

eighteen years of age—sprang to his feet and followed him. "You say," he babbled eagerly, in his enthusiasm a little forgetful of propriety, "you say you are a Master, that you have disciples. Won't you take me?"

The adept showed no embarrassment. He would not even seem to rebuke the outburst, unconventional as it was.

"Certainly," he returned. "Since I have persuaded you with all my power to do a thing and you now desire to do the opposite, you are pre-eminently fitted for a disciple. You will get on splendidly with the others, I am sure."

Such ready acquiescence, couched as it was in the

delicately-phrased English of which the adept was an acknowledged master, and made tart by that silky subacidity which had made him famous and infamous, delighted the boy beyond all bounds. He sank to his knees, and caught the Master's hand and kissed it, his face wet with tears, and his throat choking. The Master's own eyes dimmed for a moment; something rose in him that he did not even try to suppress. He stooped and put a friendly arm about the lad and raised him. "Come," he said, "it is no such great matter. Let us talk of other things. Or, if you will, enjoy the silence of this moonlit loveliness."

Presently the sun rose, and woke the world to a new day's life worth living.

DRONDON

By FORD TARPLEY.

IN the garden of blue flowers Lucien found me. I was gathering delphinium for the green bowl on the piano because he liked them there. A moment before I had been looking wonderingly at myself in the fountain and he was part of my thoughts. And I knew he would come; so his voice was no surprise.

But when I looked around my smile suddenly became a gasp of fright. Running at his side was a lean black hound, and I thought I had never seen such a strange animal. My first glance was into his weird eyes, and it was like running onto a snake in long grass.

"Sara, he is to stay with you," Lucien said. "I can't bear to think of you living in this lonely isolated house any longer. But with Drondon near you I shall feel at ease. He is an extraordinary creature. He is supposed to see into the hearts and souls of those around him. And when he accepts you as his master or mistress his devotion is like that of a mother for her child. . . ."

Drondon was gorgeous on the black rug in the music room, and there he loved to lie watching me at the organ or piano. And on all my walks he would accompany me. What a decorative spirit he was, darting through the long alleys of cypress or over the open lawn! And when I rested, what a delight it was to see him spread out the glorious design of his sleek black body beside me on the marble benches.

At the full of every moon a flutist comes to play in the grove behind my house.

Lucien and I walked there for the first time with Drondon.

Star-jeweled trees against silver sky! The moon a great lantern tossing amid the branches! Sweet swooning scents! Melody! . . . Flute notes drifting from the darkness on the quiet mid-summer breezes (Pan sobbing his heart away for a dream). . . . The dripping water in fountains. . . . A bird breaking the far-off silence. . . .

Blue moonlit meadows rising to distant hills. . . . Dark depths of surrounding woods. . . . The gleam of marble against smooth soft lawns and amongst climbing vines. . . . The black velvet of red geraniums. . . . Ghost-like white lilies . . .

Oh, memorable night! . . .

Lucien walked very closely at my side. Often he would take my hand for a moment in his and then I would feel a tremor pass through him and he would draw away as if frightened. . . . Aimlessly we wandered for hours. . . .

Seldom did we speak. But on the long flight of steps leading back to the house he suddenly seized me in his arms and muttered my name over and over again as if I were trying to escape him. . . .

And he asked me to be his wife.

"Do not answer now," he said. "Think—Consider—I shall return at dawn, and if I find a rose beneath your balcony then I shall know."

Night of wonder! . . . Of fear! . . . Of hope! . . . Of dreams! . . . Of dread! . . .

The madness of lips near and warm breath! And hands! Eyes!

At the foot of the long flight of steps he left me.

Morning.

A humming bird is sipping sweets from the blossoming vines clustered around my windows. A gentle breeze lifts lightly the blue curtains and leaves them drifting into the room waving me the sweet treasures from my gardens of flowers.

Often I have thought of the delicious excitement with which an artist must regard the clean space of blank canvas upon which he intends to produce his masterpiece. As filled with possibilities is this day for me.

Suddenly a cry!—A piercing shriek! My maid! I sent her out to bring Drondon in.

Stifled hysterical sobs—and then the excited voice of the gardener!

Silence.

I wait—I wait—

Finally a hand fumbles at my door and it opens.

Lucien is dead.

Lucien is dead. I have seen him. Between the long rows of narrow cypress trees he lay, his face lifted upwards and slightly smiling and white as last night it was with the moonlight upon it.

But on his throat were the red wounds of teeth.

In his hands the withered petals of a shattered rose!

I swooned. I seemed to be falling into dark infinite depths—like depths of eyes—depths where were innumerable hidden snakes.

Drondon!—Drondon!—

They have killed Drondon.

They found him in the woods crying like a human being; and they shot him.