pon, and stepping forward quickly in order to receive the swooning figure of his gallant young antagonist in his arms.

All his fury and unreasoning temper had vanished before the awesome majesty of the grey shadow which gradually spread over the Englishan's face.

"A leech! quick!" he begged hastily, and Mirepoix hurried out of the room, ready to obey his friend's behest.

The other two with clumsy, yet loving hands were doing their best to staunch the blood which was flowing freely from the young man's wound.

The Duc, there is no doubt, was positively heartbroken, for the wound looked deep and deadly, and it is a terrible thing to have the life of a fellow being—a young man, a friend—upon one's conscience. Moreover, the Duc was of the old school of French gentlemen, very devout and pious.

"Will God ever forgive me this great sin?" he murmured, trying with anxious, burning eyes to read that same pardon in Eglinton's filmy eyes. "Will you forgive me?" he added, under his breath, scarcely daring to hope, knowing full well that a man who is dying is none too ready to forgive his murderer.

But ever since the young man had recovered from his original swoon, he had obviously been making vigorous efforts to pull himself together. He had obviously something very important to say. At the Duc's last words he seemed to finally conquer his weakness, and said quietly:

"Nay! M. le Duc, how can I have anything to forgive? 'Tis I should seek pardon."

"Pardon? From whom?" asked the Duc, kindly.

"From her whom in my folly I dared to insult."

"Don't speak of that now, friend. 'Tis forgotten, I assure you."

"Nay, I cannot forget my presumption," said Eglinton with energy. "I think . . . I think I should die happier if . . . if she knew . . . and would forgive. . . ."

"You would not refuse a dying man's request?" he added, with infinite pathos, seeing that the Duc appeared to hesitate.

It was impossible to withstand this appeal. The Duc felt it; he gave a scarce perceptible sign to the Vicompte, who left the room.

The wounded man repeated anxiously:

"You will tell her?"

"Yes!" whispered the Duc reassuringly; "d'Ethain has gone to fetch her."

"Will she refuse to come?"

"She is here to answer that question herself," said the Duc, as the door was pushed open and Marianne—exquisite, proud, beautiful Marianne—stepped into the room.

More lovely than ever, for her luminous eyes were rendered doubly brilliant by tears of sorrow and pity. D'Ethain had briefly told her that a man who was grievously wounded wished to see her before he died. And Marianne was a true woman, pitiful and strong, and she came to soothe the last moments of the man who had asked for her.

For a few brief moments Eglinton feasted his soul on the exquisite vision before him, whilst Marianne stood with tear-dimmed eyes looking down at the prostrate figure of the gallant young Englishman, who but a while ago had been so full of gaiety, of daring, and of the joy of living.

"Will you tell her all, M. le Duc?" murmured Lord Eglinton at last.

The Duc deNeuilly tried to protest, but it seemed a dying man's wish, and reluctantly he complied. Briefly he told his sister of the Englishman's boast, the wager, the challenge, and finally the combat.

She had frowned when she heard the beginning of the story, and at one moment it seemed as if even now she would turn away from him in proud contempt, but he looked so helpless and broken, lying there pale and silent, with dimmed eyes turned in rapt adoration towards her, that a great and overwhelming pity filled her heart and she stayed.

The leech in the meanwhile had entered. He examined and dressed the wound, but he shook his wise old head sadly and ominously. The young man, in spite of his pluck and endurance, had half swooned away under the leech's treatment.

"Will he die?" whispered Marianne in a voice half-choked with sobs, as instinctively and still overwhelmed by that great and wonderful pity she dropped on her knees beside the wounded man, and with tender, soothing fingers gently stroked his pallid brow.

"I'll die in peace, if you will forgive me, Marianne!" murmured Eglinton feebly.

"Lord Eglington turned to face the daring utterer of this monstrous insult."

"Yes! yes! I'll forgive you!" she replied through her tears. "Oh! leech!" she added with heartbroken accents, "must he die?"

But before the leech could answer, the wounded man had turned an appealing look to her.

