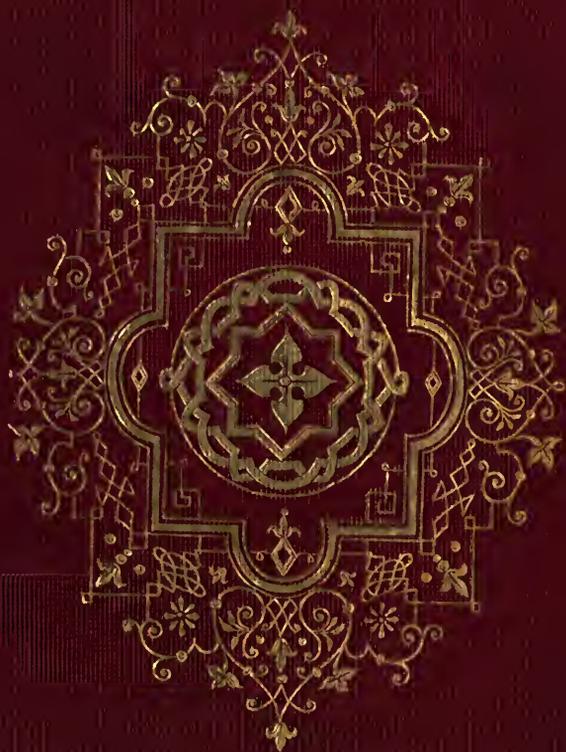


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Eugène Iuz

THE
WANDERING JEW.

BY

EUGÈNE SUE,

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS," ETC. ETC.

WITH

ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR ENGRAVINGS,

DRAWN ON WOOD BY M. VALENTIN,

AND EXECUTED BY THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH ENGRAVERS, UNDER THE
SUPERINTENDENCE OF

MR. CHARLES HEATH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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|--|--|
| <p>The Unexpected Visit.
 The Accuser.
 Adrienne's Release.
 The Seizure.
 Pierre Simon, duc de Ligny.
 Waking Dreams.
 Adrienne and Djalma.
 La Mayeux's Apartment.
 Angèle and Agricola.
 Maréchal Simon and his Father.
 Rodin exposing M. de Blassac.
 The Battle.
 The Confession.
 Morok preparing for the Theatre.
 Djalma and Rose Pompon.
 The Collation.
 Rodin attacked by Cholera.
 The Singular Contest.
 Mirth and Misery.
 The Murderers.</p> | <p>The Snare.
 The Torture.
 Suicide.
 Adrienne rescuing La Mayeux.
 The Rivals.
 Adrienne and Djalma.
 The Secret Closet.
 The Confession.
 Jocrisse and Dagobert.
 Reveries of Rose and Blanche.
 Confidence restored.
 The Dismissal.
 The Contribution.
 The Death of Rose and Blanche.
 Love and Hatred.
 Madame de la Sainte-Colombe and
 Nini-Moulin.
 The Last Embrace.
 The Duel.
 The Prospect of Happiness.</p> |
|--|--|

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

	Page
PROLOGUE.—The Two Worlds	1
PART I.—THE INN OF THE WHITE FALCON.	
Chap. I.—Morok	4
II.—The Travellers	9
III.—The Arrival	17
IV.—Morok and Dagobert	22
V.—Rose and Blanche	3
VI.—Mutual Confidence	37
VII.—The Traveller	43
VIII.—Fragments of General Simon's Journal	51
IX.—The Cages	58
X.—The Surprise	64
XI.—Jovial and La Mort	69
XII.—The Burgomaster	75
XIII.—The Investigation	81
XIV.—The Result	88
PART II.—THE STREET OF THE MILIEU-DES-URSINS.	
XV.—The Informations	95
XVI.—Orders	102
XVII.—Epilogue	112
PART III.—THE STRANGLERS.	
XVIII.—The Ajoupa	118
XIX.—The Tattooing	122
XX.—The Smuggler	126
XXI.—M. Joshua Van Dael	131
XXII.—The Ruins of Tchandi	136
XXIII.—The Ambuscade	142
XXIV.—The Château de Cardoville.—M. Rodin	151
XXV.—The Tempest	163
XXVI.—The Château de Cardoville.—The Shipwrecked	168
XXVII.—Departure for Paris	177
XXVIII.—La Rue Brise-Miche.—Dagobert's Wife.	185
XXIX.—The Sister of the Bacchante Queen	190
XXX.—Agricola Baudoin	198

	Page
Chap. XXXI.—The Return	207
XXXII.—Agricola and La Mayeux	215
XXXIII.—The Morning	221
XXXIV.—The Hôtel de Saint-Dizier.—The Pavilion	232
XXXV.—Adrienne's Toilet	237
XXXVI.—The Interview	247
PART IV.—HOTEL DE SAINT-DIZIER.	
XXXVII.—A Jesuitess	256
XXXVIII.—The Plot	262
XXXIX.—The Enemies of Adrienne	269
XL.—The Skirmish	275
XLI.—The Revolt	279
XLII.—The Hôtel de Saint-Dizier	289
XLIII.—The Snare	291
XLIV.—A False Friend	299
XLV.—The Minister's Residence	306
XLVI.—The Visit	315
XLVII.—Presentiments	325
XLVIII.—The Letter	331
XLIX.—The Confessional	340
L.—Monsieur and Kill-Joy	350
LI.—Appearances	354
LII.—The Convent	358
LIII.—The Influence of a Confessor	368
LIV.—The Interrogatory	375
PART V.—THE QUEEN-BACCHANAL.	
LV.—The Masquerading	380
LVI.—The Contrast	388
LVII.—The Réveille-Matin	395
LVIII.—The Adieux	403
LIX.—The Charity of Sainte-Marie.—Florine	409
LX.—The Abbess Sainte-Perpétue	416
LXI.—The Temptation	425
LXII.—La Mayeux and Mademoiselle de Cardoville	432
LXIII.—The Rencounters	440
LXIV.—The Rendezvous	450
LXV.—Discoveries	457
LXVI.—The Penal Code	464
LXVII.—Escalade and Forcible Entry	472
LXVIII.—The Eve of an Important Day	481
LXIX.—The Strangler	487

THE
WANDERING JEW.

PROLOGUE.

THE TWO WORLDS.

THE Arctic Ocean is encircled by a belt of eternal ice, the desert boundaries of Siberia and of Northern America—the extreme limits of the two worlds are separated by the narrow Straits of Behring.

The month of September is just at its close.

The equinox comes in with darkness and the northern storms—night will soon displace one of the short and dull days of the poles.

The sky, of a dark violet colour, is feebly lighted by a sun which is without heat, whose white disc, scarcely seen above the horizon, turns pale before the dazzling brightness of the snow which covers and conceals the vast steppes.

To the north, this desert is bounded by a coast bristling with black and gigantic rocks. At the foot of their Titanic piles lies, motionless, the vast ocean, with its ice-bound waves, extended chains of frozen mountains, whose blue-tinted peaks are lost from view in a mass of snowy vapour.

To the east, between the two peaks of Cape Oulikine, the eastern confine of Siberia, there is visible a line of darkish green, whence slowly creep forth numerous white and glassy icebergs.

It is Behring's Straits.

Beyond it, and towering above it, are the vast granitic masses of the Cape de Galles, the extreme point of North America. These desolate latitudes belong no more to the habitable world; their piercing and fierce cold rends the very stones, cleaves the trees, and bursts the ground, which groans in producing the germs of its icy herbage.

No human being would seem endued with power to dare the solitude of these regions of frost and tempest—of famine and of death.

Yet, strange to say, we trace steps on the snow which covers these

deserts, these last boundaries of two continents divided by Behring's Straits.

On the American side are seen foot-prints which, by their smallness and lightness, denote a woman's presence.

She has moved in the direction of the rocks, from whose heights are seen, beyond the strait, the icy steppes of Siberia.

On the Siberian side footmarks, larger and deeper, denote the presence of a man. He, too, has turned towards the strait. It would seem, that this man and this woman, thus reaching, from opposite directions, the extremities of the globe, have passed to see each other across the narrow armetlet of the sea which separates the two worlds.

Still more strange! This man and this woman have crossed these solitudes during a fearful tempest.

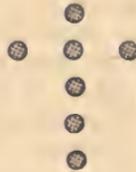
Some black pines, the growth of centuries, pointing their bent heads in different directions of the solitude, like crosses in a church-yard, have been torn up, broken, and hurled in various places by the storm.

Through the raging hurricane, which uproots huge trees, which drives before it the mountains of ice and dashes them in masses against each other with the noise of thunder—through this awful storm these travellers have made their way.

Yes, they have made their way without deviating, even for a pace, from the straight line which they have pursued, as might be seen from their equal, regular, and well-defined foot-track.

Who can they be, these two beings, who march onward thus calm and resolved in the midst of the convulsions and throes of nature?

Chance, will, or fatality, has formed beneath the iron-shod shoe of the man seven projecting nails which form a cross:—



And every where he leaves this trace.

To see these deep imprints in the hard and polished ice, one could compare it to a sheet of marble stamped by a foot of iron.

But now a night without twilight has succeeded to day.

Dark, dark night!

By the bright refraction of the sun on the sea, the steppe loses its pure whiteness beneath a heavy cupola of so deep a blue, that it would seem black; the pale stars are lost in the depths of this palpable obscure.

Silence reigns!

But towards the Strait of Behring a feeble glimmer appears in the horizon. At first it is softly brilliant, blue as the light which precedes the rising of the moon; then the brightness increases, spreads, and assumes a roseate hue.

In the other quarters of the heavens the darkness waxes deeper, and the whitened extent of the desert is hardly distinguishable from the midnight blackness of the vaulted firmament.

In the midst of this obscurity are heard strange, confused sounds.

It would seem like the flight of large night-birds as they flap their wings noisily around and over the plain.

But no cry is heard.

This fearful silence betokens the approach of one of those imposing phenomena which strike with terror all animated beings, from the mere savage to the most timid. An aurora borealis, that magnificent spectacle so frequent in the polar regions, is at hand.

In the horizon there appears a half-circle of dazzling brightness. From the centre of this shining hemisphere immense columns of light jet forth, which, rising to measureless heights, illumine heaven, earth, and sea. These rays, burning like fire, glide along the snows of the desert, empurpling the blue tops of the mountains of ice, and tinting with a deepened red the tall black rocks of the two continents.

After having reached the fulness of magnificence, the aurora borealis grows gradually pale, and its clear brightness becomes lost in a luminous mist.

At this moment, owing to the singular effect of the *mirage*, frequent in these latitudes, the American coast, although separated from Siberia by the interposition of an arm of the sea, appears suddenly so near that it would seem as though a bridge might be thrown from one world to the other.

At this instant, in the midst of that transparent and pale blue vapour, which pervaded the two worlds, two human figures were discernible.

On the Siberian Cape, a man on his knees extended his arms towards America, with a gesture of measureless despair.

On the American promontory, a young and lovely woman responded to this attitude of hopeless wretchedness by pointing her taper finger towards heaven.

For several seconds these two tall figures might be seen pale and shadowy in the parting rays of the aurora borealis.

But the mist thickened gradually, and all was lost in the growing darkness.

Whence came these two beings who thus met in the polar glaciers, at the very extremities of the earth?

Who were these two creatures, brought together for one instant by a deceptive *mirage*, but who seemed separated for eternity?

PART I.

THE INN OF THE WHITE FALCON.

CHAPTER I.

MOROK.

IT was the end of October 1831.

Although it was still daylight, a brazen lamp, with four burners, cast its rays on the bare walls of a large garret, whose one window was carefully closed ; a ladder, whose steps projected beyond the mouth of a trap-door, served as a staircase.

Here and there, thrown carelessly on the floor, were iron chains, collars with sharpened points, cavessons with teeth like saws, muzzles studded with nails, long rods of steel with wooden handles. In one corner was a small portable stove, such as plumbers use for melting lead, in which coals were placed over billets of wood, which a spark would in a moment kindle into a blaze.

Not far from these instruments of sinister appearance, which looked like the tools of an executioner, were some arms of antique form. A coat of mail, with rings so flexible, so light, and so close, that it resembled steel tissue, were laid on a chest, beside which were cuisses and armlets of iron, in good preservation, and furnished with leather straps. Several other weapons, and particularly two long pikes, with triangular blades with ashen handles, at once light and strong, and on which were the recent stains of blood, completed this panoply, which had the modern accompaniment of a brace of Tyrolean carbines primed and loaded.

In this arsenal of deadly weapons and barbarous instruments was strangely mingled a collection of very different things,—small glass cases, enclosing rosaries, necklaces, medals of *AGNUS DEI*, vessels for holy water, images of saints in frames. There was, also, a quantity of the pamphlets printed at Fribourg, on coarse blue paper,—pamphlets in which were recited many modern miracles,—in which was quoted a letter, signed J. C., addressed to a “faithful disciple,”—in which, too, there were, for the years 1831 and 1832, predictions of a most fearful description against impious and revolutionary France.

One of those paintings on canvass which showmen place in front of their movable booths, hung from one of the projecting beams of the attic, doubtless that the picture might not suffer by being rolled up too long.



MORON'S APARTMENT.

P. 4.

This canvass bore the following inscription :—

“ THE VERACIOUS AND MEMORABLE CONVERSION OF IGNATIUS MOROK, SURNAMED THE PROPHET, WHICH HAPPENED AT FRIBOURG, IN THE YEAR 1828.”

This painting, whose proportions were larger than life, was done in most vivid colours, and the inscription, in great letters, was divided into three compartments, which displayed three important features in the life of the convert, called *the Prophet*.

In the first was seen a man with a long beard, of so light a brown as to be almost white, with savage aspect, and attired in the skin of a reindeer, such as is worn by the wild populations of the north of Siberia ; his cap was of black fox's skin, ending with a raven's skull. His looks expressed terror, and bending in his sledge, which, drawn by six wild-looking dogs, glided over the snow, he fled from the pursuit of a pack of foxes, wolves, monstrous bears, &c., who all, with open jaws, and armed with formidable teeth, seemed capable of devouring a hundred times over man, dogs, and sledge.

Beneath this picture was :—

“ IN 1810 MOROK WAS AN IDOLATER, AND FLED BEFORE WILD BEASTS.”

In the second compartment, MOROK, attired in the white robe of the catechumen, was kneeling, with clasped hands, before a man dressed in a long black gown, with a white, falling collar. In one corner of the picture a tall angel, with a repulsive look, held a trumpet in one hand, and a flaming sword in the other, whilst the following words escaped from his lips, in red letters on a black ground :—

“ MOROK THE IDOLATER FLED FROM WILD BEASTS; THE WILD BEASTS WILL NOW FLEE FROM BEFORE IGNATIUS MOROK, CONVERTED AND BAPTISED AT FRIBOURG.”

In the third compartment, the new convert stood erect, haughty, disdainful, triumphant, beneath his long blue robe which hung in folds ; his head was proudly elevated, he had his left hand on his hip, with the right hand extended, and was in the very act of terrifying a crowd of tigers, hyenas, bears, lions, &c. &c., who were drawing in their claws, hiding their teeth, and crouched at his feet, submissive and frightened. Beneath the latter compartment there was inscribed as a moral conclusion :—

“ IGNATIUS MOROK IS CONVERTED ; THE WILD BEASTS CROUCH AT HIS FEET.”

Not far from these tableaux were several bundles of small books, all printed at Fribourg, in which it was narrated by what wonderful miracle the Idolater Morok was converted, had suddenly acquired a supernatural power, as was testified every day by the trial to which the “ tamer of beasts ” submitted himself, less to display his courage and boldness, than to the praise and glory of the Lord.

From the open trap in the garret there arose in puffs a wild, acrid, strong, and penetrating smell.

From time to time there were heard the sounds of heavy and low growls ; deep breathings were followed by a dull noise, like that made by some heavy body which spreads and stretches itself along the floor,

There was a man alone in this chamber.

It is Morok, the tamer of wild beasts, surnamed the "Prophet."

He is forty years of age, of middling height, his limbs shrunken, and his form singularly attenuated. A long pelisse, blood-red in colour, and trimmed with black fur, completely covers him; his complexion, naturally fair, is bronzed by the wandering life he has led from his infancy; his hair of that yellow and dull colour peculiar to certain nations of the polar countries, fell straight and lank down his shoulders; his nose is thin, sharp, and aquiline; whilst around his prominent cheek-bones there is a long beard, apparently white, but really of the lightest brown.

The physiognomy of this man was the more singular as his eyelids, which were very wide and high, displayed his fierce eyeball encircled by a white ring. His look, fixed and extraordinary, exercised a wonderful and actual fascination over animals, which, however, did not prevent the Prophet from also using in their subjugation the terrible arsenal of weapons which lay around him.

Seated before a table, he had just opened the secret drawer of a small chest filled with chaplets of beads and other toys used by the devout. In this secret drawer, closed by a peculiar lock, was a quantity of sealed envelopes, addressed only with a number, combined with a letter of the alphabet. The Prophet took one of these packets, and, putting it in the pocket of his pelisse, shut up the secret drawer, and restored the chest to the small table whence he had taken it.

The scene occurs about four o'clock in the afternoon, at the inn of the White Falcon, the sole hostelry of the little village of Mockern, near Leipsic, coming from the north towards France. After a few moments a hoarse roar, which came from underground, made the whole garret tremble.

"Judas, be silent!" exclaimed the prophet, in a menacing tone, and turning quickly towards the trap. Another deep growl, resembling distant thunder, was then heard.

"Silence, Cain, I say!" cried Morok, rising.

A third roar of surpassing and inexpressible savageness now resounded through the place.

"Will you be quiet, La Mort?" cried the prophet, hurrying towards the trap, and addressing some invisible animal who bore the gloomy appellation alluded to. Spite of the habitual authority of his voice, spite of his reiterated menaces, the tamer of brutes could not obtain silence, on the contrary, the loud barking of several mastiffs was now added to the roaring of the beasts.

Morok seized a lance, and proceeded to mount the ladder, when an individual was seen emerging from the trap. The stranger had a sun-burnt, healthy countenance; he was dressed in a round, broad-brimmed, grey hat, a short vest, and long loose trousers of green cloth. His dusty leather gaiters announced his having come some considerable distance, while, suspended over his shoulders by a large strap, he bore a capacious bag, such as is used for carrying game.

"The devil take the animals!" cried he, descending the ladder, "they seem to have forgotten me during the three days I have been absent. Why, Judas poked out his paw through the bars of his cage, and La Mort tore about like a mad thing. I suppose they did not know me again."



MOROK.

P. 6.

This was said in German, to which Morok replied in the same language, though with a slightly foreign accent. "Good or bad news, Karl?" inquired he anxiously.

"Oh, good!"

"You have met with them, then?"

"I have. Yesterday, two leagues from Wittemberg."

"Heaven be praised!" cried Morok, joining his hands with an expression of the deepest satisfaction.

"Why, I could not fail overtaking them; they were constrained to travel this road from Russia to France, and it was a thousand to one in favour of coming up with them between Wittemberg and Leipsic."

"And the description?"

"Answers precisely: two young girls dressed in mourning, a white horse, an old man with long moustachios, wearing a blue foraging cap and grey military coat, followed by a Siberian dog."

"And you have left them?"

"About a league from hence. In less than half an hour they will be here."

"And in this very inn, there being none other in the village," rejoined Morok, with a pensive air.

"And night fast approaching," added Karl.

"Did you enter into conversation with the old man?"

"Conversation! You surely are not thinking when you ask such a question."

"How?"

"No; I did not converse with him, for the best of all reasons."

"What reason can you assign?"

"The utter impossibility."

"Impossible! And wherefore?"

"You shall hear. I first followed them as though accidentally journeying the same road; then, towards nightfall yester evening, I approached them, and gave them the salutation common with foot-travellers, saying, 'Good night, and a pleasant journey, comrade;' the only answer I received was a look of defiance, while with the end of his stick the sullen individual so addressed pointed to the other side of the road."

"He is a Frenchman, and probably did not understand your German."

"Well, I heard him speak it as well as you or I when he arrived at the inn, where I also took care to put up, for I heard him ask for what he required for himself and party in perfectly good German."

"And could you not manage to draw him into conversation during the evening?"

"I tried once, but was so roughly repulsed that, for fear of incurring any risk, I would not venture again. I tell you, between ourselves, that you must be on your guard. This man has a look I don't like at all, and, spite of his grey moustache and attenuated frame, for he is bony as a skeleton, he looks so determined and so strong, too, that I scarcely know whether he or my comrade, Goliath, would have the best were they to engage in trial of strength. I know not what are your projects, but again, I say, 'Take care, master, take care!'"

"My black Java panther was also strong and disposed for mischief," added Morok, with a smile at once sinister and disdainful.

"La Mort? Yes, and he remains still fierce and dangerous as ever to all but yourself—to you certainly he is gentle enough."

"And so will I make this old man, spite of his strength and rude boorishness."

"Nay, nay, master, do not hope it; you are as clever and brave as mortal man can be; but, trust me, not even you can change the fierce old wolf we expect here into a lamb."

"Do not my lion Cain, and Judas my tiger, crouch before me with terror and submission?"

"True; but then you have such means to compel them as ——"

"Because I have FAITH—that is all—and that comprises all," said Morok, imperiously interrupting Karl, and accompanying the words with such a look as made the other cast down his eyes and remain mute. "Wherefore should not the man who by divine power has been permitted to prevail over the wild beast of the forest, have his arm also strengthened unto victory over perverse and impious man?" added the prophet, with a triumphant and inspired voice.

Whether from conviction of the power of his master, or his own inability to enter upon a controversy on so delicate a subject, Karl contented himself with humbly replying, "You are wiser than I am, master, and what you do is well done and must succeed."

"Did you follow this old man and the young girls through the whole journey?" inquired the prophet, after a momentary silence.

"I did, but cautiously and at a distance; only, as I am well acquainted with the country, I sometimes made a short cut through a valley, sometimes over a mountain, still keeping them in sight—the last look I got at them was from behind the old water-mill, down there where the tile-works are. As they were travelling on at a good pace, and night was approaching I hastened onwards to prepare for their arrival, and to announce to you a piece of good news I thought you would be glad to hear."

"Most glad, most rejoiced," replied Morok; "neither shall your welcome tidings go unrewarded, for, had these people escaped me ——" the prophet shook with an universal tremor, and ceased abruptly, but the expression of his countenance and the tone in which he spoke, abundantly declared how important were the particulars just communicated to him.

"Now I think of it," said Karl, "perhaps that courier, all covered with gold lace, who came here all the way from St. Petersburg without once stopping on the road, such was his haste to find you, had possibly something to do in the same important affair with which these people are mixed up: perhaps he ——"

Morok abruptly interrupted Karl, by inquiring,—

"And who informed you the courier from Petersburg was in any way concerned with the travellers we look for? You are wholly mistaken in your conjectures. Henceforward be more wise, and do not affect to know more than I tell you."

"Be it so, master; but pardon me this time: I do not think of it again. I must take off my game-bag here, and go and look after Goliath to help me feed the beasts; it must be about their supper—

time, if not already past the usual hour. Do you think, master, that big giant of ours would be likely to forget to feed the animals?"

"Goliath has gone out. He must not know that you have returned; neither would I have you seen by our expected travellers; it might excite much suspicion."

"Where do you wish me to go to?"

"Go down to the small outhouse adjoining the stable, and there await my orders; for I may possibly have to send you off this very night for Leipsic."

"When you please and where you please; I am at your pleasure. I have still some provisions remaining in my wallet; so I may as well go at once to my place, and be eating my supper and taking rest at the same time; so that I can start at a moment's notice."

"Begone, then!"

"Master, remember what I have said to you, and mistrust that old fellow with the grey moustache; I believe him to be a very devil for resolute courage. I am a pretty good judge, and it is my firm belief he would prove an ugly customer; mistrust him above all things, I entreat you."

"Be satisfied," said Morok; "you know it is my habit to trust nobody."

"Adieu, then, master! all good luck attend you."

And Karl, slowly ascending the ladder, quitted the place by the same means he had entered.

After bestowing a friendly adieu on his servant, the prophet continued slowly to pace the floor, wrapped in a profound meditation; then, approaching the casket with the false lining, which contained a quantity of papers, he selected a letter of considerable length, which he perused again and again with the most eager attention, occasionally going to the closed shutter which looked out on the court-yard of the small inn, and listened with anxiety, mingled with impatience, for the arrival of the three persons whose approach had just been announced to him.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRAVELLERS.

WHILST the scene we have described was passing at the White Falcon, at Mockern, the three persons whom Morok, the tamer of wild beasts, awaited so anxiously, were quietly progressing through smiling meadows, bounded on one side by a river whose current turned a mill, and on the other by the highroad which led to the village of Mockern, which was about a league's distance on the top of a tolerably high hill.

The sky was beautifully serene. The bubbling of the river, beaten by the mill-wheel, and sparkling with foam, alone disturbed the stillness of this calm evening; willows, thick with leaves, bent over the water, on which they threw their green and transparent shadows;

whilst farther on the river reflected the blue of the firmament and the warm tints of the setting sun so splendidly, that, but for the hills which separated it from the sky, the gold and azure of the wave would have been intermingled in one dazzling sheet with the gold and azure of the heavens. The tall reeds on the bank bent their velvet heads beneath the light breeze which so often rises with the close of day; the sun was slowly sinking beneath a large expanse of purple clouds, tipped with flame. The lively and clear air brought up the distant tinkling of the bells of a flock of sheep.

Across a path worn in the grass of the meadow, two young girls, almost children—for they were only just fifteen years of age—were riding on a white horse of moderate height, seated in a large Spanish saddle, which easily held them both,—for they were of small and slender figure.

A very tall man, with swarthy complexion and long moustachios, led the horse by the bridle, and turned from time to time towards the youthful maidens with an air at once anxious, respectful, and paternal. He leaned on a long staff; his shoulders, still robust, bore a soldier's knapsack; whilst his dusty gaiters and his weary steps betokened the fatigue of a lengthened journey.

One of those dogs which the people of the north of Siberia attach to their sledges,—a powerful beast, with the size, the make, and the colour of a wolf, followed closely on the steps of this little caravan, never leaving for an instant the heels of his master.

Nothing could be more charming than the group of these two young girls. One of them held in her left hand the loose bridle, and with her right arm encircled the waist of her sleeping sister, whose head reposed on her shoulder. Each step of the horse communicated to these two yielding forms an undulation full of grace, as they balanced their tiny feet on a step made of wood, which served them for a stirrup.

These twin-sisters were called *Rose* and *Blanche*, owing to a tender fancy of their mother. They were orphans, as might be seen from their dark-coloured garments, which were somewhat faded.

Such was the exactness of their resemblance and the equality of their size, that it required to be acquainted with them to distinguish one sister from the other. The portrait of her who was not sleeping may serve for both; the only difference that existed at this moment was that *Rose* was awake, and on this day fulfilled the functions of the *elder* sister,—functions which were made mutual, thanks to the fancy of their guide, who, an old soldier of the empire, was a strict disciplinarian, and had thought it right to alternate between the two orphans subordination and control.

An artist would have been inspired at the sight of these two lovely countenances, with head-dresses, or rather hoods of black velvet, whence escaped a profusion of clustering curls of the brightest chestnut hair flowing down their neck and shoulders, and surrounding their round, healthy, and velvet cheeks. A carnation, wet with dew, could not display a more lovely scarlet than did their pouting lips; the tender blue of the violet would have seemed dark beside the limpid azure of their large eyes, in which were painted the sweetness of their disposition and the innocence of their age. A white and smooth



THE TRAVELLERS.

brow, a delicately formed nose, and a dimple in their chin, completed faces replete with ingenuousness and sweetness of temper.

It was charming to see them when, on the approach of a shower or a storm, the old soldier carefully wrapped them both in a large pelisse of reindeer's skin, and pulled over their heads the capacious hood of this weather-proof garment. Then nothing could be more delicious than these two fresh and lovely faces sheltered by this dark-coloured cloak.

But this evening was fine and serene, and the heavy mantle was only wrapped around the knees of the two sisters, whilst the large hood fell back on the erupper of the saddle.

Rose kept her right arm encircled round her sister, who still slumbered, gazing on her with an air of inexpressible tenderness, almost maternal; for to-day Rose was the senior, and an elder sister is already almost a mother.

Not only did these orphans idolise each other, but, by a psychological phenomenon common to twins, they were usually simultaneously affected; the emotion of one was instantly reflected in the countenance of the other; the same cause made them both start or blush, for truly did their young hearts beat in unison. In fact simple joys, bitter griefs—all between them was mutually felt and instantly participated.

In their infancy, attacked at the same moment by a cruel malady, like two flowers on one stem, they had together bent, grown pale, and languished; but together also they had resumed their former health and charming appearance.

Need we say that these mysterious and indissoluble bonds which united the twins, could not be severed without proving a mortal blow to both of them alike?

Thus those tender creatures, which we call the "*love-birds*," can only live together; they grow sad, suffer, peak, pine, and die, when any cruel hand severs them from each other.

The guardian of the orphans, a man of about fifty-five years of age, of a military appearance, presented the immortal type of the soldiers of the republic and the empire,—that heroic offspring of the people, who became in one campaign the first soldiers in the world, proving to the world what the people can and will do when those they choose put confidence, reliance, and hope in them.

This soldier, who was the protector of the two sisters, was an old grenadier of the Imperial Horse-Guards, named *Dagobert*. His face was serious, imperturbable, and strongly marked; his grey moustache, long and thick, completely hid his lower lip, and joined a large imperial, which covered nearly the whole of his chin; his lean cheeks, of the colour of brick-dust and tanned like old parchment, were carefully shaved; thick eyebrows, still black, almost covered his light-blue eyes; his gold ear-rings descended to the edge of his military stock; a leathern belt confined his cloak, of thick grey cloth, about his waist; and a blue cap with a red tassel, which fell on his left shoulder, covered his bald head.

Once endowed with the strength of a Hercules, but always retaining the courage of a lion, good and patient, because he was brave and powerful, Dagobert, in spite of the harshness of his features, evinced for the orphans an exquisite anxiety, constant consideration, marvel-

lous tenderness,—almost maternal—yes, maternal! for the heroism of affection displays the heart of a mother and the heart of a soldier.

Of stoical calmness, and keeping down every appearance of emotion, the perfect *sang froid* of Dagobert was never disturbed; thus although nothing could be less sportive than he, yet he was at times really comical in consequence of that air of unruffled seriousness which characterised his every action.

From time to time, as he wended on his way, Dagobert turned round to give a pat or say a kind word to the good white horse which bore the orphan girls, and whose eyes and long teeth betrayed his respectable antiquity; two deep scars, one on the flank and the other on the breast, shewed that he had been present in fierce engagements; and so it was not without an air of pride that from time to time he shook his old military bridle, on the brass of whose bit there was an eagle in relievo. His step was easy, careful, and firm; his skin glossy, his condition excellent, and the foam which abundantly covered his bit proved the health which horses acquire by the constant but not excessive work of a long journey by short stages; for although he had been *en route* for more than six months, this admirable animal stepped on with as much alacrity as he had started, bearing the two orphans and a tolerably heavy portmanteau, fastened to the back of the saddle.

If we have alluded to the extreme length of the teeth of the old horse (and they are the unmistakable evidences of old age), it was because he often shewed them, though only with the intention of being faithful to his name (which was *Jovial*), and to play a little prank, of which the dog was the victim. The dog, who was called *Kill-joy* (no doubt as a contrast), never left the heels of his master, was constantly within reach of Jovial, who now and then biting him gently by the skin of his back, lifted him up and carried him so for an instant; the dog, protected by his thick hide and no doubt long used to similar facetiousness from his companion, submitted to the fun with an air of stoical indifference, only when he thought the joke had lasted long enough *Kill-joy* growled audibly. Jovial, who understood his friend's nod as soon as his wink, instantly dropped him. At other times, and doubtless by way of a change, Jovial lightly nibbled the soldier's haversack; and his master, with his dog, seemed perfectly accustomed to these little jokes.

These details will enable us to learn the excellent terms which existed between the two twin-sisters, the old soldier, the horse, and the dog.

The little caravan advanced, somewhat impatient to reach the village of Mockern, which was in sight, before nightfall.

Dagobert looked about him from time to time, seeming as though recalling old remembrances to his mind. Gradually his features grew sad, and when he was at a little distance from the windmill, whose noise had attracted his attention, he stopped, and frequently passed his fore-finger and thumb over his long moustachios, the only symptom of a strong and irrepressible emotion that he ever displayed. Jovial having stopped suddenly behind his master, Blanche, who was awakened by this, raised her head: her first look was at her sister, at whom she smiled sweetly; they both exchanged looks of surprise



REMEMBRANCES.

P. 13.

at the sight of Dagobert motionless, his hands clasped together on the top of his long staff, and apparently overcome by a powerful and over-bearing feeling.

The orphans were at this moment at the foot of a small mound, whose top was hidden by the thick foliage of a vast oak, planted half way up this little elevation. Rose, seeing Dagobert still motionless and lost in thought, leaned forward in her saddle, and, placing her little white hand on the shoulder of the soldier, whose back was towards her, said to him, in a soft tone,—

“What ails you, Dagobert?”

The veteran turned round, and, to the great surprise of the two sisters, they saw a large tear which, having marked its moistened furrow down his embrowned cheek, lost itself in his thick moustache.

“What, weeping? Yes!” exclaimed Rose and Blanche, much moved; “tell us, we beseech you, what—what ’tis that ails you.”

After a trifling hesitation, the old soldier drew his hard hand across his eyes, and pointing to the aged oak near which they were resting, he said, in a tone of deep emotion,—

“My poor children, I shall make you grieve—but what I have to say is a sacred duty I must fulfil. Listen: it is now eighteen years since the battle of Leipsic; on the eve of that bloody scene I bore your father in my arms, all wounded and bleeding, and placed him beneath this very tree. He had received two sabre-cuts on his head, and a musket-ball in his shoulder: it was here that both he and myself, who had escaped with merely some flesh wounds, were taken prisoners; and by whom, think ye? By a renegade, a traitor to his country, a Frenchman, an *émigré* marquess, now a colonel in the Russian service, and who subsequently—but another time, you shall hear all that followed.”

Then, after a short pause, the veteran, pointing with his stick to the village of Mockern, added, “Yes, yes, there it is! Well do I recognise those heights, where your brave father, at the head of his regiment of Polonaise guards, cut down the Russian cuirassiers, and carried the battery they were in charge of. Ah, my children,” added he, with grave simplicity, “I only wish you could have seen your gallant parent, at the head of his brigade, charge in the thickest of the enemy’s ranks, while the shot flew about like hailstones. You will never see such a sight, any more than I shall ever look upon his equal.”

While Dagobert was thus expressing his regrets and his recollections, the two orphans, by a spontaneous movement, had lightly slid from their saddle, and, holding each other by the hand, had kneeled down at the foot of the old oak, then, closely pressing to each other’s side, they burst into tears, while the old soldier, standing behind them, crossed his hands on his long staff, and leaned his bald forehead on them.

“Come, come,” said he, gently, when looking up at the end of a few minutes passed in intense meditation—it might be prayer—he perceived tears stealing down the delicate cheeks of the still kneeling sisters; “come, dear children, you must not fret. Perhaps we shall meet General Simon again in Paris,” continued he; “I will explain myself more fully to you this evening, ere we retire to rest. I had my own particular reasons for choosing this day to relate to you many

things concerning your father. I always wished to select this one particular day to acquaint you with much it is necessary you should be aware of, and to-day is the anniversary ——”

“ We were weeping,” said Rose, “ because we thought of our dear mother.”

“ Whom we shall never see again till we rejoin her in Heaven,” added Blanche.

The soldier raised the orphans, took a hand of each, and looked alternately from one to the other with an expression of ineffable attachment, rendered still more striking by the contrast with his own weather-beaten countenance. “ You must not grieve thus, dear children,” said he. “ True, your mother was one of the best, most estimable of women. When she inhabited Poland, she was styled ‘ *the Pearl of Warsaw* ;’ they might more justly have called her the Pearl of the whole world, for the universe itself could not produce her equal. No——”

The voice of Dagobert died away ; his broad chest heaved as with suppressed emotion, and, according to his usual wont, he remained silently smoothing down his long moustache with his finger and thumb,—

“ Hear me, my dear children,” said he, after having successfully struggled with his emotion ; “ were your beloved mother still with you, she could but give you good counsels—could she ?”

“ No, Dagobert.”

“ And what were her dying injunctions to you both ? To think constantly of her, but to restrain all grief.”

“ Yes, indeed, those were nearly her last words. She often told us that a merciful God, in pity to tender mothers constrained to leave their children on earth, would permit them the delightful privilege of watching over their offsprings, and hearing their prayers from Heaven,” said Blanche, innocently.

“ And that her eye would ever behold us,” added Rose.

So saying, the sisters, as though influenced by one spontaneous feeling, clasped each other’s hand with an air of touching innocence, and lifting their clear, blue eyes towards the scarcely bluer sky, repeated, with all the enchanting simplicity of their age and disposition,—

“ Mother, dear mother, we know that you see and hear your poor children.”

“ Then since you are aware that your lost parent sees and hears all you do and say,” interrupted Dagobert, deeply affected, “ beware how you grieve her by giving way to regrets she so expressly forbade.”

“ You are right, Dagobert.”

“ We will not weep any more,” said the orphans, drying their tears.

Now Dagobert, far from being in the slightest degree a bigot, approached more closely to a state of heathenism. In Spain, he had cut down, with the utmost indifference, those monks of all orders and complexions who, bearing a crucifix in one hand and a poniard in the other, defended, not liberty (the Inquisition had for ages baffled all attempts of that nature), but their monstrous privileges. Still Dagobert had for upwards of forty years been present at so many sights of fearful and terrible grandeur ; he had so often stared in the very jaws of death that the instinct of “ *natural religion*,” common to all simple and honest minds, had still survived in his soul ; thus, though unable

fully to understand or participate in the tender illusion which served to console the weeping orphans, he would have deemed it an unpardonable crime to have sought in any way to destroy the fabric of hope which supported them. Seeing them more composed, he resumed,—

“That’s right, my children; dry up your tears, and prattle away as you did this morning, and all yesterday, laughing at your own little jokes, and not even answering when I spoke to you, so entirely were you occupied with your own conversation. Yes, yes, young ladies; the old soldier has found you out. You have got some nice, clever little business to talk over, and you have been quite occupied with it for the last three days. Well, so it does but serve to amuse you, and pass the tedious time away, I am as much pleased with it as you are.”

The sisters blushed, and exchanged a smile which contrasted greatly with the tears still glittering in their eyes. At length Rose replied, with a slightly embarrassed manner,—

“Indeed, and indeed, good Dagobert, we were not talking of any thing in particular: we just spoke of whatever came first in our heads.”

“Ah, well! I don’t seek to know any more than it pleases you to tell me. And now take a little rest, and then we will resume our journey, for it is growing late, and we must reach Mockern before night, that we may be enabled to set out again to-morrow morning quite early.”

“We have still a very long way to go—have we not?” inquired Rose.

“In order to reach Paris, you mean? Yes, my dear children; we have at least a hundred marches before us. We get on, though may-be slowly, and we travel cheaply too, for our purse is but a slender one. But then our wants are few: just a small chamber for you, with a palliasse and coverlet for myself, outside your door, with old Killjoy at my feet; a litter of fresh straw for Jovial: here is all our expense, for as to food, both of you together scarcely eat more than a bird; and as to myself, I learned, when I was in Spain and Egypt, to reserve my appetite till I could conveniently indulge it.”

“You forget to add, that in order to economise still more, you have undertaken the sole duty of providing every thing we required, without permitting us to assist you in any way.”

“Yes, indeed, good Dagobert, when we think too that after first attending to all our wants, and seeing us comfortably provided for the night, you have actually set about washing and preparing our small stock of clothes; and, as if it were not our place to perform such offices for ourselves —”

“You!” exclaimed the soldier, interrupting Blanche. “What! allow you to spoil your delicate little hands by dabbling in coarse, soapy water? I should think not, indeed! Besides, a soldier is accustomed to wash his own linen, and, I can assure you, young ladies, whatever you may think, I was considered the best laundress in the regiment; and as for ironing, I think I am a pretty good hand at that too, eh, ladies?”

“Oh, impossible to be better; you excel in ironing.”

“Only sometimes,” said Rose, smilingly, “you rather scorch the things.”

“Yes, yes; that comes of my iron being too hot. Why, you see,

if I hold it towards my cheek, to judge of the heat, my skin is so thoroughly hardened that I cannot feel it," said Dagobert, with the most imperturbable gravity.

"Don't you perceive that we are only joking, good Dagobert?"

"Well then, my children, if you are satisfied with me as a laundress, I hope you will continue to me your custom. It is, at least, a cheap plan; and, while we are *en route*, poor folks like ourselves should be as saving as possible, that our means may hold out till our arrival in Paris. Our papers, and the medal you have about you, will do the rest—at least we must hope so."

"The medal is most sacred in our eyes. It was our beloved mother's dying gift."

"Then be most careful not to lose it, and look from time to time that you still have it about you."

"Here it is," said Blanche, drawing from her corsage a small bronze medal, which she wore suspended round her neck by a slender chain of the same medal. This medal presented on its two sides the following inscriptions:—

Victime
de
L.C.D.J.
Priez pour moi.
—
Paris,
February 13, 1832.

Paris,
3 Rue St. François.
Dans un siècle et demi vous
serez
February 13, 1832.
—
Priez pour moi.

"What does all that mean, Dagobert?" said Blanche, attentively observing these mysterious inscriptions. "Our dear mother did not know herself."

"We will talk more about it when we reach the village we are hastening to," replied Dagobert. "It is growing late. Let us start on our way. Be very careful with this medal; and now, *en route*, we have still an hour's march ere we reach our halt. Come, my dear children, give one more look to the hillock once moistened with your father's blood, and then—to horse—to horse!"

The young orphans bent a glance of mingled piety and regret on the spot which had awakened such feelings of painful regret in their usually imperturbable guide, and then, with his aid, resumed their seat on Jovial.

This venerable and sagacious animal had not employed the leisure afforded him by indulging in a little ramble on his own account, but, with all the forethought of a consummate general, had availed himself of the present opportunity to lay in a comfortable provision for the night by industriously devouring the fresh and tender grass he found growing on a foreign territory, and that, too, with so much apparent enjoyment as almost to excite the envy of Killjoy, who, stretched out on the grass, his nose between his two fore-paws, was attentively watching the signal of departure, which once given, he rose and resumed his place behind his master. Dagobert, first striking the earth with the end of his long staff, conducted the horse by his bridle, walking with great precaution, from the increasing marshiness of the ground. At the end of a few minutes travelling, he found himself obliged to strike off towards the left in order to regain the highroad.

Dagobert having, on his arrival at Moekern, inquired for the most humble house of entertainment, was referred to the White Falcon, as being the only inn the village afforded.

"On, then, to the White Falcon," replied the soldier, as, following the directions given, he directed Jovial to the inn in question.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARRIVAL.

MOROK, the tamer of wild beasts, had already many times, and with great impatience, opened the shutter in the garret which looked out into the courtyard of the White Falcon, anxious to watch the arrival of the two orphans and the soldier. Not having yet seen them arrive, he began again to walk slowly up and down with his arms folded on his breast, his head lowered, as though reflecting on the best mode of executing some plan which he had conceived. His ideas were, doubtless, employed very painfully, for his features seemed even more sinister than usual.

In spite of his wild appearance, the man was by no means deficient in intelligence: the intrepidity of which he gave proof in his displays, and which, by a clever deceit, he attributed to his recent state of grace, a language at times solemn and mysterious, and an austere hypocrisy, had combined to give him a sort of influence over the people whom he visited in his peregrinations.

Morok, long before his conversion, had been fully familiarised with the habits of wild beasts. Born in the north of Siberia, he had, whilst very young, been one of the boldest hunters of the bear and reindeer. Still later, in 1810, giving up that pursuit, he had become the guide of a Russian engineer charged with the survey of the polar regions, and had accompanied him to St. Petersburg. There Morok, after many vicissitudes of fortune, was employed amongst the imperial couriers, those iron automata, whom the least caprice of a despot sends forth in a frail sledge through the whole vast extent of empire from Persia to the Frozen Ocean. These persons, who travel day and night with the rapidity of lightning, think not of seasons, obstacles, fatigues, or dangers: mere human projectiles, they must be broken or reach their destination. We may imagine, therefore, the boldness, vigour, and resignation, of men accustomed to such an existence.

It is useless here to detail the remarkable series of events which led Morok to abandon this life of peril for another pursuit, and how he entered as a catechumen into a religious house at Fribourg, after which, properly and really converted, he had commenced his wanderings, accompanied by a menagerie with whose origin no one was acquainted.

* * * * *

Morok was walking up and down his attic.

It was night,

The three persons whom he so impatiently expected had not arrived.

His step became more and more irresolute and impatient.

Suddenly he stopped, leaned his head in the direction of the window and listened.

The man had a hearing as acute as a savage.

"They come!" he exclaimed.

And the balls of his savage eyes glared with fiendish joy; he had heard the footsteps of a man and horse.

Going to the shutter of his garret, he carefully half opened it, and saw the two young girls on horseback, and the old soldier who guided them, enter the courtyard of the inn.

The night had set in dark and cloudy; a high wind blew about the light of the lantern by which the guests were welcomed and assisted. The description which Morok had received was too precise for him to be deceived.

Sure of his prey, he closed the window.

After having reflected for a quarter of an hour—no doubt, that he might fitly arrange all his plans—he leant over the opening of the trap from which the top of the ladder which served him as a staircase projected, and called,

"Goliath!"

"Master!" replied a hoarse voice.

"Come hither!"

"Here I am, just come from the slaughter-house. I've got the meat with me."

The steps of the ladder groaned again, and soon an enormous head appeared on a level with the floor.

Goliath (and fitly was he named, for he was upwards of six feet six, and cast in the mould of Hercules) was hideous; his scowling eyes were deep sunk beneath his low and projecting brow; his matted locks and beard were thick and hard as horsehair, giving to his features a brutal character; between his large jaws, armed with teeth like hooks, he held by one corner a piece of raw beef, weighing ten or twelve pounds, finding it, no doubt, more convenient to carry the meat in this way, that he might have his hands free to help him up the ladder, which trembled beneath his tread.

At last this vast and bulky frame wholly appeared at the trap, and by his bull's neck and the vast width of his chest and shoulders, and the large proportions of his arms and legs, it might be seen that this giant could fearlessly wrestle with a bear.

He wore an old pair of blue trousers with red stripes and laced with sheep-skin, a sort of coat, or rather cuirass, of very thick leather, torn in places by the sharp nails of animals.

When he reached the floor Goliath unclosed his hooks, opened his mouth, letting his quarter of beef fall on the ground, licked his bloody moustaches with a relish.

This sort of animal had, like many other mountebanks, begun by eating raw flesh at fairs to get money from the gaping crowds. Having thus acquired a taste for this cannibal food, and uniting his taste with his interest, he used to preface the display of Morok by eating some pounds of raw flesh in presence of the astonished crowds.



MOROK AND GOLIATH.

“My share and La Mort’s are below; here’s Cain and Judas’s allowance,” said Goliath, pointing to the piece of beef. “Where’s the hatchet? I want to chop it in two. No preference; beast or man: let every wesand have its fair share, I say.”

Then tucking up one of the sleeves of his garment he displayed an arm as hairy as a wolf’s skin, and furrowed by veins as thick as a man’s thumb.

