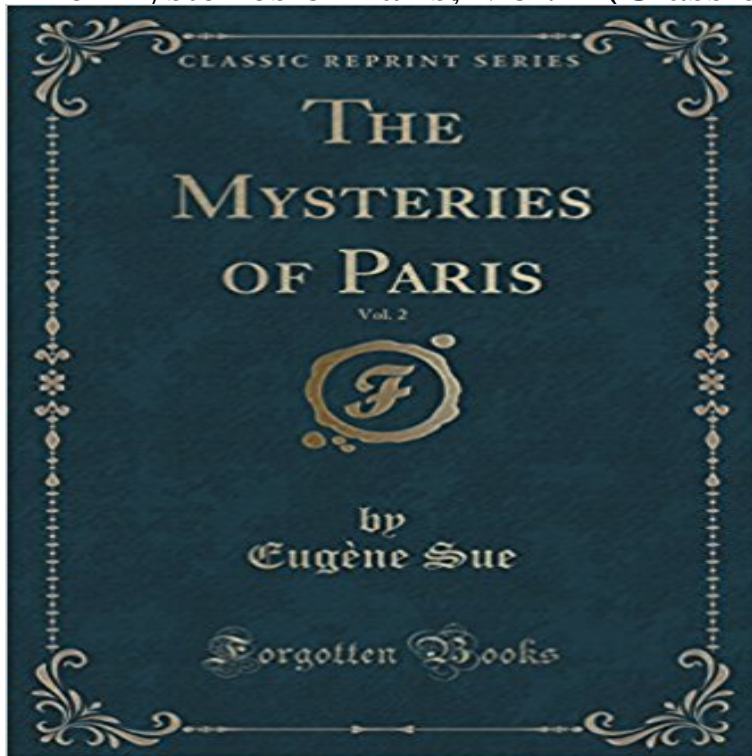


The Mysteries of Paris, Vol. 2 (Classic Reprint)



Excerpt from The Mysteries of Paris, Vol. 2
Rodolph alone found leisure to remark the extreme paleness and utter abstraction of Louise, whose first ecstasy at finding her father free passed away, apparently plunged in a deep and painful reverie. Anxious to relieve the mind of Morel of any apprehensions for the future, and also to explain a liberality which might have raised suspicions as to the character he chose to assume, Rodolph drew the lapidary to the further end of the staircase, leaving to Rigolette the task of acquainting Louise with the death of her little sister, and said to him, -Did not a young lady come to visit you and your family on the morning of the day before yesterday? Yes, and appeared much grieved to see the distress we were in. Then you must thank her - not me. Can it be possible, sir? That young lady - Is your benefactress. I frequently wait upon her from our warehouse; when I hired an apartment here, I learned from the porters all the particulars of your case, and the painful situation you were placed in: relying on this lady's well-known kindness and benevolence, I hastened to acquaint her with all I had heard respecting you; and, the day before yesterday, she came herself, in order to be fully aware of the extent of your misery. The distress she witnessed deeply affected her; but, as it might have been brought about by misconduct, she desired me to take upon myself the task of inquiring into every circumstance relative to your past and present condition with as little delay as possible, being desirous of regulating her benevolent aid by the good or bad accounts she might receive of your honesty and good conduct. Kind, excellent lady! well might I say - As you observed just now to Madeleine, If the rich did but know! - was not that it? Is it possible that you are acquainted with the name of my wife? Who could have told you that? My worthy friend, said Rodolph, interrupting

Morel, I have been concealed in the little garret adjoining your attic since six o'clock this morning. Have you, indeed, sir? Yes, my honest fellow, I have, and from my hiding-place heard all that passed among you. Oh, sir! but why did you do so? I could not have employed more satisfactory means of getting at your real character and sentiments; and I was desirous of seeing and hearing all you did or said without your being aware of my presence. The porter had made me acquainted with this small retreat, which he offered to me for a wood-closet. This morning, I asked his permission to visit it, and remained there more than an hour, during which time I had ample proof that a more upright, noble mind did not exist, and that the courageous resignation with which you bore your heavy trials was above all praise. Nay, indeed, sir, I do not merit such words as these. I was born honest, I hope, and it comes natural to me to act as I have done.

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neither courage, strength, nor boldness.