"If you have forgiven me, Marianne—" he whispered, "will you—will you kiss me?"

His dying request! How could she refuse? She bent her head and kissed him. There was dead silence in the room, whilst an angel fluttered across it; in the far distance could still be faintly heard the lively tune of the minuet.

"D'Ethain, I have won my wager," said Lord Eglinton, with proud triumph. "Now leech!" he added quietly, "I am ready to hear whether I am to die."

Marianne would have risen, indignant, to her feet, but he held her fast, with that feeble, yet irresistible grasp of one sick unto death.

"Monsieur——" she began.

"Nay!" he murmured, "have I sinned so very deeply then? I could not win a kiss from your proud lips save—save by paying—with my life for it. The Duc will tell you—I had him at my sword's point—but I knew that you were as good as you were beautiful—you would not refuse—a dying man's request—a man who was dying to win a kiss from you. So I won my wager the only way I could—with my life."

She could not speak now, for her tears were choking her, but she turned with a desperate appeal to the leech.

"Nay, mademoiselle," said that worthy man, "all lives are in God's keeping. I was about to say just now that the English milor is young—and robust—and given an incentive for recovery, I'll guarantee that Nature will pull him through."

"He'll recover, you think?"

The cry came from the heart, gladly, joyously, with all the pride gone out of her sweet face, and only the love-light in her eyes.

"I'll recover," said the wounded man with quaint determination, "if you will nurse me back to life."

"But you might have died," she said piteously, "and for a kiss."

"Aye, for a kiss from you, sweetheart—and would deem my life but poor repayment for the rapture of that kiss."

She folded him in her protecting arms, and nature, too, kindly wound her gentle mantle round him, wrapping him at last in sweet, restoring unconsciousness. He had at last an incentive for recovery, Marianne nursed him back to health and life.

And that is how it is the Eglinton's have a French ancestress, Marianne de Neuilly, who was Countess of Eglinton when George III. was King of England.

On Etching.

There is probably no medium of art-expression at once so complicated and yet so charming—demanding at once so much refinement, feeling, vigour, and knowledge, or in which the lack of these is so immediately felt, as in the art of etching. It is unlike any other medium of art-expression, notably in that the results are not immediately visible, but go through a variety of processes before the final result is achieved in the finished "proof." Oft-times I have been amused at beholding the newspaper criticisms of picture exhibitions (written, apparently, by the person who "does" the police courts or the dairy-produce column), gravely informing the public that certain etchings are "from the pen" of Mr. So-and-so. Needless to inform the intelligent reader, an etching has no connection in any way with a pen.

There are various styles of "etching." The word itself comes from the German word "aetzen," to eat in or corrode. Hence it follows that a true etching will be that which is arrived at by corrosion, i.e., by the use of acids.

The first requisite is a "plate" of polished copper—the sort that is used by engravers for engraving scrip-forms, visiting cards, cheques, etc.—or zinc (that used by process-engravers does excellently). This plate, cut to the required size, is carefully cleaned and coated with a very thin film of "etching-ground"—a mixture composed mostly of beeswax, asphaltum and pitch. It is then smoked by holding in the flame of a candle. The result is, when cold, a sheet of copper, one side of which resembles a sheet of polished ebony. On this surface the artist works with a diamond point, or steele needles of varying sharpness. On the delicate black surface, every place touched with the needle exposes the copper, which shines through the surrounding black in lines of burnished gold. Objects on the right of the artist in Nature must be drawn on the left side of the plate, and vice versa, if a true representation be desired.

The drawing finished, the back and edges of the plate are carefully covered with an acid-resisting varnish—shellac varnish and Berlin black have each their advocates—and the plate is immersed in the acid bath (generally dilute nitric acid or the sweeter "Dutch Mordant," used with such splendid effect by Seymour Haden, and said to have been invented by the great Rembrandt).

The acid eats into the copper at the places exposed by the needle, and by alternately "stopping-out" and biting, the plate gradually approaches completion. On cleaning off the black etching-ground the plate stands revealed with lines furrowed into its surface—where