“Now, master, where’s the chopper?” he again inquired, looking around him.

Instead of replying, the prophet asked him several questions.

“Were you below when those new comers entered the inn just now?”

“Yes, master; I was just coming out of the slaughter-house.”

“Who are they?”

“Oh, there’s two little wenches on a white horse; there’s an old chap with ’em, with long moustaches—— But the chopper, the animals are terribly hungry, so am I,—so where’s the chopper?”

“Do you know where they have lodged these travellers?”

“The landlord took the little girls and the old fellow to the bottom of the court-yard.”

“In the building which looks on to the fields?”

“Yes, master; but the——”

Here a concert of fierce roars shook the very floor of the garret and interrupted Goliath.

“There now, d’ye hear?” he exclaimed. “Hunger has made the animals quite furious. If I could roar, I should do so too. I never saw Judas and Cain as they are to-night; they jump about in their cages ready to break ’em. As to La Mort, her eyes shine brighter than ever—just like two candles. Poor Mort!”

Morok replied, without paying any regard to Goliath’s remarks,—

“The young girls, then, are put in the building at the bottom of the court-yard?”

“Yes, yes; but for love of the devil, the chopper! Since Karl was sent away, all the work falls on one, and that makes the feeding-time come later.”

“And the old man is with the girls?”

Goliath, astonished that, in spite of all his urging, his master did not think of the animals’ supper, regarded the prophet with an air of excessive surprise.

“Answer me, brute!”

“If I’m a brute, I’ve a brute’s strength,” said Goliath, in a sulky tone, “and, brute against brute, I haven’t always the worst of it.”

“I ask you if the old man is with the young girls?” repeated Morok.

“Ah! no,” replied the giant, “the old chap, after having led his horse to the stable, asked for a tub and some water, and there he is under the porch, and by the light of a lantern he is soaping away—he with grey moustaches, soaping like a washerwoman!—just as if I should be feeding canaries with bird-seed,” added Goliath, shrugging his shoulders with contempt.

“Now I’ve answered, master, please let me get the beasts’ supper

ready?" Then looking about him, he added, "But where is the chopper?"

After a moment's reflection, the prophet said to Goliath,—

"You must not feed the beasts this evening."

At first Goliath did not understand, for the very idea was to him incomprehensible.

"What do you mean, master?" he inquired.

"I desire that you will not feed the beasts this evening."

Goliath made no reply, but opened his heavy eyes to an immense size, clasped his hands and retreated two steps.

"Well, you understand me now, don't you?" said Morok, impatiently. "It's plain enough; is it not?"

"Not to eat when here's the meat, and supper's three hours behind time?" cried Goliath, in increasing amaze.

"Obey, and be silent."

"Do you, then, wish some frightful accident to happen to-night? Hunger will render these beasts perfectly furious, and me likewise."

"So much the better."

"Mad!"

"All the better."

"How all the better? Why——"

"Enough!"

"But, by the devil's backbone! I am as hungry as the very beasts themselves."

"Then eat! Who hinders you? Your supper is ready, since you eat it raw."

"I never eat without my beasts, nor they without me."

"Then I repeat, that if you give the animals one taste of food I will dismiss you instantly."

Goliath uttered a deep growl about as tuneful and soft as that of a bear, while he surveyed the prophet with an air at once stupefied and wrathful.

Morok, having given his orders, continued to pace with hasty strides, though buried in profound reflection; then, addressing Goliath, who still remained in utter amazement, he said,—

"You recollect the burgomaster's house, where I went this evening to have my passport signed, and where the wife purchased some little books and a chaplet?"

"Yes, I recollect," answered the giant, surlily.

"Go, then, and inquire of the servant if I can depend upon seeing the burgomaster early to-morrow morning."

"What for?"

"I may possibly have something of importance to communicate to him. At any rate, say that I particularly beg he will not leave his house to-morrow until I have seen him."

"Very well," grumbled out the giant. "But my poor dear beasts—you will let me feed them, will you not, before I go to the burgomaster? Only the Java panther,—he is the most famished of all; just let me give La Mort one little bit, only a mouthful or two between the poor starved brutes, and then master Cain, and myself, and Judas, will wait."

"It is that panther I most particularly desire you to keep without one morsel of food. Yes, I tell you, he more than any other."

"By the horns of the devil!" exclaimed Goliath, "what ails you to-day? I can't make you out at all. Pity Karl is not here; he is so deep and knowing, he would soon find out why you keep the poor starving beasts from having any thing to eat. I should be able to understand what reasons you can possibly have."

"There is no need for your understanding."

"Will not Karl soon be back?"

"He has returned."

"Where is he, then?"

"Gone again."

"What can be going on here? I am sure there is something. Karl goes—returns—sets out again—and——"

"But our present business is with you, not with Karl. You, who, though hungry as a wolf, are as cunning as a fox, and, when you please, as deep as Karl himself."

With these encouraging words Morok patted the giant on the shoulder with every appearance of friendly zeal, changing his former imperative style into a tone and expression of entire cordiality. Goliath seemed still more unable to comprehend what his master really meant. At last he opened his great eyes wider than usual and exclaimed, "Cunning as Karl! what, I?"

"Come, I will prove it. There are ten florins to be got to-night, and you will be the cunning, clever fellow who will gain them—I am sure you will."

"Ah, yes! as far as that goes I *am* deep enough," replied the giant, smiling with a stupid and self-satisfied air. "But I say, master, what must one do to gain these ten florins?"

"You will see."

"Is it any thing very difficult?"

"You will see. You will begin by going to the burgomaster. But first, ere you depart, light me this brasier," said Morok, pointing with his finger to a small stove.

"Yes, master," replied the giant, deriving considerable consolation from the idea of gaining ten florins, though he was made to wait for his supper.

"Place this bar of steel in the brasier until it becomes red-hot," added the prophet.

"Yes, master."

"Leave it in the fire while you go with my message to the burgomaster; then return and await me here."

"Yes, master."

"You must also keep a strong fire in the furnace."

"Yes, master."

Morok took a few steps as though leaving the room, when, changing his purpose, he said,—

"You told me the man who just arrived here was engaged washing linen under the porch?"

"Yes, master."

“Forget nothing; the bar of iron in the fire, the burgomaster, and to return and await my orders here.”

So saying, the prophet descended the ladder leading from the garret and disappeared.

CHAPTER IV.

MOROK AND DAGOBERT.

GOLIATH was not mistaken. Dagobert was soaping away with that air of imperturbable gravity which never forsook him.

If we consider the habits of a soldier in a campaign, we shall not be astonished at this apparent eccentricity; besides, Dagobert only thought how he was to spare the slender purse of the orphans, and save them from all care, all trouble; and, therefore, each evening after the day's march, he occupied himself with sundry feminine occupations. Besides, he was not in his apprenticeship; for often during his campaigns he had very industriously repaired the damage and disorder which a day of battle necessarily brings to the uniform and equipments of a soldier who not only may receive sword-cuts, but must also mend his uniform; since when the skin is cut, the blade also makes in the garment an unseemly opening.

Thus the evening or day after a severe combat, the best soldiers (always known by their extremely neat attire) may be seen drawing from their haversack or portmanteau a small housewife furnished with needles, thread, scissors, and other utilities, in order to go to work at all sorts of mending and repairs, of which the most careful seamstress might be jealous.

We cannot find a better time to explain why the surname of Dagobert was given to François Baudoin (the guide to the two orphans), when he was recognised as one of the finest and bravest grenadiers in the Imperial Horse-Guards.

There had been a fierce struggle during the day, without any decisive advantage. In the evening the company of which François formed one, had been sent on to occupy the ruins of a deserted village: the outposts and sentinels being placed, one half the troopers remained on horseback, whilst the other took some rest and picketed their horses. Our friend had charged amongst the bravest without being wounded this time, for he only called a *remembrance* a deep scratch which a Kaiserlitz had given him in the thigh by a thrust of the bayonet, clumsily delivered.

“Scoundrel! my new breeches!” cried the grenadier, when he saw a wide rent on the thigh of his garment, which he revenged by a heavy down blow of his sabre, which cleft the Austrian's skull. If the grenadier evinced a stoical indifference on the subject of this slight gash on his skin, he was by no means so indifferent to the disastrous wound which his full-dress breeches had sustained.

At bivouac the same evening, therefore, he undertook to remedy

this accident ; and, drawing his housewife from his pocket and choosing his best thread, best needle, and arming his finger with his thimble, he began his tailor-work by the light of the bivouac fire, having first divested himself of his jack-boots, and (we must confess it) of his breeches too ; he turned the latter wrong side outwards, that he might sew them on the inner side that the stitches should not then be so apparent.

This partial *dishabille* was somewhat contrary to discipline ; but the captain who went the round could not help laughing at the sight of the old soldier, who, gravely seated with his legs under him, his hairy cap on his head, his full uniform on his back, his boots by his side, and his breeches on his knees, was stitching away as coolly as a tailor on his shop-board.

Suddenly there was an alarm of musketry, and the videttes replied by crying "To arms !"

"To horse !" cried the captain, in a voice of thunder.

In a moment the troopers were in the saddle. The unlucky mender of holes was guide of the first rank, and, having no time to turn his breeches, alas ! he was forced to put them on wrong side outwards, and, without having time to put on his boots, he leaped on his horse.

A party of Cossacks, profiting by the shelter of a wood close at hand, had tried to surprise the detachment. The encounter was bloody. Our soldier foamed with rage, for he was very tenacious of his property, and the day was an unlucky one for him,— his breeches torn and his boots lost ! and he therefore cut and slashed away with fury, a splendid moonlight lending its aid. All the company were in admiration of the valour of the grenadier, who killed two Cossacks and took an officer prisoner with his own hand.

After this skirmish, in which the detachment preserved its position, the captain drew up his men in line to compliment them publicly on their good behaviour. Our man would fain have been without this oration, but was compelled to obey the order.

We may imagine the surprise of the captain and his troopers when they saw the tall and stern figure advance at a foot's pace on his horse with his naked feet in his stirrups, and pressing his horse with limbs equally denuded.

The captain, much astonished, approached him ; but, remembering the soldier's occupation at the instant of the cry to arms, he understood the whole affair.

"Ah, ah ! old campaigner !" said he, "you were like King Dagobert, were you ? you put on your breeches wrong side outwards !"

In spite of discipline, ill-repressed shouts of laughter hailed this speech of the captain. Our man, erect in his seat, with his left thumb at the right point of his accurately adjusted bridle, the handle of his sabre leaning on his right thigh, kept his immovable gravity, and, making his half circle, regained his rank without moving his eyelid, after having received the congratulations of his captain. From that day forward François Baudoin received and retained the surname of Dagobert.

Dagobert was then in the porch of the inn, employed in washing, to the great marvel of several beer-drinkers, who, from the taproom in which they were boozing, looked at him with a curious eye.

To say truth, it was rather an odd sight.

Dagobert had taken off his grey great-coat, and turned up the sleeves of his shirt; with a vigorous hand he was rubbing soap into a small pocket-handkerchief spread on a board, one end of which inclined in a but full of water; on his right arm, tattooed with warlike emblems in red and blue, there were two cicatrices so deep that a finger could be laid in them.

The Germans who were drinking beer and smoking their pipes might well be surprised at the singular employment of this tall old man, with long moustaches, bald head, and forbidding look, for the features of Dagobert were harsh and repulsive when he was not in the company of the two young girls.

The perpetual notice of which he found himself the object began to annoy him exceedingly, for he thought he was occupied in the simplest employment possible.

At this moment the prophet entered the porch: he looked steadfastly at the soldier for some time, then approaching him he said, in French, and in a somewhat contemptuous tone, "Comrade, it seems that you have not much confidence in the washerwomen of Mockern?"

Dagobert, without ceasing from his washing, frowned, turned his head half round, cast a peculiar look at the prophet, but made him no answer.

Surprised at his silence, Morok said, "I am not mistaken, you are a Frenchman, my fine fellow; the words tattooed in your arm prove that, and your military figure testifies that you are an old soldier of the empire; I think, then, that for a hero you end rather with the distaff."

Dagobert remained still silent, but he bit his moustache with his teeth, and squeezed tightly a bit of soap with which he was washing the pocket-handkerchief; for the countenance and air of the tamer of beasts were displeasing to him, though he was unwilling to shew his prejudice. Nothing abashed, the prophet continued,—

"I am sure, my fine fellow, that you are neither deaf nor dumb, why, then, do you not answer me?"

Dagobert, losing patience, turned round abruptly, looked Morok full in the face, and said, with a brutal tone,—

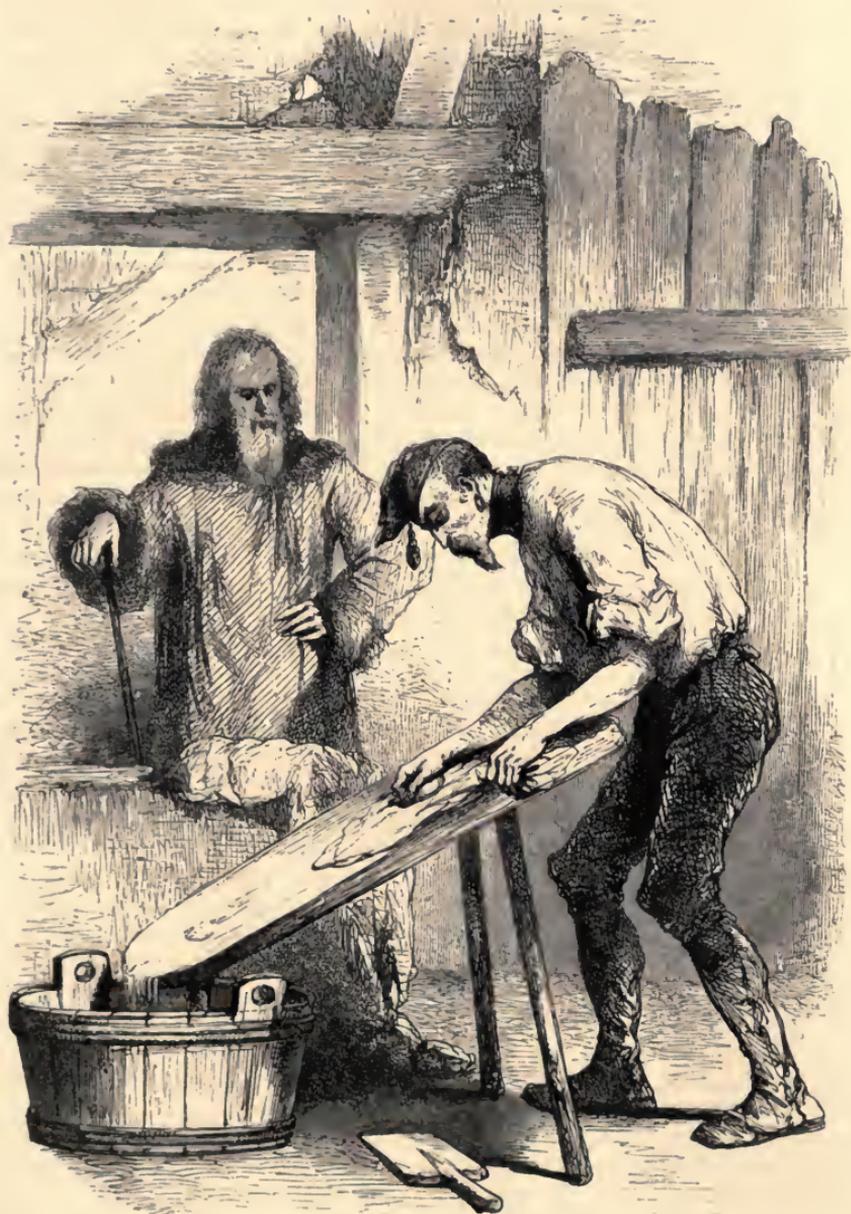
"I do not know you—I do not wish to know you—let me be quiet;" and he resumed his occupation.

"But we may make acquaintance by drinking a glass of Rhenish wine together. We can talk of our campaigns, for I have seen the wars myself, I can tell you, and that, perhaps, may make you a little more civil."

The veins in Dagobert's bald forehead swelled almost to bursting: he saw in the look and tone of this impertinent intruder the desire and intention to provoke him,—still he restrained himself.

"I ask you why you will not drink a cup of wine with me, whilst we have a talk about France. I was there once for a long time, and a beautiful country it is. When I meet with a Frenchman any where I am delighted—particularly if he uses soap as skilfully as you do; if I kept a housekeeper I should certainly send her to you to take a few lessons."

The sarcastic accent was no longer disguised,—insolence and bravado



M. A. VILLIERS DEL.

H. A. LEVING.

DAGOBERT WASHING.

were openly displayed in the impertinent demeanour and tone of the prophet. Dagobert, perceiving that with such an opponent the quarrel might become serious, and desiring under every provocation to avoid it, lifted his tub in his arms, and betook himself to the other end of the porch, hoping by this expedient to put an end to a scene which tried his forbearance to the uttermost.

The savage eyes of the tamer of beasts sparkled with pleasure. The white ring which encircled his eyeballs seemed to expand, and, thrusting his crooked fingers twice or thrice into his long and cane-coloured beard with a gesture of satisfaction, he again approached the soldier, accompanied by two or three idle gapers from the tap-room.

In spite of his natural phlegm, Dagobert, surprised and annoyed at the impertinent attack of the prophet, had hastily resolved to knock him down with the piece of wood he held in his hand, but when he remembered the orphan girls he curbed his irritable feeling.

Morok crossing his arms on his chest, said to him, in a dry and insolent tone,—

“Most assuredly you are not a very polite person, man of soap!” then turning to the grinning bystanders, he continued in German, “I was saying to this Frenchman with long moustachios that he is by no means polite, we shall see what his reply will be; it may be requisite to give him a lesson,—though Heaven preserve me from being quarrelsome,” he added, with affected compunction; “but the Lord has enlightened me, I am His work, and out of respect to Him I must make His work respected.”

This mystic and daring peroration was very much to the taste of the listeners. The prophet’s reputation had reached as far as Moekern, and as they were anxiously awaiting his exhibition on the morrow, they relished this prelude the more strongly.

When Dagobert heard this provocation on the part of his adversary, he could not refrain from saying, in German, “I understand German; so go on in German, and they will know what you say.”

Other spectators now arrived, and so great interest was excited that they formed a circle around the two principal actors in this scene.

The prophet replied in German,

“I said you were not polite, and I can say that you are grossly impertinent. What is your reply to this?”

“Nothing,” said Dagobert, as he began busily to soap another article of linen.

“Nothing,” replied Morok, “that’s concise enough; but I’ll be as brief as himself, and I tell you that when an honest man foolishly offers a glass of wine to a stranger, that that stranger has no right to make an insolent retort, and deserves that he should be taught a sharp lesson in the art of good manners.”

Heavy drops of perspiration streamed down the forehead and cheeks of Dagobert, his massy imperial moved up and down with nervous excitement; but he still commanded his temper, and taking the two ends of the handkerchief, which he had rinsed in the water, he shook it, then twisted it to squeeze out the water, and began to hum the old campaigning song:—

“ De Tirlémont, tandion du diable,
 Nous partirons demain matin,
 Le sabre en main
 Disant adieu à,” &c. &c.

(We suppress the end of the couplet, which is rather too free for any place beyond the barrack-room.)

The silence which Dagobert prescribed to himself had half-choked him, but this ditty was a kind of safety-valve for him. Morok, turning towards the spectators, said to them, with an air of hypocritical restraint,—

“ We know very well that the soldiers of Napoleon were heathens, who stabled their horses in churches, who offended the Lord a hundred times a-day, and who were justly rewarded by being drowned and destroyed in the Beresina, like the Pharaohs of old ; but we did not know that the Lord, to punish these miscreants, had deprived them of their only quality, their courage ! Here is a man who, in me, has insulted a creature touched by the grace of God, and he pretends that he does not understand that I require an apology at his hands ; or if not——”

“ If not,” said Dagobert, without looking at the prophet.

“ If not, you shall give me satisfaction. I told you that I, too, have been in the wars. We can find somewhere a couple of sabres, and to-morrow morning, at daybreak, behind some wall, we may discover the colour of each other’s blood—that is, if you have any in your veins.”

This open declaration of hostility began somewhat to frighten the spectators, who had not expected so tragic a finale.

“ You fight ? What an idea !” exclaimed one ; “ Why, you’ll both get locked up—the laws against duelling are very severe.”

“ Especially with persons of low rank or strangers,” added another. “ If you are taken, weapon in hand, the burgomaster will put you in the cage, and you will have two or three months’ imprisonment before sentence is passed on you.”

“ Are you, then, the persons to go and inform against us ?” asked Morok.

“ No, certainly not,” said the citizens ; “ do as you wish—we only advise you as friends ; but do as you like, it’s no affair of ours.”

“ What do I care for a prison ?” exclaimed the prophet. “ Only let me find a couple of swords, and to-morrow morning shall shew whether or not I care for what the burgomaster may say or do.”

“ What are you going to do with two swords ?” coolly inquired Dagobert of the prophet.

“ When you have one in your hand, and I have the other in mine, you shall see. The Lord requires that His honour be regarded !”

Dagobert shrugged his shoulders, put his linen all together in a handkerchief, dried his piece of soap, packed it carefully in a little oil-skin bag, then whistling between his teeth his favourite rondeau of Tirlémont, he made a step forward.

The prophet frowned—he began to fear that his provocation was ineffectual. He advanced a couple of paces towards Dagobert, stood

direct before him as though to bar his progress, then folding his arms across his chest and measuring him, with an insolent air, from head to foot, he said,—

“ So then an old soldier of that brigand, Napoleon, is only fit to be a washerwoman—he refuses to fight.”

“ Yes, he refuses to fight,” replied Dagobert, with a firm voice, but turning deathly pale. The old soldier had never yet given to the orphans confided to his guardianship so striking a proof of his tenderness and devotion. For a man of his temper to allow himself to be insulted with impunity, and to refuse to fight, was an incalculable sacrifice.

“ Then you are a coward—you are afraid—and you confess it——”

At this word, Dagobert made, if we may use the expression, a mental summersault, as though, when at the instant he was about to spring at the prophet, a sudden thought had restrained him.

He thought at the moment of the two young girls, and the fearful consequences which a duel, whether fortunate or unfortunate for him individually, must entail on their journey.

But this moment of anger in the soldier, rapid as it was, was so significant—the expression of his rude features, pale and bathed in sweat, was so terrible that the prophet and the lookers-on receded a step.

A perfect silence reigned for several seconds, and then, by a sudden revulsion, a general feeling arose in Dagobert's favour. One of the bystanders said to those near him,

“ I don't believe the man is a coward !”

“ No more don't I !”

“ It sometimes requires more courage to refuse a challenge than to fight a duel.”

“ And the prophet was wrong to try and provoke him ;—he's a stranger.”

“ And if a stranger fights and gets apprehended, he would have a long imprisonment.”

“ And then,” added another, “ he's travelling with two young girls, and that's a reason why he should not fight. If he were killed, or taken prisoner, what would become of those poor children, I should like to know ?”

Dagobert turned to the individual who uttered these words, and saw a stout man with a free, good-tempered countenance. The soldier held out his hand to him, and said in a tone of emotion,

“ Thank you, sir !”

The German cordially shook the hand which Dagobert extended to him.

“ Sir,” he added, still retaining his grasp of the veteran's hand, “ do this : accept of a bowl of punch with us, and we will compel this devil of a prophet to confess that he has been too hasty, and to pledge you in a bumper.”

Up to this time the tamer of beasts, giving up in despair his idea of provoking the soldier to fight, had scowled sulkily on those who had forsaken him, but now his features gradually cleared up ; and thinking

it most serviceable to his projects to conceal his discomfiture, he made a step towards the soldier, and said to him with an air of composure and easy assurance,

“Well, be it so. I accede to the proposition of these gentlemen, and confess I was wrong. Your behaviour wounded me, and I was not master of myself. I repeat I was wrong,” he added, with ill-disguised rage; “the Lord commands humility, and I request your pardon.”

This testimony of moderation and repentance was greatly applauded, and highly appreciated by the spectators.

“He asks your pardon, and now you can’t bear him any spite, *mon brave*,” said one of the party, addressing Dagobert. “Come and take a glass with him. We offer you the bowl with good-will, and you should accept it as heartily.”

“Yes! accept it, we beg of you, in the name of your pretty little maidens,” said the stout man, wishing Dagobert to comply. He, much moved by the candid advances of the Germans, replied, “Thanks, gentlemen; you are very kind. But when a man accepts a cup, he must offer one in his turn.”

“To be sure, and we’ll do so with pleasure, every one in his turn;—that’s the right thing. We’ll pay the first bowl, and you the second.”

“Poverty is not vice,” replied Dagobert; “and so I tell you fairly that I have not the means of offering you a bowl in my turn. We have yet a long journey before us, and I must not lay out an unnecessary farthing.”

The soldier said these words with so much simple but firm dignity, that the Germans did not venture to press their offer, understanding that a man of Dagobert’s character could not accept without humiliation.

“Ah! well, I’m sorry,” said the stout man. “I should have liked to have had a glass with you very much; but, as it is, good night, my brave boy—good night. It is growing late, and the landlord of the White Falcon will be for turning us out.”

“Good night, gentlemen,” said Dagobert, going towards the stables to give his horse his second feed.

Morok approached him, and said in a tone of extreme humility,

“I own how much I was in the wrong, and I have asked your pardon. You have not replied. Are you still incensed against me?”

“If we should meet again some day, when my children do not need my protection,” said the old soldier in a deep and suppressed voice, “I will have two words with you, and they shall not be long ones.”

So saying, he turned his back abruptly on the prophet, who slowly left the courtyard.

The inn of the White Falcon formed a parallelogram. At one extremity was the main building, at the other some smaller buildings, containing several apartments let out at low prices to poor wayfarers. A vaulted passage was formed in the centre of these latter which looked on to the country. On each side of the courtyard were stables and sheds, over which were granaries and lofts.

Dagobert, going into one of the stables, took from a bin a measure of oats ready for his horse, and pouring it into a sieve, shook it as he approached Jovial.

To his extreme astonishment, his old travelling companion did not reply by his accustomed joyful whining at hearing the oats in the sieve. He was amazed, and spake to Jovial in his usual amicable tone; but the good beast, instead of turning to his master with his intelligent eye, and pawing, as usual, with his feet, remained motionless. Still more astonished, the soldier went up to him.

By the dim light of a stable lantern he saw the poor animal in a state which betokened extreme fear—his limbs crouched, his head in the air, his ears bent back, his nostrils expanded, whilst his halter was stretched out to its full length as though he sought to break it in order to escape from the partition to which his rack and manger were affixed; a cold and excessive sweat soaked through his light blue body-cloth, and his coat, instead of being silky and mottled in the dim light of the stable, stood on end stiff and bristly, whilst every now and then his whole frame was shaken as if in convulsions.

“Soh! soh! old Jovial,” said the trooper, putting the sieve on the ground to pat his horse: “what, afraid, like your master,” he added, with a bitter tone, suggested by his recent insult; “what, frightened, boy, frightened—you, who are not usually a coward!”

Despite the caresses and voice of his master, the steed continued to evince signs of fright. However, his halter became less extended, and he smelled Dagobert’s hand with hesitation, snorting violently, as if doubting his master’s identity.

“What! don’t you know me!” exclaimed Dagobert: “then something very wonderful must have happened.”

And the old soldier gazed about him with much uneasiness.

The stable was spacious, dark, and but dimly lighted by a lantern hanging from the ceiling, richly festooned with accumulated and undisturbed cobwebs. At the other end, and separated from Jovial by some places marked with bars, were the three powerful black horses of the trainer of beasts, who were as quiet as Jovial was trembling and affrighted.

Dagobert, struck by the singular contrast (soon to be explained), again patted and encouraged his horse, who, gradually reassured by the presence of his master, licked his hands, rubbed his head against him, and evinced a thousand other tokens of attachment.

“Come, come, old man—that’s right—that’s the way I like to see you, my loving Jovial,” said Dagobert, taking up the sieve and pouring its contents into the manger. “Come, boy, eat—eat, for we have a long march before us to-morrow. I mustn’t have these foolish fancies and frights. If Killjoy were here, he would give you courage; but he is up in the room with the children: he is their guardian in my absence. Come, eat, and don’t keep looking at me so.”

But the good steed, after having moved his oats about with his lips, as though to obey his master, could not eat them, but began to nibble the sleeve of Dagobert’s great-coat.

“Jovial, my poor fellow, there’s something wrong with you, who generally pick up your feed with so much good-will and appetite!

What! leave your oats, and for the first time that that has occurred since we started!"

The veteran said this with an air of real anxiety, for the result of his journey depended very much on the vigour and health of his horse.

A horrid roar, so near that it seemed to issue from the very stable, so completely frightened Jovial that, with one snap, he broke the halter, leaped over the bar of his stall, and, reaching the open door, bounded out into the court-yard.

Dagobert himself could not repress a start at this sudden, deep, and savage howl, which accounted for the terror of his horse.

The next stable, occupied by the perambulating menagerie of the trainer of beasts, was only separated by the partition wall to which the manger was attached,—the prophet's three horses, used to these roarings, remained perfectly tranquil.

"Ah, ah," said the soldier, reassured, "now I find what it is. No doubt Jovial had before heard these roars. He smelt the animals of that impudent vagabond, and they were quite enough to frighten him," added the veteran, carefully gathering up the oats from the manger. "Once in another stable—and there ought to be some empty ones—he will not leave his feed, and we will make an early move of it in the morning."

The affrighted charger having run and jumped about the court-yard, came up to his master at his call, and Dagobert, taking him by his headstall, led him to another single-stall stable, which a hostler pointed out to him, and there Jovial was comfortably installed:

Once removed from his vicinity to the wild beasts, the old horse became tranquillised, and even frisked a little at the expense of Dagobert's great-coat, who, thanks to these small jokes, had a job in the tailoring line cut out for him that very night if he so pleased; but he was only engaged in admiring the alacrity with which Jovial ate his provender.

Completely recovered, the soldier shut the door of the stable, and hastened to his supper, that he might rejoin the orphans, reproaching himself with having left them so long alone.

CHAPTER V.

ROSE AND BLANCHE.

THE orphans occupied, in the most distant part of the inn, a small dilapidated chamber, whose only window looked out on the country; a bed without curtains, a table, and two chairs, completed the more than scanty furnishing of the humble apartment, lighted only by a small lamp; on the table near the casement was deposited the wallet of Dagobert. The huge Siberian dog, Killjoy, stretched at the entrance-door, had already uttered several deep angry growls, without any further manifestation of impending danger.

The sisters, partially reclining on their lowly pallet, were clad in



ROSE AND BLANCHE.

P. 21.

long white wrapping gowns, fastened at the neck and wrists. They wore no covering on their heads, save a broad fillet, which confined their rich chestnut hair and prevented the long flowing tresses from disturbing their slumbers. Their snowy vestments, with the white circlet round their brows, gave to the young and innocent countenances of the sisters a still greater charm.

Spite of their early troubles, the orphans prattled merrily, with all the light-heartedness of their age; for though the loss of their beloved mother occasionally sent a gloom over their countenances, it was still a pensive sorrow they rather sought than avoided: to their tender, loving imaginations their adored parent was not dead (for death was beyond their comprehension), but merely absent for a time.

Almost as ignorant as Dagobert of religious forms (for, in the wilderness in which they had dwelt, there was neither priest nor sacred edifice), they yet firmly believed, as they had been told, that a merciful, gracious God, beholding from afar the heart-stricken grief of a mother compelled to leave her dear children on earth, would from on high permit her to behold them, and to hear their voices, and still farther, bestow on her the blessed privilege of for ever watching, like a guardian angel, over her cherished ones.

Thanks to this simple yet pure illusion, the orphans, persuaded that their mother incessantly beheld them, would have died rather than, by word or deed, have pained their idolised parent, or induced an indulgent Deity to withdraw from them her watchful care.

And this train of reasoning formed the whole stock of theological knowledge possessed by Rose and Blanche, but which was in itself abundantly sufficient to satisfy their innocent and affectionate souls.

Such as we have described them, the two sisters were discoursing together while awaiting the return of Dagobert.

Their conversation was deeply interesting, for it referred to a matter of deep interest. Moreover, a secret so weighty and important as to quicken from time to time the pulsations of their young hearts, cause their tender bosoms to heave with a hasty throb, and send a deeper colour to their delicate cheeks, while a thoughtful and uneasy languor weighed down the lids of their clear blue eyes.

Rose, on this occasion, occupied the outer side of the bed. Her fair rounded arms were placed beneath her head, which was half turned towards her sister, who, leaning on her elbow and smiling sweetly, inquired,

“Do you think he will come again to-night?”

“Oh, yes! for yesterday, you know, he promised it.”

“And he is too good to forget his promise.”

“And so handsome, too, with those beautiful light curls!”

“And so sweet a name, just suited to himself! Is it not, dear sister?”

“Oh, quite! Did you ever see so charming a smile? With how kind and tender a voice he spoke when, taking a hand of each, he said, ‘My children, bless God for having bestowed on you one mind! That which others seek elsewhere, you will always find within yourselves; because,’ added he, ‘you are one heart in two bodies.’”

“Dear sister, how glad I am we can so perfectly recollect every little word he said!”

"We could not fail doing so, when we each listened so eagerly and attentively; and when you, dear sister, were listening to his discourse, it seemed to me as though my ears, too, drank in his charming words," said Rose, smiling, and affectionately kissing the forehead of Blanche; "and when he spoke, your eyes, or rather *our* eyes, were wide, wide open, and our lips moved, as though repeating each word after him. So how could we possibly lose one dear word?"

"Words, too, so noble—so generous—so beautifully spoken!"

"And did you not find, dearest sister, that while he spoke our hearts expanded within our bosoms as though scarcely large enough to contain all the great and virtuous thoughts that filled them, as though intended to remain there for our future meditation and delightful converse?"

"Ah, yes! not one precious counsel will be forgotten; no word but will be safely harboured in our hearts, like young birds in the soft nest of their mother."

"How delightful it is, Rose, that he should equally love us both!"

"Nay, my Blanche, it could not be otherwise, there being but one heart—one love—between us. How could he love Rose without her Blanche?"

"Or what would have become of the poor rejected one?"

"And besides, imagine the impossibility of choosing between us!"

"We are so exactly alike!"

"So to spare himself so difficult a task," said Rose, smiling, "he has very wisely selected us both!"

"And most wisely, too; for now he has but *one* to love, while he has *two* to love him!"

"Let us hope he will not depart from us ere we reach Paris!"

"Paris! Surely we shall see him there, also?"

"No doubt; for 'tis there his presence will be doubly dear. And with him and Dagobert—oh! my sister, how happy shall we be in that fine city!"

"We shall, indeed! I picture Paris to myself as all built with gold and glittering with precious stones!"

"Then, since it is so beautiful a place, all who dwell there must needs be happy?"

"And then, sister, I almost fear that two poor orphans such as we are will not be permitted to enter it. How shall we venture to look all these great and rich people in the face?"

"But, my sister, don't you think that since every one in Paris is so happy, they must also be as good and kind?"

"Oh, yes! And they will love us as we shall love them!"

"And besides, we shall have our dear friend with the light hair and blue eyes to advise and encourage us!"

"He has not yet mentioned Paris to us!"

"Probably it did not occur to him. However, we'll speak of it to him to-night."

"If he seems inclined to converse—not else; for often, you know, he appears to fix his eyes steadfastly upon us, and continue to gaze as though he were filled with deep thought that shut out conversation."

"And at these moments there is an indescribable something about him which reminds me of our adored mother."

"And since that beloved parent sees from above all that befalls us, how delighted must she be at what has occurred!"

"Because we should not be loved as we are if we did not deserve it."

"Little vain thing!" said Blanche, putting back with her delicate fingers a braid of her sister's rich chestnut hair which had escaped from its simple bandeau, then, gravely reflecting for a few minutes, she added,—

"Sister dear! do you not think we ought to communicate to Dagobert all that has happened?"

"By all means, if you consider it right."

"Yes, we will tell him the whole affair as though we were relating it to our mother; why should we conceal any thing from him?"

"Especially a matter which affords us both such happiness."

"Have you not fancied since we first saw our dear friend that our hearts have beaten with a quicker and more powerful pulsation?"

"Indeed I have, as though they were too small to contain the crowd of pleasing thoughts which now possess them."

"And because our dear friend occupies so large a place in them."

"So, then, we will inform Dagobert of all our good fortune; will it not be best, dear sister?"

"Much best and quite right, since you think so."

At this moment the dog growled a deep note of approaching danger.

"Sister," said Rose, closely pressing towards Blanche, "what can cause the dog to growl in this unusual manner?"

"Kill-joy, be quiet!—leave off scolding, and come here!" exclaimed Blanche, patting the side of the bed with her small hand. The dog arose, and, still growling angrily, came and placed his great intelligent-looking head on the counterpane, still keeping his eyes obstinately fixed on the window. The sisters, by way of calming his uneasiness, leaned towards him, and patted and caressed his large forehead, in the middle of which rose the protuberance denoting the fine race from which he derived his origin.

"What is the matter, my poor fellow?" said Blanche, softly smoothing down his great ears; "what makes you growl so,—eh, Kill-joy?"

"Poor thing! he always frets when Dagobert is away."

"Yes, so he does; he appears to know that he has then a double watch to keep."

"Dagobert seems away longer than usual this evening, does he not, sister?"

"He is attending to Jovial, no doubt."

"And that reminds me we forgot to bid our accustomed 'good-night' to our faithful Jovial."

"So we did; I am very sorry."

"Dear old horse! he always seems so pleased to see us, and licks our hands so kindly; he appears as though thanking us for going to see him the last thing."

"Fortunately Dagobert will be sure to bid him good-night for us."

"Good, excellent Dagobert! always thinking of us—he quite

spoils us, and makes us idle. We do nothing, while he is always toiling."

"But how can we possibly hinder him?"

"What a pity we are not rich that we might obtain him a little rest!"

"Ah! dear sister, we shall never have that happiness,—we are poor orphans, and must ever remain so."

"But our medal?"

"Has no doubt some great power attached to it, otherwise we should not have undertaken this long journey."

"Dagobert has promised to tell us all this evening."

Ere the young girl could proceed two panes of glass in their window were dashed to pieces with a loud noise.

The orphans, screaming with affright, threw themselves into each others' arms, while the dog, barking furiously, rushed towards the broken casement.

Pale, speechless, and trembling, holding each other in a convulsive grasp, the sisters scarcely ventured to breathe, while the dog, standing erect, his forepaws resting on the window-sill, barked in the most angry and determined manner.

The two sisters, whose extreme terror prevented their even venturing to look towards the scene of alarm, at length found words to exclaim,—

"What can this be?—why is not Dagobert here to save and to protect us?"

All at once Rose, seizing the arm of Blanche, exclaimed, "Sister! listen!—some person is ascending the staircase!"

"That it is not Dagobert's step,—it is far too heavy. Hark! how heavily it comes!"

"Here, here, Kill-joy!—my good dog—come to us—save us!—save us!" cried the sisters, in an agony of terror.

Steps of extraordinary heaviness were heard slowly ascending the wooden stairs, which creaked beneath the ponderous body they could barely support, and then a singular species of rustling was heard along the slight partition which separated their chamber from the staircase, till a heavy weight, falling against their door, shook it violently, and threatened destruction to the frail materials of which it was composed. Terrified beyond the power of uttering a word, the two poor girls mutely sought in each other's looks a gleam of hope or comfort. At this instant the door opened, and Dagobert entered.

At his welcome sight Blanche and Rose embraced each other as though all danger were over.

"What has disturbed you, my children? why this alarm?" inquired the soldier, with extreme surprise.

"Oh!" said Rose, almost gasping for breath, "if you did but know——"

"Yes," interrupted Blanche, who could distinctly feel the rapid throb of her sister's heart keep pace with the troubled beat of her own,—"if you only knew what has just happened! We did not recognise your step just now—it seemed far too heavy; and then that noise against the wainscot."

"Why, you frightened little dears! I could not ascend the staircase with the lightness of fifteen years, having my bed to carry up

with me, that is to say a palliase, which I have just thrown down at your door, intending to take up my lodging there as usual."

"To be sure!" said Rose, looking at Blanche, "that was it! How very stupid of us not to think it must be you carrying your bed!"

And with this satisfactory conclusion of their terrors the countenance of each of the fair girls reassumed the bright colour which appeared to have quite forsaken their cheeks. During this scene the dog neither quitted his position at the window, nor ceased his incessant and furious barking.

"What makes Kill-joy bark so, my children?" inquired the old soldier.

"Indeed, we cannot tell you; some one has broken two squares of glass, which was the beginning of our alarm."

Without answering a word, Dagobert hastened to the window, opened it quickly, pushed back the curtains, and looked out.

Nothing was to be seen or heard, a darkness like that of night prevailed. He listened attentively; all, however, was still, save the dull sobbing of the night wind. He called the dog,—“Out there, old fellow!” cried he, shewing the window,—“out and search diligently! look into every corner!”

The noble animal, obedient to his word and animated by his voice, cleared at one bound the distance from the ground, which could not have been less than eight feet, and disappeared through the open space, while Dagobert, still looking out, excited his dog, both by speech and gesture, to keep up the search.

“Go seek! go seek, my fine fellow! and if you find any one, hold him tight,—your teeth are strong enough to hold a lion,—don't let go till I come.”

But Kill-joy found no one.

Still he ran to and fro, as though on the scent of something that had not long since passed, and occasionally uttering a half-suppressed cry like that of a dog who is hunting game, and begins to hope he is on the track.

“There is no one then, old boy, I am sure, for if there had been, you would have pinned them to the earth ere this.”

Then turning to the young girls, who were following his movements and listening to his words with an expression of uneasiness, he exclaimed,—

“And how were these squares of glass broken, my children?—were you able to see?”

“No, indeed, Dagobert, we were conversing together when suddenly the glass fell into the room with a loud noise.”

“It seemed to me,” added Rose, “as though a shutter had slammed against them violently.”

Dagobert closely examined the outer shutter or latticed blind, and discovered a long projecting hook intended for the purpose of fastening it withinside.

“The wind is high to-night,” said he, “and has most probably blown this shutter forcibly against the glass, which has been broken by the iron handle. Yes, yes, that must be it; besides, what interest can any person have in doing such a piece of mischief?” Then

speaking to Kill-joy, he added, "Come in, my brave fellow,—there is nobody there, is there?"

The dog replied by a low growl, interpreted by the old soldier in the negative, as he immediately answered,—

"Then take one round and examine every part of the premises, then come back, your door will be open ready for your return, so away with you!"

The sagacious dog, perfectly comprehending the directions given to him, departed upon his mission after once more sniffing eagerly at the window-sill, then ran off to reconnoitre the buildings, both inside and out.

"Come, my children," said the soldier, returning to the orphans, "don't be alarmed."

"It was only the wind," said Blanche, smiling.

"But it frightened us sadly, good Dagobert, it did, indeed," added Rose.

"I dare say it did, but I must close up that opening, the wind will blow in else," said the soldier, turning towards the broken window.

After looking about for some time for the means of remedying the mischief, he bethought himself of the pelisse of reindeer-skin, which he suspended by means of the iron rod which crossed the casement, and with the thick skirts hermetically stopped the opening made by the broken glass.

"Thank you!—thank you! kind Dagobert, but we were so uneasy at not seeing you sooner."

"Yes, indeed, Dagobert! you stayed away this time longer than usual."

Then for the first time perceiving the paleness and agitation of the old man, whose countenance still evinced traces of the powerful excitement produced by his late rencontre with Morok, Rose continued,—

"But what has been the matter? How very pale you are!"

"Me! my children? Oh nothing—nothing. What can possibly ail me?"

"Yes, indeed, dear Dagobert, something is wrong with you! your countenance is quite altered. My sister is right—surely you are not ill?"

"My dear children," said the old soldier, with considerable embarrassment, for falsehood was a hard task with him, "you may be assured nothing whatever ails me, or has occurred;" then, as if he had found a capital pretext for his disturbed looks, he added, "Or if, indeed, there be any thing the matter, it is simply my uneasiness at finding you so much alarmed, because it has all happened through me."

"Through you? Oh no, Dagobert!"

"Yes, if I had not lingered so over my supper, I should have been with you when the glass was broken, and have prevented your experiencing the degree of terror it caused you."

"Then don't let us think any more about it. And will you not sit down, dear Dagobert?"

"Yes, my children; for we have much to talk about," replied the

old man, drawing a chair beside the lowly pillow of the sisters. "Now, then, are you quite awake?" said he, trying by an affectation of gaiety to dispel their recent agitation. "Let me see whether those large eyes are quite open or not."

"Look, Dagobert, look!" said the sisters, smiling in their turn, and opening their blue eyes full upon him.

"That will do, young ladies!" said Dagobert; "but we must not talk too long; however, it is scarcely nine o'clock at present."

"We have something also to tell you, Dagobert," replied Rose, after having consulted her sister's countenance.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, something to tell you in great confidence!"

"In great confidence!"

"Yes, indeed, we have!"

"A secret of the most important description," added Rose, with a serious look and manner.

"And one which concerns us both most nearly," rejoined Blanche.

"To be sure," answered the soldier; "don't I know that what concerns one concerns the other equally? Are you not always two faces under a hood?"

"Yes, when you cover our two heads with the large hood of the fur pelisse, then we are indeed," said Rose, laughing merrily.

"Why, you little mocking-birds, you never let an old man get the last word. But now, then, for this great secret, since a secret there is."

"Speak, sister," said Blanche.

"No, no, young lady, do you tell the tale. You are to-day commander of the platoon and senior officer, and therefore so important a matter as the great secret you have to disclose devolves by right on you. Now, then, begin. I am all attention," said the old soldier, striving by an appearance of jocularity to conceal from his young charges how sorely his chafed spirit still writhed beneath the aggravations bestowed on him by the brute-conqueror Morok.

Thus directed, Rose as leader of the squadron, as Dagobert styled her, thus spoke for her sister and self.

CHAPTER VI.

MUTUAL CONFIDENCE.

"Now, dear good Dagobert," said Rose, with an air of charming ingenuousness, "as we are going to tell you a very great secret, you must first promise us that you will not be angry."

"Yes, yes," added Blanche, in a tone equally deprecatory, "you must not scold your children, will you?"

"Granted," replied Dagobert, gravely, "because I should not know how to do it even if I were so inclined; but what is there to be angry about?"

“Why, perhaps, we ought to have told you before what we are going to inform you of now.”

“Listen, my dears,” replied Dagobert, sententiously, after having turned over in his mind for a moment this case of conscience, “one of two things must be; either you are right or wrong in concealing any thing from me. If you are right, why, so it is; if you are wrong, why, it’s done, and there’s an end on’t—let’s say no more about it. Now, I am all attention.”

Entirely set at ease in their minds by this luminous decision, Rose and her sister exchanged a smile, and the former resumed,—

“Dagobert, only imagine that for two nights following we have had a visit.”

“A visit!” and the soldier drew himself up erect in his chair.

“Yes, a delightful visit; for he is fair.”

“What the d—l!—He is fair!” exclaimed Dagobert, starting up suddenly.

“Fair, with blue eyes,” added Blanche.

“The deuce! and blue eyes, too;” and Dagobert again started.

“Yes, blue eyes as large as that,” said Rose, placing the end of the forefinger of her right hand in the middle of the forefinger of her left hand.

