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The Valentine.

At a counter richly laden
With St. Valentine's choice sonnets
Stands a very charming maiden
In the abject of bonnets
Her eyes look and her tones
Appear a little golden
While the style in which she dresses
Is extremely quaint and olden
She inspects the glowing treasures
Silken, fringed, and satin banners
Amidst their ardent measures
In the gracefulst of manners
Now and then a saucy Cupid
Plumes this breathing critic
But the verses are too stupid
For a taste so analytic
Over forget me not and roses
Like a butterfly she waves
Till the honey one discloses
Proves the daintiest of flavors
With this new love insurance
And he tells her in possession
As the tempts her and he dotes her
To the following confession:
'If I had the brush of Watteau,
And the wisdom of the sage,
I could paint a worthy motto
On this loveliest of pages;
But no true heart is beating
That the heart which beats for you here
So I send a simple greeting
And I sign myself your True-love.'

A GAY DECEIVER.

Jacques Bruhiere is an artist whose
mythological pictures have a most de-
lightful modern air. His Grecian god-
desses look like Parisiennes; their
wind-blown hair, their high-heeled san-
dals, and a peculiar twist given to their
drapery have captivated the Parisian
ladies. So they crowded Jacques' studio
and implore him to let them sit for
Dianas and Andromedas. But he is a
most unromantic fellow, and is swayed
by no consideration other than those of
gain. Although he is but thirty, he has
gained fame and some fortune; and he
is so industrious that he flies from use-
less words and time consumers—that is
to say, women and bores.
A year ago, just after the art exhibit
closed, Jacques determined to go on a
sketching tour. So he packed his trunk,
assisted by his friend, Eugene de Lussé,
and was bidding adieu to his studio,
when the servant entered with a note.
It was a nice little note, daintily per-
fumed, and the address was written in
the most delicate hand imaginable. He
read it, frowned, and crumpling it up,
threw it on the floor.
'Confound the women!' he said.
'What's the matter?' asked his
friend.
'Why, I'm such an unlucky fellow,'
said Jacques. 'There's always some
woman or other bothering me, writing
about how much she admires my paint-
ings, and how she'd like to see me, and
all that sort of thing. Just as if a man
would say he would like to see my
paintings because he liked the cut of
my beard. Look,' said he, picking up
the letter, 'address Mme. Leonie, such
a street and number.'
'But,' said Eugene, who was read-
ing the note, 'it's very well written. I
assure you, full of most delicate wit.
What are you going to do with it?'
'Oh, you literary man!' growled
Jacques. 'What am I going to do
with it? Why, burn it, of course.
What do you suppose I am going to do
with it?'
'I'll tell you what to do with it,' said
Eugene, 'you're going away—'

wavered long. One day she would be
Omphale; the next she had decided
that to be represented as Sodomie was
necessary to her peace of mind. But
when Eugene had made his prepara-
tions his fickle goddess decided that
Delilah was the character that suited
her. And then she would wander
around the studio and drape herself
with the barbaric stuffs used by long
gone models and handle the curious
weapons and examine the porcelains.
And then she would say she was
weary and would come the next day.
And she would go, leaving Eugene de
Lussé deeper in love than ever.
As for him, he was in a dream. He
had retired from the world. At his own
quarters his door was daily stormed
by publishers, by managers, by printers'
boys, by creditors, and by friends. But
no one knew where he had gone. He
had told his servant he was going
away, but had not told him where. It
was wrong, decidedly wrong; but he
took a certain ferocious joy in it when
he thought how he himself had once
pursued these very same editors and
managers.
Eugene had at last discovered that
his innamorata was a widow, wealthy
and of good family. Her full name was
Leonie de Norse. He had never told
his love; but that she was blind to it
was impossible. Yet she was certainly
blind to his painting, for she expressed
her admiration of it with an enthusiasm
that made Eugene wince. But one day
when he was, as usual, attempting to
transfer her to canvas, a particularly
atrocious tree which he had introduced
in the background attracted his atten-
tion.
'Jacques,' said she, 'don't you think
that you are—well, that you're losing
a little of your skill?'
'What?' shouted Eugene.
'I mean—that is—I'm afraid that I
keep you so much from your work that—'

