinks of the wood the sun sent across the flooring long fine rays that were broken at the corners of the furniture and trembled along the ceiling. Some flies on the table were crawling up the glasses that had been used, and buzzing as they drowned themselves in the dregs of the cider. The daylight that came in by the chimney made velvet of the soot at the back of the fireplace, and touched with blue the cold cinders. Between the window and the hearth Emma was sewing; she wore no fichu; he could see small drops of perspiration on her bare shoulders.

After the fashion of country folks she asked him to have something to drink. He said no; she insisted, and at last laughingly offered to have a glass of liqueur with him. So she went to fetch a bottle of curacao from the cupboard, reached down two small glasses, filled one to the brim, poured scarcely anything into the other, and, after having clinked glasses, carried hers to her mouth. As it was almost empty she bent back to drink, her head thrown back, her lips pouting, her neck on the strain. She laughed at getting none of it, while with the tip of her tongue passing between her small teeth she licked drop by drop the bottom of her glass.

She sat down again and took up her work, a white cotton stocking she was darning. She worked with her head bent down; she did not speak, nor did Charles. The air coming in under the door blew a little dust over the flags; he watched it drift along, and heard nothing but the throbbing in his head and the faint clucking of a hen that had laid an egg in the yard. Emma from time to time cooled her cheeks with the

palms of her hands, and cooled these again on the knobs of the huge fire-dogs.

She complained of suffering since the beginning of the season from giddiness; she asked if sea-baths would do her any good; she began talking of her convent, Charles of his school; words came to them. They went up into her bedroom. She showed him her old music-books, the little prizes she had won, and the oak-leaf crowns, left at the bottom of a cupboard. She spoke to him, too, of her mother, of the country, and even showed him the bed in the garden where, on the first Friday of every month, she gathered flowers to put on her mother's tomb. But the gardener they had never knew anything about it; servants are so stupid! She would have dearly liked, if only for the winter, to live in town, although the length of the fine days made the country perhaps even more wearisome in the summer. And, according to what she was saying, her voice was clear, sharp, or, on a sudden all languor, drawn out in modulations that ended almost in murmurs as she spoke to herself, now joyous, opening big naive eyes, then with her eyelids half closed, her look full of boredom, her thoughts wandering.

Going home at night, Charles went over her words one by one, trying to recall them, to fill out their sense, that he might piece out the life she had lived before he knew her. But he never saw her in his thoughts other than he had seen her the first time, or as he had just left her. Then he asked himself what would become of her—if she would be married, and to whom! Alas! Old Rouault was rich, and she!—so beautiful! But Emma's face always rose before his eyes, and a monotone, like the humming of a top, sounded in his ears, "If you should marry after all! If you should marry!" At night he could not sleep; his throat was parched; he was athirst. He got up to drink from the water-bottle and opened the window. The night was covered with stars, a warm wind blowing in the distance; the dogs were barking. He turned his head towards the Bertaux.