“But, *morbleu!* if they were as large as this,” and the veteran held out his arm from his elbow to his wrist,—“if they were as large as this, that would be nothing; but a fair man with blue eyes, ah, young ladies, what does that signify?” and Dagobert rose from his seat, evidently greatly disturbed and disquieted.

“Ah! now, Dagobert, you see you are angry directly.”

“And this is only the beginning,” added Blanche.

“The beginning—what is there more?—is there an end to it?”

“An end? oh, we hope not yet;” and Rose laughed very heartily.

“All we hope is, that it may last for ever,” added Blanche, joining in her sister’s mirth.

Dagobert looked at them in turns with a most serious air, in order to find, if possible, some clue to this enigma, but when he saw their lovely countenances animated only by open and joyous laughter, he reflected that they could not be so mirthful if they had any serious reproach to make against themselves, and he at once abandoned every thought but that of being glad to see the orphans so gay and happy in their very precarious position, and said,—

“Laugh, laugh away, my loves, I like to see you laugh in this way.” Then reflecting that, perhaps, that was not precisely the reply which he ought to make to the singular recital of the young maidens, he added, in a serious voice,—

“I like to see you laugh, certainly, yes—but not when you receive fair visitors with blue eyes, *mesdemoiselles*; come, come, tell me at once, that you are jesting with me—you have got up some little joke between you—haven’t you?”

“No! what we have told you is quite true.”

“You know we never told you a falsehood,” added Rose.

“True, true, indeed, they never tell untruths,” said the soldier, whose perplexity was thus renewed; “but how the d—l are such visits possible? I sleep on the threshold outside your room door,

Kill-joy sleeps under your window, and all the blue eyes and chestnut hair in the world cannot enter but by the door or the window, and if they had attempted, why, Kill-joy and I should have given them a welcome in our peculiar way. But, come now, my children, tell me at once, and without any jesting—pray, explain this to me.”

The two sisters seeing, by the expression of Dagobert's features, that he was suffering under real uneasiness, resolved not to prolong his disquietude, and exchanging glances, Rose took into her own little hands the coarse broad palm of the veteran, and said,—

“ Well, then, you shall not be teased any longer. We will tell you all about the visits of our friend—of Gabriel——”

“ What, are you beginning again? He has a name, has he?”

“ Certainly he has, and it is Gabriel.”

“ What a pretty name, isn't it, Dagobert? Oh, you will see him, and love our beautiful Gabriel as much as we do.”

“ I shall love your Gabriel?” said the veteran, shaking his head,—
“ I shall love your beautiful Gabriel? Why, that's as may be; but I must know him first.”

Then interrupting himself, “ But it's very singular; it reminds me of something.”

“ Of what, Dagobert?”

“ Why, fifteen years ago, in the last letter that your father brought me from my wife, when he returned from France, she told me, that poor as she was, and although she had then one little boy, Agricola, in arms (though he was growing fast), that she had received and was bringing up a poor little infant who had been forsaken; that it had a face like a cherub, and was named Gabriel; and it is not very long ago that I had some news about him.”

“ From whom?”

“ You shall know all in good time.”

“ Well, then, you see, as you have a Gabriel of your own, that's the very reason why you should love our Gabriel.”

“ Yours—yours—let me see yours; I sit on burning coals.”

“ You know, Dagobert,” replied Rose, “ that Blanche and I always go to sleep, holding each other by the hand.”

“ Yes, yes, I have seen you so a hundred times in your cradle. I was never tired of looking at you so; you looked so good and nice.”

“ Well, two nights ago we were sleeping so calm we saw——”

“ It was a dream, then!” exclaimed Dagobert. “ If you were asleep, it must have been a dream.”

“ To be sure it was a dream. What else could you think it was?”

“ Let my sister go on.”

“ To be sure, to be sure,” said the soldier, with a sigh of extreme satisfaction. “ Certainly, in every respect I felt quite assured in my own mind; because, you see—but it is quite as I wished—a dream. I am glad it was a dream. But go on, my little Rose.”

“ As soon as we were both asleep, we had the same dream.”

“ What! both? What! each the same dream?”

“ Yes, Dagobert; for the next morning, when we awoke, we told each other what we had both dreamed.”

“ And both had dreamed alike.”

"Really! Well, it is very extraordinary, my dears; and what was this dream about?"

"Why, in this dream, Blanche and I were sitting beside each other, and there came to us a beautiful angel with a long white robe, chestnut hair, blue eyes, and a countenance so beautiful and so kind, that we joined our hands together as though to pray to it. Then it told us, in a sweet soft voice, that its name was Gabriel, and that our mother had sent it to us to be our guardian-angel, and that it would never forsake us."

"And then," added Blanche, "taking one of each of our hands into one of its own, and bending its beautiful face towards us, it looked at us for a very long time in silence, and very, very kindly—so kindly, indeed, that we could not take away our eyes from his."

"Yes," resumed Rose, "and it seemed as if every moment his look was more benign and went to our very heart. Then, to our great mortification, Gabriel left us, saying, that the next night we should see him again."

"And did he appear the next night?"

"To be sure, and you may judge how anxious we were to go to sleep that we might learn whether or no our friend would return to us during our slumber."

"Umph! that reminds me, mesdemoiselles, that you rubbed your eyes very much the night before last," said Dagobert, rubbing his forehead, "you pretended to be so very sleepy; and I'll wager, that that was in order to get rid of me the sooner that you might jump into bed and go off to sleep sooner!"

"Yes, Dagobert."

"Why, you could not say to me, as you can to Kill-joy, 'Go to bed, sir!'—And did your friend, Gabriel, return?"

"To be sure; and he talked a great deal to us, and, in our mother's name, gave us such good and tender advice, that Rose and I next day could think of nothing else, but repeating to each other every thing that our guardian angel had uttered and advised us, as well as about his face and his look."

"That reminds me, mesdemoiselles, that yesterday you were whispering together all along the road, and when I asked you a straight question, you gave me a crooked answer."

"Yes, Dagobert, we were thinking of Gabriel; and as we both love him as much as he loves us——"

"But is he devoted to you two only?"

"Was not our mother devoted to us two only? And you, Dagobert, are not you devoted to us two only?"

"True, true; but do you know that I shall become jealous of this gay gentleman?"

"You are our friend by day, and he by night."

"But, see, if you talk of him all day and dream of him all night, what will there be left for me?"

"Two orphans whom you love so dearly," said Rose.

"And who have only you to look to in the wide world," added Blanche, in an affectionate tone.

"Ah, ah! that's the way you coax the old soldier. Well, well, my darlings," added the veteran, in a tone of tenderness, "I am con-



THE DREAM.

P. 40.

tent with my lot, and I leave you to your Gabriel. I knew that Kill-joy and I might sleep quietly enough. Besides, it is not so very astonishing; your first dream had made an impression on you, and as you talked together so much about it, why you dreamed it all over again, and so I should not be astonished if you saw it for the third time again. This beautiful night-bird ——”

“ Oh, Dagobert, do not laugh at it. True, they were only dreams, but they seem as if they were sent by our mother. Did she not tell us that young orphan girls had guardian angels? and so Gabriel is our guardian angel, and will protect us and you also.”

“ It would be very kind of him to think of me; but, my dear girls, do you see that I prefer as my aide-de-camp in protecting you friend Kill-joy: he is not so fair as an angel, but his teeth are stronger, and his bite more sure.”

“ Ah, you are very tiresome, Dagobert, with your jokes.”

“ Yes, you really are; you laugh at every thing.”

“ Yes, it is astonishing how gay I am. I laugh like old Jovial without shewing my teeth; but do not scold me, my dear children. I was wrong; the thought of your sainted mother mingled with this dream, and we should always talk of her with seriousness. Besides,” added he, with a grave air, “ there’s sometimes truth in dreams. In Spain, two comrades of mine of the empress’s dragoons dreamed, the night before they died, that they were poisoned by the monks, and so they were. If you resolve on dreaming about your beautiful angel, Gabriel, why—you see then—why, if it amuses you, why not? You have not much entertainment during the day, and so your sleep ought to be as diverting as possible. But I have a good deal to tell you, all about your mother; but promise me not to be sad.”

“ Certainly we do; when we think of her we are not sad, but only serious.”

“ Well, well; for fear of making you sorrowful, I have put off as long as I could telling you what your poor mother would have told you when you had ceased to be children, but she died so suddenly that she had not time; and, then, what she would have told you would almost have broken her heart, and mine also; so I delayed my confidence as long as I could, and I did not tell you any thing before the day when we crossed the field of battle in which your father was taken prisoner—I gained time by that—but now the moment has arrived, and there is no retreat.”

“ We will listen, Dagobert,” replied the young girls, with an attentive and melancholy air.

After a moment’s silence, during which he collected himself, the veteran said to the two sisters,—

“ Your father, General Simon, was the son of a mechanic, who remained a mechanic, for, in spite of all that the general could do or say, the good man obstinately clung to his employment—he had a head of iron and a heart of gold, just like his son. You may suppose, my children, that if your father, who enlisted as a common soldier, became a general and a count of the empire, that that was not attained without exertion and glory.”

“ Count of the empire, Dagobert, what’s that?”

“ Oh! a folly—a title which the emperor gave (beyond the

bargain) with the promotion—a something to say to the people, whom he loved, because he belonged to them. My children, you like to play at nobility, as the old noblesse did, well, then, you are noble. If you like to play at kings, I'll make kings of you—try every thing. There's nothing too high or too good for you—so feast on what you prefer or fancy.”

“Kings!” said the little girls, clasping their hands in wonder.

“More than kings, if that's possible. Ah! he was not selfish with crowns and thrones, the emperor. I had a bedfellow, as good a soldier as ever drew sword, who became a king; well, we all liked that, it flattered us, because when one was a king, we were all kings, and it was playing at this game that your father became a count; but, count or no count, he was the handsomest and bravest general in the army.”

“He was very handsome, Dagobert, was he not? Our mother always said so.”

“Oh! indeed he was, but he was by no means a fair man, like your guardian angel. Imagine a splendid, dark-complexioned man, in full uniform, a man to dazzle your eyes, and put courage into your heart; with him a soldier would have charged on the *bon Dieu* himself,—that is, you will understand, if the *bon Dieu* had desired it,” added Dagobert, eager to correct himself, and desirous in no way to wound the innocent creed of the orphans.

“And our father was as good as he was brave, wasn't he, Dagobert?”

“Good, my darlings!—he? I believe so! He could bend a horse-shoe between his hands as you could bend a card, and the day he was made prisoner he had cut down the Prussian artillery-men at their very guns. With his courage and strength, how could he help being good? It is nearly nineteen years ago, that hereabouts, in the place I pointed out to you before we entered the village, the general fell from his horse dangerously wounded. As his orderly, I followed him, and ran to his succour. Five minutes afterwards we were taken prisoners—and by whom, think you? By a Frenchman.”

“A Frenchman?”

“Yes; an emigrant marquis, colonel in the Russian service,” replied Dagobert, bitterly. “So when this marquis said as he advanced to the general, ‘Surrender, sir, to a countryman,’ your father replied, ‘A Frenchman who fights against his father-land is no countryman of mine—he is a traitor, and I do not surrender to traitors!’ and, wounded as he was, he dragged himself to a Russian grenadier, and gave him his sabre, saying, ‘I surrender to you, my gallant fellow;’ the marquis became pale with rage.”

The orphan girls looked at each other proudly, a scarlet colour suffused their cheeks, and they exclaimed,—

“Brave father! brave father!”

“Ah!” said Dagobert, caressing his moustache with a delighted air, “we may see the soldier's blood in the girls' veins.” Then he continued, “Well, we were prisoners, the last horse of the general's had been killed under him, and he was obliged to mount Jovial, who had not been wounded that day, to get on his journey. Well, we reached Warsaw, there the general met your mother, who was called





THE SURPRISE.

P. 43.

the 'Pearl of Warsaw,' and that name comprises every thing. So he who loved all that was good and handsome soon fell in love with her; she loved him in return, but her parents had promised her to another, and that other was no other than ——"

Dagobert could not continue, for Rose, uttering a piercing shriek, pointed to the window in an agony of fear.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAVELLER.

DAGOBERT rose quickly at the cry of the young girl.

"What ails you, Rose?"

"There—there!" said she, pointing to the window; "I thought I saw a hand move the pelisse."

Rose had not finished these words, before Dagobert hastened to the window, which he opened with haste, after having taken away the cloak which was hung up in the window-frame.

It was very dark without, and the wind blew violently.

The soldier listened, but heard nothing.

He then took the candle from the table, and endeavoured to throw its rays outside by covering the flame with his hand.

He saw nothing.

Closing the window again, he persuaded himself that a gust of wind had moved and deranged the cloak. Rose must have been deceived.

"Don't be alarmed, my dears. The wind is very high, and must have stirred the corner of the cloak."

"Yet I fancied I saw the fingers which moved it on one side," said Rose, in a tremulous voice.

"I was looking at Dagobert," said Blanche, "and so did not see any thing."

"There was nothing to see, my children, that's quite evident. The window is at least eight feet and a half above the ground, and so only a giant could reach up, or else a ladder must be used to get up. If there had been a ladder, there could not have been time to remove it before I reached the window, which I did as soon as Rose cried out; and when I held the candle out I could not see any thing."

"I must have been deceived," said Rose.

"You see, sister, it could only have been the wind," added Blanche.

"I am very sorry to have interrupted you, Dagobert!"

"Never mind that," replied the soldier, musing. "I am sorry that Kill-joy has not returned, for he would have kept watch at the window, and that would have given you confidence; but, no doubt, he has smelled out the stable of his comrade Jovial, and has gone in to say good-night to him. I have a good mind to go out and look for him."

"Oh! no, Dagobert, do not leave us alone," exclaimed the young girls; "we should be so frightened!"

“Well, then, I daresay Kill-joy will not be long before he returns, and we shall soon hear him scratching at the door. Well, then, I’ll go on’ with my story,” said Dagobert, as he seated himself at the foot of the two sisters’ bed, with his face towards the window.

“Well, the general was a prisoner at Warsaw and in love with your mother, whom they wished to marry to another,” he said. “In 1814 the war was brought to an end. The emperor was exiled to the Isle of Elba, and the Bourbons were restored; and, in concert with the Russians and Prussians who had brought them back, they had exiled the emperor to the Island of Elba. When your mother learnt that, she said to the general, ‘*The war is ended—you are free! The emperor is in misfortune;—you owe all to him—go to him! I know not when we shall meet again; but I will never marry any one but you. I am yours till death!*’ Before he started, the general sent for me. ‘Dagobert,’ said he, ‘remain here. Perhaps Mademoiselle Eva may require your aid to fly from her family if they persecute her—our correspondence will pass through your hands. In Paris I shall see your wife—your son; and I will console them. I will tell them what you are to me—how dear a friend!’”

“Always the same!” said Rose, in a tender voice, looking at Dagobert.

“Good to the father and the mother as to the children!” added Blanche.

“To love the one was to love the other,” replied the veteran. “So, then, the general was in the Isle of Elba with the emperor. I was at Warsaw, and in concealment near your mother’s house, when I received letters, and conveyed them secretly to her. In one of these—and I say it with pride, my dears—the general told me that the emperor remembered me.”

“You! What!—he knew you then?”

“Yes, a little bit, I flatter myself. ‘Ah! Dagobert?’ said he to your father, who had mentioned me, ‘a grenadier of my old horse-guard!—a soldier of Egypt and Italy, furrowed with wounds; an old ‘*pince-sans-rire*,’ whom I decorated with my own hand at Wagram: I have not forgotten him!’ *Dame!* my children, when your mother read that to me, I cried like a blubbering schoolboy!”

“The emperor! Oh! what a beautiful golden face he had in your silver cross with the red riband which you used to shew us sometimes when we were good girls!”

“That was the very cross he gave me with his own hand. It is my relic—*mine!*—and it is there in that bag with all that we have in the world—our little purse and our papers. But to return to your mother. When I carried to her the general’s letters, and talked with her about him, that was a great comfort to her, for she suffered a great deal. Oh! yes; a very great deal. Her relatives were very unkind to her, and tormented her greatly; but she always told them, ‘*I will never marry any one but General Simon!*’ She was a determined spirit, she was!—resigned, but full of courage! One day she received a letter from the general. He had sailed from Elba with the emperor. The war began again; and in this campaign of France, especially at Montmirail, my loves, your father fought like a lion, and

his brigade fought like him. It was no longer bravery—it was downright rage; and he told me that in Champagne the peasantry killed so many Prussians that their fields were manured for years to come! Men, women, and children, all ran forward! Pitchforks, stones, pickaxes, shovels, all and every thing was turned into arms, and used for slaughter. It was a real *battue* of wolves!”

The veins in the veteran's forehead swelled, his cheeks grew scarlet, as this trait of popular heroism recalled to him the sublime ardour of the republican wars—those levies *en masse* in which his earliest scenes of military life had passed.

The orphans, the daughters of a warrior and a high-spirited mother, were excited by these energetic words, and instead of being intimidated by their roughness, their hearts beat high and their cheeks became flushed.

“What happiness for us to be the daughters of so brave a father!” exclaimed Blanche.

“What happiness, and what good fortune, my children, for on the evening after the fight of Montmirail, the emperor, to the joy of the whole army, created your father on the field of battle *Duke of Montmirail and Marshal of France!*”

“Marshal of France!” said Rose, amazed, and hardly understanding the purport of these words.

“Duke of Montmirail!” added Blanche, equally surprised.

“Yes, Pierre Simon, the workman's son, a *duke and marshal!* He could not be higher unless he was a king,” continued Dagobert, with pride. “That's the way the emperor treated the sons of the people, and so the people were always for him. It was no use for any to say, ‘Ah! but your emperor only considers you as *food for powder!*’ ‘Pooh! why another would make of us *food for misery,*’ replied the people, who are no fools. ‘I prefer gunpowder and the chance of being a captain, colonel, marshal, king,—or invalid: that's better than starving with want, cold, or old age, on dirty straw in an old garret, after having toiled uselessly forty years for other people.’”

“What! in France—in Paris—in that beautiful city, are there miserable creatures who die of want and misery, Dagobert?”

“Yes, even in Paris, my dears, there is want and misery; but I will leave that now. I like gunpowder better, for with that one has the chance of being made a peer or a marshal, like your father. When I say peer and marshal, I am right and I am wrong, for afterwards he was not known by that title and rank; because, after Montmirail, there was a day of deep mourning, very deep, on which old soldiers like me, and the generals, have wept—yes, wept—the evening of that battle—of that day, my dears, called *Waterloo.*”

There was in the simple words of Dagobert an accent of sorrow so deep that the orphans trembled at its expression.

“There are,” resumed the soldier, with a deep sigh, “days accursed as these. This day, at Waterloo, the general fell, covered with wounds, at the head of a division of the guard. After a long time he was cured, and requested leave to go to St. Helena, another island at the farther end of the world, where the English had sent the emperor to torture him, at their ease; for if he was fortunate at first, he suffered a great deal of misery in his after-life, my poor dears.”

"Oh, Dagobert, how sad! you make us weep."

"And there's reason for tears. The emperor endured so much—so very much. His heart bled cruelly—but it's over. Unfortunately the general was not with him at St. Helena, or he would have been one more to console him: they would not let him go. Then he, exasperated, like many more, against the Bourbons, organised a conspiracy to recall the emperor's son. He was anxious to gain over a regiment composed almost entirely of old soldiers devoted to him. He went into a city of Picardy, in which this garrison was stationed, but the conspiracy had been discovered. At the moment when the general arrived there, he was arrested and led before the colonel of the regiment: and this colonel," said the veteran, after a minute's silence,— "do you know who he was? But, bah!—it is too long a story to tell now, and would only sadden you. Well, then, it was a man whom your father had long had reason to hate heartily. Well, they were face to face, and the general said, 'If you are not a coward, you will put me at liberty for one hour, and we will fight till one falls, for I hate you for that, I despise you for the other, and still more for this.' The colonel accepted the offer, and released your father until the next morning, when there was a bloody duel, the end of which was, that the colonel was left for dead on the plain."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*"

"The general was wiping his sword, when a friend stepped up and told him that he might yet escape. He did so, and fortunately got out of France: yes, fortunately, for fifteen days afterwards he was condemned to death as a conspirator."

"Oh, Heaven, what misfortunes!"

"There was good fortune in this misfortune—your mother kept firmly to her promise, and was constantly expecting him. She had written to him to say, '*the emperor first and me afterwards!*' As he could no longer do any thing either for the emperor or his son, the general, exiled from France, reached Warsaw. Your mother's parents had just died; she was therefore free, and they were married, and I am one of the witnesses of their marriage."

"You are right, Dagobert; that was really good fortune amidst misfortune."

"Well, at last they were happy; but, like all noble hearts, the happier they were themselves, the more they pitied the miseries of others—and there was much to pity in Warsaw. The Russians were again beginning to treat the Poles as slaves, and your dear mother, although of French origin, was yet a Pole in heart and feeling. She boldly said out what others dared not even whisper, and the unhappy called her their good angel, and that was enough to draw upon her the suspicious eye of the Russian governor. One day a colonel of the lancers, a friend of the general's, a brave and worthy man, was condemned to exile in Siberia, for a military conspiracy against the Russians. He escaped, and your father gave him shelter. This was discovered, and during the next night, a body of Cossacks, led by an officer and followed by a post carriage, came to our door, surprised the general in bed, and carried him off."

"*Mon Dieu!* what did they do with him?"

"Conduct him out of Russia, with a peremptory order never again

to set foot in it under pain of imprisonment for life. His last words were, '*Dagobert, I trust to your keeping my wife and child;*' for your mother was expecting your birth soon after. Well, in spite of that she was exiled to Siberia. It was an opportunity for getting rid of her—she did so much good in Warsaw that they were afraid of her. Not content with exile, they confiscated all her property. The only favour they would grant was, that I should accompany her; and had it not been for Jovial, whom the general had allowed me to retain, she would have been forced to make the journey on foot. Well, in this way, she on the horse, and I walking by her side, as I do by yours, my darlings, we reached, three months after, a miserable village, in which you were born—poor little things!"

"And our father?"

"He dared not return into Russia, and it was impossible for your mother to fly with two children, and equally impossible for the general to write to her, because he did not know where she was."

"And did you never hear from him again?"

"Yes, my dears, once we heard——"

"What, and by whom?"

After a moment's silence, Dagobert replied, with a singular expression of countenance,—

"By whom? Why, by one who did not resemble other men—yes—and that you may understand what I say, I must tell you, as briefly as I can, an extraordinary adventure which happened to your father during a campaign in France. He had received from the emperor an order to storm a battery which was dealing heavy destruction in our lines. After many unsuccessful attempts, the general, heading a regiment of cuirassiers, dashed at the battery, according to his usual practice, and cut down the men at their very guns. He found himself on his horse exactly before the mouth of a cannon, of which all the artillery-men were killed or wounded; one, however, had strength enough to raise himself and hold out his slow-light to the touch-hole of the piece, at the very moment when the general was only ten paces from the mouth of the gun."

"*Grand Dieu*, what danger our father was in!"

"Never, as he told me, was he in greater peril—for the moment he saw the artillery-man fire the gun, it went off; but at that very moment a tall man, dressed like a countryman, and whom your father had not before remarked, threw himself before the cannon's mouth——"

"Ah! wretched man! What a horrid death!"

"Yes," said Dagobert, pensively. "That ought to have happened—he should have been shattered into a thousand bits—yet he was not——"

"What say you?"

"Why, the general told me, 'At the moment when the gun fired,' he has often repeated, 'by a movement of involuntary horror, I closed my eyes, that I might not see the mutilated carcass of the wretched individual sacrificed in my place. When I opened them, what should I see, in the midst of the smoke, but this tall individual standing erect and quite calm on the same spot, casting a sad but sweet smile on the artillery-man, who, with one knee on the ground, his body half recum-

bent, looked at him with as much fear as if he had been the devil himself; then the battle raging hotly it was impossible for me again to find this man,' added your father."

"*Mon Dieu!* Dagobert, is this possible?"

"That's what I inquired of the general. He replied that he never could explain this singular fact to his satisfaction. Your father was much struck by the features of this man, who appeared, as he told me, about thirty years of age, with very black eyebrows, which united in the centre of his forehead, making, as it were, only one large brow from one temple to the other, so that his forehead appeared as if it was stamped with a black semicircle—remember this, my dears, you will know why presently."

"Yes, Dagobert, we will not forget it," said the astonished girls. "How very strange, a man with his forehead encircled with a black ray."

"Listen now. The general had been, I told you, left for dead at Waterloo. During the night, which he passed on the field of battle in a sort of delirium, caused by the fever of his wounds, there seemed to appear to him, in the moonlight, the same man, who leaned over him, contemplating his features with great tenderness and sorrow, and who, stanching the blood of his wounds, did all in his power to recover him. And as your father, whose senses were wandering, repulsed him and refused his care, saying, that, after such a disastrous defeat, there was nothing left him but to die, it seemed to him this person said, '*You must live for Eva's sake!*' That was your mother's name—your mother, whom the general had left at Warsaw, to rejoin the emperor, and with him once more enter on a campaign for France."

"How very strange, Dagobert! and did our father ever see that man again?"

"He did! it was he who brought the general's letters and messages to your poor mother."

"When could that have been? we never saw him."

"Do you recollect that on the morning of your dear mother's death you had gone with old Fedora to the forest of pines?"

"Oh yes!" replied Rose, mournfully, "we had accompanied Fedora to search for a particular sort of moss our mother used to be so fond of."

"Dear mother," murmured Blanche, her soft eyes filling with tears, "who could have anticipated when we quitted her so well in the morning the dreadful blow we were to experience that very night!"

"Who, indeed, my child? As for me, on that very morning I was at work in the garden singing my merriest song, and as little dreaming of trouble or sorrow as yourselves, when suddenly I heard a voice behind me inquire in French, '*Is this the village of Milosk?*' I turned hastily round and perceived a stranger standing before me; instead of replying to his question, I looked steadfastly at him and retreated several steps in utter surprise and astonishment."

"And wherefore were you so startled?"

"The individual was of immense height, very pale, with a high expansive forehead, his thick black eyebrows had grown together so as to shade his countenance with one dark gloomy semicircle."

“This was doubtless the same person who had twice stood beside our father during the battles he was engaged in!”

“The very same!”

“But tell me, Dagobert,” said Rose, thoughtfully, “how long is it since these battles took place?”

“About sixteen years!”

“And this stranger whose appearance so greatly astonished you—about how old was he?”

“Scarcely thirty years!”

“Then how could he possibly be the same man who, sixteen years previously, had fought in the same campaign as our father?”

“Quite right,” said Dagobert, shrugging his shoulders; “I must have been deceived by some passing resemblance—yet——”

“At least, if it were really the person you imagined, his age must have stood still all those years, and that is quite impossible.”

“But did you not ask him if he were the very same individual who had formerly succoured our parent?”

“In my first confusion of ideas I did not think of it; and he stayed so very short a time that I had no further opportunity of so doing. He again inquired for the village of Milosk.

“‘You are there at present,’ replied I, ‘but how did you discover I was a Frenchman?’

“‘By hearing you sing as I passed by this garden,’ answered he; ‘but can you tell me where Madame Simon, wife to the general of that name, resides?’

“‘This is her house, sir!’

“Evidently perceiving the surprise his visit occasioned me, he surveyed me for several minutes in silence, then holding out his hand to me, he said,—

“‘You are the friend of General Simon—I may say his best friend!’

“You may judge, my children, of the utter amazement I experienced at finding a mere stranger so well informed on such matters: at length I managed to exclaim,—

“‘And how know you this, sir?’

“‘From frequently hearing the general speak of you in terms of grateful recollection.’

“‘You have then seen the general?’

“‘I knew him long since in India; and am equally with yourself his friend. I have constantly been employed by him to convey his letters, &c. to his lady, of whose exile in Siberia I was perfectly aware. At Tobolsk I learned that she inhabited this village. Have the goodness to conduct me to her at once.’”

“Kind traveller, how I love him!” said Rose.

“For he was our dear father’s friend,” added Blanche.

“I begged him to wait a few minutes while I apprised your mother of his proposed visit, fearing any sudden surprise might be injurious to her. Five minutes afterwards he was admitted into her presence.”

“And how was this traveller dressed, Dagobert? what sort of person was he?”

“Very tall, with long black curling hair. He wore a dark travelling cloak, with a similar cap.”

“And was he handsome?”

“Yes, my children, extremely so; but the expression of his countenance, though kind and gentle, had a grief-worn look that cut me to the heart.”

“Poor man! some severe trouble—some incurable affliction, no doubt!”

“Your mother remained closeted with him for some time, when she summoned me to say she had received favourable tidings from the general. She was in tears, and had before her a large packet of papers, forming a species of journal. The general was in the habit of writing to her nearly every evening to console her for their separation. Unable to converse with her, he poured out on paper all he would have said had she been present.”

“And where are these papers, Dagobert?”

“There, in my wallet, with my cross and our purse—one of these days I will give them to you. I have merely taken out a few leaves which I will read to you directly—you will see then why I have selected them.”

“Was our father long in India?”

“From the little your mother told me it appears that the general had gone thither after having fought with the Greeks against the Turks—for he ever loved to side with the weak and oppressed against the strong. Upon his arrival in India, he commenced a bitter strife against the English, who had massacred our countrymen when prisoners of war, and held our emperor in bondage at St. Helena. This was a legitimate war; and while wreaking his vengeance on a nation he detested, he was enabled to assist a good cause.”

“How, Dagobert? What cause could he befriend?”

“That of one of the tributary petty princes of India, then ravaged by the English without the slightest pretext to cover their unjust invasion. Here, again, you see my children, your noble father acted upon his favourite impulse, that of protecting the weak from the tyranny of the strong; and in a very short space of time he had so well disciplined and instructed the twelve or fifteen thousand men who composed the troops of the Indian sovereign, that they gained two decisive victories over their invaders, the English, who, but for his timely interposition, would——But stay, a few pages from his journal will tell you more and better than I can. Besides, you will then read a name you must never forget; and for that reason I have selected this passage.”

“Oh, what happiness!” exclaimed Rose, “to be able to read the very words traced by our dear parent’s hand; it is almost the same as though he spoke to us.”

“As though he were beside us,” added Blanche, tenderly.

So speaking, both sisters eagerly extended their hands to receive the papers Dagobert drew from his pocket.

Then, as if influenced by a simultaneous burst of filial reverence, they each silently kissed the hand-writing of their father.

“You will perceive, my children, in perusing these pages, why it was I felt so much surprise when you told me that your guardian angel, who has visited you in your dreams, was named Gabriel. But read—read,” continued the soldier, observing the astonished looks of the sisters. “Only, I ought to tell you beforehand, that when your father

wrote these lines he had not then encountered the individual who was the bearer of these papers to your mother."

Rose, sitting up in her bed, took the leaves and commenced reading in a soft and tremulous voice.

While Blanche, her head reclining on her sister's shoulder, listened with profound attention, the motion of her lips evincing how closely she followed each sound, and that she, too, read mentally.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRAGMENTS OF GENERAL SIMON'S JOURNAL.

"Bivouac of the Mountains of Ava,
"20th February, 1830.

"EACH time that I add to the sheets of my journal, now written in the upper part of India, where my fate and wandering destiny have thrown me—a journal which, perhaps, thou, my ever-loved Eva, mayst never read—I experience sensations so painful, yet so dear to me; for it is a consolation thus to commune with thee, dearest, and yet my regrets are never more bitter than when I thus speak to, but do not see, thee.

"If ever these pages shall come before thine eyes, thy generous heart will beat at the name of that intrepid being to whom I owe my life, to whom I shall, perhaps, owe the happiness of one day again beholding thee and our child—for it lives, does it not—our dear child? I must hope so, for else, dear wife, what must be your life, spent in lonely exile? Dear angel, it must be now fourteen years of age. Who is it like? To thee, dearest—is it not? It has, I know, thy large and lovely blue eyes. Fool that I am! How many times in this long journal have I not already asked this question, to which thou canst not reply? How many times?—and yet I shall again do so. Thou must teach our child to pronounce and love the name, however strange, of Djalma."

"Djalma!" said Rose, who, with moistened eyes, interrupted the reading.

"Djalma!" replied Blanche, who shared her sister's emotion; "oh! we shall never forget this name."

"And you will be right, my children; for it seems it is that of a soldier, very famous though very young. Go on, my little Rose."

Rose resumed,—

"I have told you, dearest Eva, in the preceding sheets, of the two good days which we had during this month. The troops of my old friend, the Indian prince, improving daily in their European discipline, have done wonders. We have driven back the English, and compelled them to evacuate a part of this unhappy country, invaded by them in contempt of all right, all justice; and which they have ravaged most mercilessly, for here English warfare is only in other words treason, pillage, and massacre. This morning, after a forced march

through rivers and over mountains, we learn by our spies that reinforcements had reached the enemy, who was preparing to assume the offensive. They were only a few leagues off, and an engagement was inevitable. My old friend, the Indian prince, the father of my preserver, was eager for the onset. The affair began at three o'clock, and was fierce and bloody. As I saw a moment of indecision in our lines, for we were much inferior in numbers, and the English reinforcements were quite fresh, I charged at the head of our small body of cavalry.

"The old prince was in the centre, fighting as he always fights, most valorously. His son Djalma, hardly eighteen years of age, and as brave as his father, was at my side, when, in the hottest of the fight, my horse was killed under me, and rolled with me down a bank, on the edge of which we were at the moment, and I was so completely under him that for an instant I fancied my thigh was broken."

"Poor father!" said Blanche.

"Fortunately, this time nothing serious did happen to him, thanks to Djalma. You see, Dagobert, I remember the name," remarked Rose, who then continued,—

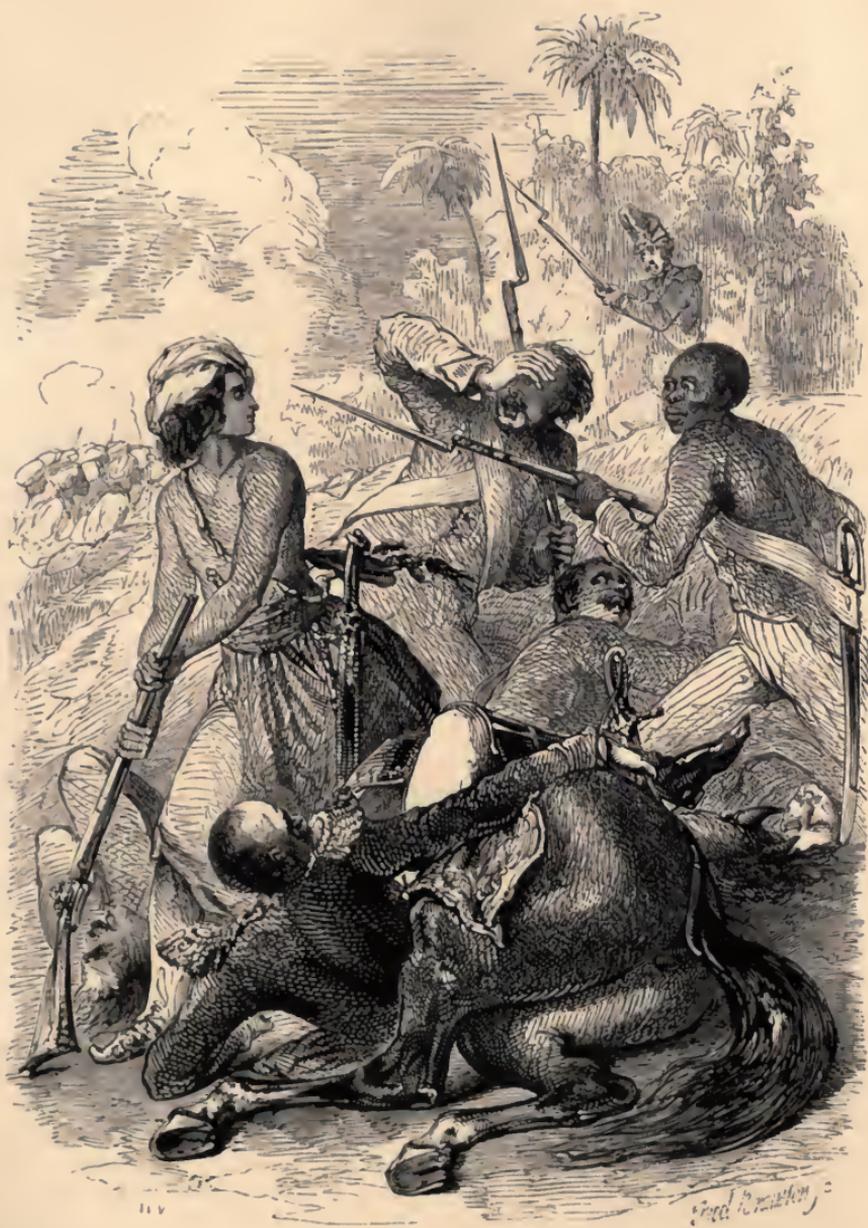
"The English, thinking that if they killed me (very flattering for me) they should easily subdue the prince's army, an officer and five or six irregular soldiers—brutal and cowardly robbers!—seeing me roll down the ravine, rushed after to slay me. In the midst of the fire and smoke, our gallant fellows had not seen my fall; but Djalma never quitted me, and, leaping down the bank to my rescue, by his calm intrepidity saved my life. With one of the double barrels of his carbine he laid the officer dead, and with the other broke the arm of the miscreant who had stabbed my left hand with his bayonet; but my Eva need not feel alarm—it is only a scratch——"

"Wounded—wounded again! *Mon Dieu!*" cried Blanche, clasping her hands, and interrupting her sister.

"Oh, that's nothing!" said Dagobert; "it was only a scratch, as the general said. He used to call the wounds which did not prevent him from fighting 'white wounds.' He always found out the right word for every thing."

"Djalma seeing me wounded," continued Rose, wiping her eye, "used his heavy carbine for a club, and drove back my assailants, when, at this moment, I saw a fresh adversary concealed behind a clump of bamboos, which commanded the ravine, who, placing the barrel of his long fusil between two branches, blowed in his slow-light, and took deliberate aim at Djalma, and the brave youth received a ball in his chest, before my cries could put him on his guard. Feeling himself struck, he retreated in spite of himself for two paces, and fell on his knee, but still keeping erect and trying to make for me a rampart of his body. Conceive my rage, my despair! Unfortunately my efforts to disengage myself were paralysed by the excruciating agony which I experienced in my thigh. Powerless and weaponless, I looked for some moments at this unequal conflict.

"Djalma had lost a great deal of blood—his arm grew weak; and one of the skirmishers, encouraging the others with his voice, took from his belt a large and heavy axe, which would decapitate a man at a single blow, when, at the moment, a dozen of our men reached the spot,



DJALMA PROTECTING GENERAL SIMON.

P. 52.

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Djalma was delivered in his turn, and they disengaged me. At the end of a quarter of an hour I was able to mount another horse, and we eventually gained the day, though with immense loss. To-morrow the affair must be decisive, for I can see the fires of the English bivouac from this spot. Thus my Eva will see how I am indebted for life to this youth. Fortunately, his wound is harmless, the ball having glanced along his ribs."

"The brave lad would say, with the general, '*only a white wound,*'" said Dagobert.

"Now, my beloved Eva," Rose read on, "you must know, by my recital, the intrepid Djalma, who is scarcely eighteen years of age—in one word, I will paint to you his noble and courageous nature: in his country they sometimes bestow surnames, and, from fifteen years old, he has been called '*the Generous.*' Generous, indeed, in heart and soul. By another custom of the country, as peculiar as it is touching, this surname has ascended to his father, who is termed '*the Father of the Generous;*' and he might well be styled *the Just*, for the old Indian is a rare specimen of chivalrous loyalty and proud independence. He might, as so many other poor princes in this land have done, humble himself to the dust before the execrable English despotism, treat for the sale of his sovereignty, and surrender to force; but no—'*My whole right, or a ditch in the mountains where I was born,*'—such is his motto. It is not boasting, it is the consciousness of what is right and just. 'But you will be ground to powder in the struggle,' I have said to him. His reply was, '*My friend, if to compel you to a disgraceful action you were told to yield or die?*' From this day I fully understood his character, and have devoted myself, body and soul, to the cause—the sacred cause—of the weak against the strong. You see, my Eva, that Djalma is worthy of such a sire. This young Indian's courage is so heroic, so intense, that he fights like a young Greek in the age of Leonidas, with a bare breast, while the other soldiers of his country, who in time of peace have the shoulders, arms, and breasts uncovered, put on a thick war-coat when they go to battle. The rash intrepidity of this youth reminds me of the King of Naples, of whom I have often spoken to you, and whom I have seen a hundred times charge at the head of his troops with no other arms in his hand than a riding-whip."

"Ah! he is one of those I told you of," said Dagobert, "and with whom the Emperor amused himself in making him a king. I saw a Prussian officer, a prisoner, whose face the King of Naples had marked in his rage with his whip. It was black and blue. The Prussian swore an oath, and said he was dishonoured, and that he would rather have had a sabre-cut. I believe him. That devil of a monarch—he only knew one way of doing business, that was to *march straight up to the cannon.* As soon as a cannonade began, he declared that it called him by all his names, and ran up to it, saying, 'Here I am.' If I speak of him to you, my dears, it is because he often said, 'No one can cut through a square that bids defiance to General Simon or myself.'"

Rose proceeded:—

"I have remarked, with pain, that, in spite of his youth, Djalma often had fits of deep melancholy. Sometimes I have detected between

him and his father singular looks, and, in spite of our mutual regard, I believe that they keep from me some painful family secret, if I may judge from a few words which at times escape from them, and which I believe involves some singular event, to which their imaginations, naturally excited and romantic, have given a supernatural character.

"But you know, my love, that we ourselves have lost the right of ridiculing the credulity of any persons,—I, since my campaign in France, wherein that very singular adventure occurred to me, which mystery I have never been able to solve."

"He means of the man who threw himself before the mouth of the cannon," said Dagobert.

"And you," the young girl resumed her perusal, "my Eva dear, since the visits of that young and lovely woman, whom your mother said she had seen at her mother's forty years previously."

The orphans looked at the soldier with astonishment.

"Your mother never mentioned that to me, nor the general either; it's as strange to me as to you."

Rose resumed, with much emotion and increasing curiosity:

"After all, my dear Eva, things often very extraordinary in appearance are explained by some chance, some resemblance, or some caprice of nature. The marvellous being always only some optical illusion, or the result of an imagination already deeply impressed, the time comes when that which seemed superhuman or supernatural turns out an event the most probable and explicable in the world; and so I have no doubt but that what we call our *prodigies* will, one day or other, come before us fully and naturally explained."

"You see, my children, that what at first is wonderful, is afterwards very simple—though that does not prevent us from being a long time before we find out its meaning."

"As our father says so, we must believe it, and not be surprised—must we not, sister?"

"Of course, because, some day or other, it will be all explained."

"Now," said Dagobert, after brief reflection—"a comparison. You two are so alike, you know, that any one who was not in the habit of seeing you every day would easily mistake one for the other. Well, if he did not know—if I may say so—that you were double, only see how astonished he would be. I am quite sure that he would think the devil was in it, *à propos* of good little angels as you are."

"You are right, Dagobert; and in this way, as our father says, many things may be accounted for"—and Rose continued:

"My dear Eva, it is with no little pleasure that I find that Djalma has French blood in his veins: his father married, many years ago, a young girl whose family, of French extraction, was long settled in Batavia, in the isle of Java. This similarity of position between my old friend and myself has made our friendship the more close; for your family also, Eva, is of French descent, and long since established in a strange land. Unfortunately, the prince, some years since, lost the wife he adored.

"Alas, my beloved, my hand trembles as I write. I am weak—I am a child—my heart is wounded, broken. If such a misfortune should occur! Oh Heaven! and our child, what would become of it

without you—without me—in that barbarous clime? No! no! the fear is absurd; but what horrid torture is uncertainty! Where, then, are you? What are you doing? What has become of you? Forgive these gloomy thoughts, which come over me so often in spite of myself! Cheerless moments—desolate—for, when they come, I say, ‘I am a proscribed man, unhappy; but still, at least, at the farther end of the world, there are two hearts that still beat for me, thine, my Eva, and that of our child!’”

Rose could hardly complete these last words, her voice was almost choked with her sobs.

There was, in truth, a sad coincidence between the fears of the general and the mournful reality; and what could be more affecting than these remarks, written on the eve of a battle, by the light of the bivouac fire, by a soldier, who thus sought to allay the anguish of a separation so painful, but which, at the moment, he did not know to be eternal?

“Poor general! he did not know our misfortune,” said Dagobert, after a moment’s silence; “and neither did he know that, instead of one child, he has two—that will be some comfort to him; but now, Blanche, do you go on reading, I fear your sister will be tired; she is too much excited,—and, besides, it is only right that you should share the pleasure and the pain of the reading.”

Blanche took the letter, and Rose, wiping her eyes, which overflowed with tears, leaned in her turn her lovely head on her sister’s shoulder, who thus proceeded,—

“I am calmer now, my loved one. I ceased to write for a moment. I have driven my dark thoughts away, and let us resume our conversation.

“After having so much, at length, discoursed to you of India, I will say a word or two of Europe. Yesterday evening one of our men, a safe hand, came to our advanced post, he brought me a letter from France, which had been forwarded to Calcutta. I have news from my father, and my uneasiness is removed. This letter is dated in August last, and I find that many letters are lost or miscarried, for, during nearly two years, I have not had one, and was, therefore, deeply anxious about him. Excellent father, always the same—age has not weakened his energetic mind; and his health is as robust as ever, he tells me. He is still a mechanic, and rejoices in it as much as ever; always faithful to his strong republican bias, and full of hope yet: for, said he, ‘*the time is at hand,*’ and these last words were underlined. He also gave me, as you will see, excellent accounts of the family of our good, faithful friend and follower, Dagobert. Believe me, dearest Eva, it is a considerable diminution of my grief to reflect that you have so true and devoted a man near you, for well I know that he would never forsake you in your exile. What sterling worth lies hid beneath his rough exterior; a heart pure and valuable as gold, yet firm and unbending as iron. I can suppose how tenderly he loves our child!”

While this passage was being read, Dagobert was suddenly seized with a most unusual attack of coughing, occasionally looking down and searching most diligently for a small checked pocket-handkerchief, which happened at that very moment to be lying across his knees.

He remained in his stooping position for some brief space, then, recovering himself, commenced stroking his moustache.

“How well our dear father understood and appreciated you!”

“And how rightly he foresaw how tenderly you would love us!”

“Enough, enough! dear children, don't let us say any more about that; but go on to where your father (the general) mentions my little Agricola and Gabriel, the adopted son of my wife—dear wife, when I think that perhaps ere three months——But proceed, my dear children. Read, read,” added the soldier, striving to repress his emotion.

“Spite of myself, dear Eva, I cherish the hope that these pages will one day reach you, and with that idea I shall write what I think may also be interesting to our good Dagobert, and I know well how delighted he will be to receive tidings of his family. My father, who still superintends the business of his worthy employer, M. Hardy, informs me that this latter has taken Dagobert's son into his workshop, and Agricola is employed under the immediate superintendence of my father, who is delighted with his skill and docility: he speaks of him as an amiable and clever youth, who makes no more of the heavy tools required in his work than he would of using a child's toy. As light-hearted as industrious and intelligent, he bids fair to become the head workman in the establishment: yet, after his day's toil is over, his great delight is to return to his adored mother, and, sitting by her side, compose verses and patriotic songs of extraordinary merit; indeed, the rich vein of poetry which runs through these productions, combined with the purity and sublimity of the expressions, have caused them to become exclusively the songs sung by all the workmen in the workshops of Paris; and well are they calculated to touch the coldest hearts, and by their stirring energy to rouse and excite even the weak and timid to virtuous deeds.”

