

strange mistake indeed. 'Listen to me,' it said." Louis sighed and finished his salad in three mouthfulls.

"At first I did not look up," continued he, "for that bashfulness which is so common with me, kept my eyes on the paper. I imagined, also, that if she were by chance the Muse of lighter poetry her costume might be such as to startle my senses from that elevated placidity necessary for the composition of a long poem. So I merely in all reverence replied, 'Speak Oh lofty One, and I shall write! All the world will read what thou has't said. Oh, drop a portion of ethereal dew upon my head.' What was my delight to feel a hand laid upon my shoulder! The next words broke the spell."

"Impertinant Frenchman! How dare you call me lofty in that sneering way, when you haven't paid your rent for two months neither! Out you go today. It's plain to be seen that you're only a know-nothing furriner. Tell the world what I said if you dare, writing it down on your dirty bits of paper like a sneak. Tell the world indeed! It's got something better to do than listen to your tomfoolery. Perhaps it'll drop a brick on your head instead of 'etherol doo' or whatever you call it. This is the last sauce I'll take from you young man, and if you don't get out today I'll call the police." It was of course Mrs. Gruntle, the landlady, or should I say 'landwoman?' She must have come in when I was deeply engrossed indeed, if her comments on entering were as loud as this. Anyway, she shook me most distressingly, so that for a minute or two I remained as putty in the hand of the potter. Then I composed my swaying body and in a voice which I hope was not very jerky, 'Hands off madame,' I said, 'I am not your husband nor yet your dog,' and I removed her arm in a dignified manner, with my right hand in which I still held a pen.

"'Wretch!' she screeched, 'would you lay hands on a woman? Take that for throwing ink all over me!' and she slapped my face—for which I blush greatly," and in truth Louis Jean looked very hot about the cheeks and eyes.

"I couldn't write any more that morning of course," said he. "Thirteen verses and no more! And no less! Mon Dieu, I got feverish and walked back and forth, back and forth, lamenting leaving France; and writing poetry, and coming to America, and living, and being slapped by the landlady, and having no place to go to, and no money, nor hopes of money, and no friends but you and Madaline, and you away for three days in Boston. It was—inexpressable!" When Louis had gasped a moment he put his attention once more upon his plate, and he and "O. V. B." made pleasant music with the high faint clatter of silver on china and the small bell-notes of tinkling glass.

I walked up and down," said the Frenchman wearily, "thinking of the laurels which France might have bestowed upon me, by now if I hadn't been so feverish for success and come to America with the idea of making my name in American letters."

"'Stop gallumping around up there!' shouted the landlady from the room below, 'you're lossening the plaster!'"