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**The Queen of Hearts**

**By**

**Wilkie Collins**

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**LETTER OF DEDICATION TO EMILE FORGUES.**

AT a time when French readers were altogether unaware of the existence of any books of my writing, a critical examination of my novels appeared under your signature in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. I read that article, at the time of its appearance, with sincere pleasure and sincere gratitude to the writer, and I have honestly done my best to profit by it ever since.

At a later period, when arrangements were made for the publication of my novels in Paris, you kindly undertook, at some sacrifice of your own convenience, to give the first of the series--"The Dead Secret"--the great advantage of being rendered into French by your pen. Your excellent translation of "The Lighthouse" had already taught me how to appreciate the value of your assistance; and when "The Dead Secret" appeared in its French form, although I was sensibly gratified, I was by no means surprised to find my fortunate work of fiction, not translated, in the mechanical sense of the word, but transformed from a novel that I had written in my language to a novel that you might have written in yours.

I am now about to ask you to confer one more literary obligation on me by accepting the dedication of this book, as the earliest acknowledgment which it has been in my power to make of the debt I owe to my critic, to my translator, and to my friend.

The stories which form the principal contents of the following pages are all, more or less, exercises in that art which I have now studied anxiously for some years, and which I still hope to cultivate, to better and better purpose, for many more. Allow me, by inscribing the collection to you, to secure one reader for it at the outset of its progress through the world of letters whose capacity for seeing all a writer's defects may be matched by many other critics, but whose rarer faculty of seeing all a writer's merits is equaled by very few.

WILKIE COLLINS.