“Oh! how proud you must be of such a son, Dagobert,” said Rose, her sweet face beaming with admiration; “he composes songs, you see.”

“Yes, it is indeed a fine thing to hear all this; but what principally delights me is to learn how much he loves his mother, and that he is skilful and strong in the management of heavy tools. Ah! only a man capable of making the iron ring well on the anvil could have had the soul to write such beautiful songs as the ‘*Réveil du Peuple*,’ and ‘*La Marseillaise*!’ but where Agricola picked it all up is more than I can think. I dare say, though, he learned all those sort of fine things at the school where, as you will find, he went with his adopted brother, Gabriel.”

At this name, which recalled to the sisters the imaginary being they styled their guardian angel, their curiosity was deeply excited, and Blanche, with redoubled attention, read as follows:—

“Agricola's adopted brother, the poor deserted child so generously protected by the wife of our excellent Dagobert, is, I am told, the most perfect contrast to himself, not as regards the goodness of his heart, for in that respect the youths are equal, but in character and disposition. Agricola is endowed with the most buoyant gaiety and unflinching flow of spirits, ever in action, and prompt to create and participate in all mirthful pastimes, while—while Gabriel is melancholy and thoughtful. My father further adds, you may read in the countenances

of these youths the faithful index of their opposite characters. Agricola is tall and muscular, his fine dark complexion beaming with health and manly courage: Gabriel, on the contrary, has a thin, slight figure, by no means indicative of health or strength; he has the delicate complexion and soft hair of a woman, and his timid, gentle manner gives an almost angelic sweetness to his whole appearance."

The orphans surveyed each other in utter amazement; then turning their ingenuous looks towards Dagobert, Rose exclaimed,—

"Why, Dagobert, this is precisely the description of our Gabriel. Yours has fair features, light curling locks, and the look of an angel,—so has ours."

"Yes, yes; the resemblance is perfect; and that was the cause of my being so astonished when you related to me your dream."

"Are you sure he had blue eyes?" inquired Rose.

"As for that, my child, though the general says nothing about it, I should say he certainly had, for I believe all very fair people do have blue eyes; however, black or blue, he must not use them to admire young girls—wherefore, you will find out as you proceed."

Blanche resumed,—

"The almost supernaturally angelic expression of Gabriel's countenance attracted the attention of a holy brother in one of our public schools, which, in company with Agricola and the children of the neighbourhood, he was in the habit of attending. This holy man mentioned him to a high dignitary of the church, who had sufficient interest to place him in one of our seminaries, and it is now more than two years since he took the vows of the order. He is intended to be sent abroad as a missionary, and will, ere long, depart for America."

"Then your Gabriel is a monk," said Rose, looking at Dagobert, somewhat dismayed.

"And ours is an angel!" added Blanche.

"Which certainly proves that your Gabriel holds a higher rank than mine. Well! every one to their choice! but I am very glad it was not my boy took a fancy to a priest's coat. I would rather a thousand times see my Agricola's muscular frame clad in a workman's dress, a leathern apron tied before him, and his brawny arm wielding a hammer, after the fashion of your venerable grandfather, my children, and the parent of Marshal Simon, Duke de Ligny; for after all, the general holds that rank, through the emperor's own creation. Now conclude your manuscript."

"Thus, therefore, my tender Eva, should this journal ever reach you, you will have the gratification of tranquillising Dagobert as to the present prospects of his wife and son, whom he quitted to serve and assist us. How shall I ever repay so great a sacrifice? But he is with you, and well I know your noble and generous heart will try hard to devise some adequate mode of acquitting our heavy debt of gratitude.

"Again, and again, adieu, Eva, best beloved! For one instant I quitted my journal to visit the tent of Djalma. I found him sleeping peacefully, his father watching beside him. A single gesture made by the anxious parent sufficed to convince me no further alarm was entertained for the safety of the intrepid young man. May he be equally preserved from the perils of the approaching fight. Farewell, my

tender wife! The night is calm and still: one by one the watch-fires burn out and become gradually extinct: our brave mountaineers repose after the fearful combat of yesterday, and no sound is heard but the distant call of our sentinels; their words, as they strike on my ear, uttered in the language of their country, recall me from my temporary delusion, and remind me of what, when thus conversing with you, I entirely forget, namely, that oceans divide us—that I am far, far from you and our child. Beloved beings, what is your present condition—what will your future destiny be? Ah! could I but convey to you that medal I so unfortunately brought away with me from Warsaw, perhaps you might obtain permission to proceed with it to France, or at least, to send your child thither with Dagobert; for you know, well know, the importance attached to it: but why add this vexation to the many troubles which already oppress us? Unfortunately, years are rolling on: the fatal day will arrive, and the last hope to which I cling will be taken from me.”

“But I will not end this day mournfully. Once more, my Eva!—my love!—my wife!—farewell! Press our infant to your heart, and while you cover it with kisses, say that they come from an adoring, though exiled husband and father, who would peril his life to bestow them himself on his loved ones.

“Till the termination of to-morrow’s conflict, adieu! adieu!”

A long silence succeeded the perusal of this touching paper, the tears of the sisters alone faintly breaking the stillness which prevailed; while Dagobert, leaning his head on his hand, was lost in deep and painful meditation.

The wind increased in violence, and blew in gusts along the old passage, while the otherwise profound quiet which prevailed in the inn was broken only by the heavy drops of rain which descended in torrents and pattered against the window-panes.

* * * * *

While the daughters of General Simon were occupied in the affecting task of reading these fragments from their father’s journal, a strange and mysterious scene was passing within the menagerie belonging to Morok, the brute-conqueror.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAGES.

MOROK had armed himself. Over his vest of chamois leather he had put on his coat of mail; a tissue of steel, as flexible as linen, and as hard as adamant. He had buckled his cuishes on his thighs, his greaves upon his legs, his brassards on his arms, and covered his feet with iron-plate shoes; concealing all this defensive attire with a long and loose pantaloon, and an ample pelisse carefully buttoned up, whilst in his hand he bore a long rod of iron, heated in the fire, and held by its wooden handle.

Although his tiger Cain, his lion Judas, and his black panther

La Mort, had long since been subdued by his address and energy, yet at times these brutes, in a fit of anger, would try their teeth and nails upon him; but, thanks to the armour which his pelisse covered, they had but struck their nails on a surface of steel, blunted their teeth on arms or legs of iron, whilst a slight shake of the metal rod of their master made their hides smoke and shrivel up, thus furrowed by a deep and smarting burn.

Finding that their bites were useless, these animals, whose memories are vastly retentive, understood that henceforward it were vain to try their claws and teeth on an invulnerable being. So greatly did their crouching submission increase, that in their public displays, their master, at the least movement of a small cane, covered with flame-coloured paper, made them shrink and cringe at his feet in an agony of fear.

The prophet, carefully armed, and holding in his hand the rod, heated by Goliath, descended the trap of the garret, which was over the large shed in which the cages of his animals were placed. A thin partition of planks separated this shed from the stable in which were the horses of the tamer of beasts.

A reflecting light threw its full beams over these cages. They were four in number.

A grating of iron, tolerably wide, was round the sides. On one side this grating turned on hinges like a door, so that the animals which they enclosed could come out. The floors of these cages were on axletrees and four small iron wheels, so that they were thus easily drawn to the large covered van in which they were placed during their journeys. One of these was empty, the three others were closed, and in them, as we know, were a panther, a tiger, and a lion.

The panther was from Java, and seemed, by its lowering and savage look, to deserve its name of *La Mort*.

Completely black, it remained coiled up into the smallest compass at the farther end of its cage. The colour of its skin was mingled with the obscurity that surrounded it, so that its shape could not be made out, and only two burning and fixed fires could be seen—two large eye-balls of a phosphorescent yellow, which only shone out at night; for all the animals of the feline genus see perfectly only at night, or in the midst of darkness.

The prophet had entered the stable very silently—the deep red of his pelisse contrasting with the light and yellow hue of his straight hair and long beard. The lamp was so placed that it completely lighted up the man, and the breadth of its beams, contrasted with the darkness of the shadow, brought out more fully the prominent features of his harsh and bony countenance.

He approached slowly towards the cage.

The white ring, which encircled his glaring eyeball, seemed to expand, whilst his eye rivalled, in brilliancy and fixedness, the glaring and steadfast gaze of the panther.

Though crouching in the darkness, she yet felt the influence of her master's commanding look, and twice or thrice closed her eyelids hastily, uttering an angry but low growl; then her eyes reopening in spite of herself became immovably fixed on those of the prophet.

Then the round ears of La Mort fell back on her neck, flattened

like that of a snake, the skin of her forehead wrinkled convulsively, while she drew up her nostrils, covered with long bristles, and twice silently opened her wide jaw, armed with formidable fangs.

At this moment a kind of magnetic sympathy seemed to be carried on between the look of the man and the beast.

The prophet stretched towards the cage his rod of heated steel, and said, in a harsh and imperious tone,—

“La Mort, come hither!”

The panther arose, but crouched so greatly, that her belly and hocks still dragged along the floor. She was three feet high, and nearly five feet long, her chine was supple and fleshy, her hams as lengthy and as deep as those of a race-horse, her chest wide, her shoulders broad and projecting, her paws flat and strongly nerved,—all evincing that this formidable beast united strength with suppleness and vigour with activity.

Morok, with his rod of iron extended towards the cage, made a step towards the panther.

The panther made a step towards the prophet.

He paused.

La Mort paused likewise.

At this moment the tiger Judas, who, as Morok stood, was behind him, as though jealous of the notice bestowed by his master on the panther, uttered a furious growl; and, throwing back his head, displayed his formidable triangular jaw and deep-set powerful chest of dusky white, whence arose the first shades of tawny, mingled with black, which constituted the colour of his coat. His tail, like a huge copper-coloured serpent, marked with clear black rings, was sometimes passively folded against its flanks, at others employed in furiously lashing them with a slow and continued movement, while his green transparent eyes were fixed on the prophet.

Such was the influence possessed by this man over the animals, that Judas, at a glance from his master, ceased his roaring, and quailed in profound submission to his will; no trace, save his loud and panting respiration, bearing evidence of his recent daring attempt at insubordination.

Morok, who, at his wrathful cry, had instantly turned towards him, examined him with steady attention for several moments. Immediately the animal felt himself relieved from the controlling power of the prophet's eye, he returned to the darkest corner of his cage, and quietly laid himself down.

A crackling noise, at once sharp and grating, similar to that made by beasts when gnawing hard substances, now arose in the lion's den, and attracted thither by the uncommon sound, Morok quitted the tiger, and proceeded to investigate the cause of the noise, as well as the nature of Cain's employment.

Nothing but the huge tawny head of the animal was visible; his hind quarters were bent under him, and his immense mane hung over his glowing eyes; but by the working and tension of his muscles with the strain of his vertebræ, it was evident he was making violent use of his jaws and fore-paws.

The prophet's mind misgave him, and he approached the cage in utter alarm, lest, contrary to his express command, Goliath should

have given the beast food, the bones of which he was then gnawing. To ascertain this point he went close to the den, and exclaimed, in a sharp, decisive tone,—

“Cain!”

Cain did not move.

“Cain! I say! come hither!” again cried Morok, in a still louder voice; but with no better success; the lion stirred not, and the grinding noise still went on.

“Cain! here! instantly!” summoned the prophet a third time; but as he spoke, he, on this third appeal to his attention, applied his rod of hot steel to the flanks of the animal.

Scarcely had a light smoke issued from the scorched sides of the creature, than, with a spring of inconceivable quickness, he flew to the bars of his cage; not merely rushing thither, but flying with one bound, and so standing, and almost erect, he surveyed his tormentor with an air of majestic grandeur and ineffable rage.

The prophet stood at the corner of the cage, and Cain, in his fury, and with the desire of facing his master, had presented his side against the bars, through which he thrust his enormous fore-paw up to the shoulder; the limb still quivering with his recent exertions, and exhibiting a contour that, for strength and size, might have vied even with the hereulean proportions of the giant Goliath himself.

“Down, Cain! down!” said the prophet, eagerly approaching him; but the furious beast refused compliance; his lips, drawn back in utter rage, displayed fangs as long and formidable as those of the wild boar.

Again Morok applied his wand of burning iron to the lips of Cain; and this time, agonised by the acute pain produced by burning so sensitive a part, and, intimidated by the eye and voice of his master, the lion offered no further opposition; his loud roaring ceased and subsided into a menacing growl, while his huge body, as though utterly deprived of all power of resistance, sunk into an attitude of submission and dread.

Morok lowered his lantern, in order to discover what had so recently occupied the beast, when he perceived that he had torn up one of the planks from the bottom of his den, and had been trying to appease his hunger by grinding it to pieces between his huge jaws.

For several instants the most profound silence reigned in the menagerie. The prophet, with his hands behind him, passed from cage to cage, observing the animals with a perplexed, yet earnest, gaze, as though hesitating how to make a difficult and important choice. From time to time he stopped at the door, looking out on the inn yard, and listened attentively.

In a few minutes it was hastily opened, and Goliath reappeared, the wet streaming from his garments.

“Well!” said the prophet.

“I have had trouble enough!” answered the giant. “However, luckily, the night is as dark as pitch, and it blows and rains enough to kill a fellow!”

“Do they suspect any thing?”

“I should say not, master! No! you have laid your plan too

well. There is a cellar just under the room where these young girls are put to sleep; and the door of that cellar opens out on the fields. When you whistled to let me know it was time, I went out, carrying a high stool, which I placed against the wall, and stood upon it: that, with my own height, made me at least nine feet, so that I could lean upon the window-frame. I held the blind in one hand, and my knife in the other; and, when I had broken two squares of glass, I slammed the blind as hard as I could."

"And they fancied it was the wind?"

"Yes, they so considered it. There, you see, one is not quite such a fool as you might suppose. Well, when I had done my job, I made all the haste I could back into the cellar, taking my stool with me. In a little while, I heard the old man's voice; so it was well I had been so quick."

"When I whistled, he had just gone to his supper. I did not expect he would so soon have finished it."

"Oh! he isn't the sort of man to be long eating his supper," replied the giant, contemptuously. "Well, soon after the old soldier-man had gone to the young girls' room, and found out about the glass being broken, he opened the window, and called his dog, saying, 'Seize him! hold him!' So I took care to shut myself tight inside the cellar, for if that cursed dog had got hold of me, he would have split my wind-pipe with his fangs."

"You need have no further fears of the dog, he is safe in the stable with the horse; but go on."

"When I heard the shutter and window shut again, I came forth from the cellar; and, putting my trestle as before, I got on it once more; and, turning the fastening of the shutter gently, I opened it. But the two broken panes of glass had been filled up with the skirts of the pelisse, so I could only hear, and not see any thing. Well, then, I moved the cloak a little and saw the young wenches on the bed with their faces towards me, and the old fellow sitting at the foot of the couch with his back to me——"

"And the bag—his bag? That is the important thing."

"His bag was near the window on a table beside a lamp. I could have touched it by stretching out my arm."

"What did you hear?"

"As you told me not to attend to any thing but the bag, I only remember about the bag, and the old fellow said that his papers, the general's letters, his money, and his cross were in it."

"Good. What then?"

"As it was difficult to hold the pelisse from the hole in the window, it fell out of my hand. I tried to take it up again, and put my hand so far through the window, that one of the girls saw it, and shrieked out, pointing to the window."

"Cursed wretch!—all is a failure," exclaimed the prophet, pale with rage.

"Listen, all is not a failure. When I heard her scream, I jumped down from my trestle, and again hid myself in the aperture under. The dog was no longer there. I left the door half open. Then I heard the window open, and saw by the reflection that the old fellow was holding



GOLIATH AT THE WINDOW.

P. 63.

a lamp out of the window. He looked about him; but not seeing any ladder, as the window was too high for any man of ordinary stature to reach up to——”

“He thought it was the wind, as he did before. You are not so stupid as I thought.”

“The wolf has become a fox, as you said when I found out where the bag, the money, and the papers were. As I could not do any more for the present, I thought it best to come to you. So here I am.”

“Go in the loft and find me the longest ashen pike.”

“Yes, master.”

“And the red woollen blanket.”

“Yes, master.”

“Be gone.”

Goliath mounted the ladder, and when he had reached midway stopped.

“Master, mayn't I bring down a bit of meat for La Mort? You'll see she'll owe me a spite; she'll lay it all to me. She never forgets, and at the first opportunity——”

“The pike and the blanket!” replied the prophet, in a commanding tone.

Whilst Goliath mutteringly executed his behests, Morok gently opened the door of the shed, and, looking out into the court-yard, again listened.

“Here are the pike and blanket,” said the giant, coming down the ladder with them. “What am I to do next?”

“Return to your aperture, get up again to the window, and when the old man rushes hastily out of the chamber——”

“Who'll make him rush out?”

“He will go out. The *how* is no affair of yours.”

“Well; and then?”

“You told me the lamp was near the window.”

“Quite near; and the table close to the bag.”

“As soon as the old man leaves the room, push the window, knock over the lamp, and if you then succeed in doing quickly and cleverly what remains to be done—the ten florins are yours. You remember all I told you?”

“I do, I do.”

“The girls will be so frightened by the noise and the darkness that they will remain dumb with fear.”

“Make yourself easy, the wolf has become a fox, he will be a serpent.”

“This is not all.”

“What more?”

“The roof of the shed is not high, the skylight in the loft is easily reached, the night is dark, and so, instead of returning by the door——”

“I am to get in by the skylight?”

“And without a sound.”

“Like a real serpent.” And the giant left the stable.

“Yes,” said the prophet, after a silence of some time; “my means are sure, and I will no longer hesitate. Blind and obscure tool; I

know not the motives of the instructions I have received; but after the orders which accompany them, and the position in which *he* is who sends them to me, doubtless some most important interests are involved. Interests," he continued, after another pause, "which affect all that is greatest—most exalted in the world!!! But how can these two young girls, almost beggars,—how can this miserable old soldier represent or be connected with such interests? No matter," he added with humility, "I am the arm which acts, it is for the head that thinks and orders to be responsible for its works."

The prophet then left the shed, taking in his hand the blanket, and directed his steps towards Jovial's little stable. The shattered door was hardly kept closed by the hasp.

At the sight of a stranger Kill-joy sprang at him, but his teeth only met with greaves of iron; and, in spite of the dog's bites, the prophet took Jovial by his halter, and, having tied his head up in the blanket that he might neither see nor smell, he led him out of the stable and conducted him to the interior of his menagerie, the door of which he fastened.

CHAPTER X.

THE SURPRISE.

HAVING thus completed the perusal of their father's journal, the orphans remained, for some time, mournfully and silently contemplating the precious document, the leaves of which were already discoloured and soiled by age; while Dagobert, absorbed in fond anticipation of shortly meeting the beloved wife and son from whom he had been so long separated, sat buried in many a fond reverie of domestic bliss.

The soldier was the first to break the deep silence which for several minutes prevailed in the little chamber; taking the manuscript from the hands of Blanche, and carefully folding it, he returned it, with all the reverence due to so sacred a relic, to the pocket from which he had taken it, saying to the sisters,—

"Take heart, my children, and let the recollection of your brave father rouse you to bear your present trials with courage. Remember you are the daughters of a brave man, and must not disgrace him by cowardly shrinking from what is before you; let the dear hope of shortly embracing him drive away all grief and sorrow; and, above all, never forget the name of that worthy friend to whom you will owe this happiness—for, had not Djalma saved his life, you would indeed be orphans."

"Fear not, Dagobert," answered Rose, "we can never, never, cease to think of that revered name, while we are spared the use of our memory."

"And when our Gabriel, our guardian angel, again visits us," added Blanche, "we will pray for him to take Djalma also under his charge."

"Good, my children,!" replied Dagobert; "I am quite sure that you will do all that affection and duty require. But, to return to the traveller who so unexpectedly visited your mother in Siberia, he had

seen your father a month after the facts you have just read had occurred, and again previously to the general's setting out to open a fresh campaign against the English; upon the latter occasion it was that your father confided to him these papers and medal."

"But, Dagobert, can you tell us what is the use of this medal?"

"And what do the words inscribed on it mean?" pursued Rose, drawing it from her bosom.*

"Why, it means exactly this—that we must be, without fail, in Paris, No. 3 Rue Saint François, on the 13th February, 1832."

"But wherefore?"

"The suddenness of the attack which carried off your dear mother prevented her informing me, and all I know is, that this medal had been handed down to her from her family, in whose possession it had been for more than a hundred years."

"And how did our father become possessed of it?"

"Among the various articles hastily put into the carriage, when he was so forcibly carried from Warsaw, was a dressing-case of your mother's, in which was deposited this medal. No opportunity was ever afforded the general of returning it; for, had there been any means of communicating with us, he was entirely ignorant of our place of exile."

"But still you believe this medal to be of great importance to us?"

"Doubtless it is! and never had I seen your mother so joyful for the last fifteen years, as on the occasion of her again obtaining possession of it through the stranger. 'Henceforward,' exclaimed she, 'the fate of my children will be as happy and prosperous as it has hitherto been the reverse!' and turning to me, her fine eyes filled with tears of joy, and her whole countenance bright with the glow of happiness, she said, in the presence of the stranger, 'I shall now request permission of the governor of Siberia to visit France with my daughters. Surely I have been sufficiently punished by fifteen years' exile, and the confiscation of all my property. If I am refused, I must perforce remain; but, at least, he will permit me to send my children to France under your care, my faithful Dagobert; and you must, in that case, depart quickly—for, unhappily, much time has already been lost; and should you not arrive before the 13th of February, this painful separation and hazardous journey will all have been in vain.'"

• Victime
de
L. C. D. J.
Priez pour moi.
—
Paris,
Le 13 Février, 1682.

Translated thus.

Victim
of
L. C. D. J.
Pray for me.
—
Paris,
February 13, 1682.

A Paris,
Rue Saint François, No. 13,
Dans un siècle et demi
vous serez.
Le 13 Février, 1832.'

Priez pour moi.

Translated thus.

Paris,
13 St. Francis Street,
In a century and a half you will be there.

Pray for me.
February 13, 1832.

“What if even a single day after the date?”

“Should you even be delayed an hour over the prescribed time, returned your mother, ‘it will be destructive to the good I expect from the undertaking; the 13th of February once passed, all is over.’ She at the same moment put into my hands a thick packet, enjoining me to put it into the post-office of the first town we passed through; and this I have done.”

“And do you calculate upon our reaching Paris by the appointed time?”

“I trust so. But, if you think you are strong enough to bear the fatigue, I should like to double some of our marches; for, only travelling as we now do, at the rate of five leagues a-day, even should we escape all accidental delay, it will be impossible for us to arrive at our journey’s end before the beginning of February, and it would be very much better to be there as much sooner as we could reach Paris.”

“But since our dear father is in India, and, being under sentence of death, unable to return to France, when shall we see him?”

“Yes, dear Dagobert, do tell us when and where we are to embrace this beloved parent?”

“My poor children! there are many things you have yet to learn. When the mysterious stranger last saw your father, he could not have ventured back to France. But circumstances have altered since then, and he may now do so with perfect safety.”

“Tell us! tell us how, Dagobert?” asked the sisters, eagerly.

“Because, during the past year, the Bourbons, who exiled him, have, in their turn, been driven out of the kingdom; the news will have long since reached India, and your father’s first impulse would be to hasten to Paris, in the fond hope and expectation of finding your mother and selves assembled upon the all-important 13th of February of the coming year.”

“Ah!” said Rose, with a gentle sigh, “now I understand; and we may, indeed, hope to behold him!”

“Do you know the name of the strange traveller you have been telling us of, Dagobert?”

“No! my children. But let his name be what it might, he was a fine, noble-hearted man. When he took leave of your mother, she thanked him, with many tears, for his kindness to us all, and blessed him for his generous devotion to your dear father, he pressed her hands in his and said, in a sweet and gentle voice, which moved me in spite of myself, ‘*Why thank me? has He not said, LOVE YE ONE ANOTHER?*’”

“Who did he mean by HIM? Yes, whom did the traveller allude to as speaking those words?”

“That I can’t tell you; but the tone and manner in which he uttered the expression seemed to touch my very heart, and those were the last syllables I heard him speak.”

“LOVE YE ONE ANOTHER!” repeated Rose, pensively.

“What beautiful words!” added Blanche.

“And where was the traveller going? Did he tell you?”

“Oh, far off—far distant northwards, I heard him reply, when your mother questioned him on the subject of his farther travelling; and when, after his departure, your mother was speaking to me of him,

she said, 'The tender yet mournful style of language employed by the stranger, who has just gone, has affected me even to tears. Yet, while listening to him, I appeared happier in mind, and stronger in body, than I have done for years; my heart seemed to beat with increased love for my husband and children, and yet the expression of his own countenance was that of a person who had never smiled or wept in his life.' I stood by your mother watching his departing steps, and, we both remarked, with slow, calm, yet measured steps, and looking downwards with a dejected and melancholy air—and, talking of his steps, I observed——"

"What did you observe, Dagobert?"

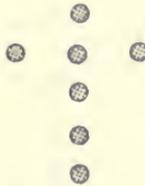
"You remember that the pathway leading to the house was always damp, from the trickling of the small stream which flowed near it?"

"Oh, yes! we remember perfectly!"

"Well, then, I noticed that the impression of his foot remained on the soil, and that the nails in his boot were arranged in the form of a cross."

"A cross?"

"Like this," said Dagobert, dotting with his finger the seven marks composing the cross, on the coverlet of the bed; "there they were placed after this fashion, beneath the heel of his boot, —



There, you see, that forms a perfect cross!"

"What could that possibly signify?"

"Any thing—nothing. Yet it must, too, have had some meaning in it; and, for my part, I could but look upon it as a bad presage for us, for, from the hour of his quitting us, one piece of ill-luck followed another."

"Alas! the death of my mother!"

"Yes, indeed; but, previously to that, a severe blow overtook us. You had not returned from your ramble, and your mother was preparing her petition requesting permission either to conduct you to France or to send you thither, when I heard the quick gallop of a horse; it was a courier from the governor-general of Siberia, bringing an order for our change of residence, and bidding us prepare, in three days' time, to join a party of unfortunates who were condemned by the state to banishment in one of the most inclement parts of Asiatic Tartary, four hundred leagues beyond our present abode, and so much farther northwards. Thus, after fifteen years of exile, your poor mother was still to experience an increase of persecution and cruelty."

"But, wherefore, Dagobert, was she thus severely treated?"

"It appeared as though some evil genius strove against her happiness. Had the traveller been but a day or two later, he would not have found us at Milosk; and if he had subsequently visited us, the extreme distance would have rendered both the papers and medal useless, since, had we

started on the instant, we could not have reached Paris by the given time."

" 'There must be some powerful interest concerned in keeping myself and children from Paris, or these harsh measures would never be resorted to,' said your mother; 'for thus to increase the distance of our place of banishment upwards of four hundred leagues, is to place an insuperable obstacle to our being in Paris by the appointed day.' And this thought rendered her almost heart-broken."

"And, perhaps, was the cause of the sudden malady which carried her off!"

"Alas! no, my child; the accursed cholera, which, like the simoom of the desert, falls on all with deadly power, laid her low. Like the lightning comes this scourge of human life, and, like the thunderbolt, it strikes the young, the fair, the innocent, the beloved, the good, equally with the vile and wicked. None are safe from its dread poison, and, ere evening closed on our village, which, when the morning dawned, had no sickness but that of fond hearts pining for home and dear-loved friends, five of our small population had fallen victims to its rapid and fatal progress; while your precious mother, stricken unto death, lay in her last agonies, with barely sufficient strength remaining to hang this medal round your neck, my poor dear Rose—to commend you both to my most careful guidance and charge—to beseech of me to set out with you both for France on the morrow—to clasp her feeble arms about your necks—and, with her last fond kiss, to give up her latest breath. Your mother dead, the government order of removal could in no way affect you, and, accordingly, the permission I requested of departing instantly with you was unhesitatingly granted. We, therefore, set out on the journey deemed so important by your ——" The poor soldier could not proceed—sobs choked his voice; and, throwing himself back on the seat he occupied, he tightly pressed his hard, horny fingers over the eyes which refused to contain the large drops gathered in them, while the sisters, tenderly embracing each other, mingled their sobs and tears.

At length Dagobert uncovered his sunburnt face, and surveying the weeping girls with proud exultation, "There!" said he, "upon that fearful occasion you, children as you were, shewed yourselves worthy of the brave father from whom you sprung. Spite of all remonstrance as to the danger you incurred, it was found impossible to withdraw you from the bed of your dying mother—your tender hands closed her eyes. When all forsook her corpse, from very dread, you boldly looked on death and dared contagion. Your young eyes, dimmed with weeping over this cruel bereavement, refused to close in sleep, and resolutely persisted in passing the night by the cold remains of her who in life had been so justly dear. Nor did you once lose sight of her till you saw me lay her in the humble grave I had dug—when, weeping bitterly, you watched me place the small wooden cross I had made at the head of her last resting-place."

Here Dagobert abruptly ceased. A strange and wild noise was heard, resembling the neighing of a terrified animal, mingled with the most savage and ferocious roarings, as though a whole menagerie had broken their bounds. The horror-stricken soldier sprung to his feet—his time-worn countenance was blanched with fear—hastily he arti-

culated, "'Tis the cry of Jovial!—'tis my old horse! What can have happened to him?" and, hastily quitting the chamber, he rushed impetuously down the staircase.

The two sisters, relapsing into their former terror at the abrupt departure of Dagobert, and tightly folded in each other's arms, saw not an enormous hand passed through the broken casement, open the fastening of the window, push the two sashes violently open, and knock over the lamp placed on the little table, on which the old soldier had laid his wallet.

The orphans were now left in impenetrable darkness.

CHAPTER XI.

JOVIAL AND LA MORT.

MOROK, having conducted Jovial into the middle of his menagerie, took off the covering which prevented his seeing or smelling.

Scarcely had the tiger, lion, and panther, perceived him, than the famished creatures rushed precipitately against the bars of their cages.

The poor horse, seized with a sudden terror, stood with extended neck and fixed gaze, trembling in every limb, and as though glued to the ground, while a stream of thick, cold sweat ran from his panting sides.

The lion and tiger, uttering fearful roarings, continued to pace violently up and down their dens, while the mute, concentrated fury of the panther was still more fearfully expressed. At the risk of dislocating his neck, he, with one tremendous spring, dashed against the bars of his cage, then returning slowly and stealthily, though with increased ferocity, he again crouched down at the opposite extremity of his cage, preparatory to a fresh essay to burst the bars which held him—an effort as futile, though more desperate, than the preceding: thrice had he taken his deadly spring in fearful silence, when the horse, passing from the first stupor of fear to the horrible terror of certain danger, neighed loudly and rushed with wild alarm to the door by which he had entered, but, finding it closed, his head drooped, his limbs lent, while he sniffed with expanded nostrils the trifling aperture between the door and the sill, as though anxious to escape the nauseous atmosphere by which he was surrounded, and to breathe again the open air; then, becoming momentarily more aware of the danger of his situation, the poor brute filled the place with his loud neighings, while he kicked with desperate plunges against the door.

At the moment when La Mort was preparing another death-dealing spring, the prophet approached his cage, and with his spear pushed back the heavy bolt which secured it. As the last portion of the iron rolled from the groove in which it was held, the prophet fled rapidly towards the ladder, and, ere a second had elapsed, had well-nigh reached his loft.

The loud roaring of the lion and tiger, mingled with the cries of

Jovial, were no longer confined to the menagerie, but now resounded throughout the inn.

Again the panther essayed a fresh bound, and this time with so determined a force, that, as the door flew open, he sprung into the very centre of the building.

The light of the lamp left by Morok shone upon the sable lustre of the creature's coat, displaying the variegated spots which clothe its surface. For a few seconds the beast remained on the ground motionless, its short legs gathered under it, and its head stretched out, as though calculating the force of the spring calculated to reach the horse. A brief instant, and La Mort darted upon the unfortunate animal.

Jovial, on perceiving his enemy escape from his den, threw himself, with all his strength and power, against the door, which, unhappily for him, opened from without. In his struggles to escape, the horse plunged, kicked, beat the door with his head, and strove by every exertion to force a passage for himself, and, at the moment when La Mort sprung on him, was standing almost erect, striking against the door-posts with his fore-feet. The quick and deadly foe he sought to fly from seized him by the throat, tearing his chest with the sharp talons of his fore-paws. The first incision of the panther's terrific teeth divided the jugular vein, from which spouted forth jets of crimson blood, and covering the mouth and breast of the ravenous beast with its ensanguined stream; but, not content with thus dealing poor Jovial his death-wound, the Java panther, raising himself on his hind-legs, forced the agonised brute against the door, where he held him, while, with his sharp claws, he tore open the heaving flanks of his victim.

The shrieks of the tortured horse were now fearful to hear, and as the savage panther continued to mangle his quivering flesh, his cries, groans, and half-smothered attempts to neigh for his master, were most horribly distinct in the stillness of the night. All at once a voice was heard, exclaiming,—

“Jovial! Jovial! my fine fellow, your master is here! Courage, my old boy, his master will save him!”

These words proceeded from Dagobert, who was vainly striving to break open the door behind which this sanguinary conflict was going on.

“Jovial!” pursued the old soldier, “here I am. Don't mind them, my brave fellow! Here, help! help!”

At the well-known and friendly sound the expiring animal endeavoured to turn his head towards the place from whence his master's voice proceeded, and to answer him with a faint note of recognition; but, sinking under the devouring ferocity of the panther, he dropped, first on his knees, then on his side, so as to completely block up the door, and effectually preventing any one opening it from without.

All was now over.

The panther, still eagerly pursuing his gluttonous and murderous repast, now bestrode the horse's body, and, tightly compressing him with his fore and hind paws, spite of poor Jovial's dying efforts to dislodge him, continued to bury his blood-stained muzzle in the palpitating entrails of the noble steed.

“Help! help! help! for heaven's sake, for my poor horse!”

exclaimed Dagobert, vainly seeking to burst the lock; then crying with impotent fury, "And I have no weapon!—oh, for my trusty weapons! My arms! my arms!"

"Take care!" cried the conqueror of brutes, appearing at the opening which looked out from the loft on to the court-yard; "attempt not to enter, or you will endanger your life! My panther is furious."

"But my horse! my horse!" reiterated Dagobert, in a tone of beseeching earnestness.

"Must have got out of his stable in the night and entered into the building here, by pushing the door open. No doubt the sight of him made the panther break through his bars and get out. You will have to answer for whatever may happen," added the tamer of beasts, in a threatening voice; "for I must incur the most fearful risks in getting La Mort back to his cage."

"But my horse!" persisted Dagobert. "Save—oh, save my horse!"

The prophet disappeared from the opening.

The roaring of the animals, with the cries of Dagobert, awoke all the inmates of the White Falcon; in all directions lights streamed from the windows, while heads were hastily thrust out to inquire the cause of all this unusual disturbance. Ere long the servants of the inn had assembled, lantern in hand, and, crowding round Dagobert, were loudly questioning him as to what had occurred.

"My horse is in there, and one of this man's animals has got loose!" cried the soldier, still frantically striving to burst the door.

At these words the *possé* of half-dressed domestics, seized with a direful panic, still further augmented by the tremendous roaring of the beasts, fled in wild disorder to apprise the landlord of what had happened. The agony of the old soldier while awaiting the opening of the door from within is wholly beyond the powers of language to describe. Pale, trembling, his ear tightly pressed against the keyhole, he listened in silent eagerness. By degrees the terrific howling of the animals ceased; a deep, low roar was occasionally heard, mingled with the harsh voice of the prophet, endeavouring to restore tranquillity among the furious inhabitants of the menagerie.

"La Mort!—here! La Mort!—I command! So——"

The night was profoundly dark, and Dagobert, absorbed in his intense concern for the horse's safety, neither saw nor heard Goliath clambering over the tiled roof, so as to effect an entrance by the garret-window into the chamber of his master.

At this moment the yard-door again opened, and admitted the host of the White Falcon followed by a number of men, some armed with guns, others carrying pitchforks, sticks, or any defensive weapon they could hastily collect—all, however, approached with considerable alarm and caution.

"What is all this about?" inquired the host, approaching Dagobert. "Why is my inn to be upset in this way, I should like to know? I wish all wild-beast showmen were at the devil, in company with the careless fellows who know not how to tie a horse up securely, when there is a strong halter and a good manger to fasten it to! It is a confounded shame to be dragged out of one's bed in this unaccountable manner! If your horse is injured, it serves you right—you ought to have been more careful."

The poor soldier heeded not these remarks; in fact, he did not appear to hear them, his whole soul seemed concentrated in listening to the sounds proceeding from the menagerie, while, with a half-impatient gesture, he sought to obtain the silence he desired to ascertain what was doing within its walls.

Suddenly a fearfully ferocious roar was heard, accompanied by a shriek of pain from the prophet, and almost instantly the panther uttered a frightful yell.

"Your negligence has, no doubt, caused some fatal accident," said the landlord of the inn to Dagobert. "Did you hear that cry? Morok is, perhaps, dangerously wounded."

Dagobert was about to reply, when the door opened, and Goliath appeared on the threshold, saying,—

"You can come in—there is no danger now."

The interior of the menagerie presented a most horrible spectacle.

The prophet, pale and scarcely able to conceal his extreme agitation beneath his assumed mask of calm self-possession, was kneeling near the panther's cage, in an attitude of deep prayer; his lips only moved, and he seemed wrapped in a devotional reverie that rendered him alike unmindful and unconscious of what was passing around him. At length, compelled by the thronging crowd to rise from his knees, Morok cast his eyes upwards, and uttered, in a deep solemn voice,—

"Thanks, thanks! O my God! for having yet again prevailed by the power Thou hast given to mine arm!" Then crossing his arms on his breast, with imperious look and haughty brow, he seemed triumphing in his late victory over La Mort, who, extended at the bottom of his den, still howled piteously.

The spectators of this scene, ignorant that the robe of the prophet concealed the suit of entire armour he wore, and attributing the cries of the panther to the supernatural terror he experienced, were struck with astonishment and admiration at the marvellous courage and intrepidity of a single man. A little behind Morok stood the giant figure of Goliath, leaning on an ashen sapling, which served him as a lance to direct the movements of the beasts. And at no great distance from the panther's cage lay the remains of poor Jovial, surrounded by a sea of blood.

At the sight of the mangled and still bleeding corpse of his dear and ancient comrade, the rough countenance of the old soldier assumed an expression of the most touching grief, hopeless as it was. The poor fellow, kneeling beside his horse, raised his head, as though still seeking a vestige of life; but when he beheld the fixed glassy eye but lately so bright and intelligent, Dagobert gently laid it down, and, covering his face with his hands, gave way to the most bitter lamentations, forgetting, in his sorrow at the loss of so valued and cherished a friend, all considerations save his bitter regret at the horrible fate of his poor old charger—his unflinching companion in fatigue or battle, who, like himself, bore wounds and scars to commemorate the hard fights they had mutually shared in, and who for nearly twenty years had daily fed from his hand and joyfully welcomed his approach. Engrossed by the most painful reminiscences of all Jovial had been, mingled with the deepest sorrow of his having met with so unworthy an end to all his services, the veteran thought not once of the severe interruption this accident would prove to the important journey he



THE MENAGERIE.

had undertaken, or by what means the young girls he was conducting to Paris would now be able to proceed. The intense grief of the old soldier was so evident in the agony delineated on his weather-beaten features, that even the host of the Falcon, with his group of followers, could not refuse their sympathy and pity at the sight of the old man kneeling in such bitter sorrow beside his dead horse.

But when pursuing his regrets at the violent end his favourite had come to, he remembered that Jovial had shared his exile, and had borne the mother of his young charges through a long and fatiguing journey, even as he had since carried the children, then the fatal consequences of being at this critical juncture deprived of the unfortunate animal, flashed on his mind in all their force. Rage succeeded to grief, and as the soldier awoke from his laments over his friend to a clear sense of his present peril and destitution, fury flashed from his eyes, and springing on the prophet, whom he justly considered as the cause of all his misfortunes, he seized him by the throat, while he struck him repeatedly on the breast, but the firm coat of mail worn beneath the soft wrapping robe of Morok, prevented this effusion of wrath from taking the slightest effect.

“Wretch!” exclaimed Dagobert, still continuing his blows; “you shall dearly pay for all this!”

The slight frame of Morok would have had no chance against an antagonist of Dagobert’s uncommon size and strength, and it required the combined power of Goliath and the host of the Falcon to rescue the prophet from the firm grasp of the soldier.

When at length the combatants were separated, Morok was white and almost convulsed with so deadly a rage, that it required all Goliath’s enormous strength to prevent his assailing Dagobert with the spear of the giant.

“Your conduct is most disgraceful,” said the landlord, addressing Dagobert, who was standing with his clenched hand tightly compressed against his bald forehead. “You expose this worthy man to the risk of being devoured by his own beasts, and then try to murder him! Is that the way for an old soldier like you to behave? You shewed far more sense in the early part of the evening.”

The words recalled the soldier to himself, and made him the more regret his impetuosity, as he knew that, being a stranger, he should be sure to have the worst chance of justice. It was, besides, absolutely necessary that he should be indemnified for the loss of poor Jovial, because the delay of a single day might peril every thing he had at heart to achieve. Making a violent effort, therefore, to restrain himself, he replied in an agitated voice he strove to render calm,—

“You are right. I was too hasty! True, I forgot the patience I exercised before. But surely this man ought to replace my horse. I ask you to judge fairly between us.”

“Well, then,” answered the other, “if you leave it to my decision, I shall give it against you. You are alone to blame for all the mischief that has ensued. You must have tied your horse up very carelessly, and, in consequence, he has strayed from his stable and entered this barn, the door of which was probably left half-open,” added the host of the White Falcon, evidently siding with the tamer of beasts.

“You are right, master,” chimed in Goliath; “I recollect purposely

leaving the door ajar to give the animals air. I knew the cages were well secured, and that there was not the slightest danger."

"Of course not, if all was well looked to and fast," responded the crowd.

"And no doubt it was the sight of the horse rendered the panther furious, and made him break out," added another.

"I think the prophet has the greatest cause for complaint," said a third.

"It is very immaterial to me what any of you think or say," said Dagobert, whose patience was beginning to leave him. "What *I* say and what *I* insist upon is, that he either gives me as good a horse as that his beast has killed, or the price of one, and that, too, without delay, that I may instantly quit this unlucky spot."

"You will find," said Morok, "that it is I who require recompensing for the mischief done," and having purposely reserved this *coup de théâtre* as a finale, he exhibited his left hand which he had hitherto kept concealed in the bosom of his furred robe, and displayed it wounded and bleeding. "There," said he, "behold the effects of your inexcusable negligence in not taking more care of your horse,—this wound, received while forcing the infuriated panther back to his cage, has probably lamed me for life."

Without being of the dangerous description stated by the prophet, the wound was sufficiently frightful to attract universal sympathy and pity. Reckoning, no doubt, upon this incident as certain to obtain a favourable decision for a cause he looked upon as his own affair, the landlord of the Falcon said, turning to a stable lad, who stood near him,—

"There is but one means of settling this dispute. Go and call up the burgomaster, and beg of him to come hither with all speed; he will decide who is right and who is wrong."

"The very thing I was going to propose," said the soldier; "for, talk as I may, I cannot obtain justice unaided."

"Fritz!" said the host, "run to the burgomaster."

The lad went instantly, and his master fearing to be involved in the inquiry which would take place, and probably punished for having on the previous evening omitted to ask the soldier for his passport, &c., said,—

"The burgomaster will be precisely cross at being disturbed at such an unreasonable hour: I have no taste for coming in for a share of it, therefore, I will thank you to go and fetch your passport and requisite papers, if you are duly provided with them, for I did very wrong in not demanding them upon your arrival last evening."

"They are in my travelling bag, up stairs in the bedroom," answered the soldier; "you shall have them instantly!" Then averting his head, and putting his hand before his eyes, as he passed the body of Jovial, he quitted the place to return to the sisters.

The eye of the prophet followed him with a triumphant glare, saying, mentally,—

"He has now neither horse, money, nor papers—more I am forbidden to do; and I must likewise proceed with cautious steps that no suspicions may fall upon me. I have so far managed cleverly, that all blame must rest on the soldier for what has happened; and one thing is very certain, that several days must elapse ere he can continue his

route, which is the great point aimed at in all I have done, though still I work blindly, and wholly unable to comprehend the deep importance attached to delaying the progress of an old man and two young girls. Well, well, I am but an agent."

A quarter of an hour after these reflections had crossed the mind of the brute-conqueror, Karl, Goliath's comrade, quitted the concealment he had observed by his master's commands, and departed for Leipsic, bearing a letter hastily penned by Morok, and which Karl was instructed to put in the post immediately on his arrival in that city. The letter was addressed,

" A Monsieur
" Monsieur Rodin,
Rue du Milieu-des-Ursins, No. 11,
A Paris,
France."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BURGOMASTER.

THE disquiet of Dagobert was increased by his entire conviction that the death of poor Jovial had not been accidental, and that nothing was more improbable than that an animal of his steady and well-disciplined habits should have broken from his own stable to wander into a den of beasts. This deplorable accident, therefore, he ascribed to the wickedness and malice of the master of the menagerie, though in vain did he try to find a cause for such determined persecution; and he reflected with alarm that the decision of his just cause was at the sole mercy of a man whose displeasure at being thus roused from his slumbers might possibly fall upon him, and induce the irritated and weary burgomaster to condemn him upon false appearances.

Firmly resolved to conceal from the orphans as long as he possibly could the new misfortune which had overtaken him, he proceeded to their chamber, when, at the door, he stumbled over Kill-joy; for, after having failed in his attempts to prevent the prophet from leading Jovial away, the faithful dog had returned to his post.

"Thank Heaven for that," murmured poor Dagobert; "the dog, at least, has kept watch over the poor children," added the old man, gently opening the door: to his great surprise the chamber was in utter darkness.

"How comes it, my children," exclaimed he, "that I find you thus without light?"

No answer was returned.

Terrified, he hastily groped his way to the bed, and took the hand that lay nearest to him—alas! it was icy cold. "Rose! my children!" screamed the old man, in an agony of fear—"Blanche! oh, speak to me—you alarm me excessively!"

Still no reply; and the rigid fingers fell heavy and helplessly again on the coverlet.

The moon, breaking through the mass of dark clouds which had

hitherto obscured her beams, shone brightly through the window-panes on to the little bed placed immediately opposite, and revealed to him the sisters fainting in each other's arms, their pale countenances assuming a still more corpse-like hue from the reflection of the moon-light.

"Poor dear children! they have been reduced to this state by fear," cried Dagobert, feeling in his pocket for the small flask he usually carried with him; "but who can wonder at it after such a trying day as they have passed through?"

So saying, the soldier moistened the corner of one of their handkerchiefs with a few drops of brandy; and, kneeling down beside the bed, lightly passed it over the temples of the sisters, and again applying the saturated linen to the nostrils of each. Still kneeling by their side, and bending his dark swartly countenance, expressive of the most anxious solicitude, over the young orphans, Dagobert waited, with intense interest, the effect of the only restorative he had it in his power to administer.