'I only hope that you may keep me
from it forever,' returned the amorous
Eugene. And so the dangerous mo-
ment passed.
But this state of affairs could not last
forever. One fine day, as Eugene was
seated upon a divan, thinking of his
lady-love, who had just departed, who
should enter but Jacques Bruhiere.
Yes, there he was, with his attendant
carrying his umbrella, his sketch-books,
his camp stools, his baggage—a true
artist just from the country. The false
one trembled as he thought that his
dream was over. Had he been a Borgia
he would have slain his friend. As he
was not, he pressed his hand warmly,
and bade him welcome. But how could
he answer to a high-spirited woman for
the deception he had practiced upon
her? As to persuading Jacques to con-
sent to any arrangement for keeping up
the deception, that was out of the ques-
tion; where his art was concerned the
painter would prove as deaf as a post,
and as unmanageable as a balky horse.
So Eugene was puzzled. Finally a
bright idea occurred to him.
'Why not,' thought he, 'give a
comic turn to the affair. If properly
done, Leonie will be disarmed. She is
easily moved to laughter, and then I
will explain and beg her forgiveness.'
Alas! Poor Eugene's idea was not a
happy one.
The next day when Leonie came it
was Jacques who met her at the door.
He was in a blue blouse, cap, and car-
ried palette and brushes.
'An I see M. Bruhiere?' she asked,
with some little surprise.
'That is my name, madame,' replied
the painter.
'You Jacques Bruhiere!' said she
with an amused laugh, and she pushed
by him and entered the studio. 'You
the great painter? No, no!' and she
seated herself and looked at him de-
fiantly.
But if she was at ease in the studio,
he was more so. Her quick woman's
eye noted this, and on the easel there
was already begun a canvas in which
she recognized the master's touch.
Leonie was becoming ill at ease. She
picked up a little Hindoo god which
stood on the table beside her, and fidgeted
nervously. Her hands trembled,
the little monster slipped from
them and dashed to pieces on the floor.
The artist stepped to the wall and rang
the bell. The door opened and a ser-
vant entered, clad in livery, and wearing
an apron, rendered necessary by the
fact of his cleaning brushes.
'Did monsieur ring?' he asked.
Leonie stared at him and grew white.
'Yes, Jean,' replied the artist.
'Gather up the fragments of this trifle,
which madame has unfortunately broken.
Now,' said he, turning to Leonie,
'if madame will kindly inform me to
what I owe the honor of this vis—'

He stopped. Her white, set face, her
starry eyes frightened him.
'A lackey!' she hissed; 'a base
lackey! And I have loved this heart-
less, cruel, lying wretch!'
With a sudden impulse of fury she
snatched up a pretty toy, a silver pen-
dant, which lay upon the table, and
sprang at Eugene. Quick as a flash
the artist flashed between them. But
quick as he was, he was too late. The
pendant struck Eugene in the side, in-
flicting a deep wound. As she did so,
Leonie uttered a shriek and fainted
away.
Eugene's comedy had become a
tragedy.
'Truly, a pretty sight for the studio
of an honest, hard-working painter,'
groaned Jacques Bruhiere, as he gazed
upon the two prostrate forms. 'This
comes of obliging your friends. Catch
me doing it again.'

Three years had passed. Leonie was
in the brilliant salon of the Comtesse de
Sagone, whose house was always filled
with the literary men of the day, and
she invariably secured the literary lion.
She was making her way through the
brilliant throng toward Leonie.
'My dear,' said she, when she
reached her, 'have you read that novel
of which all Paris is talking—Les Deux
Princesses?'
'Yes,' said Leonie, 'it is a charming
work.'

'Do you know its author?'
'Eugene de Lussé? No. Is he here
this evening?'
'Yes, and I want to present him to
you. Ah, there he is, Monsieur de
Lussé!' and in another moment there
stood before Leonie—the false painter.
For a moment she hesitated, but the
old spell reasserted itself, and she
found herself listening, almost against
her will, to his pleas for pardon. And
he pleaded his case most eloquently.
'I am half inclined not to forgive
you,' she said, at length. 'You acted
abominably, you know you did.'

'I acted like a fool and a knave,'
said Eugene, 'and you ought never to
pardon me, but you will, won't you?'
'Well,' said the beauty, semi-reluctantly, 'if you will be a very good
boy—'