At length a convulsive tremor, passing over the frame of Rose, inspired the old man with fresh hopes. She soon turned upon her pillow sighing deeply; then, starting up, perceived Dagobert, whom she did not recognise, through the imperfect light of the moon, and at once frightened and surprised she clung to Blanche, loudly calling upon her for help.

Happily the rough but well-meant cares of the soldier began to take effect on the tender frame of Blanche, and the cries of her sister completely roused her from her unconscious state; sharing her terrors without being aware of the cause of them, she tightly enfolded her sister in her arms.

"Heaven be praised!" said Dagobert, "the colour is returning to their cheeks, they will soon be quite restored! That is all right; and these attacks are merely the effects of a weak nature, and soon pass away;" then speaking in a more soothing tone, he added, "There! now you are better! are you not? Come, my children, courage, courage, see, it is Dagobert—only Dagobert! just tell me you are well, and pleased I have come back to you."

Both sisters sprung towards their tender nurse, and, looking at him with countenances still agitated and uneasy, smiled gratefully, and by one simultaneous movement held out their arms to him, crying, in glad tones,—

"Oh, Dagobert! how glad we are to see you! Now we are safe!"

"Yes, dear children!" returned the veteran, taking their hands, and pressing them with the tenderness of a fond father, "I will see that no further harm shall befall you. But what terrified you so much while I was absent?"

"Oh, Dagobert, do not ask us to tell you—we were almost dead with fright."

"Yes, indeed, if you only knew!"

"But how came the lamp extinguished?"

"We did not do it."

"Come, dear children, collect your courage, and tell me every thing that took place after I quitted the room; this inn does not seem to me very secure, fortunately we shall soon quit it—it was a bad job for us ever to have entered it; but, then, what could we do? there was no

other place for us to halt at for the night; but tell me what happened to alarm you so very much?"

"Scarcely had you left us than the window came open with a violent noise, and the lamp fell off the table with a frightful crash; and we were so alarmed that we threw ourselves into each other's arms, screaming for help, and we fancied some person was walking about the chamber. And all that terror made us as ill as you found us, good, kind Dagobert; we felt as if we should die; and so we thought of our dear mother, who promised we should go to her then."

Unfortunately adhering to his original belief, that the violence of the wind had broken the glass of the window and forced it open, Dagobert still blamed himself for imperfectly fastening the casement. Setting down this second alarm of the sisters to the same cause as the preceding one, and even judging that their extreme terror had exaggerated the circumstances they related,

"That is all over now, and done with," replied he, "so calm yourselves, and think no more about it!"

"But what made you quit us so hastily, Dagobert?"

"Yes! now, I recollect—don't you, sister? We heard a great noise down stairs, and then Dagobert rushed out, exclaiming, 'My horse! what can they be doing to my horse?' It was Jovial neighing very loudly, was it not? what was the matter with him?"

These questions recalled to the mind of the soldier the many griefs and difficulties by which he was now surrounded; he feared to reply lest he should betray the fearful predicament in which they were placed, he therefore answered, with an air of assumed indifference,—

"Yes, it was Jovial neighing, but that was all; but we must have a light. Do you remember where I put my fire-box last night? Why, I am growing old and stupid, and forget every thing. Here it is, all the while in my pocket: fortunately we have a candle—so I will just light it, and then look in my wallet for some papers I require."

As Dagobert completed his operation of procuring a light and alluming the candle, he perceived that the sisters' account of their recent fright had not been overcoloured, for the casement was half-open, the table and lamp knocked over, and on the ground beside him lay his haversack. The veteran closed and fastened the window, replaced the table-lamp and bag, then, taking the latter in his hands, he carefully unclasped it, in order to take out the pocket-book, which, as well as his cross and purse, were deposited in a species of false pocket, constructed between the outer case of leather and the lining; and so carefully were the different straps and fastenings re-adjusted, that a more suspicious mind than Dagobert's would never have supposed its contents had been subjected to any scrutiny but his own.

The soldier thrust his hand into the accustomed aperture in search of his papers. The pocket was entirely empty. Thunderstruck at this additional outrage, Dagobert started with amazed looks; again the blood forsook his timeworn countenance, and, in accents of deep distress, he exclaimed,—

"Gone! That too!"

"Dagobert!" said Blanche, "what can be the matter?"

He answered not,

For some minutes he continued vacantly gazing around him, one hand grasping the table near which he stood as though to prevent himself from falling, the other mechanically pressing the sides of the pocket where he had left his lost treasures. Then, as though inspired by a sudden hope (for so cruel a reality seemed more than it was possible to believe), he eagerly emptied the contents of the wallet on the table. They consisted merely of some trifling articles of half-worn-out clothing, and his old uniform of the Imperial Dragoon-guards, in his eyes an inestimable relic; but in vain did Dagobert unfold and shake out each article, no trace either of his purse or the pocket-book (containing his cross and the letters of General Simon) could be found. And then, with that almost childish tenacity of purpose which frequently attends a hopeless search, the soldier took the haversack by the two corners, and shook it with desperate energy; alas! equally without finding that which he sought. The orphans, unable to comprehend either the silence or conduct of Dagobert, whose back was towards them, looked at each other in great uneasiness. At length Blanche ventured to say, in a timid voice,—

“What ails you, Dagobert? You do not speak to us? And what are you looking for in your bag?”

Still deaf to every inquiry, the soldier commenced a strict search through all his pockets, turning them completely out, but still in vain; and this great calamity was, perhaps, the first thing in his life that had ever rendered him unmindful of the words of his children, as he loved to style the orphans. Tears suffused the eyes of the sisters at this continued silence on the part of their old friend; and now believing that Dagobert was displeased with them, they durst not address him further.

“No—no—no!—it cannot be!—I will not believe it! No, no!” uttered the veteran. “I cannot! I dare not think them really gone—” repeated he, pressing one hand on his forehead, and seeking to recall to his memory some probable place where he might have deposited objects so precious.

A sudden ray of hope darted across his mind, and, quick as lightning, he placed on a chair the small valise belonging to the orphans. It contained merely a few changes of linen, two black dresses, and a small white box, in which were enclosed a silk handkerchief that had been their mother's, two locks of her hair, and a black riband she generally wore round her neck. The little she possessed had been seized by the Russian government when her estates were confiscated. Dagobert turned each article over and over, searched even the very corners of the valise, but, alas! he found not what he sought.

And now, completely bewildered and exhausted, the unhappy man felt his strength both of body and mind desert him; he, so unmindful of fatigue, so energetic, so bold, now felt a conscious weakness stealing over him, his knees tottered under him, a cold sweat bedewed his face, and he clung to the chair on which he had rested the valise to keep himself from falling.

It is commonly asserted a drowning man will catch at a straw, it is so with persons who, however desperate their circumstances, refuse to surrender themselves to despair. Dagobert, clinging to any suggestion, however fallacious, absurd, or improbable, turned round abruptly to



THE LOSS DISCOVERED.

P. 78.

the orphans and said, without recollecting his altered voice and looks,

"Tell me, quickly! did I not give them to you to keep for me? Speak, speak! put me out of suspense."

Instead of replying to him, Rose and Blanche, terrified at the paleness of his countenance and wildness of his looks, uttered a cry of fear and distress.

"Dear, dear Dagobert," murmured Rose, softly, "what can be the matter with you?"

"Have you got them, or have you not?" exclaimed the wretched man, whose brain was quite unsettled by the severity of the shock he had sustained; and, contrary to his usual habit, vociferating his demand in a voice of thunder. "If you have not, I will seize the first knife I can find and bury it in my wretched heart!"

"Good, kind Dagobert! pray forgive us if we have offended you!"

"You love us too well to see us grieve; so pray tell us what has thus changed you, Dagobert."

And thus uniting their tearful petitions, the orphans extended their hands in earnest supplication towards the soldier.

For a time the veteran, as though unconscious that they spoke, continued to gaze with a wild, vacant, haggard look; but as the confusion of his brain subsided and reason resumed her power, he became clearly and fully aware of all the miseries which would result from this last climax of evil, and the fearful consequences that would follow their utter privation of means to reach Paris: the rude soldier felt in that dread hour the need of some superior aid to any earth could afford, and falling on his knees beside the orphans, and clasping his hard, sunburnt hands, he rested his aching forehead upon them and wept bitterly. Yes, the iron-framed soldier sobbed like an infant while he uttered in broken accents,—

"Pardon, pardon! alas! I know not—Oh, miserable man! oh, misfortune too great to bear! Pardon! oh, pardon!"

At this burst of grief, the cause of which they could not comprehend, but which, coming from one whose usual firmness and resolution were so completely opposed to any outward display of distress, the sisters fondly threw their arms around his grey head as it rested on the covering of their bed, and weeping bitterly, exclaimed, "Look up, dear Dagobert! look at your poor children! Tell them what makes you so very unhappy, and say they have not done any thing to cause your grief."

Advancing steps were now heard on the staircase. At the same time Kill-joy, who still kept watch outside the door, barked furiously. The nearer the sounds approached the more violent became the growling of the dog, who was evidently proceeding to more hostile measures, for the voice of the innkeeper was heard exclaiming, in an angry tone,—

"Halloa! there! you! Speak to your dog, will you? Call him, I say! The burgomaster is coming up stairs."

"Dagobert!" cried Rose, "do you hear what they say? The burgomaster is coming!"

"Hark!" said Blanche, "persons are coming towards this room."

The name of the *burgomaster* recalled Dagobert completely to himself, and presented before his mental vision the entire *tableau* of his terrible situation. His horse was dead; he had neither money nor passport, and a single day's delay would ruin the future prospects of the two poor girls committed to his charge with dying earnestness, and render the fatigues and perils they had already undergone of no avail. Men of Dagobert's firm, daring nature will frequently survey a positive and declared danger with greater equanimity than they can endure the agonising suspense of evils whose termination is all uncertain, and dependent on petty causes, over which they have no control.

But the plain good sense of the veteran, sharpened by his devoted attachment to his orphan charges, quickly pointed out to him that his only hope was in the justice of the *burgomaster's* decision, and that his every effort must be directed to interest that functionary in his cause. Thus resolved, he rose from his knees, wiped the tears from his eyes on the corner of the bed-clothes he had convulsively grasped in his hand, and standing calmly and erect before the sisters, said,—

“Fear nothing, my dear children! it must be the friend I trusted would arrive to serve us!”

“Are you going to call your dog away?” vociferated the innkeeper, still prevented from advancing beyond the stairs by the determined vigilance of Kill-joy, who resolutely forbade all further approach up the passage. “Is the beast mad? Why don't you tie him up? You have caused mischief enough in the place, I think. I tell you that the *burgomaster* having heard the prophet's account of the disturbance, now wishes to learn what you have got to say for yourself.”

Poor Dagobert, feeling that an eventful moment had arrived, upon the result of which the future fate of the sisters depended, and desirous of appearing to all possible advantage in the eyes of the important personage he was about to be placed before, began to improve his personal appearance by passing his fingers through his grey locks, smoothing his moustache, adjusting the buckle of his military coat, and polishing up his gold-striped sleeves. Yet the heart of the brave fellow beat with a terror it had never felt when facing death in all its most frightful forms, as he laid his hand on the lock of the door, and turning to the orphans, who, perplexed and affrighted at so many strange events, looked after him with earnest and beseeching gaze, said, encouragingly,

“Remain quite still and quiet in your bed, my dear children, and if it be necessary that any one should visit our room, the *burgomaster* alone shall enter.”

Then, advancing to the staircase, the soldier exclaimed,—

“Down, Kill-joy! down!”

The animal obeyed with the most evident reluctance, and it was not until his master had been twice compelled to interpose his authority that he seemed disposed to relinquish his hostile intentions towards the innkeeper, who, holding his cap in one hand and a lantern in the other, respectfully preceded the *burgomaster*, whose magisterial figure was concealed by the shadow of the staircase.

At some distance behind the judge might be indistinctly seen, by the dull glimmering of a second lantern, a group of curious spectators, consisting of the servants and helpers belonging to the inn,

Dagobert having shut Kill-joy up in the chamber of the orphans, and carefully closed the door, advanced a few steps on the landing-place, which was large enough to contain several persons, and in one corner of which was a wooden bench with a back to it.

The burgomaster, who had just reached the top of the stairs as Dagobert closed and fastened the door, seemed much astonished at a proceeding which seemed like interdicting his right of entrance.

"Wherefore do you close that door?" inquired he, in an abrupt tone.

"In the first place, because two young girls, who are under my care, are sleeping there; and secondly, because, should they overhear your interrogatories, it would alarm them very much," answered Dagobert. "Sit down here, M. le Bourgmestre, and put what questions you please to me; it is the same thing to you, I suppose, where the examination takes place?"

"And by what right do you presume to dictate to me the place where you shall be examined?" inquired the functionary, with an appearance of displeasure.

"Nay, M. le Bourgmestre," returned Dagobert, dreading, above all things, to prejudice his visitor against him; "far be it from me to dictate, only, as the young girls are in bed, and already much frightened, you would be acting most kindly towards them if you would be so good as to interrogate me here."

"Humph!—here!" returned the magistrate, grumbling. "A pretty thing for a person like me to be dragged out of bed at this hour of the night! Well—be it so—I will examine you here, then, since you desire it." Then, turning to the innkeeper, he said, "Set down your lantern on that bench, and leave us."

The landlord obeyed, and departed with his followers, equally disappointed with them that he was not permitted to be present at the examination.

The old soldier was now left alone with the burgomaster.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE INVESTIGATION.

THE worthy burgomaster of Mockern, attired in a cloth cap and large cloak, seated himself on the bench, which groaned beneath his ponderous weight; he was an excessively stout man, about sixty years of age, his countenance was morose and forbidding, and he kept continually applying his large red hands to rub his eyes, which were evidently suffering from the unusually early hour at which he had been compelled to throw off his slumbers.

Dagobert, standing beside him, holding his old military cap in his hands, waited his inquiries with an air of respectful submission, while with a timid glance at the harsh, repulsive features of the magistrate, he sought to read what hopes there were for *his* cause, or rather that of the poor orphans. During these trying moments the old soldier

called to his aid all his coolness, reason, eloquence, and resolution: he who had twenty times looked on death with calm indifference and despised danger; he who, self-possessed and firm, because tried and sincere, had never even lowered his glance before the eagle-eye of his emperor—his hero, his divinity—now found himself trembling and utterly confused before the gaze of a scowling provincial functionary.

So had he also brought himself to endure with imperturbable resignation the taunts and insults of the prophet on the preceding evening, that he might not, by indulging in suggestions of his own chafed spirit, in any manner compromise the sacred mission entrusted to him by a dying mother; thus proving the heroism and self-denial a simple upright heart can attain.

"Come, make haste! Let's hear what you have to say in your defence!" said the judge, in a brutal tone, yawning at the same time with impatient drowsiness.

"I have nothing to defend, M. le Bourgmestre; on the contrary, I have a complaint to make," answered Dagobert, in a firm voice.

"Are you going to teach me, fellow! in what form I am to put my questions?" exclaimed the magistrate, in so sharp a manner that the veteran, blaming himself for having so badly opened the conversation, and earnestly seeking to propitiate his judge, hastened to reply submissively,—

"Your pardon, M. le Bourgmestre! I expressed myself badly. I only wished to say that I have been in no way to blame in the late affair."

"The prophet says differently."

"The prophet!" repeated Dagobert, with a contemptuous smile.

"A most pious, worthy man!" added the judge; "quite incapable of uttering a falsehood!"

"That is a point on which I have nothing to say, M. le Bourgmestre; but you are too good and too just to decide without hearing me. It is easy to perceive you are not the sort of person to deny justice to any one. I feel quite sure of that," added Dagobert, who, in thus playing a courtier's part against his own inclinations, endeavoured to render his performance still more correct by softening his voice and enlivening his austere features with a smiling, conciliating, and winning expression. "A man like you," continued the soldier, redoubling his flattery, "a judge so highly respectable, does not hear with one ear only."

"Ears have nothing to do with the matter, but, as far as 'seeing' goes, is 'believing.' Why, my eyes, which smart as though they had been rubbed with nettles, have seen the hand of the master of these wild beasts, and it is dreadfully torn."

"I don't dispute that, M. le Bourgmestre; but only consider, if he had secured his door and the cages of his animals properly, none of this mischief would have happened."

"Yes it would: it was all your fault. You ought to have fastened your horse more carefully to his manger."

"You are quite right, M. le Bourgmestre, quite right, nobody can speak more sensibly," said the poor soldier, increasing in soft conciliation and flattery in proportion as he perceived the prejudiced view his interrogator had already taken of the case. "It is not for a poor devil

like me to contradict you! But suppose now that any one, for mischief's sake, had untied my horse, and led him into the menagerie, you would say then—would you not?—that it was not my fault; or, at least," said the old man, fearing he had gone too far, "you will admit that fact if it is your pleasure to think so; because it is not for such as I am to dictate to you!"

"And what, in the devil's name, leads you to suppose any body has played you such a trick? What motive could they have had?"

"That is more than I can imagine, M. le Bourgmestre; "but still ——"

"But still you don't know! Well, no more do I," exclaimed the burgomaster, in a peevish tone; then added impatiently, "Here's a mighty fuss and coil about the carcase of a dead horse!"

The countenance of the old soldier at these words lost all its assumed gentleness, its harsh expression returned, and he replied, in a serious and agitated voice,—

"True, but a carcase remains of my old friend—my faithful horse, who but a few hours ago was so full of health and courage, and though old, still so intelligent and vigorous. Scarcely an hour ago he neighed joyfully at me as I gave him his meal, and each night he licked the hands of the dear children he carried through the long day, even as he had borne their mother. But now he will never rejoice in my approach, never again carry his kind mistress or her children; he is fit but to be thrown on the dunghill and to become the food of dogs, that is all he is good for now. It was not worth while, M. le Bourgmestre, to recall all this to me so cruelly, for I dearly loved my poor horse."

These words, pronounced with a simple, dignified manner and tone, made the functionary feel sorry that he had provoked the regrets of a man who thus loved even a horse; he hastily interrupted Dagobert, saying, in a voice of greater kindness,—

"I can suppose you regret the loss of your beast; but what can be said? It is an accident, and you must bear it. I will even say it is a misfortune."

"A misfortune, M. le Bourgmestre, of the deepest consequences. The two young girls whom I am accompanying are not strong enough to undertake a long journey on foot, and are too poor to travel by any public conveyance; and yet it is indispensable that we should be in Paris before the month of February. I promised the mother of these children, on her death-bed, to conduct them to the time and place she desired. And the poor things have no one in the world to protect them but me."

"You, then, are their ——"

"Most faithful friend and servant, M. le Bourgmestre; and now that they have killed my horse, how shall I be able to proceed on my journey? You who look so good and speak so kind have, perhaps, children of your own. Oh! if they should ever be situated as my poor orphans are, with no other possessions in the world than an old soldier and an equally aged horse,—if, after having been born and reared in misery, for these dear children were born in exile, where their poor mother died—if, after passing their early days in sorrow and banishment, a bright future awaited them at the end of this journey, and if this

journey were rendered impossible by the loss of the horse, would not their painful position move you to pity them? and would you not, like me, look upon the death of your horse as an irreparable misfortune?"

"Certainly I should," answered the burgomaster, who was not a bad-hearted man, though hasty and abrupt in the discharge of his duty, and who began to feel a powerful sympathy with the sorrows of the old soldier. "And I can well believe the loss of your beast is a most serious loss to you; but I feel interested in the fate of your orphan children: what are their ages?"

"Fifteen years and two months. They are twin sisters."

"Fifteen years and two months! Very nearly the same age as my Frederica."

"You have, then, a daughter of similar age?" inquired Dagobert, fresh hope springing up at the idea. "Thank Heaven! for now, M. le Bourgmestre, the fate of my poor orphans no longer disquiets me. You, a wise and upright judge, and, moreover, a parent, will see justice done us."

"Of course I shall. What is the use of my being a magistrate else? But really, in this affair between you and the prophet, I think the case is pretty equal. On the one hand, you failed in securing your horse properly in his stable; he gets out. Well, then the beast-tamer leaves his menageric door open. Then he asserts, 'I have been wounded in the hand.' To which you reply, 'My horse has been killed, and, for various reasons, the loss of my horse is irreparable.'"

"You express my meaning far better than I could do it myself, M. le Bourgmestre," said the veteran, with a humble and quiescent smile. "That is just the sense of what I should say if I were to talk for an hour, for even you, M. le Magistrat, admit that the horse his beast killed was all I possessed in the world, and that, therefore, it is but just ——"

"Of course, of course," replied the burgomaster, interrupting the soldier, "your reasoning is excellent; besides, the prophet, who is as clever as he is pious and good, has very clearly laid all the facts of the case before me, added to which, he is well known here. You see we are all devout Catholics in this village, and this holy man sells exceedingly cheap and wondrously edifying books among our young people; then he lets our wives and daughters have his rosaries, chaplets, and *agnus Dei*, almost at a loss. To be sure, as you will justly observe, that has not much to do with the present affair. Nor more it has; and yet I declare, upon my conscience as an honest man, that when I came up stairs I had made up my mind to ——"

"To decide against me!—was it not so, M. le Bourgmestre?" returned Dagobert, becoming each instant more re-assured as to his success. "Ah, that was because you were only half-awake. Your justice had only opened one eye."

"Good, my friend!" answered the burgomaster, now roused into perfect serenity of temper; "it may be as you say—for, at my first coming hither, I did not conceal from Morok that I considered he was the party aggrieved, and should decide accordingly; when he very generously remarked, 'Then, since you pronounce in my favour, I will not aggravate the position of my adversary by telling you what I otherwise could concerning him.'"

“Concerning me? and to my prejudice?”

“So it would seem: but, like a generous enemy, he was silent, after I had assured him that, according to appearances, I should sentence you (conditionally) to make him an ample atonement for the pain and trouble you had occasioned him; for I will candidly inform you, that, before you had adduced such good reasons to make me think you less to blame than I had been led to believe you were, I had fully resolved on adjudging you to pay a very heavy indemnity to the prophet for the wound inflicted through your carelessness on his hand.”

“You see now, M. le Bourgmestre, how possible it is for even the most just and clever men to be deceived: however, the wiser the man the readier he is to acknowledge his error; and no prophet, witch, or wizard, can hinder him from seeing clearly at last,” added Dagobert, reassuming his flattering tone and manner, hoping, by increased attention to his judge, to win his favourable consideration for his just demand for the means of prosecuting his journey without delay.

The burgomaster appeared, however, to take little note of the veteran’s strenuous attempts to place himself and his cause in a propitious light, until, looking up, he perceived the chuckling, self-satisfied air of Dagobert, whose countenance seemed to say, “What do you think of my powers of persuasion? I am quite surprised at my own skill and manœuvres.” Upon which the magistrate smiled—a smile of paternal patronage; then added, with a miserable attempt at a joke,

“Ay! ay! you are right about clever men, and being convinced; and the prophet will turn out a *FALSE prophet* THIS time.—No, no! I shall not inflict any penalty upon you, because I think one has as much to complain of as the other; and so one piece of mischief makes up for the other; *he* has received a severe wound, and your horse has been killed: so it seems to me that you are even with one another.”

“And how much do you suppose he ought to pay me?” inquired the soldier, with singular simplicity.

“What is that you say?”

“I ask, M. le Bourgmestre, the amount of the sum he shall give me?”

“What the devil are you talking about? What sum?”

“Yes, the sum. But, before you name it, M. le Bourgmestre, I must tell you one thing—I consider that I have a right to employ the money as I please; therefore I shall not expend it all in the purchase of a horse. I am quite sure that, among the country people in the environs of Leipsie, I shall find a horse at a cheap price; and I will even go so far as to own, between ourselves, that if even I could meet with a good strong ass, I would try to make shift with it—not that I should like it nearly so well. But another horse would be almost painful to me, after my poor Jovial, the companion of so many journeys; therefore, I ought to say to you——”

“What are you gabbling about?” cried the burgomaster, interrupting Dagobert. “And what money, ass, or other horse are you talking of? I tell you again, that you owe nothing to the prophet, neither does he owe you any thing!”

“Not owe me any thing?”

“You have a very thick skull, my good man; there seems no

knocking any sense into it. I tell you once more, and for the last time, that if the wild beasts belonging to the prophet have killed your horse, the prophet himself has been severely wounded, so you are even with each other; or, if you like it better, I will say that he has nothing to repay you, neither have you him. Now have I made you comprehend?"

Dagobert, quite stupified at finding his hopes thus destroyed by so unfair a decision, remained for some time regarding the burgomaster with an expression of deep anguish of mind.

At length he replied, in a voice in which powerful emotion strove against his forced calmness,

"Nay, M. le Bourgmestre, you are, I am sure, too just to overlook one circumstance. The wound received by the owner of the beasts will not prevent his continuing his daily occupation, while the death of my horse entirely prevents me from proceeding on my journey. Surely that ought to make a great difference between us, and call for his indemnifying me for the loss I have sustained."

The magistrate, as we before stated, thought he had done much for Dagobert in excusing him from making any recompense to the prophet, who, as was previously stated, was in the habit of currying favour with the female part of the village, by selling them cheap articles of a religious character, such as rosaries, chaplets, and other trifles, said to be endowed with marvellous powers; he also vended spiritual pamphlets and Scriptural tracts, at so small a price as rendered him, combined with the reported sanity of his life, an excessive favourite among all the strict Catholics in the place: added to this, he was well known to be powerfully aided and protected by persons of high rank and power, so that it became no easy matter to decide any point against him. Thus, then, the importunity of the soldier greatly displeased his judge, who, resuming his original harsh and severe aspect, replied, angrily,

"Do you wish to make me regret my impartiality? What! instead of thanking me, you have the face to make further demands?"

"M. le Bourgmestre, I ask but for that which is just and right. I would gladly suffer my hand to be more severely injured than is that of the prophet, so I could but continue my journey."

"We have nothing to do with what you would like or dislike. I have pronounced judgment—the case is ended."

"But, M. le Bourgmestre——"

"Enough, enough, I tell you! No more of it. Let us proceed to the next thing. Shew me your passport and papers."

"Yes, we will talk about the papers directly; but, I beseech you, M. le Bourgmestre, to have pity on the two poor children yonder—give us the means of proceeding on our journey, and——"

"I tell you I have done all that I can do, perhaps more than I ought to have done. Once again, let me see your papers!"

"Let me first explain to you——"

"I will listen to no explanations. Your papers, I say! Do you mean to make me send you to prison as a rogue and vagabond?"

"Me! Send me to prison?"

"Of course I shall, if you refuse to give me your papers. Unless you immediately produce them, I shall treat you as though you had



THE BURGOMASTER.

P. 87.

none to produce ; and, in that case, I have no alternative but to arrest you as a suspicious character, and place you under confinement, until the proper authorities have decided what shall be done with you. Now, then, if you please, these papers ; and let us be quick, for I want to get home again."

The position of Dagobert was the more insupportably trying from the false hope which had, until the last few minutes, induced him to believe justice would certainly be done him. This last blow was the climax of all the misery the veteran had endured through this eventful night—a trial as severe as dangerous to a man of Dagobert's firm, honest, but unbending nature, who, long inured to the proud satisfaction of being honoured and esteemed as a soldier who had victoriously shed his blood for his country, and regarded by his superiors with confidence and esteem, had rather indulged in a contemptuous despotism towards all mere "*bourgeois*," like the magistrate who now held his fate in his hands. At the oft-repeated words, "Your papers," the old soldier's colour fled his cheeks and lips ; the blood seemed to retreat from his heart at the thoughts of being ignominiously dragged to prison at so critical a moment, but still striving to conquer the agony of his feelings, and veil his fears beneath an appearance of confidence, which might, after all, win the magistrate to befriend him, he said,—

"I will tell you, in two words, M. le Bourgmestre, how I am situated at present—the thing is simple enough, and might happen to any one. I do not look like a rogue or vagabond, do I ? And yet, you can imagine that a man like me, travelling with two young girls——"

"What the devil do you make all this parleying about ? Produce your papers and have done !"

At this juncture, two unexpected allies arrived to assist the old soldier—the orphans, whose uneasiness momentarily increased as they heard Dagobert's voice still earnestly engaged in conversation ; they therefore arose and dressed themselves, so that, at the instant that the magistrate was loudly exclaiming, "*What is all this talk about ? Deliver up your papers instantly,*" Rose and Blanche came out on the staircase, holding each other by the hand.

At the sight of these young and lovely beings, rendered still more interesting by their humble dress of entire mourning, the burgomaster rose from his seat, struck with sudden surprise and admiration. By a simultaneous movement, each sister clung to the side of their old friend, and taking each of them one of his large hands in theirs, looked up in the face of the magistrate with a timid yet ingenuous glance.

A more exquisitely touching group can scarcely be imagined than was thus presented—the rough, toilworn soldier, standing between the young and delicate children, clinging to him in trustful love, while he seemed as though presenting their youth and innocence to the eyes of his judge, in warranty of his own integrity and honour in being thus accompanied. Unstudied as had been the scene, it had its full effect upon the magistrate, and again filled his heart with commiseration for their orphan state. The veteran quickly remarked the change in the austere countenance of the burgomaster, and, advancing towards him, holding the sisters by the hand, he said,—

"Behold these poor helpless orphan girls, M. le Bourgmestre ! What better passport could you desire ?"

And overcome by a crowd of painful and long-repressed feelings, the eyes of Dagobert filled with large drops which threatened to overflow.

Although naturally abrupt, and rendered still more churlish by being disturbed out of his sleep, the burgomaster was, in reality, neither deficient in good sense nor feeling, and he felt how impossible it was to suspect or mistrust a man thus accompanied."

"Poor dear children!" said he, examining them with increased attention; "orphans at so early an age! And they come from some distance you say?"

"From the most distant part of Siberia, M. le Bourgmestre, where their mother was exiled before they were born. We have already been five months on our journey, coming short distances at a time; that is no small hardship for young creatures like them. It is for them alone I seek your favour and kind assistance—for these poor things, who seem doomed to misfortune. For just now, when I went to look for my papers, in the bag I always carried them in, I could neither find the pocket-book in which I had placed them, my purse, nor my cross; for, excuse me, M. le Bourgmestre, I do not say it to boast of myself, but I have been decorated by the emperor's own hand with the cross of honour, and a man whom his hand thus distinguished cannot be a bad man, though he may unfortunately have lost his papers and his money: so now you see exactly how we are circumstanced, and why I was so earnest about being indemnified for the loss of my horse."

"And where, and in what manner, did you lose these things?"

"I know not, M. le Bourgmestre. I am quite sure that the evening before last I took a small sum of money out of my purse, and that I then saw the pocket-book quite safe. The money, trifling as it was, supplied all our wants through yesterday, so that I had no occasion to undo the bag again."

"And yesterday, and up to the present minute, where has your bag been kept?"

"Through the day, while travelling, with ourselves; at night, in the room where these children slept. But this night——"

Dagobert was interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps. It was the prophet.

Concealed in the dark shadow of the staircase, he had overheard this conversation, and hastened, by his presence, to prevent the full accomplishment of his schemes, almost realized, from being destroyed by the weakness and vacillation of the burgomaster.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RESULT.

MOROK, who carried his left arm in a sling, ascended the staircase slowly, and saluted the burgomaster respectfully.

At the sight of the sinister aspect of the brute-conqueror, Rose and Blanche shuddered, and drew closer to the soldier, whose cheek

burned again as he felt his gall rise against Morok, the cause of his distressing embarrassment. He was not aware, besides, that Goliath had, at the instigation of the prophet, stolen his pocket-book and papers.

"What seek you, Morok?" inquired the burgomaster, with an air half-kind, half-angry; "I told the innkeeper I wished to be alone."

"I came to render you a service, M. le Bourgmestre."

"A service?"

"A great service; but for which I should not have disturbed you. But a scruple has arisen in my mind."

"A scruple?"

"Yes, sir; I have reproached myself for not having told you all I knew of this man; but I was deterred by a false feeling of pity."

"Well, what then have you to disclose?"

Morok approached the judge, and spoke to him for some time in an undertone.

The burgomaster appeared at first greatly astonished, and then very attentive and anxious. From time to time an expression of surprise escaped him—then of doubt, looking, as he did so, at Dagobert and the two young girls.

By these looks, which grew darker and more uneasy, it was easy to perceive that the whispering of the prophet affected and destroyed the interest which the magistrate had at first expressed for the orphans and the soldier, converting the feeling of kindness into mistrust and hostility.

Dagobert saw this sudden change, and his fears, allayed for the moment, revived in double force. Rose and Blanche looked at the soldier in amazement and anxiety, unable to comprehend what was passing.

"The devil!" said the burgomaster, rising hastily. "I could never have believed it! What could I have been thinking of? But you see, Morok, when a man is aroused in the middle of the night he has not all his wits about him so readily; but I fully appreciate the great service you have rendered me, and am very much obliged to you."

"Mind, I do not say it is all certain, but——"

"Never mind, it's a thousand to one that you are perfectly correct."

"It is only my suspicion, founded, it is true, on certain circumstances; but still, only a suspicion——"

"May lead us to the direct truth. And here was I, going like a bird into the snare! Again, I say, where was my sense when——"

"It is difficult to find excuse for certain appearances——"

"To whom do you allude, my dear Morok? To whom?"

During this mysterious conversation Dagobert was on thorns; he felt all the presentiment of a storm that was bursting upon him, and only considered how he should repress his rage.

Morok went closer to the judge, and pointing to the orphan girls again, began to speak in a low voice.

"Ah!" cried the burgomaster, with indignation, "now you are going too far."

"I affirm nothing," said Morok, hastily; "it is a simple presumption based on——"

And again he whispered in the judge's ear.

"After all, why not?" said the judge, raising his hands to heaven. "Such people are capable of any thing. He said, too, he had come from the further end of Siberia with them; that proves that his whole tale is but a pack of lies. But nobody makes a fool of me twice," exclaimed the burgomaster, in a wrathful tone; for, like all persons of a weak and fickle mind, he had no mercy towards those whom he thought capable of practising any deceit on him.

"Do not, however, decide too hastily," said Morok, in a voice of hypocritical pity and compunction; "do not allow my words to have more weight than is really due to them. My position with *this man* (pointing to Dagobert) is unfortunately so false, that it might be imagined that I was acting from resentment of the ill he has caused me; and perhaps, unknown to myself, I may be so influenced, whilst I am supposing that I am solely impelled by a love of justice, a horror of falsehood, and profound reverence for our holy religion. He who lives longest will see most—may the Lord pardon me if I err!—let justice be done! If they are innocent, they will be free in a month or two."

"That is why I shall not hesitate; it is but a simple measure of prudence, and they will not die by that. Besides, the more I reflect, the more probable it seems to me. Yes, this man is a spy or French agitator, particularly when we place beside these suspicions the display of the students of Frankfort."

"And supposing it to be so, there is nothing which would excite and inflame the heads of those young fools like——" and Morok gave a quick and meaning glance at the two sisters; then, after a moment's significant silence, he added, with a sigh, "The Evil One avails himself of all means."

"Certainly it is a detestable idea, but therefore the more skilfully designed."

"Then, sir, look attentively at *this man*. Did you ever see a more dangerous countenance? Look!" and as he whispered, Morok pointed at Dagobert.

In spite of the control he exercised over himself, the constraint he had displayed since his arrival in this cursed auberge, and particularly since the commencement of Morok's conversation with the burgomaster, yet he could no longer restrain himself. He saw too clearly that his efforts to conciliate the judge were utterly destroyed by the fatal influence and interference of the brute-tamer; and, losing all patience, he went up to him, and folding his arms across his chest, said to him, in a constrained tone,—

"Are you talking of me to the burgomaster?"

"Yes," answered Morok in a firm voice.

"Then why not speak out?"

The convulsive twitches of the thick moustaches of Dagobert, who having uttered these words looked steadfastly into Morok's very eyes, betokened the violent contest which was working within him. Seeing that his adversary kept up a provoking silence, he said to him, in a louder voice,—

"I ask you why you speak in whispers to the burgomaster, if I was the subject of your conversation?"

"Because there are things so shameful that one would blush to pronounce them aloud," replied Morok, insultingly.

Dagobert had till then kept his arms folded, but he suddenly extended them with his fists clenched. This rapid movement was so expressive, that the two sisters came to him uttering a cry of alarm.

"Mister Burgomaster," said the soldier, from between his clenched teeth, "bid this man depart, or I will not answer for myself!"

"What!" said the burgomaster, angrily, "do you give your orders to me? do you dare——"

"I tell you to desire this man to depart," said Dagobert, whose anger was now unrestrained; "or something will happen to him!"

"Dagobert, *mon Dieu!* calm yourself!" exclaimed the children, taking hold of his hands.

"It is just like a miserable vagabond, as you are, to give your orders here!" replied the burgomaster in a rage. "What, you thought it would be enough for me, to say that you had lost your papers! You are playing a fine game, dragging these young girls about with you, who, in spite of their innocent looks, may be——"

"What!" exclaimed Dagobert, interrupting the burgomaster, with a gesture and look so threatening that the justice was afraid to go on.

The soldier took the children by their arms, and, before they could utter a word, put them into their chamber, of which he quietly closed the door and put the key in his pocket. He then turned hastily round upon the burgomaster, who, alarmed at the threatening attitude and aspect of the veteran, recoiled several paces, and put his hand on the balustrade of the staircase.

"Hear me, you!" said the soldier, laying hold of the judge's arm. "Just now this fellow (he pointed to Morok) insulted me; I bore it, because myself only was concerned. Again I have listened patiently to your stupid remarks, because you seemed for a moment to interest yourself in these unfortunate children; but since you have neither heart, pity, nor justice, I tell you to your beard, burgomaster though you are, I will come across you as I have already done to this hound (pointing again to the prophet), if you dare to breathe one syllable against these two poor girls which you would not say of your own daughter. Do you understand me, burgomaster?"

"What—you dare!" stammered the indignant burgomaster, "that if I speak of these two wanderers——"

"Your hat off when you speak of the daughters of the Marshal Duke de Ligny,"* cried the soldier, snatching off the burgomaster's bonnet and throwing it at his feet.

At this Morok bounded with joy.

In fact, Dagobert, exasperated as he was, renounced all hope, and, unfortunately, allowed his indignation full vent.

When the burgomaster saw his bonnet at his feet, he looked at the tamer of brutes with an air of stupefaction, as if he could not comprehend the enormity of the offence.

Dagobert, regretting his offence, and knowing that there was no hope of reconciliation left, took a hasty glance around him, and, retreating a few paces, gained the first steps of the staircase.

* In a former chapter, by an error of the French copyist, General Simon has been called Duke de Montmirail, instead of Duke de Ligny.

The burgomaster stood beside a bench in a corner of the landing-place; Morok, with his arm in a sling, in order to give a more serious aspect to his wound, was near the magistrate, who, deceived by Dagobert's movement, cried,

"Ah! you think to escape, after having dared to lay hands on me; do you, you miserable old fellow, you?"

"Mister Burgomaster, forgive me. I could not control a feeling too quick for me; I am sorry for my offence," said Dagobert, in a tone of repentance, and bowing very humbly.

"I have no pity for you, fellow! You want to come over me again with your gammon; but I see through your tricks. You are not what you seem to be, and there may be some state secret at the bottom of all this," added the magistrate, with a very diplomatic air:—"every means is resorted to by persons anxious to set all Europe by the ears."

"I am but a poor devil, M. le Bourgmestre. You who have so good a heart should have pity."

"What, when you have snatched of my bonnet?"

"But you," added the soldier, turning to Morok, "you are the cause of all this: pity me, and do not shew malice. You, who are a holy man, say at least a word in my favour to the burgomaster."

"I have said to him what I ought to say to him," replied the prophet, ironically.

"Ah, now, you vagabond! you are very sorry. You thought to humbug me with your tales of woe," added the burgomaster, advancing towards Dagobert; "but, Heaven be praised, I am no longer your dupe. You will see that at Leipsic there are good dungeons for French emissaries and wandering misses; for your girls are no better than yourself. Go!" added he, swelling with impatience, "go down before me; as to you, Morok——"

The burgomaster could not conclude.

For some minutes Dagobert had only tried to gain time; he saw, from the corner of his eye, a half-open door looking on the staircase, and opposite the room occupied by the orphans. He found the moment favourable, and darting with the quickness of lightning on the burgomaster, and seizing him by the throat, threw him so powerfully against the half-open door, that the bewildered magistrate could not utter a word or cry, but rolled prostrate to the further end of this chamber, which was in utter darkness.

Then turning on Morok, who, with his arm in a sling, seeing the staircase free, had hastened towards it, the soldier seized him by his long hair, and, dragging him towards him, grasped him in his iron arms, put his hand over his mouth to prevent his cries, and, in spite of his determined resistance, pushed and dragged him into the chamber, at the bottom of which the burgomaster lay bruised and giddy.

Having double-locked the door, and put the key in his pocket, Dagobert darted down the staircase, which led to the court-yard. The inn-gate was closed, and it was impossible to get out that way.

The rain fell in torrents; and he saw, through the window-panes of a lower room, lighted by a fire, the landlord and his people awaiting the decision of the burgomaster.

To bolt the door of this back stair, and cut off all communication

with the court-yard, was with the soldier but the work of a second, and he then went quickly up the stairs to rejoin the orphans.

Morok, recovering himself, called loudly for help; but, even if his cries could have been heard at the distance, the wind and rain would have stifled them.

Dagobert had perhaps an hour before him; for by that time suspicion would arise as to the long time elapsed, and suspicion once excited, they would break open the two doors, and release the burgo-master and the prophet.

"My children," said Dagobert, entering abruptly in the room of the two little maidens, who had been aghast at the noise they had heard for the last few minutes; "now is the moment to prove whether or not a soldier's blood is in your veins."

"*Mon Dieu!* Dagobert! what has happened?" exclaimed Blanche.

"What would you desire us to do?" asked Rose.

Without replying, the soldier ran to the bed, took off the sheets, tied them together, made a large knot at each end, which he placed at the upper part of the shutter, first opened and then closed. Fastened inside by the knot, which could not slip through the space between the shutter and the jamb of the window, the sheet was securely fastened, whilst the other end dropping outside reached the ground; the other half of the window being opened, left a sufficient space for the escape of the fugitives.

The veteran then took his bag, the children's portmanteau, the rein-deer skin pelisse, and threw them all out of the window, and then made a sign to Kill-joy to jump out and take care of the things. The dog obeyed in an instant.

Rose and Blanche were amazed, and looked at Dagobert without saying a syllable.

"Now, my darlings," he said, "the doors of the inn are closed. Courage!" and pointing to the window, "we must get out by this way, or we shall be arrested and cast into prison—you on one side and I on the other, and our journey is ended."

"Arrested!—cast into prison!" exclaimed Rose.

"Separated from you?" cried Blanche.

"Yes, my dears! They have killed Jovial: we must escape on foot, and try to reach Leipsie. When you are tired, I will carry you in turns; and, if we beg every inch of our way, we will reach our journey's end; but a quarter of an hour's delay, and all is lost! So now, dears, trust in me. Let us see that the daughters of General Simon are no cowards, and we have still hope to lead us on."

The sisters took each other's hand by mutual sympathy, as if to unite against the common danger; their lovely faces, pale with emotion, yet expressed a simple firmness, which arose from their unbounded confidence in the old soldier.

"Be assured, Dagobert—do not fear for us," said Rose, in a resolute tone.

"We will do what we ought to do," added Blanche, in a voice no less firm.

"I was sure of it," said Dagobert; "good blood will always shew itself. Forward! You are not heavier than feathers, the sheets are

strong, and it is hardly eight feet from the window to the ground. Kill-joy is waiting for you."

"I will go first—I am eldest to-day," said Rose, kissing Blanche affectionately; and she hastened to the window, determined, if there were any peril, to essay it before her sister.

Dagobert easily guessed the motive of her conduct, and said,

"My children, I understand you; but do not fear, there is no danger; I tied the sheets securely. Now, there, my little Rose-bud."

Light as a bird, the young maiden jumped on the window-sill; then, aided by Dagobert, she seized the sheet and slid gently down under the soldier's advice, who, leaning out of window, encouraged her with his voice.

"Sister, dear, do not have any fear," said the young girl, in a low voice, when she touched the ground; "it is very easy to come down so, and Kill-joy is liking my hand."

Blanche did not delay in descending as speedily and with courage equal to her sister.

"Dear little things! what have they done to have such misfortunes? *Mille tonnerres!* Is there, then, an evil spell over the family?" exclaimed Dagobert, in his grief, when he saw the pale and resigned countenance of the young child disappear in the darkness of the night, rendered still more painful by the gusts of wind and torrents of rain.

"Dagobert, we are waiting for you: come quickly," said the two girls under the window. Thanks to his height, the soldier leaped rather than slid from the window to the ground.

Dagobert and the two girls had hardly left the White Falcon inn a quarter of an hour, when a violent burst resounded through the house.

The door had yielded to the efforts of the burgomaster and Morok, who had used a heavy table for a battering-ram.

Guided by the light they ran into the room of the orphans. It was deserted.

Morok saw the sheets hanging outside, and cried out,—

"M. le Bourgmaster, by this window they have escaped—they are on foot—the night is dark and stormy, and they cannot have fled far."

"Certainly not. We shall overtake them. Miserable vagabonds! Oh, I'll be revenged! Quick, Morok! Your honour is as much concerned as mine."

"My honour? More than that is concerned, M. le Bourgmaster," replied the prophet, in a tone of bitterness. He then descended the staircase rapidly, and, opening the door of the court-yard, cried with a resounding voice,—

"Goliath, unchain the dogs! And you, landlord, bring lanterns and torches! Arm your people, open your doors! Run after the fugitives, they must not escape. We must take them, dead or alive!"



THE ESCAPE.

P. 94

PART II.

THE STREET OF THE MILIEU-DES-URSINS.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INFORMATIONS.

IN reading the rules of the order of Jesuits, under the title of *De Formulâ Scribendi* (Instit. 2, 11, pp. 125-129), the developement of the eighth part of the Constitution, we are amazed at the number of letters, informations, revelations, registers, and writings of every kind, preserved in the archives of the society.

This body is a police, more exact and better informed than was ever found in any state. The government of Venice itself found that it was surpassed by the Jesuits, when, in 1606, it laid hands on their papers and drove them out of the city, reproaching them for their INTENSE AND PAINFUL CURIOSITY. This police, this secret inquisition, carried to such a pitch of perfection, evince all the power of a government so fully informed, so persevering in its plans, so powerful in its unity, and, as their Constitutions express it, *the union of its members*. It may be easily understood what immense power the government of a society thus constructed must acquire, and how the general of the Jesuits was justified in saying to the Duke de Brissac, "FROM THIS ROOM, SIR, I GOVERN NOT ONLY PARIS BUT CHINA; NOT ONLY CHINA, BUT THE WHOLE WORLD, WITHOUT ANY ONE UNDERSTANDING THE MANNER IN WHICH I DO IT."—*The Constitutions of the Jesuits, with the Declarations: Latin text, from the Prague edition*, pp. 470-478. Paulin, Paris, 1843.

Morok, the beast-tamer, seeing Dagobert deprived of his horse, robbed of his papers and his money, and believing him also deprived of any and every means of continuing his journey, had, before the arrival of the burgomaster, despatched Karl to Leipsic with a letter, which he was instantly to put in the post,

The address of the letter was as follows:—

" To Monsieur Rodin,
Rue du Milieu-des-Ursins,
A Paris."

About the middle of this solitary and little-known street, which is just above the Quai Napoléon, to which it leads, and not far from the

Rue Saint Landry, there was a house of quiet appearance, built at the extremity of a dull and narrow court-yard, isolated from the street by a small façade, in which was an arched door, and two windows, protected by strong bars of iron.

Nothing could be more unpretending than the interior of this silent abode, judging from the furniture of a large room on the ground floor of the principal part of the building. Old gray panels covered the walls, the floor was of square blocks, painted red and carefully polished, and white calico curtains hung in front of the window-panes.

A globe, four feet in diameter, placed on a pedestal of solid oak, was at the further end of the apartment, facing the fire-place.

On this sphere, which was on a large scale, there were a vast quantity of small red crosses, scattered over all parts of the world, from north to south, from east to west; from the most barbarous countries, the most remote islands, to the most civilised countries—even to France: there was no nation which did not bear, in many places, more or less of these small red crosses, which evidently served as signs of indication or as points of reference.

Before a table of ebony covered with papers, and close against the wall, by the chimney side, was an empty chair; at a distance, between two windows, was a large walnut-tree bureau, with shelves filled with large memorandum-cases.

At the end of the month of October, 1831, about eight o'clock in the morning, there was a man seated at this bureau, who was busily writing.

It was M. Rodin, the correspondent of Morok the beast-tamer.

Fifty years of age, he wore an old, threadbare, olive-coloured, long-tailed coat, with a greasy collar; a pocket-handkerchief was his cravat, with waistcoat and trowsers of black cloth, worn white at the seams and knees; whilst his feet plunged in shoes of oiled leather, rested on a small green-baize stool, which was on the red and shining floor. His gray hairs fell limp and flat on his temples, and crowned his bald forehead; his eyebrows were scarcely marked; his upper eyelid shrivelled, but falling low, like the membrane of a reptile's eye, half-concealed his small and sharp black eye; his lips, thin and absolutely colourless, were lost in the wan hue of his lank visage, his peaked nose, and peaked chin. This livid and (it might almost be said) *lipless* mask seemed the more strange from its death-like inanimation, and but for the rapid motion of M. Rodin's fingers as he stooped over his bureau, and his pen scratched along, he might have been taken for a corpse.

By the aid of a *cipher* (a secret alphabet) placed before him, he was transcribing, in a manner unintelligible to all but the initiated, certain passages from a long scroll of writing.

In the midst of this perfect silence, in a dull, dark day, which made even more gloomy this large and naked room, there was something repulsive in the sight of this frozen figure writing mysterious characters.

The clock struck eight.

The knocker of the outer gate sounded heavily, then a bell tinkled twice. Several doors opened and shut, and another individual entered the room.

When he saw him, M. Rodin rose, put his pen between his teeth,

and, having saluted him with an air of the deepest humility, resumed his labour without a word.

These two personages presented a striking contrast.

The new-comer, older than he seemed, appeared thirty-six or thirty-eight years of age, of tall and elegant proportions; it was difficult to sustain the brilliant glance of his large and sparkling gray eyes; his nose, large at the base, terminated with an expansive curve; his chin was well defined, and, being closely shaven, the blue tints of his beard contrasted broadly with the vivid scarlet of his lips, and the whiteness of his teeth, which were exquisite in form and colour. When he took off his hat and put on a black velvet cap, which was lying on the table, he exposed his bright and full chestnut locks, which time had hitherto left without one gray hair. He was attired in a long military frock-coat, buttoned closely up to his chin.

The penetrating look of this man, his largely developed forehead, revealed a powerful mind, whilst the expansion of his chest and shoulders betokened a vigorous physical construction. His distinguished appearance, the care evidently bestowed upon his gloves and boots, the light perfume which came from his hair and linen, and the easy grace of his slightest gesture, betrayed what is called "a man of the world," and implied that he had had, and might still have, if he pleased, success in all he aimed at, from the most frivolous toying to the most serious pursuit.

From this strength of understanding, power of limb, and elegance of manners — an union so rare to meet withal — there resulted a combination the more remarkable, inasmuch as the appearance of arbitrary sway which exhibited itself in the upper part of his energetic features was, in a manner, tempered by the affability of his smile, habitual but not uniform; for, as occasion claimed it, this smile, by turns affectionate or shrewd, cordial or gay, discreet or open, increased the insinuating charm of a man who, once seen, could never be forgotten.

However, in spite of the conjunction of so many advantages, and although you were almost always left under the influence of his irresistible demeanour, your feelings would be mingled with a vague disquiet, as if the grace and exquisite urbanity of this individual's manners, the enchantment of his discourse, his delicate flattery, and the soothing softness of his smile, concealed an under-current of insidious treachery.

You would ask yourself, even whilst subdued by an involuntary sympathy, if he were leading you to good or evil!

M. Rodin, the stranger's secretary, continued to write.

"Are there any letters from Dunkirk, Rodin?" asked his master.

"The postman has not yet been."

"Without being positively distressed about the state of my mother's health, for I was informed of her entire convalescence," replied the other, "I shall not feel perfectly easy until I have a letter from my excellent friend the Princess de Saint-Dizier. I hope this morning will bring me good news."

"I hope so," said the secretary, in a tone as humble and dependent as it was laconic and unmoved.

"Yes, I am very desirous," resumed his employer; "for one of the

happiest moments of my life was that in which the Princess de Saint-Dizier informed me that her malady, which was as sudden as it was dangerous, had most propitiously yielded to the careful attentions with which my mother was nursed by her; but for this, I should instantly have set out for the princess's estate, notwithstanding my presence here is so very requisite."

Then approaching the bureau of his secretary, he added,—

"Have you made the extracts from the foreign correspondence?"

"Here is the analysis."

"All letters come addressed to the particular places designated, and brought according to my orders?"

"Always."

"Read me the analysis of this correspondence; and if there be any letters to which I ought to reply in my own hand, I will let you know."

Rodin's master then began to walk up and down the room, with his hands folded behind his back, dictating, from time to time, remarks which Rodin carefully noted down.

The secretary took a thick volume, and began thus:—

"Don Ramon Olivares, accused at Cadiz of the receipt of the letter, No. 19, will conform to its instructions in every particular, and will deny all participation in the affair."

"Good: enter it in the right list."

"Count Romanof, of Riga, is in a most embarrassing dilemma."

"Tell Duplessis to send him fifty louis d'or. I was once captain in the count's regiment, and he has since supplied us with most useful information."

"They have received at Philadelphia the last cargoes of the 'History of France *expurgated* for the use of the Faithful.' They require another supply, as that is exhausted."

"Make a note to write to Duplessis. Go on."

"M. Spindler sends from Namur the secret report requested, concerning M. Ardouin."

"That must be analysed."

"M. Ardouin sends, from the same city, the secret report requested, concerning M. Spindler."

"That, too, must be analysed."

"Doctor Van-Ostadt, of the same city, sends a confidential note concerning both M. Spindler and M. Ardouin."

"They must be duly compared. Continue."

"The Count Malipierri, of Turin, announces that the donation of the 300,000 francs is signed."

"Inform Duplessis. Well——"

"Don Stanislas has quitted the Baden waters with the Queen Marie-Ernestine. He states that the queen will gratefully receive any information sent to her, and reply to it in person."

"Make a note of this. I will write myself to the queen."

Whilst Rodin was making several notes in the margin of the book he held in his hand, his master, who continued to walk up and down the room, paused before the large sphere marked with the small red crosses, and gazed at it for a moment, thoughtfully.

Rodin continued:—

"From the state of mind in certain parts of Italy, where certain agitators have turned their eyes towards France, Father Orsini writes from Milan that it would be very important to diffuse, in large numbers, a small book in which our countrymen, the French, should be described as impious and debauched, robbers and cut-throats."

"It is an excellent idea, and we could thus easily account for the excesses committed by our troops in Italy during the wars of the Republic. Jaques Dumoulin must be employed to write this book—that man overflows with bile, gall, and venom! His pamphlet will be tremendous; and I can furnish him with some notes. But mind, Jaques Dumoulin must not be paid until the manuscript is complete and delivered into our own hands."

"Of course. If he had any money down, he would be blind drunk for eight days together in some disreputable house or other. We were obliged to pay him twice for his virulent letter against the pantheistical tendencies of the philosophical doctrines of Professor Martin."

"Make your memorandum, and go on."

"The *merchant* announces that the *clerk* is on the point of sending the *banker to his accounts* before the time, when ——"

Having accented the words we print in italics in a peculiar way, Rodin added,—

"You understand?"

"Perfectly," said the other, with a start; "these were the expressions agreed upon. Well, what then?"

"But the *clerk*," added the secretary, "is restrained by a last scruple."

After a moment's silence, during which his features were painfully contracted, Rodin's master replied,—

"Give instructions to work on the *clerk's* imagination by silence and solitude, and then place in his hands the list of instances in which *regicide* is authorised and absolved. Continue."

"The woman Sydney writes from Dresden that she awaits instructions. Violent scenes of jealousy have occurred between the father and son about her; but in their mutual reproaches and hatred, in the confidences which each has made to her of his rival, the woman Sydney has not gleaned any thing on the subject we desire to fathom; she has not as yet shewn preference for either, but if she delays, she fears they may suspect: which is she to prefer—the father or the son?"

"The son!—the workings of jealousy would be more violent and deadly in the old man than in the young; and, to revenge himself for the preference bestowed on his son, he might very probably reveal what both have so great an interest in concealing. What next?"

"In the last three years, two female servants belonging to Ambrosius, who was placed as pastor in that small parish among the mountains of the Valois, have disappeared, without the least trace having been obtained of their fate; a third has recently been missing. The Protestant inhabitants of the country are excited; they speak openly of murder having been committed, and call it a horrible affair requiring immediate investigation."

"Until the most positive evidence of his guilt is obtained, the

most unquestionable proof of a murder having been committed, let Ambrosius be strongly supported and defended against the infamous falsehoods of a party that would go any lengths to support their malignant scandals. Continue."

"Thompson, of Liverpool, has at length succeeded in securing a confidential employment for Justin, in the family of Lord Stewart, a rich Irish Catholic, whose mental weakness daily increases. Justin is engaged as private secretary."

"Fifty louis for Thompson upon the above information being duly and satisfactorily verified. Make a note for Duplessis. Go on."

"Frank Dichestein, of Vienna," resumed Rodin, "informs us that his father has just died of cholera, in a little village a few leagues from hence, for the epidemic is advancing with slow but sure strides, proceeding from the north of Russia through Poland."

"True," answered Rodin's superior, interrupting him; "may this frightful scourge be arrested ere it reach France!"

"Frank Dichestein proceeds to say, that his two brothers have resolved to contest the legacy left by his father, but that he is well disposed to allow it."

"Consult those charged with the bequest. What have you next?"

"The Cardinal Prince d'Amalfi will conform to the three first points of the memorial; but he will only accede to the fourth upon certain reservations."

"None will be permitted; a full and unqualified acceptance, or war. War!—mark me well, and take a note of what I say—bloody and unsparring, either of himself or his creatures! The next."

"Father Paoli announces that the patriot Boccari, head of a secret and formidable society, driven to despair of being (in consequence of the adroit insinuations infused by Paoli in the minds of his associates) accused by his friends and companions of treacherous designs against their common interests, has perished by his own hand."

"Can it be possible?" exclaimed Rodin's employer. "Boccari!—the patriot Boccari!—that redoubtable and dangerous enemy!"

"Himself," repeated the still immovable secretary.

"Bid Duplessis send an order for twenty-five louis to Father Paoli. Make a note. Now proceed."

"Hausman acquaints us that the French dancer, Albertine Ducornet, is established as the acknowledged mistress of the reigning prince, over whom she exercises the most perfect influence; through her intervention the desired aim might be obtained: but this individual is in her turn entirely guided by her lover, an individual now under sentence for forgery, but without whose knowledge and concurrence she does nothing."

"Then desire Hausman to confer with this man, and if he find him reasonable in his demands, to accede to them; and also to make inquiries as to whether this woman, Albertine, has not relations in Paris."

"The Duke d'Orbano acquaints us that the king his master will authorise the new establishment proposed, but upon the conditions previously stated."

"No conditions will be listened to; either an unqualified compliance or a positive refusal. By such decided means alone we shall

be able to know our friends from our foes ; the more unfavourable the circumstances by which we are surrounded, the greater need of shewing firmness and self-reliance."

"By the same despatch we learn that the entire diplomatic body persist in remonstrating in favour of the parent of the young Protestant girl, who refuses to quit the convent in which she has found safety and protection unless to marry a person her father is wholly opposed to."

"Ah! the diplomatic body continue to support the father's demand for the restoration of his disobedient daughter, do they?"

"They do."

"Then continue to reply to all their petitions and memorials by saying that the ecclesiastical power cannot suffer itself to be drawn into disputes with temporal authority."

At this instant the bell at the entrance-door rang twice.

"Go see who that is," said Rodin's master.

The former rose and quitted the room while his employer continued pensively to pace the room, until his attention being attracted by the enormous globe he suddenly stopped, and for several minutes continued to gaze in silence on the innumerable little red crosses, which, like the meshes of an immense net, appeared to cover the whole surface of the earth.

Doubtless impressed with the consciousness of his wide-extended power, from the influence of which no quarter of the universe seemed free, the features of the man we are describing were suddenly lighted up with an expression of haughty complacency and self-gratulation ; his large gray eye glittered, his nostril expanded, and his strongly marked features assumed an indescribable look of energy, determination, and pride.

With lofty mien and half-disdainful smile he bent over the sphere and grasped the pole in his strong hand, looking on it with the proud air of a conqueror who felt assured of obtaining the universal dominion he coveted ; and well did that eager, absolute, and audacious grasp accord with the fierce, imperious look of the eye, fixed on it with so intense a gaze, as though already wielding the universal sceptre his desires aimed at obtaining. Yet no smile illumined his countenance ; deep frowns contracted his large forehead and imparted a menacing air to his whole features. An artist would have chosen him, as he then stood, as a model of the demon of pride and audacity, the evil genius of insatiable power. Nor could he have embodied his ideas under a more fearful personification.

Ere Rodin returned to the room the features of his master had resumed their natural expression.

"'Twas the postman," said Rodin, exhibiting the letters he carried in his hand. "There is nothing, however, from Dunkirk."

"Nothing!" exclaimed his master ; and the pained look of his countenance contrasted deeply and singularly with the haughty and unbending expression it so lately wore.

"No news of my mother!" resumed he ; "yet six-and-thirty hours more of uncertainty and suspense!"

"Yet had Madame la Princesse had bad news to communicate, she

would surely have written. Let us hope, therefore, that things continue to go on favourably."

"Probably, Rodin, it may be as you say; but, I know not why, I cannot tranquillise myself, and if to-morrow does not bring me the most satisfactory intelligence I shall certainly set off at once to the princess. Oh! why would my mother so positively choose to pass the autumn in that place! I fear much the situation of Dunkirk is decidedly unfavourable to her."

After a brief silence, during which he still continued to pace the room, he added,—

"Let me see those letters."

Rodin, having examined their various postmarks, replied,—

"Among the four I hold, are three relative to the great and important affair of the medals."

"Then Heaven be praised for so much that is good to hear!" exclaimed Rodin's master. "Let us hope the accounts are favourable." And this was said in a tone and manner that clearly evinced the extreme uneasiness and anxiety entertained respecting the matter.

"One is from Charlestown, and is, no doubt, from the missionary Gabriel," rejoined Rodin. "The other, from Batavia, comes probably from the Indian Djalma. This is from Leipsic, and is, I expect, in confirmation of that of yesterday, in which Morok, the tamer of beasts, announced that, in pursuance of orders received, and without in any way involving himself, he had rendered it impossible for the daughters of General Simon to continue their journey."

At the name of General Simon a dark cloud passed over the features of Rodin's master.

CHAPTER XVI.

ORDERS.

"THE provincial agencies correspond with that in Paris, and are also in direct communication with the General, who resides at Rome. The correspondence of the Jesuits, so active, various, and so wonderfully organised, is arranged and devised to supply the chiefs with every information they may require. Every day the General receives a mass of reports which check each other. In the central dépôt at Rome there are immense registers, in which are kept the names of all the Jesuits, their allies, and all persons of consequence, friends or enemies, with whom they have connexion or business. In these registers are detailed, without alteration, without hatred or passion, the facts relative to the life of each individual. It is the most gigantic biographical collection ever formed. The conduct of a woman of light character, and the concealed faults of a statesman, are recapitu-



RODIN.

P. 108.

lated in this book with calm impartiality. Abridged for an useful purpose, these biographies are necessarily precise. When it is requisite to act upon or against a certain individual, the book is opened, and instantly his life, character, qualities, defects, projects, family, friends, and most secret connexions, are known. Imagine, now, what immense control, what a sphere of action, a book like this, which includes the entire world, must give to a society! I do not speak lightly of these registers—I have the fact from one who has *seen* the collection, and who knows the Jesuits thoroughly. This must afford matter for reflection for families who admit with facility into their domestic circle members of a community by whom the study of biography is so skilfully carried out.”—LIBRI, *member of the Institute: Letters on the Clergy.*

After having overcome the involuntary emotion which the name or the recollection of General Simon had caused him, Rodin’s master said,—

“Do not open these letters from Leipsic, Charlestown, and Batavia; the information they contain will doubtless classify itself forthwith. That will spare us a double employment of time.”

The secretary looked at his master with an inquiring air.

The other continued,—

“Have you finished the note in reference to the medals?”

“Here it is; I have just finished it from the ciphers.”

“Read it to me, and according to the order of dates, and adding the fresh informations which these three letters ought to contain.”

“By which,” said Rodin, “these informations will duly fall into their right places.”

“I wish to see,” added the other, “if this note be clear and sufficiently full; for you have not forgotten that the person to whom it is addressed does not know the full purpose of it?”

“That I fully understand, and have drawn it up accordingly.”

“Read.”

M. Rodin read what follows, very carefully and slowly:—

“A hundred and fifty years since, a French Protestant family voluntarily expatriated itself in anticipation of the coming revocation of the edict of Nantes, and with the intention of escaping the severe and just arrests already issued against the Reformers, those savage enemies of our holy religion.

“Amongst the members of this family, some took refuge first in Holland, then in the Dutch colonies; others in Poland, others in Germany, others in England, and some in America.

“It is believed that at this time there are only seven surviving descendants of this family, which has experienced remarkable vicissitudes of fortune, since its representatives are now placed on every step of the ladder of society, from the monarch to the mechanic.

“These direct or indirect descendants are,—

“*By the Mother’s side:—*

“The demoiselles *Rose* and *Blanche Simon*, minors.

“(General Simon married, at Warsaw, a female descendant of the said family.)

“The sieur *François Hardy*, a manufacturer at Plessis, near Paris.

“The Prince *Djalma*, son of *Kadja-Sing*, king of *Mondi*.

“(*Kadja-Sing* married, in 1802, a female descendant of the said family, then settled at *Batavia*, Isle of *Java*, a Dutch settlement.)

“*By the Father's side* :—

“The sieur *Jacques Rennepont*, called *Couche-tout-nud*, a mechanic.

“The demoiselle *Adrienne de Cardoville*, daughter of the Count de *Rennepont*, duke de *Cardoville*.

“The sieur *Gabriel Rennepont*, a missionary in foreign parts.

“Each of the members of this family possesses, or ought to possess, a bronze medal, on which is engraved the following inscription :—

Victime
de
L.C.D.J.
Priez pour moi.
—
Paris,
13th February, 1682.

A Paris,
Rue St. François, No. 3,
In a century and a half
you will be
the 13th February, 1832.

—
Pray for me

“These words and this date indicate that there is some powerful reason why all of them should be in Paris on the 13th of February, 1832, and that not by proxies or by attorney, but IN PERSON, whether of age or under age, married or single.

“But other persons have an *immense* interest in preventing any one of the descendants of this family from being in Paris on the 13th of February, except *Gabriel Rennepont*, the foreign missionary.

“*At all hazards, therefore, it is absolutely necessary that Gabriel alone be present at this interview, appointed for the representatives of this family a century and a half ago.*

“To prevent the six other persons from being in, or coming to, Paris on that particular day, or to prevent their attendance at the appointment named, much has already been done; but a great deal more must be yet accomplished to ensure the entire success of this object, which is considered as the most important and vital affair of this time, because of its probable results.”

“That is very true,” said *Rodin's* employer, interrupting him, and shaking his head gravely; “add, moreover, that the consequences of success are incalculable, whilst the fatal results of failure cannot be anticipated. But, in a word, it involves the very fact of existence or virtual death for many years to come. Thus, to succeed, *all means possible must be resorted to, and nothing allowed to impede the progress to perfect completion*; whilst, at the same time, *appearances* must be most carefully preserved.”

“I have written that,” said *Rodin*, after he had added the words dictated to him.

“Continue.”

Rodin continued thus :—

“To facilitate or ensure the success of the affair in question, it is necessary to supply some particular and secret details, as to those seven representatives of this family. These details can be verified, and if requisite, given in full minutiae; for cross-informations having been received, we have the fullest particulars. We proceed in order of the persons, and only mention facts which have occurred up to this day.”

(NOTE, No. 1.)

“The girls Rose and Blanche Simon are twins; age, about fifteen; lovely faces, so like each other, that they are mistaken one for the other; disposition, gentle and timid, but susceptible of strong impulses; brought up in Siberia by their mother, a woman of strong mind, and a Deist in principle, they are completely ignorant of every thing connected with our holy religion.

“General Simon, separated from his wife before they were born, does not know to this hour that he has two daughters.

“It was believed that they were prevented from reaching Paris on the 13th of February, by having sent the mother to a place of exile more remote than that to which she was first sentenced; but the mother being dead, the governor-general of Siberia, who is entirely devoted to us, believing (by a deplorable error) that the affair was only a personal one, affecting solely the wife of General Simon, unfortunately allowed these young girls to return to France under the protection of an old soldier.

“This man, quick-witted, faithful, and resolute, is noted as *dangerous*.

“The demoiselles Simon are inoffensive. There is every good reason to believe that, at this time, they are detained in or near Leipsic.”

Rodin’s master, interrupting him, said,—

“Now read the letter received by this post from Leipsic, which should perfect the information.”

Rodin read, and exclaimed—

“Capital news! the two young girls and their guide contrived to escape during the night from the inn of the White Falcon, but being pursued, they were overtaken a league from Mockern, sent on to Leipsic, and then locked up in gaol as vagabonds; besides this, the soldier, who was their conductor, was accused and convicted of resistance, assault, and contempt of a magistrate.”

“Well, then, it is pretty sure, thanks to the tediousness of German law proceedings (and we will contrive to protract them), that the young girls will not be able to be here on the 13th of February,” said the employer to Rodin. “Add this fact to the note by a postscript.”

The secretary obeyed, and added to the note the substance of Morok’s letter, saying,

“I have done that.”

“Then continue,” said his master.

Rodin complied thus:—

(NOTE, No. 2.)

M. François Hardy, Manufacturer at Plessis, near Paris.

“Forty years old—a strong-minded, rich, intelligent, active, honourable, well-informed man; greatly beloved by his work-people, owing to the numerous improvements he has established in their favour; never fulfilling the duties of our holy religion; marked as a *very dangerous* man; but the hatred and envy which he excites in other manufacturers, particularly to M. le Baron Tripeaud, his com-

petitor, may be easily fomented, and used against him. If other springs of action against or upon him be required, the book will be referred to: it is very full with respect to him, as this individual has long been marked, and carefully watched.

"He has been so carefully misled with regard to the medal that, up to this time, he is completely ignorant of its importance and the interests which it represents; moreover, he is constantly watched, looked after, and led, without the slightest suspicion on his part. One of his most intimate friends betrays him, and his most secret thoughts are known."

(NOTE, No. 3.)

The Prince Djalma.

"Eighteen years of age — of energetic and noble disposition, proud, independent, and wild; a favourite of General Simon, who commands the troops of his father *Kadja-Sing*, in his struggle against the English in India. This account of Djalma is from memory only, as his mother died very young. From the survivor of her parents, who remained in Batavia, dying subsequently, their small property has not been claimed by Djalma, or the king his father, and it is clearly understood that they are both ignorant of the deep interests which appertain to the possession of the medal in question, which forms part of the inheritance of Djalma's mother."

Rodin's master interrupted him and said,—

"Now read the letter from Batavia, that our information as to Djalma may be complete."

Rodin did as he was desired, and said,—

"More good news! M. Joshua Van Daël, a merchant of Batavia (educated in our house at Pondicherry), has learned from his correspondent at Calcutta that the old Indian king was killed in his late battle with the English. His son Djalma, dispossessed of his throne, was sent temporarily to a fortress in India as prisoner of state."

"We are at the end of October," observed the other, "and, admitting that the Prince Djalma was set at liberty, and could now quit India, he could scarcely reach Paris by the month of February."

"M. Joshua," replied Rodin, "regrets not being able to prove his zeal in this case: if, contrary to all probability, the Prince Djalma has been released, or contrives to escape, it is certain that he would come instantly to Batavia to reclaim his maternal inheritance, as he had nought in the world left beside. He might, in this case, rely on the devotion of M. Joshua Von Daël. He requests, in return, by the next courier, precise information as to the fortune of the Baron Tripeaud, manufacturer and banker, with whom he is connected in commercial affairs."

"Reply in an evasive manner, as M. Joshua has not yet testified any thing but zeal. Complete the information of Djalma with these fresh particulars."

Rodin wrote.

At the end of a few seconds his employer said, with a singular expression,—

"M. Joshua does not mention General Simon, although he refers to the death of Djalma's father, and the prince's imprisonment."

“ M. Joshua does not say one word,” replied the secretary, as he continued his writing.

Rodin's master kept silence, and walked up and down thoughtfully in the room.

At the end of a few minutes, Rodin said,—

“ I have written that.”

“ Continue, then.”

(NOTE, No. 4.)

The Sieur Jacques Rennepont, called Couche-tout-Nud.

“ A workman in the manufactory of the Baron Tripeaud, the competitor of M. François Hardy. This artisan is a drunkard, indolent, extravagant, riotous—not deficient in understanding, but idleness and debauchery have utterly ruined him. One of our sub-agents, a very clever fellow, and much trusted, has got up an intrigue with a girl named Cephyse Soliveau, called the *Queen-Bacchanal*. She is the mistress of this artisan. Through her our agent has begun an intimacy with him, and we may look on him, from this time, as almost withdrawn from any interest which might necessitate his presence at Paris on the 13th of February.”

(NOTE, No. 5.)

Gabriel Rennepont, Foreign Missionary.

“ Distant relation of the preceding, but knows nothing of the relation or the relationship: a forsaken orphan, adopted by Françoise Baudoin, wife of a soldier surnamed Dagobert.

“ If, contrary to all expectation, this soldier should come to Paris, we should have a strong hold on him, through his wife, who is a worthy creature, ignorant, credulous, of exemplary piety, and over whom we have long had entire control and influence. It was by her intervention that Gabriel was induced to take orders, in spite of his own repugnance to a clerical life.

“ Gabriel is twenty-five years of age, and of a disposition as sweet as his countenance; he has rare and solid virtues. Unfortunately he was brought up with his brother by adoption, Agricola, the son of Dagobert. This Agricola is a poet and a mechanic—a capital workman, and employed at M. François Hardy's; imbued with detestable doctrines; idolizes his mother; honest, hard-working, but destitute of all religious feeling. Noted as *very dangerous*, which made his intimacy with Gabriel so much to be feared.

“ Gabriel, in spite of his perfect qualities, sometimes gives cause for alarm; we must, therefore, not be completely without reserve with him—a hasty step might render him a most *dangerous* man. He must, therefore, be carefully managed, at least until the 13th February, because *on him, and on his presence in Paris at this moment*, rest not only immense hopes, but also the most important interests.

“ Carrying out this system of management with him, he has had leave to join a mission to America, for he unites to an extreme gentleness of disposition the most perfect intrepidity and a most adventurous spirit, which could only be satisfied by allowing him to share in

the perilous life of the missionaries. Fortunately, the most rigid instructions have been given to the superiors at Charlestown that they will not expose a life so precious. They are to send him to Paris, at least a month or two before the 13th of February."

Rodin's employer again interrupted him, saying,—

"Read the letter from Charlestown, and see what information it contains that will enable you to complete this information."

Having read as he was desired, Rodin replied,—

"Gabriel is expected daily from the Rocky Mountains, where he insisted on going alone on a mission."

"What imprudence!"

"Oh! doubtless he ran no risk, since he has himself announced his own return to Charlestown. On his arrival, which cannot be later than some time in this month, he will be immediately sent forward to France."

"Add that to the note about him," said Rodin's master.

"I have done so," was the reply, after a few minutes.

"Now, then, go on."

Rodin complied.

(NOTE, No. 6.)

Mademoiselle Adrienne Rennepont de Cardoville.

"Distant relation (and ignorant of the relationship) of Jacques Rennepont, called *Couche-tout-nud*, and of Gabriel Rennepont, the missionary priest. She is very nearly twenty-one years of age, with a countenance singularly prepossessing, and of remarkable beauty, though with hair of reddish tinge; an understanding remarkable for its originality; an immense fortune; possessed of strong sense and quick appreciation. There is much apprehension as to the future life of this young person, when her incredible boldness of disposition is considered. Fortunately, her acting guardian, the Baron Tripeaud (baron since 1829, and formerly man of business to the late Count de Rennepont, duke of Cardoville), is entirely in the interest, and almost in the confidence, of the aunt of Mademoiselle de Cardoville. We calculate, and almost with certainty, on this worthy and respectable relative, and on M. Tripeaud, to combat and subdue the strange designs and unheard-of projects of this young lady, who is as determined as she is independent, is always talking of openly, and which, unfortunately, cannot be usefully directed towards the importance of the affair in hand, for —"

Rodin could not proceed. He was interrupted by two blows carefully struck on the door.

The secretary arose and went to see who knocked, and, remaining outside for a moment, returned, bearing two letters in his hand, saying,—

"The princess has availed herself of the departure of the estafette to send —"

"Give me the princess's letter!" exclaimed the master of Rodin, not allowing him to conclude; "give me the princess's letter!" said Rodin's superior, without allowing him time to finish speaking. "At length, then," added he, "I have news of my mother!"

But scarcely had he perused a few lines of the epistle than he

turned pale, while his features expressed the most lively astonishment mingled with the deepest distress.

"Oh, God!" cried he; "my mother!—my beloved mother!"

"Has any thing happened to her?" exclaimed Rodin, starting from his seat in alarm at the sudden exclamation of his patron.

"Alas!" returned the latter, with most poignant agony, "all hopes of her recovery are at an end. The late favourable symptoms have proved deceitful, and she has relapsed into an almost hopeless state; still her physician thinks that my presence might yet save her, for she incessantly calls for me, and prays to behold me yet once again, that she may die in peace. And shall I not fly to perform so sacred a duty?—to fail were to be a parricide indeed! Heaven grant I may only reach her in time! Travelling night and day, it will be two days ere I reach the princess's estate."

"Great God!" said Rodin, clasping his hands, and raising his eyes to the ceiling, "what a blow!"

The superior rose, and hastily pulling the bell, it was answered by an old domestic, to whom he said, hurriedly,—

"Pack hastily such things as are indispensably necessary for a journey; have the travelling carriage prepared with all speed, and bid the porter take a cabriolet and proceed as quickly as may be to order post-horses instantly; I must depart within an hour."

The servant bowed and retired.

"And what if I should never again in life behold this beloved parent?—there is agony in the very thought. Oh! my mother!—my mother!" reiterated he, sinking into a chair, overwhelmed with anguish, and covering his face with his outspread hands; "for your dear sake, surely Heaven will spare me this bitter trial."

And this burst of grief was of nature's own working; no art, no feigned sorrow, mingled with the pure and sacred feeling. This man, so hard, so cold, and even so guilty in some transactions of his life, had preserved for his mother the most devoted affection; and chilled as was his heart to every other finer sympathy of our nature, his filial fondness for his almost adored parent had remained untouched, undiminished, through all the various changes and schemes of his chequered career.

After some moments permitted to the indulgence of his agonised feelings, Rodin ventured to arouse him, by displaying a second letter, and observing,—

"This has just arrived from M. Duplessis; it is most important, and in extreme haste."

"See what it contains, and reply to it; I cannot attend to it at present myself."

"But," said Rodin, presenting the epistle to his patron, "this letter is marked '*strictly private and confidential*,' and bears the usual mark of being intended for your perusal alone. I cannot, therefore, open unless——"

As the eyes of the superior fell on the mark, his countenance assumed an indescribable expression of fear and respect; with a trembling hand he broke the seal, the billet merely contained these words:—

"*Leaving all other matters, set out without an instant's delay;*

come—you are imperatively required. M. Duplessis will take your place, and has all the necessary instructions."

The paper fell from his trembling fingers.

"Merciful powers!" exclaimed the distracted man; "what fresh trial awaits me? What! obey this mandate! and renounce the melancholy delight of once again beholding a dying parent?—Oh! horrible!—not to be thought of! Not go to her! 'Twould be making me a parricide, indeed!—my own dear mother's murderer!"

As he wildly uttered these words, his perturbed glance was arrested by the huge globe, dotted over with small red crosses; and quickly again a change came over him. He seemed to regret his recent impetuosity and unrestrained grief, and by degrees his countenance, though still sorrowful, recovered its usual calm, grave expression. Giving the letter back to his secretary, he said, stifling a heavy sigh,—

"Number and class this paper."

Rodin took the letter, numbered it, and placed it in a particular case.

After a short pause, the patron continued,—

"You will receive all necessary directions from M. Duplessis, who will take my place while absent. Give him the paper concerning the medals, he will know who to forward it to. You will reply to our communications from Batavia, Leipsic, and Charlestown, as I dictated but now. By all and every means prevent the daughters of General Simon from quitting Leipsic; and should (though it is highly improbable, and scarcely possible, that such should be the case) Prince Djalma arrive in Batavia, inform M. Joshua Van Daël that it is expected he will use his accustomed zeal and energy to detain him there."

So saying, the man who could thus turn a deaf ear to the summons of an expiring parent returned to his apartment cool and self-possessed as ever.

Rodin, meanwhile, occupied himself in transcribing in ciphers the different replies he had been directed to send.

At the close of three quarters of an hour thus employed, the trampling of horses and the cracking of whips announced the arrival of the postilions and post-horses for the approaching departure; the same old domestic who had previously appeared; having first discreetly tapped at the door, opened it gently, saying,—

"The carriage is ready!" and as Rodin acknowledged his information by a slight inclination of the head, the servant retired as noiselessly as he had entered.

The secretary arose, and in his turn knocked at the door of his patron's chamber, who, calm and collected as before, but looking ghastly pale, immediately came forth, bearing a letter in his hand:

"For my mother," said he, delivering it to Rodin; "let a courier be sent off with it instantly."

"This instant," replied the secretary.

"And despatch the three letters for Leipsic, Batavia, and Charlestown, by the customary mode of conveyance; it is of the very utmost importance that they be sent without a minute's delay. You understand?"

Such were the last words of this man, who, acting as pitilessly



PERE D'AIGRIGNY.

towards himself as he was doing to others, departed without making any further effort to visit his dying mother.

His secretary respectfully accompanied him to the door of his carriage.

"What route do I take, monsieur?" asked the courier, turning round on his saddle.

"To Italy," replied Rodin's patron, with a sigh so deep, so full of suffering, that it more resembled a sob.

As the carriage dashed off at full speed, Rodin bowed with profound respect, and then retraced his steps to the large, cold, naked-looking apartment he had just quitted. And now that he found himself alone in it, his attitude, demeanour, and countenance, appeared to undergo an entire transformation.

No longer the mere automaton yielding an implicit and mechanical obedience to the will and commands of another, he seemed to increase in height, while his hitherto motionless features and downcast eyes were lighted up by an expression of fiendish audacity, while a sardonic smile played on his thin pale lips, and a sinister self-satisfied gleam diffused itself over his wrinkled, contracted countenance.

He too paused to contemplate the ponderous globe, and his meditations were evidently as deep and absorbing as his master's had been. Then stooping over it, and almost embracing it with his long lank arms, he continued to feast his reptile gaze with its dotted surface; then passing his hard bony finger over the polished surface of the globe, he, by turns, tapped with his broad ill-shaped nail on three of the places marked with red crosses, and as he touched each place, so widely distant from the other, he gave a look of demoniacal delight while he loudly pronounced its name; and first he uttered,—"*Leipsic*," then "*Charlestown, Batavia*," adding,

"In each of these so widely separated cities are persons far from dreaming that here, in this small obscure street, in the recesses of this chamber, they are watched—their every movement known and followed, and that from hence will instructions be despatched, involving their dearest plans, their most lively interests, and decrees sent forth which admit of no escape or appeal, but will most inexorably be followed up: for motives are involved affecting the whole of Europe—nay, the universe itself. Happily we have firm and able coadjutors in *Leipsic, Batavia, and Charlestown*."

The individual thus soliloquising, so old, sordid, and ill-dressed, with his livid death-like visage, thus crawling with slimy tread over the bright face of the earth, as though to blot its fair surface by deeds of wrong and treachery, was even a more fearful object to behold as he stood than had been his employer, when, but now, with haughty and imperious air, he placed his daring eluteh on the pole of that globe, whose whole extent seemed barely sufficient to satisfy his craving ambition and desire of domination. The one resembled an eagle hovering over his anticipated prey, the other reminded you of the reptile clasping his victim in his inextricable folds preparatory to destroying it.

At length Rodin quitted the object of his intense meditation, and, returning to his desk, eagerly rubbed his hands with every appearance

of self-gratulation, then proceeded to write the following letter, using a cipher with which even his patron was unacquainted.

“ Paris, 9 o'clock, A.M.

“ *HE has gone, but not without HESITATION. When he received the order for departure, he had just been summoned to the death-bed of his mother. He was told her only chance of life lay in his presence. In his first emotion he exclaimed, ‘ Shall I not instantly fly to my parent? I were a parricide else!’*

“ *Nevertheless HE has gone, but he HESITATED IN SO DOING.*

“ *I still carefully watch him. These lines will reach ROME as quickly as he will.*

“ *P.S. Assure the prince cardinal he may fully rely on me, but that I expect, in his turn, he will serve me with equal zeal and activity.*”

After having folded and sealed this letter, Rodin deposited it in his pocket.

Ten o'clock struck—this was M. Rodin's breakfast hour. He arranged his papers, and placed them in a drawer, which he carefully locked and took the key from, brushed his greasy old hat with the sleeve of his coat, took up a shabby patched umbrella, and went out.*

* * * * *

While these two men were busied in this obscure retreat, laying plans to injure and involve the seven descendants of a once proscribed family, a strange and mysterious protector appeared to protect and support a family to which he likewise claimed affinity.

CHAPTER XVII.

EPILOGUE.

THE site is rugged and wild. It is a high hill covered with vast blocks of granite, from amongst which, few and far between, are birch-trees and oaks, whose leaves already shew the tints of autumn. These large trees appear still larger in the red rays cast by the setting sun, and which resemble the reflexion of a fire.

From this height the eye directs its vision into a deep valley, which, shady and fertile, is half-obsured by the thin vapour which descends with the twilight. The rank meadows, the clumps of umbrageous trees, the fields, shorn of their ripened grain, mingle in

* After having cited the excellent and courageous “ Letters ” of M. Libri, and the curious work edited by M. Paulin, it becomes our duty equally to make mention of the many highly valuable and daring productions on the Jesuits, recently published by Messieurs Dupin l'aîné, Michelet, Ed. Quinet, Génin, the Count de Saint-Priest,—writings full of the highest and most impartial information, and in which the fatal influence of the theories promulgated by this order are so admirably displayed and censured. We should deem ourselves but too happy if the few humble stones we bring serve to aid in the powerful (and let us hope) lasting defence now being raised by these noble-spirited and right-minded men against the inroads of this impure and formidable stream.—E. S.

one sombre and uniform hue, contrasting strongly with the clear blue of the firmament.

Roofs of gray-stone or slate, thrust, in various places, their sharp angles above the soil of the valley, for several villages were scattered through it, on the borders of a long line of road extending from north to west.

It is the hour of rest—it is the hour when generally the window of each hut shines with the sparkling blaze of the cheerful wood fire, and is seen from afar through the shade of the foliage, whilst the eurling smoke, hastening through the chimneys, ascends gently towards heaven.

Yet, strange to say, it would appear that throughout this district the hearths are untenanted—deserted. Still more strange, more fearful still, all the bells are tolling the funeral knell of the dead.

All the activity, motion, and life, seem concentrated in this dismal sound, which echoes far and wide.

But at length, in this village almost wrapt in darkness, the lights began to appear.

These are not produced by the bright and joyful flame of the rustic hearth, but are red and dull, like a watch-fire seen through the evening fog.

And these lights do not remain motionless, they wave gently towards the cemetery of each church.

There the death-knell redoubles, the air trembles under the heavy tinkling of the bells, and, at rare intervals, the hymns for the repose of the souls of the dead reach faintly to the summit of the hill.

Wherefore so many burials? What is this valley of desolation? Where are the peaceful strains that should follow the day's labour?—why are they displaced by the hymns for the departed? Wherefore is the repose of evening replaced by the repose of death?

What is this valley of desolation, wherein each village bewails so many dead at the same time, and inters them at the same hour, on the same night?

Alas! the mortality is so rife, so rapid, so fearful, that hardly enough of the living are left to bury the dead. During the day severe and requisite toil is done by the survivors, and in the evening only, on their return from the fields, are they able, though worn out by fatigue, to make that deeper furrow in the soil, in which they deposit their friends and kinsfolk like grains of wheat in the plough-land.

This valley is not solitary in thus suffering from desolation.

For many wretched years many villages, many towns, many cities, nay, immense districts, have been like this valley—their hearth-fires extinct and forsaken;—have seen, like this valley, mourning substituted for joy; the death-toll replace the sounds of pleasure;—have, like this valley, wept for the many dead the same day; and buried them at night, by the dull light of the funeral torch.

For many dreadful years a horrible traveller has slowly overrun the earth from pole—from the furthestmost parts of India and Asia, to the endless snows of Siberia—from the snows of Siberia, to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. This traveller, mysterious as death, slow as eternity, implacable as destiny, terrible in the hand of God, was—

The CHOLERA!!

* * * * *

The noise of the funeral bells and hymns ascended still from the bottom to the summit of the valley, with a loud and wailing voice.

The light of the funeral torches was seen afar through the gloom of the evening.

The twilight was not yet obscured, but there was that singular glimmering which gives to forms the most defined a vague, indefinite, and fantastic appearance.

The stony and echoing soil of the mountain path gives out the sounds of a slow, firm, and equal tread—a man has passed across the black trunks of the tall trees.

His stature is high; he keeps his head lowered on his breast; his countenance is noble, gentle, and sad; his eyebrows, united into one, extended from one temple to the other, and spread over his forehead one ray of sinister aspect.

This man seemed not to hear the distant tinklings of the funeral bells; and yet, but two days before, tranquillity, happiness, health, and joy, reigned in these spots which he had slowly traversed, and now left behind him desolate and deserted.

But the traveller wended onwards absorbed in these thoughts:—

“The 13th of February approaches—they come; those days in which the descendants of my beloved sister, these last branches of our race, would be assembled in Paris.

“Alas! for the third time, one hundred and fifty years ago, persecution scattered all over the earth that family which, with tenderness, I have followed from age to age for eighteen centuries,—in the midst of their wanderings, their exiles, their changes of religion, of fortune, and of name!

“Oh! this family, the progeny of my sister—the sister of me, a poor artisan*—how has it suffered in abasements, in obscurity, in brilliancy, in miseries, in glory!

“By how many virtues has it been illustrated—by how many vices stained!

“The history of this one family is the history of all the children of humanity.

“Passing through so many generations, flowing through the veins of the poor and rich, the sovereign and the robber, the wise and the foolish, the coward and the brave, the pious and the atheist,—the blood of my sister has been perpetuated to this time.

“What of this family remains at this hour?

“Seven offspring!

“Two orphan girls, children of a proscribed mother and proscribed father ——

“A dethroned prince ——

“A poor missionary priest ——

* The subject of the legend of the “Wandering Jew” is that of a poor shoemaker of Jerusalem. When Christ, bearing his cross, passed before his house, and asked his leave to repose for a moment on the stone bench at his door, the Jew replied harshly, “Onwards! Onwards!” and refused him. “It is thou who shalt go onwards—onwards—till the end of time!” was Christ’s reply, in a sad but severe tone. For more details, our readers should refer to the eloquent and learned notice of M. Charles Maguin, which introduces M. Ed. Quinet’s magnificent poem of “Ahasuerus.”—EUGÈNE SUE.

“ A man in the circumstances of middle life ——

“ A young maiden of illustrious birth, and vast fortune ——

“ A mechanic ——

“ And amongst them they comprise the virtues, the courage, the degradation, the splendours, the miseries of our race !

“ Siberia — India — America — France — Fate has thrown them in all these countries !

“ Instinct warns me when one of them is in danger — then, from north to south, from east to west, I go to them. Yesterday, beneath the ices of the pole — to-day, to the temperate zone — to-morrow, beneath the tropics' scorching ray ; but alas ! often at the moment when my presence would save them, an invisible hand impels me, the whirlwind hurries me away, and —

“ ONWARDS ! — ONWARDS !

“ Let me finish my task !

“ ONWARDS !

“ One hour only ! — One moment's rest !

“ ONWARDS !

“ Alas ! I leave those I love, on the very brink of an abyss !

“ ONWARDS ! — ONWARDS !

“ This is my chastisement. If it is great, my crime was greater still !

“ A mechanic, kept in privation and misery, misfortune made me wicked.

“ Oh ! cursed — cursed for ever be the day when, whilst I was fasting, dull, melancholy, desperate, because, in spite of my constant labour, my family were still in want, Christ passed before my door !

“ Overwhelmed by insults, borne down by blows, and bearing with toil and great difficulty his heavy cross, he asked me to allow him to rest, for one moment only, on my stone bench. His forehead poured down with sweat, his feet were bleeding, his face in agony ; and, with touching sweetness, he said to me, ‘ I suffer ! ’ ‘ And I also suffer, ’ I answered, in a brutal tone, repulsing him with harshness and rage — ‘ I suffer : but no one comes to my aid. The pitiless create the pitiless. Onwards ! — Onwards ! ’

“ Then he, heaving a deep sigh, said to me, —

“ ‘ *And thou shalt go onwards until the Day of Judgment ; so does He will it, the Lord who is in heaven.* ’

“ And my chastisement began.

“ Too late did I see my error ; too late have I known repentance ; too late have I known charity ; too late, indeed, have I understood the Divine words of him I so outraged — those words which ought to be the law of all human kind —

‘ LOVE ONE ANOTHER. ’

“ In vain, for ages, seeking to deserve forgiveness, exhausting my strength and eloquence in these heavenly words, have I filled with pity and love many hearts filled with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness : in vain have I inspired many souls with a holy horror of oppression and injustice.

“ The day of mercy has not yet arrived !

“ And as the first man, by his fall, devoted his posterity to misfortune, so would they say that I, an artisan, have devoted all artisans

to eternal miseries, and that they expiate my crime : for they alone, for eighteen centuries, have not been emancipated.

“ For eighteen centuries, the powerful and the happy say to the working classes what I said to the imploring and suffering Christ—

“ ‘ *Onwards !—Onwards !*’

“ And these people, like him, broken down with fatigue and bearing a heavy cross, say, as he did, with bitter sadness, ‘ Oh ! for pity’s sake, some moments of rest—we are exhausted !’

“ *Onwards !*

“ But we shall die on the way ; and what then will become of our little ones, old mothers ?

“ *Onwards !—Onwards !*

“ And for ages and ages they shall go on, and on, and on, and suffer—suffer, whilst no pitying voice says to us, *Enough !*

“ Alas ! such is my chastisement ; it is terrible to bear—it is twofold weighty.

“ I suffer in the name of all humanity when I see the wretched population sacrificed, without relaxation, to rude and ungrateful toil.

“ I suffer in the name of every family when I am unable—I, poor and wandering—to come to the rescue of my own, of the descendants of a dearly beloved sister.

“ But when my grief o’ermasters my strength—when I foresee for my family a danger from which I cannot save them,—thus traversing worlds, my thoughts desire to seek the woman—cursed as I am—that queen’s daughter,* who, like me, the child of an artisan, goes *onwards, onwards*, till the day of redemption.

“ Once only in a century, even as two planets approach each other in their secular revolutions, may I meet this woman—during the fatal week of the *Passion*.

“ And after this interview, full of fearful recollections and thrilling grief, we, the wandering stars of eternity, again proceed on our endless journey.

“ And she, the only one with me on earth who is present at the close of each century, and says, ‘ Again !’—she, from one end of the universe to the other, responds to my thought.

“ She, who alone in the world shews an equal destiny with myself, would also share the sole interest which has for ages consoled me. These descendants of my sister she too loves—protects them also. For them she also, too, from the east and the west, and the north and the south, goes—comes.

“ But, alas ! the invisible hand impels her also—the whirlwind hurries her away likewise. And—

“ *ONWARDS !*”

“ ‘ Let me but complete my task,’ she too exclaims.

“ *ONWARDS !*”

“ One hour—one single hour of rest !”

“ *ONWARDS !*”

“ I leave those I love on the brink of an abyss.”

“ *ONWARDS !—ONWARDS !*”

* * * * *

* According to a legend but little known, Herodias was condemned to wander till the Day of Judgment for having demanded John the Baptist’s head.

Whilst this man thus passed along the mountain, deeply abstracted in his thoughts, the evening breeze, till then but light, had increased, the wind became louder and louder, and lightning darted along the sky; whilst deep and loud howlings announced the coming storm. Suddenly, this accursed man, who could neither weep nor smile, shuddered.

No physical harm could affect him: yet he placed his hand suddenly on his heart, as if he experienced some deadly blow.

"Oh!" he cried, "I feel it! At this hour, many of my race, the descendants of my dearly beloved sister, suffer and undergo great peril:—some in uttermost India, others in America, others here in Germany. The struggle again commences—devilish passions are again excited. Oh! thou who hearest me, thou, wandering as I am, and accursed as I am, Herodias, aid me to protect them: let my prayer reach thee in the depths of the solitudes of America, where at this moment thou art! Oh! that we may be in time to save them!"

Then a remarkable phenomenon occurred.

It was now night.

This man made an effort to return quickly on his path; but an invisible form prevented him, and thrust him in the opposite direction.

At this moment the tempest burst forth in all its dark and fierce majesty.

One of those whirlwinds which uproots trees, tears up rocks, passed over the mountain-top as quick and terrible as the levin bolt.

In the midst of the howling of the storm, and the glare of the lightning, the man, with the forehead branded by his black hair, was seen hurrying along the mountain-side, and, descending with rapid strides across the rocks and trees, bent beneath the power of the hurricane.

His step was no longer slow, firm, composed; but painfully impelled, like a person hurried on by an irresistible force, or whom a fearful storm carried away in its whirlwind.

In vain did the man extend his supplicating hands towards heaven, he disappeared rapidly in the darkness of the night and the howl of the tempest.

PART III.

THE STRANGLERS.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE AJOUPA.

WHILST M. Rodin was despatching his universal correspondence from the Rue du Mileu-des-Ursins, at Paris; whilst the daughters of General Simon, after having quitted the inn of the White Falcon as fugitives, were, with Dagobert, confined as prisoners at Leipsic, other scenes, in which they were deeply interested, were passing similarly, and at the same moment, at the other extremity of the world, in the very depths of Asia, in the isle of Java, not far from the city of Batavia, the residence of M. Joshua Van Daël, one of the correspondents of M. Rodin.

Java!—that magnificent and fearful clime, where the most lovely flowers conceal the most hideous reptiles; where the most tempting fruit contain the most subtle poisons; where spring those splendid trees whose shadow is death; where the vampire, an enormous bat, sucks up the blood of the victims whose sleep he prolongs, by wafting over them an air full of freshness and perfume, for the most briskly used fan is not more rapid than the motion of the vast and scented wings of this monster.

The month of October, 1831, was nearly at its close.

It is noon, an hour almost deadly for any one who dares the burning sun, which was full in the sky, whose blue enamel was dappled with streaks of blazing light.

An *ajoupa*, a sort of sleeping pavilion, made with mats of bulrush stretched upon thick bamboos driven deeply into the ground, might be seen in the midst of the dark-blue shade cast by a tuft of trees, whose verdure was as bright as the greenest porcelain; those trees, of fantastic forms, were here bent into the shape of arcades—here straight as arrows—there arranged like parasols, and so tufty, so thick, so entangled one in the other, that the roof they formed was impenetrable to rain.

The ground, always marshy in spite of the glowing heat, disappeared here beneath the masses of bindweed, fern, and thick rushes,

* *Phansigars*, or stranglers (from the Hindoo word *phasna*, to strangle). We shall give, further on, details of this remarkable community, called "*The Good Work*."

all in the freshness and vigour of rank vegetation, and which, growing almost to the top of the *ajoupa*, concealed it like a nest amidst the grass.

Nothing could be more suffocating than this atmosphere, scented as it was with moist exhalations, which steamed up like boiling water, and impregnated as it was with the most overpowering and pungent odours,—for the cinnamon-tree, the ginger, the gardenia, the stephanotis, mingling amongst these trees and creepers, gave out in volumes their sable and aerid odours.

This cabin was covered over with large banana leaves; at one end was a square aperture, which served for a window, and trellised over very finely with vegetable fibres, to prevent the noxious reptiles and venomous insects from entering the *ajoupa*.

The vast trunk of a dead tree, still standing but very much bent, and whose top touched the roof of the *ajoupa*, sprung from the under-wood; from each cleft and crevice of its black, rugged, and moss-covered bark, there appeared a peculiar and fantastic flower—the wing of a butterfly is not of more fragile tissue, of more brilliant purple, or more velvety black—those unknown birds we see in dreams have not forms more bizarre than these orchydes, winged flowers, which always seem ready to fly away from their slender and leafless stalks: the curling cactus, flexible and rounded, and which seem like apples, also clung round the trunk of this tree, and their green arms, laden with large bell-flowers, of a silvery white, shaded within by a brilliant orange, hung down in clusters, shedding a strong odour of vanilla.

A little snake, of a blood-red colour, about as thick as a quill, and five or six inches in length, hung with his head half out of one of these enormous perfumed cups, in which he lay nestled and coiled.

At the bottom of the *ajoupa* was a young man, stretched on a mat and soundly asleep.

To contemplate his clear yellow and gold-coloured complexion, he might have been taken for a statue of pale copper, on which a sun-beam rested; his attitude was simple and graceful—his right arm was folded under his head, which reposed upon it, and was somewhat raised and in profile; his large dress of white muslin, with long hanging sleeves, displayed his chest, worthy of Antinous; marble is not more firm and solid than his skin, of which the dark hue contrasted singularly with the whiteness of his dress. On his wide and powerful chest was a deep scar, which he had received from a musket-ball when defending the life of General Simon, the father of Rose and Blanche.

He wore round his neck a small medal similar to that which the two sisters possessed.

It was Djalma the Indian.

His features were equally noble and beautiful; his hair was of a blue-black, parted over the forehead, and falling wavy, but not curling, on his shoulder; his eyebrows, boldly and perfectly drawn, were also of jet black, as were the long eyelids whose shade was thrown over his beardless cheeks; his lips, of a dark red, half open, gave forth an appropriate sigh, whilst his slumber was heavy and painful, as the heat became more and more suffocating.

Without the silence was profound. There was not a breath of air stirring.

After a few moments, however, the vast creepers which covered the ground began to move almost imperceptibly, as if some animal slowly creeping along had shaken their stalks.

From time to time this slight movement ceased, and all was again still as death.

After several intervals between this motion and its cessation, a human head appeared in the midst of the rushes at a short distance from the trunk of the decayed tree.

It was a man of sinister aspect, with a complexion of greenish bronze, his long hair twisted about his head, his eyes glaring with savage feeling, and a countenance replete with intelligence and ferocity.

Holding his breath, he remained for a moment motionless, and then, advancing on his hands and knees, pushed aside the leaves so gently that not a sound was heard; and thus progressing, until he reached the sloping trunk of the dead tree whose top reached nearly to the top of the ajoupa.

This man, a Malay by origin, and belonging to the sect of Stranglers, having again carefully listened, drew himself almost entirely out of the underwood. Excepting a sort of white cotton drawers fastened round his loins by a handkerchief of most gaudy colours, he was entirely naked, whilst a thick dressing of oil was smeared all over his bronzed, supple, and nervous limbs.

Stretching himself upon the vast bole of the tree on the side farthest from the hut, and thus concealed by the bulk of the tree almost overgrown by the creepers, he began to climb it with extreme care and patience. In the undulations of his backbone, the flexibility of his movements, and his enduring strength, the extent of which must have been terrible, there was something which resembled the stilly and treacherous step of the tiger crawling to his prey.

Reaching at length, and unobserved, the part of the tree which in its bend almost touched the roof of the cabin, he was not more than a foot distance from the small window. Then, stretching forth his head with the utmost caution, he cast his eyes into the interior of the hut, and tried to discover some mode by which he could enter.

At the sight of Djalma in a deep sleep, the bright eyes of the Strangler shone with redoubled brilliancy, and a nervous contraction, or rather, a silent and scornful laugh, curling the two corners of his mouth, drew them up towards his cheek-bones, and displayed two rows of teeth filed triangularly like the teeth of a saw, and dyed of a jet and shining black.

Djalma was sleeping so, and so near the door of the ajoupa (which opened inwards from without), that if any one had attempted to open the door ever so little, he would have awakened in an instant.

The Strangler, whose body was hidden by the tree, desiring to examine the interior of the cabin a little more closely, leaned forward, and, to maintain his position, placed his hand lightly on the sill of the opening which served for a window: his motion shook the large flower of the cactus, at the bottom of which the small snake lay coiled, and, darting out, he twined rapidly round the Strangler's wrist.

Pain and surprise extracted from him a slight cry; and, as he retreated behind the tree to which he still clung, he saw that Djalma had stirred.

The young Indian, still keeping his posture of repose, half opened his eyes, turned his head towards the little window, and breathed forth a very deep sigh, for the concentrated heat under this thick vault of humid verdure was intolerable.

Djalma had scarcely stirred, when there was heard from behind the tree that brief, sharp, and shrill cry, which the bird of paradise utters when he seizes his prey, and which resembles the pheasant's mate.

This cry, often repeated, became weaker and weaker, as if the beautiful bird was on the wing. And Djalma, believing that he had discovered the cause of the noise which had aroused him for the moment, slightly stretched the arm on which his head rested, and went off to sleep again almost without changing his position.

For some minutes the most profound silence reigned again in this solitude: all was silent.

The Strangler, by his skilful imitation of the cry of a bird, had managed to repair the imprudent exclamation of surprise and agony which the reptile's sting had wrung from him. When he imagined that Djalma would be again asleep, he carefully protruded his head, and saw that the youthful Indian was again slumbering soundly.

Then descending the tree with the same precautions he had hitherto observed, although his left hand was swollen from the bite of the serpent, he disappeared amidst the tufts of rushes.

At this moment there was heard a distant singing, in a monotonous and melancholy voice.

The Strangler stood up, listened attentively, and his face assumed an expression of surprise and sinister meaning.

The sound drew nearer to the cabin.

At the end of a few seconds an Indian appeared in an opening, coming straight to the spot where the Strangler was hidden.

He then took a long and thin cord which was encircled round his waist, at one of the extremities of which was a ball of lead, in shape and size like an egg. After having tied the other end of this string round his right wrist, the Strangler again listened, and then disappeared, groping his way along the tall grass in the direction of the Indian, who came on slowly, singing his plaintive and gentle ditty.

He was a young man, hardly twenty years of age, the slave of Djalma, and had the dark skin of his country. His waist was encircled with a gay handkerchief, which confined his blue cotton vest, and he wore a small turban, with rings of silver in his ears and round his wrists. He was bringing a message to his master, who, during the heat of the day, was reposing in this ajoupa, which was at some distance from the house in which he resided.

When he reached a point where the path divided, the slave, without hesitating, took that which led to the hut, from which he was then hardly forty paces distant.

One of those enormous butterflies of Java, whose wings, when extended, measure from six to eight inches across, and displaying two rays of gold, arising from a body of ultramarine, was flitting from leaf to leaf, and had just settled on a bush of gardenias within reach of the young Indian.

He ceased his song, stopped, put out his foot carefully, then his hand, and seized the butterfly.

At this instant, the sinister visage of the Strangler arose before him; he heard a whistling like that of a sling, and then felt a cord, thrown with equal swiftness and power, encircle his neck with a triple fold, and, at the same moment, the lead with which it was loaded struck him violently on the back of his head.

The assault was so sudden and unexpected, that Djalma's attendant could not utter one cry—one groan.

He staggered—the Strangler gave a violent twist to his cord—the dark visage of the slave became a black purple, and he fell on his knees, tossing his arms wildly in the air.

The Strangler turned him over, and twisted his cord so violently that the blood rushed through the skin. The victim made a few convulsive struggles, and all was over.

During this rapid but brief agony, the murderer, kneeling beside his victim, watched his blighted convulsions, fixing his glaring eyes on him, and appearing as if enjoying an ecstasy of delight. His nostrils expanded, the veins in his temples and neck swelled thickly, and the same sinister laugh, which had curled his lips when he saw Djalma sleeping, again displayed his black and pointed fangs, whilst a convulsion of the jaw made them chatter against each other.

But soon he crossed his arms over his panting chest, bent his forehead, and murmured forth mysterious words, which seemed either an invocation or a prayer, and then again he resumed that savage contemplation with which the sight of the dead carcass inspired him.

The hyæna and the tiger-cat, who always crouch beside the prey they have surprised in the chase before they devour it, have not a look more fierce, bloody, and rejoicing, than had this man.

But, recollecting that his task was not yet accomplished, he tore himself away with regret from this sight of death, and, disentangling his cord from the neck of his victim, he restored it to its place around his waist, dragged the dead corpse out of the pathway, and, without attempting to despoil it of its rings of silver, hid the body in a thick bush of rushes.

Then the Strangler, again going on hands and knees, reached Djalma's cabin, which was made of mats fastened to bamboos.

After having listened very attentively, he drew from his waist a knife, whose keen and glittering blade was wrapped in a leaf of banana, and cut in a mat an incision about three feet long. This he did so rapidly, and with a blade so trenchant, that the slight noise of a diamond over glass sounds more loudly.

Seeing through this opening, which he intended to pass through, that Djalma still slept, the Strangler glided into the hut with unhesitating boldness.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TATTOOING.

THE sky, which until then was of a transparent azure, became overcast, and the sun was partially hidden by a red and lowering mist.



THE TATTOOING.

P. 125.

This strange light cast curious shadows on all objects, and every thing seemed as a landscape would do viewed through a piece of copper-coloured glass.

In these climates, this phenomenon, united with the increase of the fierce heat, always announces the approach of a tempest.

From time to time there was a sulphurous smell, then the leaves, slightly stirred by the electric current, trembled on their stalks, then fell into a silence and utter want of motion.

The weight of this burning atmosphere, saturated with acrid perfumes, became almost insupportable. Large beads of sweat dropped from Djalma's brow, plunged as he was in enervating sleep, which was no refreshment or repose, but an overwhelming pain.

The Strangler, gliding along the sides of the ajoupa, and crawling on his stomach to Djalma's mat, at first stooped low beside him, and then raised himself up, occupying the smallest possible space.

Then began a fearful scene, surrounded by mystery and in silence.

The life of Djalma was at the Strangler's mercy, who, drawing himself together, and supporting his whole weight upon his hands and knees, remained with extended neck and fixed gaze, like a wild beast about to spring upon his prey, a slight convulsive tremor in his lower jaw alone disturbing his bronzed countenance; but quickly were his hideous features distorted by the struggle passing within him between the thirst for blood, the enjoyment of murder, doubly excited by the recent assassination of the slave, and the prohibition he had received not to aim at the life of Djalma, although the motive which had brought him to the ajoupa was fraught with evil designs the young Indian would have dreaded far more than death itself.

Twice had the Strangler, whose looks kindled momentarily into increased ferocity, supporting himself only on his right hand, seized the extremity of his fatal cord, but the murderous design failed before the all-powerful influence which bore irresistible control over the mind of the Malay, and the extended hand was involuntarily withheld even at the moment when his savage soul most craved for blood; and, in his insensate craving for murder, he allowed precious moments to escape, which might involve not only the success of his mission, but his very life; for Djalma, whose vigour, address, and courage, were every where known and estimated, might awake, and, though unarmed, prove a formidable adversary.

As, at length, these reflections forced themselves on the mind of the Strangler, with a deep and bitter sigh he resigned himself to the stern necessity of allowing his victim to live, and prepared himself to accomplish the task assigned him,—a task which, to any but him, would have appeared utterly impossible. Let the reader judge for himself.

Djalma was sleeping with his face turned toward the left hand, his head supported on his arm. It was therefore requisite to induce him, with waking, to alter his position by turning in a contrary direction; that is to say, towards the door, that, in the event of his suddenly awakening, his first glance might not fall on the Malay; and, in order to effect this, it was requisite the latter should remain some time in the pavilion.

Meanwhile the heavens became more overcast, and the heat became

intense. All conspired to prolong the deep slumber of the prince and to favour the designs of the Strangler, who, kneeling beside the young Indian, passed his quick fingers, previously rendered soft and supple by oiling them, over the eyelids, forehead, and temples of Djalma, managing the operation so delicately and skilfully, as to render the contact of the two skins scarcely perceptible.

As the magnetic incantation proceeded, the large drops of perspiration which bedewed the countenance of the sleeper became more abundantly large; he sighed heavily, and a convulsive tremor passed over his features; for these light touches, though insufficient to break his trance-like slumber, yet evidently caused him a feeling of great uneasiness and discomfort.

Watching him with an eager, anxious eye, the Strangler continued his manœuvre with so much patience, perseverance, and dexterity, that Djalma, whose sleep remained unbroken, unable longer to endure the oppressive sensations he experienced without being in any way conscious of their origin, yet restless and uncomfortable, mechanically threw his right arm across his face, as though to free himself from the annoyance of some troublesome insect which had found admission to the ajoupa, but, yielding to the enervating effects of the heat which prevailed, his uplifted hand fell heavy and powerless on his breast.

Perceiving by this favourable circumstance that he was proceeding towards the full accomplishment of his design, the Strangler redoubled his manœuvres and increased his applications to the temples and forehead of his victim; and this he effected with so much address, that Djalma, yielding more and more to the drowsiness it inspired, and having neither will nor power sufficient to direct his hand towards his face, mechanically moved his head, which sunk languidly on his right shoulder, as though seeking by this change of position to escape from the disagreeable feelings which surrounded him. This point achieved, the Malay now went boldly to work, but, anxious to render the slumber he had partially disturbed as sound as possible, he sought to imitate the deadly practice of the vampire, which fans its prey into the sleep ending but in death, by the undulations of its wings. So did the Strangler continue gently to wave and agitate his hands, with the rapid motion of a fan, over the burning countenance of the young Indian.

At this delightful and unexpected change from oppressive heat to refreshing coolness, the features of the prince assumed a look of soft repose and peaceful enjoyment; his chest expanded, his respiration became easy and gentle, while his half-open lips seemed to court the beneficent breeze which had just arisen; and his sleep became so much the sounder, as it now was the result of perfect ease and enjoyment, instead of being (as before) in a manner forced and constrained.

A sudden flash of lightning illumined the leafy screen which encircled the ajoupa; and the Malay, fearing that the noise of the accompanying thunder might awaken the prince, lost not an instant in the fulfilment of his project.

Djalma now lay extended on his back, with his head on his right shoulder, while his right arm was extended at full length. The Strangler, concealing himself on the left side of the bed, ceased by degrees to fan the prince, and with incredible dexterity proceeded

to lift up the long white muslin sleeve of his dress almost to the shoulder.

Then, drawing from the pocket of his cotton drawers a small brass box, he took from it a needle of an almost indescribable fineness and sharpness, and a piece of a dark-looking root, into which he plunged the needle repeatedly, and at each injection there issued forth a white viscous liquid.

When the Strangler deemed the needle sufficiently imbued with the juice of the root, he bent over his sleeping victim, and blew gently upon the internal portion of Djalma's arm, in order to induce him to extend it to receive the additional coolness by his breath; then with the point of his fine needle he traced on the arm of the prince certain mysterious and symbolical signs and characters.

All this was executed with so much skill and quickness, that Djalma was utterly unconscious of the operation, and felt not the fine and delicate point of the instrument, or the slight puncture it made as it slightly wounded the epidermis.

At first the marks traced by the Strangler were of a faint pink colour, so pale as to be scarcely visible, and as fine as a hair; but so potent and penetrating was the power of the juice into which the needle had been dipped, that, as it spread beneath the skin and mingled with the fine veins it passed over, the colour deepened by degrees, until, at the lapse of a few hours, the at first indistinct and almost invisible characters assumed a deep blood-coloured hue, recognisable at the quickest glance.

The Strangler, having thus successfully performed his mission, surveyed the slumbering Indian with a look of brutal satisfaction, and, bestowing a last lingering look of murderous ferocity, crawled away as silently as he had entered, and, regaining the opening which had served to admit him within the hut, he carefully closed the aperture, so as to effectually prevent any suspicion of his visit, and disappeared in the mazes of the forest, just as the loud thunder began to peal forth its threatening notes.*

* The letters on India by the late Victor Jacquemont contain the following remarks on the almost incredible dexterity of these men. He says:—

“They crawl on the ground in the deepest ditches, in the furrows of the fields, and repair any false step they may make, or any accidental noise they may occasion, by promptly imitating the cry of a jackal or some bird of prey, when a confederate will almost immediately respond by giving a similar note, as though from some animal in the distance; they annoy the sleeper by various sounds, by different modes of touching him, and can always oblige their victim to assume the attitude and position best suited to their designs.”

M. le Comte Edward de Warren, in his admirable work on British India, which we shall have further occasion to quote, thus expresses himself:—

“These men,” observes he, “carry their address so far as to be able to deprive you of the very sheet on which you are sleeping, without in the least disturbing your slumber; and this is not intended figuratively, but as a literal fact. The managements of the BHEEL are those of a wily serpent. Should an individual be sleeping in his tent, with a servant stretched outside each door conducting to it, the Bheel will crouch down in the shadow, and carefully listen to the respiration of all within and without the tent; directly the European sleeps, he is sure of his game; he knows full well the Asiatic will not long resist the influence of the drowsy god. At the auspicious moment for his design, he softly cuts a round piece from the covering of the tent, sufficiently large to admit his body, which he slips through so stealthily and silently as not to disturb a single grain of sand. He is entirely naked, his body well

CHAPTER XX.

THE SMUGGLER.

THE storm of the morning had long since ceased.

The sun was declining, some hours having elapsed since the Strangler had introduced himself into the pavilion of Djalma, and tattooed him with the mysterious sign during his slumber.

A cavalier was advancing rapidly in the midst of a long avenue bordered with thickly growing trees.

Sheltered by this thick vault of verdure, a thousand birds hailed, by their warblings and their joyous twitterings, this glorious evening; green and red parrots climbed with beak and claws to the tops of the rare acacias; the *maina-mainon*, a large bird with bright blue plumage, and with thin long necks and tails of burnished gold, pursued the lories, black like velvet, shaded with orange colour; the turtle-doves of Kolo, of a rainbow violet colour, cooed loudly beside the birds of paradise, whose brilliant feathers united the prismatic tints of the emerald, ruby, topaz, and sapphire.

This avenue, which was rising ground, terminated with a small lake, on whose surface, here and there, dipped the green shadows of the tamarind and the tatupa trees, whilst the water, calm and clear, shewed, as though incrustated in a mass of dark-blue crystal (so motionless were they), silver fish, with fins of purple and gold; fish with fins of scarlet, all immobile on the top of the lake, on which gleamed a dazzling sunbeam, which seemed to enjoy the light and warmth that were diffused amongst them; a thousand insects, living jewels with wings of fire, glided, dived, flew, and buzzed in this transparent mirror, which reflected, to a vast depth, the variegated shades of foliage and aquatic plants with which the banks were overgrown.

It is impossible to depict the entire or part of this exuberance of nature, so luxuriant with colours, perfumes and sunlight, and serving, as we might say, for the frame to the picture of the youthful horseman at the end of the avenue.

It was Djalma.

He had not yet perceived that the Strangler had traced on his left arm certain ineffaceable marks.

His Javanese steed, of moderate size, was full of fire and vigour, and black as midnight. A piece of scarlet cloth formed the saddle,

oiled, and a small poignard suspended round his neck. Crouching down beside the bed, he, with a coolness and dexterity almost passing belief, begins folding the sheet on which the sleeper is extended, in fine folds close to the body lying on it; then, passing to the other side of the couch, he commences a series of magnetic touches and light tickling, to avoid which the sleeper instinctively draws himself away, and ultimately turns completely round, leaving the sheet at the mercy of his enemy—should he awake, and endeavour to seize the intruder, he grasps but a naked oiled body, which slips from his hold like an eel; but if he unhappily succeed in holding him, then the dagger of the assassin is plunged in his heart, and while he falls a corpse to the ground, his murderer escapes unobserved and undetected.

and, to restrain the impetuosity of his spirited mare, Djalma made use of a light bit of steel, whose reins of scarlet-twisted silk were light as a thread.

None of those horsemen so admirably ensulptured on the frieze of the Parthenon is more gracefully and proudly mounted than was this young Indian, whose fine countenance, lighted up by the rays of the setting sun, was full of happiness and tranquillity. His eye sparkled with delight; his nostrils were dilated; his lips half opened, as he inspired with freedom the perfumed breeze of the flowers and scented shrubs, the more delicious as coming after the heavy rain which had succeeded the mid-day storm. A crimson cap, resembling the Greek head-dress, covered the black hair of Djalma, and brought out the golden hue of his complexion. His neck was bare, and he was clad in his muslin caftan, with wide sleeves girdled by a scarlet band; his drawers were full, and of white tissue, reaching just below the knees, leaving his rounded and polished legs half naked, whilst their graceful contour, quite *à l'antique*, was seen pressed against his horse's sides; those powerful limbs preserving his seat, as he had no stirrups; his small and narrow foot bearing a sandal of red morocco leather.

The variation of his fancies, by turns impetuous and restrained, were exhibited in the paces which his horse displayed—sometimes bold and rapid, as if his imagination had thrown away its reins—and then calm and deliberate, as though reflection had succeeded to impetuosity.

In this wayward course his every movement was replete with a proud, independent, and wild grace.

Djalma, dispossessed of his paternal territory by the English, and at first imprisoned after his father's death, who had been killed in battle (as M. Joshua Van Daël wrote from Batavia to M. Rodin), had been subsequently set at liberty.

Then, leaving continental India, accompanied by General Simon, who had not quitted the environs of the prison which contained the son of his old friend the king Kadja-Sing, the young Indian came to Batavia, the place of his mother's birth, to obtain possession of the modest inheritance of his maternal ancestors.

In this inheritance, so long disdained or forgotten by his father, were found many important papers, and the medal resembling that worn by Rose and Blanche.

General Simon, surprised as well as charmed at this discovery, which not only established a bond of relationship between his wife and the mother of Djalma, but seemed to hold out such great advantages to the latter hereafter, leaving Djalma at Batavia to conclude certain affairs of business, had gone to Sumatra, a neighbouring island, where he hoped to find a ship going straight and speedily to Europe; for it was necessary, at all hazards, that the young Indian should be in Paris on the 13th of February, 1832. If he should find such a vessel, he was to return instantly to find Djalma, who was waiting his arrival daily, and was then going to the pier of Batavia in the hopes of seeing the father of Rose and Blanche arrive by the packet from Sumatra.

A few words on the infancy and youth of the son of Kadja-Sing are necessary.

Having lost his mother when he was very young, he was simply and rudely brought up, and as a child had accompanied his father to the great tiger-hunts, as dangerous as battles; and, hardly a youth, he had followed his parent to the wars undertaken in defence of his territory, fierce and bloody as those wars were.

Having thus lived, since his mother's death, in the depths of forests and his paternal mountains, where, in the midst of incessant combat, his vigorous and ingenuous nature had preserved itself pure and intact, never was the surname of *Generous* more fitly bestowed. Prince, he was really a prince—a rare occurrence; and, during the time of his captivity, he had won the favour of his English gaolers by his calm and uncomplaining dignity: no reproach, no lament, escaped his lips; he maintained a proud, but not sullen demeanour, and never changed his mood until the moment when he was set free.

Accustomed until then to a patriarchal existence, or a warrior in the mountain holds of his native land, which he had left only to pass a few months in prison, Djalma knew actually nothing of civilised life.

But, without positively having defects, Djalma pushed the qualities of his mind to extremes; of an inflexible obstinacy as to his pledged word, devoted to death itself, blindly confiding, good to a perfect forgetfulness of self, he was inflexible towards any one who would prove himself an ingrate, liar, or a traitor—he would have displayed summary justice towards perjury or disloyalty, because, had he himself been foresworn or treacherous, he would have deemed his life the just forfeit.

He was, in a word, a man whose feelings were uncompromising and in full integrity. Such an one, opposed to the arrangements, calculations, falsenesses, deceits, tricks, restrictions, and hypocrisy of very refined society—that of Paris, for instance—would have been a perfect study for a philosopher.

We advance this hypothesis, because, since his journey from Java to France had been decided on, Djalma had but one fixed, constant, and concentrated thought—to *be at Paris*.

At Paris, that fairy city, of which, even in Asia, that fairy land was discoursed of in such glowing terms.

What especially inflamed the young and heated imagination of the young Indian was the French women—the Parisiennes—so lovely, so winning—such marvels of elegance, grace, and fascination, who eclipsed (as the Asiatics said) the magnificence of the capital of the civilised world.

At this moment, during this splendid and glowing evening, surrounded by flowers and delicious perfumes, Djalma was thinking of those enchanting creatures whom his fancy clothed in his own brightest hues.

He seemed to see at the end of the avenue, in the midst of the sheet of golden light, which the trees enclosed in their frame of tufted verdure, lovely and entrancing forms, graceful and captivating figures, who smiled upon him, and sent kisses to him from the tops of their rosy fingers!

No longer able to contain himself, and carried away by the heat of his imagination at features so lovely, Djalma uttered a deep and



MAHAL AND DJALMA.

P. 129.

almost savage note of joy; and, at the same moment, his beautiful steed bounded in the air, as though participating in his ecstasy.

A piercing sun-ray darted at this moment through the sombre vault of the alley, and lighted it all up.

For some minutes a man had been advancing quickly along a path which, at its extremity, cut diagonally the avenue in which Djalma was.

The man stopped for a moment in the shade, contemplating Djalma with astonishment.

It was indeed charming to see, in the midst of this radiant glow of light, a young man so handsome, so full of fire, so joyous, with his white and flowing raiment, so gracefully seated on his proud black steed, who covered with foam his red bridle, and whose long tail and thick mane flowed in the evening wind.

But, by a contrast which follows all human desires, Djalma soon felt the return of an indefinable and subduing melancholy, and, lifting his hand to his moist and downcast eyes, let fall his reins on the neck of the fine-tempered animal that bore him.

The horse stopped instantly, stretched out his swan-like neck, and turned his head half towards the individual whom he saw in the path.

This man was called Mahal the Smuggler, and he was dressed like an European sailor, with a jacket and trousers of white linen, a wide red girdle, and a straw hat, very wide in the brim; his countenance was tanned and strongly marked, but, although he was forty years old, he was entirely beardless.

"What seek you?" said the Indian.

"You are the son of Kadja-Sing?"

"Again I say, what seek you?"

"The friend of General Simon."

"General Simon!" exclaimed Djalma.

"You were going to meet him, as you do every evening since you expected him from Sumatra?"

"Yes; but how know you that?" said the Indian, looking at the smuggler with surprise and curiosity.

"He ought to reach Batavia to-day or to-morrow."

"Do you come from him?"

"Perchance I may," said Mahal, with a distrustful air. "But are you really the son of Kadja-Sing?"

"I am, I tell you. But when did you see General Simon?"

"If you are the son of Kadja-Sing," replied Mahal, still looking at Djalma with a suspicious eye, "what is your surname?"

"They called my father '*The Father of the Generous*,'" replied the young Indian; and a shade of sadness stole over his handsome features.

These words appeared to begin to convince Mahal of the identity of Djalma; however, as he was anxious to be well assured, he replied,

"You should have received, two days ago, a letter from General Simon, written from Sumatra?"

"I did; but why those questions?"

"That I may be quite certain that you are the son of Kadja-Sing, and then I will execute the orders I have received."

"From whom?"

"From General Simon."

"But where is he?"

"When I am certain that you are the Prince Djalma, I will tell you. I was informed that you would be mounted on a black horse with red housings; but——"

"By my mother's shade! will you speak?"

"I will say every thing, if you tell me what printed paper there was inclosed in the last letter which General Simon sent you from Sumatra?"

"It was an extract from a French newspaper."

"And did it announce good or bad news for the general?"

"Good news; for it stated that, during his absence, the title and rank which the emperor had last conferred upon him had been recognised and confirmed, and that the same recognition had taken place with respect to all his brothers in arms exiled as well as himself."

"Now I am sure you are the Prince Djalma," said the smuggler, after a moment's reflection; "and I will tell you all. General Simon landed last night at Java. but in a desert spot on the other side."

"In a desert spot?"

"That he might be concealed."

"He," exclaimed Djalma, in great surprise, "conceal himself!—and why?"

"I do not know."

"But where is he?" said Djalma, with increased anxiety.

"Three leagues off, on the sea-shore, in the ruins of Tchandi."

"He forced to conceal himself!" repeated Djalma, whose countenance was expressive of deep alarm and anxiety.

"I am not sure, but I think he was engaged in some duel in Sumatra," said the smuggler, with an air of mystery.

"A duel! and with whom?"

"I do not know. I am not at all sure about it. But you know the ruins of Tehandi?"

"I do."

"Well, the general awaits you there, and desired me to bring you word."

"You then have come from Sumatra with him?"

"I was the pilot of the little smuggling coaster from which he landed last night on the lone shore. He knew that you came every day to look for him on the road to the Mole, and I was sure to meet with you. He gave me the particulars about the last letter you received from him, and which I have mentioned to you that you might know I came from him; if he could have written to you, he would have done so."

"And he did not say why he was obliged to conceal himself?"

"Not a word to me. But, from something that fell, I suspect, as I told you, that there was a duel."

Knowing the quick temper and high courage of General Simon, Djalma thought the suspicions of the smuggler were very probable.

After a moment's silence he said to him,

"Can you lead my horse back for me? My house is outside the city—down there—hidden by the trees, near the new mosque. My horse would be an obstacle in going up the mountain of Tchandi;—I would reach it quicker on foot."

"I know very well where you live, for General Simon told me, and I should have gone on to you had we not met here. Give me your horse."



M. JOSHUA VAN DAEL.

P. 131.

Djalma leaped lightly down, threw the bridle to Mahal, unrolled one end of his girdle, and taking out a small silk purse gave it to the smuggler, saying,

“ You are faithful and obedient—there, it is not much, but I have no more.”

“ Kadja-Sing was well named ‘ *The Father of the Generous,* ’ ” said the smuggler, bowing respectfully and gratefully ; and he took the route which led to Batavia, leading Djalma’s courser by his bridle.

The young Indian turned down the path, and, walking with great speed, bent his steps towards the mountains where the ruins of Tchandi were, but which he could not reach before night.

CHAPTER XXI.

M. JOSHUA VAN DAEL.

M. JOSHUA VAN DAEL, a Dutch merchant, correspondent of M. Rodin, was born at Batavia (capital of the island of Java). His parents had sent him to be educated at Pondicherry, in a celebrated religious house long established in that city, and belonging to the Society of Jesus. He was then affiliated to the community as a *professed of three vows*, or lay member, commonly styled *temporal coadjutor*.

M. Joshua was a man whose probity was considered perfect ; he was extremely exact and punctilious in all matters ; cold, discreet, impenetrable, and of singular skill and sagacity. His financial operations were almost always successful, for a protecting power gave him, from time to time, a knowledge of events which had the control of vast commercial transactions. The religious house of Pondicherry was interested in his business, and entrusted to him the exportation and exchange of the produce of many extensive estates which it possessed in this colony.

Speaking seldom, listening always, never discussing, exceedingly affable, giving little, but with care and discretion, M. Joshua inspired, in the absence of sympathy, that cold respect which men of his character usually inspire. Instead of yielding to the influence of colonial manners, so often libertine and dissolute, he appeared to live with great regularity, and his exterior presented an austere appearance, which imposed on the world at large.

The following scene was passing in Batavia whilst Djalma was on his way to the ruins of Tchandi, in the hope of meeting General Simon there.

M. Joshua had just entered his private closet, where were rows of shelves piled with memorandum-cases and large ledgers, and cash-books open on the desks.

The only window of this closet, situated on the ground-floor, looked on a small empty court-yard, and was protected from without by thick iron bars, whilst a movable blind was substituted for panes of glass, in consequence of the great heat of the climate of Java.

Joshua, having placed on his desk a wax-light enclosed in a glass shade, looked at the clock.

"Half-past nine o'clock," said he; "Mahal will soon be here."

So saying, he went out, crossed an antechamber, and, opening a second thick door, strengthened with large-headed nails, he entered the little court-yard with much precaution, that he might not be heard by the people of his establishment, and then drew back the secret bolt which fastened a folding-door with a large bar six feet long, and defended by plates of iron.

Leaving this open he returned to his cabinet, after having successively and carefully closed after him all the other doors.

Joshua then seated himself at his desk, and took from a drawer a long letter, or rather memoir, begun some time back, and written day by day. (It is unnecessary to say that this letter, addressed to M. Rodin, at Paris, in the Rue du Milieu-des-Ursins, was anterior to the liberation of Djalma and his arrival at Batavia.)

The memoir in question was also addressed to M. Rodin, and thus did M. Joshua continue it:—

"Fearing the return of General Simon, about whom I had been instructed by intercepting his letters—(I have already said that I had contrived to have myself appointed as his agent and correspondent)—letters which I read, and then forwarded, apparently *untouched*, to Djalma, I have been compelled, by time and the pressure of circumstances, to have recourse to extreme means, at the same time that I have altogether preserved appearances, and rendered signal service to humanity: this latter reason especially decided me.

"A new danger, moreover, imperiously ruled my conduct. The steam-boat, *The Ruyter*, reached here yesterday, and sails to-morrow.

"This vessel goes to Europe by the Arabian Gulf; her passengers disembark at the Isthmus of Suez, which they cross, and at Alexandria they take another vessel, which conveys them to France.

"This journey, as rapid as it is direct, only occupies seven or eight weeks: this is the end of October, and Prince Djalma might, therefore, reach France about the beginning of the month of January; and after your instructions (the cause of which I am ignorant of, but which I execute with zeal and submission) it was requisite, at all hazards, to prevent his departure; as you told me one of the gravest interests of our *society* would be thereby compromised by the arrival of this young Indian at Paris before the 13th of February. If I succeed, as I hope and believe, in making him miss the *Ruyter*, it will be absolutely impossible that he can reach France before the month of April, for the *Ruyter* is the only vessel which makes this quick and direct route, all the other ships being from four to five months in reaching Europe.

"Before I tell you the means I have been forced to use to retain Prince Djalma here—means, of which at this moment I do not know the result, good or bad, I should tell you a few facts.

"There has been discovered, in Anglo-India, a community whose members called themselves *Brothers of the Good Work*, or *Phansegars*, which simply means Stranglers; these murderers do not shed blood—they strangle their victims, less to rob them than to obey a homicidal vocation and the laws of an infernal deity, called by them *Bohwanie*.

“I cannot give you a better idea of this horrible sect than by transcribing a few lines of the introduction to Colonel Sleeman's report, who has tracked and followed up this murderous confraternity with indefatigable zeal. The report was published two months ago: this is the extract, and the colonel himself speaks:—

“‘From 1822 to 1824, when I was charged with the magistracy and civil administration of the district of Nersingpouur, there was not a murder, or the smallest theft by a common bandit, but I was instantly informed of it. And if any one had come and told me, at this time, that a band of assassins, by profession and inheritance, lived in the village of Kundelia, about four miles at most from my court of justice; that the lovely groves of the village of Mundesoor, a day's march from my residence, was one of the most fearful centres of assassination in all India; that vast bands of ‘the Brothers of the Good Work,’ coming from Indostan and the Dehan, annually met in these thickets, as at a solemn festival, to carry on their infernal calling on every road and bye-path which crossed this locality, I should have taken my informant for a madman, who had been alarmed at some silly invention: yet nothing was more true, for travellers by hundreds were every year interred in the groves of Mundesoor: a whole tribe of assassins lived at my very door whilst I was supreme magistrate of the province, and extended their butcheries to the cities of Poonah and Hyderabad!’

“‘I shall never forget that, to convince me, one of the Strangler chiefs, who had denounced his associates, exhumed, from the very spot on which I had pitched my tent, thirteen carcasses, and offered to dig up from the soil all around an unlimited number.’*

“These few lines from Colonel Sleeman's report will give you some idea of this terrible society, whose laws, duties, and customs, are wholly at variance with all laws, human and divine. Devoted to one another, even to heroism, blindly subservient to their chiefs, who style themselves the immediate representatives of their dark divinity, considering as foes all who are not united with them, adding to their numbers in all quarters by a fearful system of proselytism, these apostles of a religion of murder go about preaching in secrecy their abominable doctrines, and inclosing India in a vast net.

“Three of their principal chiefs and one of their adepts, flying from the hot pursuit of the English governor, which they contrived to elude, had reached the northern point of India at the Straits of Malacca, which is but a short distance from Java. A smuggler and pirate, affiliated with them and named *Mahal*, took them on board his coasting bark, and conveyed them hither, where, for some time, they believed themselves in safety, for, according to the smuggler's advice, they took refuge in a thick forest, in which are several ruined temples, whose numerous caverns afford them a shelter.

“Amongst these chiefs, all three of remarkable intelligence, is one particularly, Faringhea by name, who is a man of extraordinary energy, and of qualities so superior as to make him a man to be feared. He is a *Métis*, that is, the son of a white father and Indian mother. He has dwelt long in cities where Europeans have con-

* This extract is from the excellent work of M. le Comte Edward de Warren on British India, in 1831.

ducted business, and speaks English and French very well; the other two chiefs are a Negro and an Indian: the adept is a Malay.

“Mahal, the smuggler, thinking that he might obtain a good reward by betraying these three chiefs and their disciple, came to me, knowing, as all the world knows, my extreme intimacy with a person who is most influential with our governor, and offered, two days since, on certain conditions, to deliver up the Negro, the Métis, the Indian, and the Malay. His conditions were, a considerable sum of money, and the guarantee of a passage on board some ship going to Europe or America, in order to escape from the implacable vengeance of the Stranglers.

“I instantly seized on this opportunity of delivering up to human justice these three murderers, and I promised Mahal that I would intercede for him with the governor, on certain conditions on my side, very innocent in themselves, but concerning Djalma. I will tell you my project at length if it be successful, which I shall soon know, as I expect Mahal here almost immediately.

“Waiting until I close my despatches, which will go to-morrow for Europe by the *Ruyter*, on board of which I shall pay for *Mahal's* passage, if he is successful, I will advert to another subject which is very important.

“In my last letter, in which I told you of the death of Djalma's father and the young man's imprisonment by the English, I requested information as to the solvency of the Baron Tripeaud, a banker and manufacturer at Paris, who has a branch-establishment at Calcutta. Now this information is no longer requisite to me if what I learn is unfortunately true, and, in that case, you will act accordingly.

“His house at Calcutta owes us, *i. e.* to me and our college at Pondicherry, very large sums of money, and I am informed that M. Tripeaud's affairs are in a most embarrassed and ruinous condition. Desirous of establishing a concern which should ruin, by its unrelenting rivalry, an immense business, long since commenced by M. François Hardy, a most extensive manufacturer, I learn that M. Tripeaud has already sunk vast capital in his undertaking, and lost it all. He has, no doubt, done M. Hardy considerable harm, but, at the same time, he has greatly injured his own property, and if he fails, his disaster will be greatly detrimental to us, as he owes us and our clients very considerable sums of money.

“In this state of things it would be very desirable that all possible means in our power should be employed and directed to shake and injure the credit of the house of François Hardy, already hurt by the fierce opposition of M. Tripeaud. If this combination could be made to operate, M. Tripeaud might, in a short time, recover all he has lost, assure the ruin of his rival, which would be his own making, and our debts would thus be paid.

“No doubt it would be most painful—deeply grievous, to be compelled to resort to such an extremity to recover our monies; but, in these days, are we not authorised to use means which are incessantly employed against us? If we are driven to this by the injustice and wickedness of men, we must resign ourselves to the distressing task by the reflection, that if we strive to recover and preserve our earthly

possessions, it is all for the greater glory of God, whilst, in the hands of our enemies, these goods are but dangerous means to perdition and scandal.

"This is but a proposal, which I humbly submit to you; if I had the power in my own hands of taking the initiative on the subject of these credits, I should do nothing of myself—my will is not my own; with all I possess it belongs to those to whom I have sworn a blind obedience."

A slight noise without interrupted M. Joshua Van Daël, and attracted his attention.

He rose quickly, and went to the window.

Three gentle taps were struck from without on one of the blinds.

"Is it you, Mahal?" inquired Joshua, in a subdued voice.

"It is," was the reply from without, and in a suppressed tone.

"And the Malay?"

"Has succeeded."

"Really?" exclaimed M. Joshua, in a tone of deep satisfaction,—
"are you sure?"

"Quite sure. There never was devil more skilful and more daring."

"And Djalma?"

"The passages from General Simon's last letter, which I quoted to him, convinced him that I came from the general, and that he would find him at the ruins of Tchandi."

"So, then, at this moment——"

"Djalma is at the ruins, where he will find the Blaek, the Métis, and the Indian. They appointed the spot as a rendezvous for the Malay after he had tattooed the princee during his sleep."

"Have you reconnoitred the subterranean passage?"

"I went yesterday. One of the stones of the pedestal of the statue turns on a pivot; the staircase is wide, and will do very well."

"And the three chiefs have no suspicion of you?"

"None. I saw them this morning, and this evening the Malay came and told me all before he went to rejoin them in the ruins of Tchandi; for he was obliged to remain concealed in the bushes, not daring to venture during the daylight."

"Mahal, if you have told me the truth, if all succeeds, your pardon and a handsome reward will be yours. Your place is bespoke on board the *Ruyter*; you will go to-morrow, and thus be out of reach of the Stranglers' revenge, who would else pursue you to death to avenge their chiefs. Since Providence has selected you to deliver these three great criminals to justice, God will bless you. Go now and await me at the governor's gate; I will introduce you to his excellency, for such important matters are now concerned, that I shall not hesitate to go and awaken him, although it is midnight. Go quickly, and I will follow."

There were then heard the rapid steps of Mahal, as he precipitately departed, and all was silent.

Joshua returned to his desk, and added these words hastily to his long memoir.

"Whatever happens, it is now impossible that Djalma can quit

Batavia. Be assured that he will not be in Paris on the thirteenth of February next year.

“As I foresaw, I shall be on foot all night. I am now going to the governor. To-morrow I will add a few words to this long memoir, which the steam-boat, the *Ruyter* will convey to Europe.”

After having closed his *secrétaire*, Joshua rang his bell loudly, and, to the great surprise of his establishment at seeing him go out so late at night, went away with a rapid pace to the governor of the island.

We now conduct our reader to the ruins of Tehandi.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RUINS OF TCHANDI.

THE storm in the middle of the day—that storm, whose influences had so well served the design of the Strangler on Djalma, was succeeded by a calm and serene night.

The moon's disc rose softly behind a mass of striking ruins, situated on a hill, in the midst of a thick wood, three leagues from Batavia.

Large rows of stones, high brick walls mutilated by the tooth of time, vast porticoes covered with parasitical vegetation, were seen in the clear horizon, in the silvery light which was shed copiously from the blue vault of heaven.

Several rays of moonshine, stealing through the opening of one of the porticoes, fell on two colossal statues placed at the foot of an immense staircase, whose disjointed flag-stones were almost entirely concealed beneath the rank grass, moss, and underwood.

The remains of one of these statues, broken in the middle, were scattered on the ground; the other, which was still upright, was frightful to look at.

It represented a man of gigantic proportions, with a head three feet in height, the expression of whose countenance was ferocious in the extreme, and two eyes of black and shining schistus were inlaid in its stone-grey face; the mouth large, wide, and opened to its utmost stretch, had become the nest of reptiles, a swarm of whom might be seen crawling in and out of the lips most disgustingly.

A wide girdle, ornamented with symbols, encircled the waist of this statue, and supported the long sword which hung by its side. The giant had four extended arms, and in his four massive outspread hands he supported an elephant's head, a coiled snake, a human skull, and a bird resembling a heron.

The moon, which lighted this statue on one side, spread a full light over the profile, which added to the singular fierceness of the countenance.

Here and there, inserted in the midst of the brick walls, half destroyed, were fragments of bas-relief, also a stone very boldly carved;



THE STRANGLER CHIEFS.

one of these, in the best state of preservation, represented a man with an elephant's head, with wings like a bat, and devouring a child.

Nothing could be more repulsive than these ruins, encompassed by thickets of trees of a dark green, covered with mystic emblems, and seen by the moon's pale light in the profound silence of night.

In the angle of one of the walls of this ancient temple, dedicated to some mysterious and bloody Javanese deity, was erected a hut, clumsily constructed of fragments of brick and stone; the door, made of the bulrush stalks, was open, and there issued from it a reddish light, which cast its warm glare on the tall weeds with which the earth was covered.

Three men were in this hovel, lighted by a clay lamp, in which burnt a wick made of the cocoa-tree fibre and fed with palm-oil.

One of these individuals, a man about forty years of age, was dressed in shabby European attire; his pale and almost white complexion proving that he was of Mulatto race; that is, the child of a white man and an Indian mother.

The second was a robust African Negro, with blubber-lips, muscular shoulders, and spindle legs; his frizzly hair was becoming grey, and, covered with tatters, he was standing upright near the Indian.

A third person was asleep on a mat in the corner of this lair.

These three men were the three chiefs of the Stranglers who, pursued in continental India, had sought refuge in Java under the guidance of the smuggler Mahal.

"The Malay does not return," said the Mulatto, whose name was Faringhea, the most redoubtable of this homicidal sect; "he may have been slain by Djalma in executing our orders."

"The morning's storm has brought the reptiles out of their holes in swarms," said the Negro; "perhaps the Malay has been bitten, and his carcass may now be only a serpent's nest."

"To advance the *good work*," said Faringhea, with a sombre air, "death in all shapes must be braved."

"And inflicted," added the Negro.

A stifled cry, followed by several inarticulate words, attracted the attention of the two chiefs, who turned quickly towards the sleeping man.

He was about thirty years of age, and his beardless chin and copper-coloured skin, his dress of coarse stuff, his small variegated turban of yellow and brown, evinced that he belonged to the pure Hindoo race. His sleep was agitated by some painful dream, abundant perspiration covered his features, contracted by terror—he uttered words, and his voice was stifled and moaning, whilst his frame shook with convulsive agitation.

"Always this dream!" said Faringhea to the Negro; "always the remembrance of *that man*!"

"What man?"

"Don't you recollect, five years ago, that savage, Colonel Kennedy—the Indians' executioner—who came on the banks of the Ganges to hunt the tiger, with twenty horses, four elephants, and fifty attendants?"

"Yes, yes!" said the Negro; "and we three, men-hunters, we had better sport than he had. Kennedy, with his horses, elephants,

and large train, did not catch his tiger; but we, we had *ours*," he added, with fierce irony. "Yes, Kennedy, that tiger with a human face, fell into our ambush, and the '*Brothers of the Good Work*' offered up their glorious prize to their goddess Bohwanie!"

"If you remember, it was at the moment when we had encircled Kennedy's neck with the last twist of our cord, that we suddenly saw this traveller—he had beheld us, and we were compelled to make away with him. Since that," added Faringhea, "the recollection of the murder of that man follows him"—(pointing to the sleeping Hindoo)—"even in his dreams."

"As well as when he is awake," said the Negro, looking significantly at Faringhea.

"Hark!" said the latter, looking towards the Indian, who, in the agitation of his dream, began speaking again in muttering and broken tones. "Hark! he is repeating the replies of that traveller when we told him he must die, or join us in the *good work*. His mind was unsettled by it—decidedly affected!"

At this moment he uttered in his sleep a sort of mysterious interrogatory, in which, by turns, he gave the questions and replies.

"Traveller," he said, in a voice broken by occasional abrupt pauses, "why hast thou that black circle on thy brow? It extends from one temple to the other—it is a fatal brand; thy look is as sad as death itself. Hast thou been a victim? Come with us—Bohwanie avenges the injured. Thou hast suffered?—*Yes, suffered deeply!* For a long time?—*Yes, for a very long time!* Thou still sufferest?—*For ever!* What wouldst thou bestow on him who hath so done to thee?—*Pity!* Will thou return blow for blow?—*I would return love for hatred!* Who art thou, then, that wouldst return good for evil?—*I am he who loves, suffers, and forgives.*"

"Dost hear him, brother?" said the Negro to Faringhea; "he has not forgotten the words of the traveller before his death."

"The vision follows him still. Listen—he speaks again. How ghastly he looks!"

The Indian, still under the influence of his dream, continued thus:

"Traveller, there are three of us: we are fearless, and have death in our hands; thou hast seen us already make a sacrifice to the *good work*; join us or die—die—die!—Oh, what a look!—Not so—do not look at me so——"

As he uttered these words the Hindoo made a sudden motion, as if to drive away an object that approached him, and awoke with a start.

He passed his hand over his forehead, which was reeking with perspiration, and looked wildly around him.

"Brother, always this dream!" said Faringhea to him: "for a hardy hunter of men, thy head is weak. Fortunately thine heart and thine arm are strong."

The Indian did not reply for some moments, but hid his face in his hands.

After a pause he said, "For a long while I have not dreamed of this traveller."

"Is he not dead?" said Faringhea, shrugging his shoulders. "Didst not thou thyself cast the cord around his neck?"

"I did!" said the Indian, shuddering.

“ Did we not dig his grave close to that of Colonel Kennedy? Did we not bury him as we did the English butcher, under the sand and bulrushes?” asked the Negro.

“ Yes, we dug his grave,” said the Indian, deeply agitated; “ and yet it is now a year ago that I was at Bombay, when, one evening, as I was awaiting one of our brethren, at sun-down, near the pagoda which is at the side of the little hill—whilst I was looking at the view before me, seated under a fig-tree, I heard a gentle, slow, and firm footstep; I turned my head—’twas *he*, leaving the city.”

“ A dream!” said the Negro. “ Nothing but a dream!”

“ Yes, a vision,” added Faringhea; “ or some singular resemblance.”

“ I knew him at once by the black half-circle which shrouds his brow—’twas he! ’twas he! I remained motionless with fear—my eyes starting out of my head. He stopped, and cast on me his mild and melancholy glance: in spite of myself I exclaimed—’Tis he!”

“ ‘ *It is I,*’ he replied, with his gentle voice; ‘ *and all those you have slain will rise again as I have done.*’ Then he pointed towards the sky, and continued, ‘ *Why slay? Hearken! I came from Java, I am going to the other end of the globe, to a country of eternal snows; there or here, whether on a flaming soil or an icy land, yet I shall be for eternity. Thus will it be with the souls of all who fall under thy deadly cord, either in this world or the other; in this earthly form, or in some other, the SOUL will always be a SOUL—thou canst not extinguish THAT. Then, wherefore slay?*’ And then, shaking his head sorrowfully, he went on his way, always walking slowly, with his forehead bowed. He ascended the hill of the pagoda, and I followed him with my eyes without stirring from the spot. As the sun set, he paused on the summit, his tall figure was marked against the sky, and then he disappeared. Oh, ’twas he!” said the Indian, trembling violently as he spoke; and then again, after a long pause, “ *Yes, ’twas he!*”

This recital of the Indian had never varied, and he had frequently narrated this mysterious adventure to his comrades. This pertinacity on his part shook their incredulity, or rather made them endeavour to find some natural solution for an event which appeared supernatural.

“ Perhaps,” said Faringhea, after some reflection, “ the knot which choked the traveller was not so tight as actually to cause death, and a breath of life might remain in him; the air may have penetrated the rushes with which we covered his grave, and so he returned to life.”

“ No, no!” said the Indian, shaking his head; “ this man was not of our race——”

“ What mean you?”

“ Now I am sure——”

“ Sure of what?”

“ Listen!” said the Hindoo, in a solemn voice. “ The number of victims that the children of Bohwanie have sacrificed since the beginning of ages, is nothing to the immensity of dead and dying that this terrible traveller leaves behind him in his march of destruction.”

“ He!” exclaimed the Negro and Faringhea.

“ He!” replied the Indian, with an accent of conviction which struck home to his companions. “ Hearken and tremble! When I

met this traveller at the gates of Bombay, he had come from Java, and was going towards the north, as he said. The next day Bombay was ravaged by the Cholera; and, some time afterwards, we learnt that this scourge had burst forth here at Java."

"That is true," said the Negro.

"Listen to me," resumed the Hindoo. "'I am going towards the north—to a country of eternal snow,' said the traveller to me; and has not the Cholera also gone northward, passing Mascata, Ispahan, Tauris, Tefis, and reached Siberia?"

"True," replied Faringhea, thoughtfully.

"And the Cholera," resumed the Indian, "only proceeded at the extent of five or six leagues a-day—a man's journey. It never appeared in two places at once, but progressed slowly, equally, always at the pace of a man's daily travel."

At this singular comparison, the two comrades of the Hindoo looked at each other in great amaze.

After some minutes' silence, the affrighted Negro said to the Indian:

"And you believe that this man——"

"I believe that this man, whom we killed, restored to life by some infernal divinity, has been empowered to spread this terrible scourge over the earth, and to spread death wheresoever he may wander, though he himself cannot be affected by it. Remember," added the Indian, with gloomy emphasis—"remember, this terrible traveller has passed by Java—the Cholera has devastated Java; this traveller has passed by Bombay—the Cholera has devastated Bombay; this traveller has gone northward—the Cholera has devastated the north——"

And the Indian, pausing, fell into a deep reverie.

The Negro and Faringhea were overcome by deep astonishment. The Indian was right as to the mysterious progress (wholly inexplicable) of this fearful scourge, which, as we know, did not spread more than five or six leagues a-day, and never appeared simultaneously in two places at once.

Nothing can be more striking than to follow, on a map marked for that purpose, and correctly, the steady advance of this progressive scourge, which presents to the astonished eye all the caprices, and all the incidents, of the march of a wayward traveller.

Going here in preference to there; choosing certain districts in a country and certain cities in those districts, certain quarters in those cities, certain streets in those quarters, certain houses in those streets; having even its places of rest and cessation, and then resuming its gradual, mysterious, and terrible progress.

The words of the Indian which described these fearful wantonings made, necessarily, a deep impression on the Negro and Faringhea, fierce as were their dispositions, and directed by revolting doctrines to the monomania of murder.

It is an undenied and undeniable fact, that there are in India seats of this abominable community, creatures who, almost always, commit their murders without motive or excitement,—who kill for murder's sake—for the pleasure of slaying—for the sake of substituting death for life—to make a *live being a dead corpse*,—as they have declared in answer to questions put to them.

Thought is lost in the attempt to penetrate to the cause of such monstrous phenomena. By what incredible series of events have men become vowed to such a priesthood of Death?

Doubtless, such a religion cannot flourish but in countries devoted, like India, to the most atrocious system of slavery—to the most pitiless experiments of man on his fellow-man.

Such a religion must be the outbreak of the hatred of humanity exasperated, beyond endurance, by the oppression of selfish power. Perhaps, too, this homicidal sect, whose origin is lost in the night of ages, is perpetuated in these regions as the only possible protest of slavery against despotism. Perhaps, indeed, the Almighty, in His impenetrable designs, has created the Phansegars as he has created tigers and serpents.

It is very remarkable, in this repulsive community, that a mysterious link unites all the members together, and isolates them from their fellow-men; for they have laws of their own, customs of their own; they devote themselves to each other, sustain and aid each other, but they have neither country nor family,—they spring, then, themselves, only in conformity to a dark and mysterious power, whose behests they blindly obey, and in whose name they wander abroad and “*make corpses,*” to use one of their own ferocious expressions.*

* We append some extracts from the very curious book of M. le Comte de Warren on British India in 1831 :—

“ Beside the robbers who kill for the sake of the booty which they trust to find on travellers, there is a class of assassins, organised into a society, with chiefs, a service, a free-masonry, and even a religion, which has its fanaticism and its devotion, its agents, its emissaries, its assistants, its moving bodies, its passive comrades, who contribute by their subscriptions to “*the good work.*” It is the community of *Thugs*, *Phansegars* (cheats or stranglers, from *thugna*, to cheat, and *phasna*, to strangle), a religious and working confraternity, who war against the human race by exterminating them, and whose origin is lost in the night of ages.

“ Up to 1810 their existence was not only unknown to their European conquerors, but even to their native governments. Between the years 1816 and 1830, many bands were taken in the fact and punished, but up to the latter period all the revelations made on this subject by officers of high experience seemed too monstrous to obtain public attention and belief, and had been refused credence, as the dreams of a wild imagination. Yet for very many years, at least for half a century, this social plague-spot had consumed immense populations, from the foot of the Himalaya to Cape Comorin, from Cutch to Assam.

“ It was in the year 1830 that the confessions of a celebrated chief, whose life was spared on condition that he should denounce his accomplices, unfolded the whole system. The foundation of the Thuggee confraternity is a religious belief, the worship of Bohwanie, a dark divinity, who loves nothing but carnage, and hates especially the human race. Her most acceptable sacrifices are human victims, and the more of these are offered up in this world, the more will you be recompensed in the next by joys of the soul and the senses, and by females, always young, fresh, and lovely. If the assassin should meet with the scaffold in his career, he dies with enthusiasm,—a martyr whom a palm awaits. To obey his divine mistress, he murders, without anger and without remorse, the old man, the woman, and the child. To his colleagues he must be charitable, humane, generous, devoted, sharing all in common, because they, as well as he, are ministers and adopted children of Bohwanie.

“ The destruction of fellow-creatures who do not belong to the same community, and the diminution of the human species, is the object they pursue. It is not a road to fortune, for the booty is but a secondary consideration—a corollary very agreeable, no doubt, but only secondary in estimation. Destruction is the great aim and end—the heavenly mission, the absorbing vocation. It is a delicious gratification; the hunting down of men is the most intoxicating sport in the world. ‘ You find great pleasure,’ was said by one of these criminals, ‘ in pursuing the wild beast

* * * * *

For some moments the three Stranglers preserved a profound silence.

Outside the hovel the moon was shedding her large and silvered rays and vast blue shadows on the striking mass of ruins. The stars shone brilliantly, and, from time to time, the fitful breeze shook the clustering and bright leaves of the bananas and palm-trees.

The pedestal of the gigantic statue, which was preserved entire, and was at the left of the portico, rested on large slabs, half-concealed under thick and rank weeds.

Suddenly one of these slabs appeared to give way.

From the opening, which was effected noiselessly, a man, clothed in uniform, looked out and carefully reconnoitred about him, listening with much attention.

Seeing the light of the lamp which lighted up the interior of the hut glimmer in the tall herbage, he withdrew,—made a signal, and then he and two other soldiers climbed, with the greatest precaution and silence, up the lower steps of this subterranean staircase, and moved stealthily across the ruins.

For some moments their moving shadows were thrown on the ground by the moonbeams, and then they disappeared behind several pieces of the fallen walls.

At the moment when the thick slab resumed its place and level, heads of several other soldiers were visible in the concealment of this excavation.

The Mulatto, the Indian, and the Negro, plunged still in deep thought, saw nothing of this.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE AMBUSCADE.

THE Mulatto Faringhea, no doubt desirous of diverting the painful thoughts which the language of the Indian on the mysterious progress of the Cholera had excited, suddenly changed the conversation. His eye shone with a wild glare, and his countenance assumed a look of fierce enthusiasm, as he exclaimed,—

“Bohwanie will always watch over us, fearless hunters of men.

to its lair, in attacking the wild boar and tiger, because there are dangers to face, energy and courage to display. Only think, then, how that fascination must be redoubled when the struggle is with men, when it is men whom you destroy! Instead of the exercise of one only faculty, courage, you have at once to evince courage, cunning, foresight, eloquence, diplomacy. How many springs to move!—how many strings to touch! To play with all the passions, to cause vibration on the chords of love and friendship to lead your prey into your nets; it is a glorious chase, it is sublime—enrapturing, I say!

“Whoever was in India, in the years 1831 and 1832, will remember the stupor and affright caused by the discovery of this vast infernal machinery spread throughout society. A great number of magistrates of the provinces refused to believe it, and could not comprehend how a system so vast had for so long a time absorbed the social body under their eyes, silently and without betraying itself.”—*British India in 1831*, by M. Edward de Warren, 2 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1844.

Courage, brothers, courage!—the world is wide and our prey is every where. The English force us to leave India—we, the three chiefs of the *good work*! What matters that? We leave behind us brethren, as well concealed, as numerous, as terrible, as the black scorpions, which only betray their presence by their deadly bite! Exile but widens our range, our domains! Brother, to thee is America!” said the chief to the Hindoo, with an air of inspiration; “Brother, to thee is Africa!” he said to the Negro; “Brothers, to me is Europe! Wherever there are men, there are executioners and victims—wherever there are victims there are hearts filled with hatred; be it our task to influence those hatreds with all the fiercest longings after vengeance! It is reserved for us, by dint of stratagems and seductions, to draw around us, servants of Bolwanié, all whose zeal, courage, and boldness, can be useful to us. Amongst ourselves, and for ourselves, let us rival each other in devotion, in self-denial. Let us lend each other force, help, and support. Let all who are not with us be our prey. Let us isolate ourselves in the midst of all, against all, in spite of all. For us let there be no country, no family!—our family is our brethren; our country, the universe!”

This savage eloquence deeply impressed the Negro and the Hindoo, who were usually under the influence of Faringhea, whose intelligence was so greatly superior to their own, although they themselves were amongst the most eminent leaders of this sanguinary fraternity.

“You are right, brother,” exclaimed the Hindoo, fired by the enthusiasm of Faringhea; “be the world ours! Here, even in Java, let us leave a trace of our passage. Before we quit it, let us establish the *good work* in this island; it will increase, for her misery is great. The Dutch are as rapacious as the English. Brothers, I saw in the marshy rice-fields of this isle, always deadly to those who cultivate them, men whom want forced to this suicidal labour; they were pale and wan as dead corpses. Some, extenuated by sickness, fatigue, and famine, fell never again to rise! Brothers, the *good work* will increase in this land!”

“The other evening,” said the Mulatto, “I was on the border of the lake behind a rock; a young woman came thither having on a few miserable rags, which scarcely covered her lean and wasted frame: in her arms she bore a young child, whom she, weeping, pressed against her dried-up breast. She embraced the infant thrice, saying,—‘Thou, at least, shalt not become miserable like thy father!’ and she cast it into the waters, uttering a piercing shriek as the child sunk. At this sound an alligator, concealed in the reeds, dashed into the lake. Brothers, here mothers kill their children for pity’s sake. Oh, the *good work* will increase in this land!”

“This morning,” said the Negro, “whilst they were mangling one of the black slaves with the lash, a little old man, a merchant of Batavia, left his country-house to return to the city. In his palanquin he received, with all the indolence of palled appetite, the sad caresses of two of the young creatures with whom his harem is peopled, by purchasing them of their parents, too poor to bring them up. The palanquin which held this old man and the two young girls was borne by a dozen young and powerful men. Brethren, there are mothers here who, from want, sell their children—slaves who have not

a brute's pity nor a honnd's fec—men who carry others like beasts of burthen ; yes, yes, the *good work* will increase in this country !”

“ In this country ? yes, and in every country of oppression, misery, corruption, and slavery.”

“ Should we succeed in engaging Djalma to join us, as Mahal the smuggler advises us,” said the Indian, “ our voyage to Java will be doubly profitable ; for before we go we shall include in our ranks this bold and daring young man, who has so many motives for hating mankind.”

“ When he comes we will sharpen his animosities.”

“ Let us remind him of his father's death.”

“ The slaughter of all his people.”

“ His own captivity.”

“ If hatred but inflame his heart, he is assuredly ours.”

The Negro, who had been for some time lost in thought, said abruptly,—

“ My brothers, what if the smuggler Mahal has deceived us ?”

“ He !” exclaimed the Indian, almost indignantly ; “ why, he gave us refuge on board his coaster, and effected our escape from the mainland, and he will take us on board the schooner which he is to command, and convey us to Bombay, where we shall find vessels for America, Europe, and Africa.”

“ What interest can Mahal have for betraying us ?” inquired Faringhea ; “ he knows how impossible it is to escape the vengeance of the sons of Bohwanie.”

“ Then, too,” said the black, “ he has promised, by a trick, to bring Djalma here amongst us this evening ; and, once here, he must become one of us.”

“ Besides, was it not the smuggler who said to us, ‘ Order the Malay to go to Djalma's ajoupa, to surprise him during sleep, but instead of killing him, as he might, let him mark on his arm Bohwanie's name ?’ Thus Djalma will judge of the resolution, address, and devotion of our brotherhood, and know what there is to hope and fear from such men. Through admiration or fear, then, he must join us.”

“ But should he refuse to do so, in spite of the reasons he has to hate his fellow-men ?”

“ Then, Bohwanie will decide upon his destiny,” said Faringhea, with a gloomy air. “ I have my plan.”

“ Think you the Malay will succeed in surprising Djalma during his sleep ?” said the Negro.

“ It is impossible for living creature to be bolder, more adroit, and more active, than the Malay,” said Faringhea. “ He has had the daring to surprise a black female panther in her lair whilst she was suckling, and he killed the mother and carried off the cub, which he afterwards sold to the captain of an European vessel.”

“ The Malay has succeeded !” exclaimed the Hindoo, listening to a singular cry which resounded through the deep silence of the night and woods.

“ Yes, it is the cry of the vulture who bears off his prey,” said the Negro, also listening. “ It is the signal by which our brethren announce their success.”

Shortly afterwards the Malay appeared at the door of the hut.



DJALMA AND THE STRANGLERS.

He was dressed in a large piece of cotton, striped with various bright colours.

"Djalma will all his life bear the mark of the *good work*," said the Malay, exultingly. "To get at him I was compelled to offer up to Bohwanie a man who crossed my path; I left his carcass under the bushes near the ajoupa. Djalma bears our sign—Mahal the smuggler was the first to know that."

"And! Djalma did not awake?" said the Indian, amazed at the Malay's address.

"If he had awakened, I must have been dead," replied he, calmly; "for I was ordered to spare his life."

"Because his life may be more useful to us than his death," replied the Mulatto. Then, addressing the Malay, "Brother, in risking your life for the *good work*, you have done to-day what we did yesterday, and must do again to-morrow. To-day, you obey; another day, and you will command."

"We all belong to Bohwanie," said the Malay. "What is next to be done? I am ready."

As he spoke, the Malay turned towards the door of the hovel, and said suddenly, and in a calm voice, "Here is Djalma—he is approaching the cabin: Mahal has not deceived us."

"He must not see me yet," said Faringhea, going into the further corner of the hut and concealing himself beneath a mat. "Try and persuade him; if he resist, I have my plan."

Faringhea had scarcely disappeared when Djalma reached the door of the hovel.

At the sight of these three persons, with countenances so repulsive, Djalma recoiled with surprise. Ignorant that these men belonged to the sect of Phansegar and knowing that in this country, where there are no public-houses, travellers often pass the night under tents, or in ruins which they pass, he made a step towards them. When his first surprise was over, recognising, in the bronzed features and peculiar costume of one of these individuals, a Hindoo, he said to him, in his native tongue,—

"I expected to find here an European,—a Frenchman."

"The Frenchman is not here now," replied the Indian; "but he will not be long."

The Indian comprehending by Djalma's question the means which Mahal had made use of to draw him into this snare, hoped to gain time by not undeceiving him.

"Do you know this Frenchman?" asked Djalma of the Phansegar.

"He appointed to meet us here as well as yourself," replied the Indian.

"And why?" said Djalma, more and more astonished.

"You will know when he arrives."

"Was it General Simon who told you to be here?"

"It was General Simon."

There was a momentary pause, during which Djalma in vain endeavoured to expound this mystery.

"And who are you?" he inquired of the Indian with a suspicious air, for the profound silence which the two companions of the Phansegar observed began to excite his suspicion.

"Who are we?" replied the Hindoo; "we are yours if you will be ours."

"I have no need of you: you have no need of me?"

"Who knows?"

"I know."

"You deceive yourself: the English killed your father; he was a king. You have been a captive, proscribed, and now possess nothing."

At this reminding of his condition and his sufferings, Djalma's brow became clouded; he started, and a bitter smile curled his lips. The Phansegar continued:

"Your father was just and brave; beloved by his subjects: he was called the Father of the Generous, and well named was he. Will you let his death pass away without vengeance? Hatred is gnawing at your heart; shall it bite into you in vain?"

"My father died with his weapons in his hand—I revenged his death on the English, whom I slew in battle. He who replaced my father, and also fought for him, has told me that it would be folly, madness, for me to seek to contend against the English to recover my territory. When they set me at liberty I swore never again to set foot in India, and I will keep my word."

"They who despoiled you, who made you captive, who killed your father, are men. Yes, men! And there are other men on whom you may take vengeance, let your hate fall on them."

"You, who speak so of your fellow-men, are not you also a man?"

"I, and those who are with me, are more than men. We are to the rest of the human race what the bold hunters are to the fierce beasts whom they track into the woods. Will you become as we are—more than a man? Will you assuage surely, widely, fully, safely, the hatred that devours your heart, after all the ill, the injury they have done you?"

"Your words become more and more obscure. I have no hatred in my heart," said Djalma. "When an enemy is worthy of me, I fight him; when he is unworthy, I despise him; and so I do not hate either the brave or the coward."

"Treachery!" exclaimed the Negro, suddenly pointing to the door with a quick gesture; for Djalma and the Indian had moved, in the course of their conversation, towards one of the corners of the hut.

At the cry of the Negro, Faringhea, whom Djalma had not perceived, threw rapidly from him the mat behind which he was concealed, drew his dagger, and, with a leap like a tiger's, was out of the cabin. Seeing then a body of soldiers approaching cautiously, he struck one of them dead with his poignard, dashed down two others, and then disappeared amidst the ruins.

This occurred so instantaneously that, at the moment when Djalma turned round to seek the cause of the Negro's alarm and cry, Faringhea had disappeared.

Djalma and the three Stranglers were then immediately under the fire of the raised muskets of many of the soldiery, whilst the others hastened in pursuit of Faringhea.

The Negro, the Malay, and the Hindoo, seeing the inutility of resistance, rapidly exchanged some words, and then extended their hands to the cords with which the soldiers were furnished.

The Dutch captain who commanded the detachment entered the cabin.

"And this one," said he, pointing out Djalma to the soldiers, who had bound the three Phansegars.

"Each in his turn, sir," said the old serjeant; "we were going on to him."

Djalma remained petrified with surprise, wholly unable to comprehend any thing that passed around him; but when he saw the serjeant and two soldiers advance to bind him, he repulsed them with violent indignation, and hastened to the door where the officer was standing.

The soldiers, believing that Djalma would submit to his fate as quietly as his companions, did not anticipate this resistance; but struck, in spite of themselves, with the dignity and nobility of the air of Kadja-Sing's son, they retreated a pace or two.

"Why would you bind me as you have these men?" exclaimed Djalma, speaking in Indian to the officer, who understood the language.

"Why bind you, you wretch? Because you are one of this gang of assassins."

"Are you afraid of him?" said he in Dutch to his men. "Bind him, bind him hard and fast, and tie your knots tight round his wrists; he'll have a tighter one round his neck very speedily."

"You are mistaken," said Djalma, with a calmness and dignity which astounded the officer. "I have been here scarcely a quarter of an hour. I know nothing of these men. I expected to have found a Frenchman here."

"You are not a Phansegar like them? Who will believe that lie?"

"Like them!" exclaimed Djalma, with a movement of horror so natural, that the officer signed to his soldiers to be quiet. "These men form part of that horrible body of murderers? and do you accuse me of being their accomplice? Then I am quite re-assured, sir," said the young man, shrugging his shoulders and smiling disdainfully.

"Your expression of tranquillity will not suffice in this case, as, thanks to certain information we have received, we are cognisant of the mysterious signs which designate a Phansegar."

"I repeat, that you yourself, sir, cannot hold this murderous sect in greater abhorrence than I do!"

The Negro, interrupting Djalma with ferocious joy, addressed the officer, saying,

"You have spoken well. The sons of the *good work* are easily known by the mystic characters tattooed on their body. *Our* hour has arrived, and we welcome our fate. Full oft has our fatal cord encircled the necks of such as were enemies of the *good work*. Now, then, first behold our arms; then examine those of this young man."

The officer, only imperfectly understanding the words of the Negro, turned to Djalma, saying,

"It is clear that if, as this Negro asserts, you do not bear on your arm the mysterious symbol, and of that we shall easily satisfy ourselves, and can fully account for your presence on this spot, you will be liberated at the end of two hours."

"You do not comprehend me," exclaimed the Negro to the officer. "Prince Djalma is our leading brother, and bears on his left arm the name of Bohwanic in testimony thereof."

"Yes," added the Malay; "he is as much the sworn servant of the *good work* as we are."

"And as complete a Phansegar as any of us," rejoined the Indian.

These three men, deeply irritated at the indignant disgust with which Djalma had repudiated the idea of belonging to their sect, now took a ferocious delight in endeavouring to prove the son of Kadja-Sing a member of their horrible association.

"What answer do you make to all this?" inquired the officer of Djalma.

The prince, smiling disdainfully, replied only by thrusting back with his right hand the loose hanging sleeve from his left arm, and extending it bare to the shoulder, for general inspection.

"Unparalleled audacity!" exclaimed the officer, as, directing his glance to the out-stretched arm of the prince, he beheld, in indelible characters of deep blood-red, the name of Bohwanic traced just above the principal veins at the bend of the inside elbow-joint.

Passing rapidly from the prince to the Malay, the officer pushed back his sleeve, and saw the same letters similarly traced. Still determined upon further proof, he carefully examined the arms of the Negro and Indian; each bore the precise counterpart of the mysterious words written on the arm of Djalma.

"Miserable and contemptible being!" cried the officer, turning towards the prince, in a paroxysm of rage; "you are more hateful and abhorrent to my sight than even your wretched associates! Handcuff him, like a mean, cowardly assassin as he is!" added he to the soldiers; "tie him as a paltry miscreant who lies even on the verge of the grave, for assuredly his punishment will not be long deferred."

Stupified and speechless, Djalma remained in mute and motionless surprise, gazing on the fatal and incomprehensible marks upon his arm — his whole being absorbed in dismay and wonder at a fact so bewildering.

"Have you still the effrontery to deny bearing these characters?" exclaimed the officer, with deep disgust and indignation.

"Alas, no!" returned the prince, in accents of intense suffering. "'Tis there — I see it but too plainly."

"'Tis well, unhappy man! that you at length avow your guilt," replied the officer. "Soldiers, watch over this person and his accomplices — remember your own lives will have to answer for it if you suffer them to escape."

Djalma, who could not believe all this was more than a fearful dream, and whose senses were so completely disturbed as to prevent his attempting to justify himself, allowed the soldiers to manacle his limbs, and lead him away without offering the slightest resistance.

The officer, aided by a party of soldiers, sought diligently throughout the ruins in hopes of discovering Faringhea, but in vain; and at the lapse of an hour he followed the prisoners, who had been previously despatched to Batavia under a powerful escort.

* * * * *

A few hours after the passing of the events we have just described,

M. Joshua Van Daël thus terminated his long letter of particulars addressed to M. Rodin, at Paris:—

“Circumstances rendered it impossible for me to act otherwise than I have done; and, after all, if a small mischief has been done, it has been to effect a great good.

“Three atrocious murderers have been delivered into the hands of justice, and the temporary arrest of Djalma will only serve to display his innocence in a stronger light.

“I have already been this morning to the governor to assert the innocence of the young prince; ‘for,’ said I, ‘since it is entirely owing to me that three notorious criminals have fallen into the hands of justice, I have a strong claim upon the gratitude of the public authorities, whose long and earnest desire I have now enabled them to carry into effect; and I therefore require, as my sole recompense, that they will use every exertion to clear the character of Prince Djalma, already so justly estimated for his many noble qualities, and deservedly commiserated for his great misfortunes. Certainly,’ continued I, ‘when I hastened yesterday to apprise the governor that a meeting of the Phanségars would take place in the ruins of Tchandi, I was far from expecting that it would, in any way, involve the character and safety of the adopted son of General Simon, whom I know to be a most highly honourable man, and with whom I have had many satisfactory transactions.’

“We must, therefore, at all risks, and at any cost of time or patience, use the most strenuous efforts to penetrate the inconceivable mystery which has placed Djalma in his present dangerous position. ‘And,’ added I, ‘I am so perfectly convinced of his entire innocence of the revolting charge under which he now suffers, that for his own sake I seek no pardon, neither do I solicit his immediate release—the prince, I am assured, possesses too much pride and dignity to desire to quit his prison until his innocence is made to appear clear and unclouded as the sun at noon-day.’

“You will perceive that in thus expressing myself I in no respect departed from the truth, neither have I loaded my conscience with the slightest falsehood, since no person can be more perfectly satisfied of the innocence of Prince Djalma than myself.

“The reply of the governor was precisely what I expected it would be. He said that, morally speaking, he was equally convinced with myself of the young prince’s innocence, and that his best exertions should be given to clear him of the foul accusation; but that justice must take its course, because it afforded the only certain method of demonstrating the falsity of the charge made against the prince, or of discovering by what incomprehensible fatality the mysterious characters were tattooed on the arm of Djalma.

“Mahal the smuggler, who alone could clear up this perplexing point, will have quitted Batavia within an hour, to embark on board the *Ruyter*, which will land him in Egypt; and he will be furnished with a note from me, recommending him to the captain of that vessel as the individual whose passage on board the *Ruyter* I have engaged and paid for: he will also bring you this long letter, for the ship I am referring to sails in an hour, and the letters for Europe were made up and the bags closed last night. I wished, however, to report to you

the result of my conference with the governor this morning, before finally sealing my voluminous packet.

"You perceive, therefore, by what I have said, that Prince Djalma will be forcibly detained here for at least a month; and the opportunity of sailing by the *Ruyter* thus lost, it will be entirely impossible for the young Indian to be in France before the 13th of February in the coming year.

"Thus have I, to the best of my ability, blindly and explicitly followed your directions, considering only the *aim* and *END*, which should justify the *MEANS* employed. You assure me that the welfare of society requires the sacrifice of a few to the general good, and I yield implicit obedience to your words and commands, passively contenting myself with being, what all should be, willing to become a mere machine in the hands of my superiors, obeying their impulses, without even seeking to guess the motive or reason; and well remembering that high and impressive command, 'that, to promote any great or holy design, we should place ourselves in the hands of our superiors—as mute, as passive, and as passionless, as would be a corpse taken from its grave.'*

"Let us then continue to act in firm concert and entire confidence in each other's zeal, for we live in troubled times; circumstances and events may alter, we can know no change. Obedience and courage, secrecy and patience, cunning and boldness, union and devotion, be henceforth the watchwords of those who have no country but the universe, no family but our brethren, and no authority but the Church of Rome.

"J. V."

About ten o'clock in the morning, Mahal the smuggler departed with his sealed despatches to go on board the *Ruyter*: but at the expiration of an hour, his body, evidently strangled by the Phansegars, was found among the rushes of a wild spot he had to pass in order to reach his bark, and proceed in her to the vessel he was to sail in.

The *Ruyter* had been gone more than an hour when the body of the smuggler was first discovered; but in vain did M. Joshua cause the strictest search to be made for the voluminous packet entrusted to him—not a trace could be discovered of it, or the letter addressed to the captain of the *Ruyter*, recommending Mahal as the passenger he was to expect: neither were the close researches made after Faringhea successful.

The dangerous chief of the Stranglers was never again seen in Java.

* It is well known that the doctrine of passive and absolute obedience, the grand pivot on which the body of Jesuits turned, was recalled by the dying words of Loyola: "Let each member of this association be in the hands of his superiors LIKE A CORPSE DRAWN FROM THE TOMB,—PERINDE AC CADAVER."



MONSIEUR AND MADAME DUPONT.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CHATEAU DE CARDOVILLE. — M. RODIN.

THREE months have passed away since Djalma was cast into prison at Batavia, accused of belonging to the murderous sect of the Phansé-gars or Stranglers. The scene we now describe is in France, at the beginning of the month of February, 1832, at the Château de Cardoville, an ancient feudal habitation, situated on the high cliffs of the coast of Picardy, not far from St. Valery, a very dangerous sea-shore, where almost every year ships are lost in gales from the north-west, which render the navigation of the Channel so dangerous.

In the interior of the château was heard the roaring of the wild tempest which had arisen in the night, and, at intervals, there was a loud noise resembling a discharge of artillery, which echoed all around, and was repeated by the hollows of the rocks. It was the sea, which dashed with fury against the high cliffs which towered around the old manor-house.

It was about seven o'clock in the morning, and daylight had not penetrated the windows of the large apartment on the ground-floor of the château; it was lighted by a lamp, before which was seated a female of about sixty years of age, with an open and good-tempered face, clothed after the fashion of the respectable farmers' wives of Picardy, and occupied with needle-work, although it was so early. At a little distance was her husband, about her own age. He was seated before a large table, and sorting out and putting into small bags samples of wheat and oats. The countenance of this grey-haired old man was intelligent and honest, expressive of sound sense and a love of fair dealing, and lighted up by a look of mirthful humour. He wore a cut-away coat of green cloth, high tanned-leather gaiters, coming above the knees of his black velvet breeches.

The terrible storm which was raging outside seemed to make this peaceable interior even still more comfortable. An excellent fire was blazing in a chimney-place made of white marble, which threw the reflexion of its cheerful glare on the carefully dry-rubbed floor. Nothing could be more gay than the hangings and curtains of old Persian cloth, with red Chinese figures on a white ground; and nothing more pleasing than the paintings in the panels of the room, which represented village scenes, shepherds and shepherdesses, in the style of Watteau. A *pendule* in Sèvres biscuit, rose-wood furniture inlaid with buhl-work and of old-fashioned construction, in all sorts of odd shapes, twistings, and crooked constructions, completed the fitting-up of the apartment.

The tempest continued to roar without, and the wind from time to time howled in the chimney, or shook violently the casements of the window. The man who was occupied in assorting the samples of grain was M. Dupont, the land-steward of the Château de Cardoville.

“*Sainte Vierge!* my dear,” said his wife to him, “what awful weather! This Monsieur Rodin, whose arrival the head-steward of

the Princess de Saint-Dizier has informed us we are to expect this morning, has selected a very uncomfortable day for his journey."

"Why, in truth, I think I never remember such a fearful tempest. If M. Rodin never saw the sea in a rage, he may to-day amuse himself with the sight."

"Who is this M. Rodin who is to come here to-day, *mon ami*?"

"*Ma foi!* I don't know: the intendant of the princess desires me in his letter to shew him every attention, and obey him as I would my master. It will be for M. Rodin to explain himself, and for me to obey his orders, since he comes from the princess herself."

"Why, to be quite precise, it is from Mademoiselle Adrienne that he really comes, as the estate belongs to her since the death of her late father, the Count-Duke de Cardoville."

"Yes, but the princess is her aunt, and her chief agent does the business of Mademoiselle Adrienne; so, whether he comes from her or the princess, why it's all the same thing."

"Perhaps M. Rodin intends to purchase the estate, although the stout lady who came purposely from Paris a week ago, to see the chateau, seemed very anxious to have it."

At these words the steward smiled.

"What makes you laugh, Dupont?" inquired his wife, who was an excellent woman, but not remarkable for the brilliancy of her understanding or the acuteness of her penetration.

"I laugh," replied Dupont, "because I was thinking of the face and figure of this stout, this enormous woman. Only imagine with such an appearance that any female should call herself Madame de *Sainte-Colombe!* *Dieu de dieu!* what a saint and what a dove (*colombe*)! She is as big as a kilderkin, with a voice like a dram-drinker, and moustaches as thick and grey as a grenadier of the line! And I heard her say to her servant, '*Come, get on, my trump!*' And she is *Sainte-Colombe!*"

"Really, Dupont, you make very strange remarks. She didn't choose her own name, you know; and as to her beard, poor lady! she cannot help that."

"Yes, but it is her fault if she calls herself De la *Sainte-Colombe*; you can't believe that it is her real name. Ah, my poor Cathrine! you are as simple as ever."

"And you, my poor Dupont, you cannot help always saying little sharp things. Now I think the lady looked very respectable. The first thing, too, that she asked when she arrived was about the chapel belonging to the chateau, of which she had been informed. She declared she would fit it up again: and when I told her that there was no church in this small district, she appeared quite distressed at being deprived of a curé in the village."

"Yes—ah! yes—the first thing your *parvenus* do is always to play the charitable, and meddle with the affairs of the parish, like a great lady."

"But Madame de la *Sainte-Colombe* has no occasion to play the great lady, for she is so already."

"She a great lady?"

"Yes; why, only look at how beautifully she was dressed, with her shot-silk gown and her violet-coloured gloves, as handsome as

a bishop's; and then, when she took off her hat, she had round her false hair a bandeau of diamonds, and ear-rings of diamonds as large as my thumb-nail, and rings on every one of her fingers! Depend upon it she is a person of consequence, or she would not wear so many jewels in the open day."

"Um! um! you are a very clever body."

"That is not all."

"Go on—what else?"

"She talked of nothing and nobody but dukes, marquises, counts, and very rich people, who visited her, and were her friends; and then, when she saw the little pavilion in the park, which was half-burnt down by the Prussians, and which the late count would not repair, she said, 'What ruins are these?' I replied, 'Madame, this pavilion was burnt down when the allies were in this country.' 'Indeed, my dear,' said she; 'the allies—the good allies—the dear allies—they and the Restoration began to make my fortune.' Then I said to myself, Dupont, says I, 'Ah, I see, she is an ancient *émigrée*.'

"Madame de Sainte-Colombe!" shrieked the steward, bursting with laughter; "oh, my poor wife! my poor wife!"

"Ah, because you were once for three years in Paris, you think you know every thing."

"Catherine, my dear, let us talk of something else; you will make me say something I do not wish. There are things, my love, which good and simple-hearted creatures like you ought never to know."

"I do not know what you mean by that, but pray try not to say such ill-natured things of people; for if Madame de Sainte-Colombe does buy the estate, you wish to remain as steward, don't you?"

"To be sure I do, for we are growing very old, Catherine, dear; and having been here for twenty years we have been too honest to save money for our old age; and, *ma foi!* it would be very hard, at our time of life, to have to seek another home, and, perhaps, not find it. Ah! what I regret is that Mademoiselle Adrienne will not keep the estate, for it seems that it is she who will sell it, and that the princess did not wish her to part from it."

"*Mon Dieu!* Dupont, you do not surely see any thing very extraordinary in the fact of Ma'amselle Adrienne's desire to spend some of her large fortune, so young as she is?"

"Oh, the thing is natural enough; Ma'amselle, having neither father nor mother, is her own mistress, and she has a 'cute little head of her own. Don't you remember ten years ago, when the count, her father, brought her here one summer, what a self-willed young lady she was? what temper? and such eyes!—*hein*, how they sparkled and shone even then!"

"'Tis truth to be said, Ma'amselle Adrienne had a very singular expression in her look—very strange for her age."

"If she has grown up as she promised to do, with her wild and animated countenance, she must be very handsome now, in spite of the rather peculiar hue of her hair; for, between ourselves, if she was a little shop-girl, instead of a damsel of high birth, every body would say that she was red-haired."

"For shame! again something ill-natured."

“Of Ma’amselle Adrienne? Heaven forbid! for she promised to be as good as she was handsome; and it is not to wrong or scandalise her that I should call her red-haired. On the contrary: for I remember that her locks were so fine, so bright, so golden, and suited so admirably her snow-white skin and black eyes, that I would not have had them altered if I could. Therefore, I am sure that now this auburn colour, which would have been detrimental to others, will render Ma’amselle Adrienne’s hair only more charming; and she must now be a real wanton little sprite.”

“Oh! as to that, she was always full of tricks and fun; running in the park, teasing her governess, climbing the trees, and a hundred little funny ways.”

“I agree that there Ma’amselle Adrienne was a very little devil, but then so full of sense, kindness, and so good-hearted!”

“She was, indeed. Didn’t she once give her new shawl and merino dress to a poor little beggar-girl, and then returned to the château with nothing but her petticoat on, and with her arms bare?”

“Yes, heart, plenty of heart, wife; but her head—ah! what a head!”

“Yes, a wild, very wild head; and I fear it may lead her into mischief; for it seems that in Paris she does things—such things!—”

“What things?”

“Oh, my dear, I dare not say.”

“Come, tell away, old lady.”

“Well, then,” said the worthy housewife, with a sort of embarrassment and concern, which shewed how deeply such enormities affected her, “they *do* say that Ma’amselle Adrienne never sets foot in church; that she lives all alone in an idolatrous temple at the end of the garden of her aunt’s hôtel; that she is waited on by women in masks, who dress her up like a goddess, and she scratches them all day long, for she gets tipsy, and then all night long she plays on a hunting-horn of solid gold; and all this, as you may well suppose, is most terribly afflicting and annoying to her poor aunt the princess.”

At this moment the steward burst out into so loud a fit of laughter, that he quite interrupted his wife.

“Really!” said he, when he had finished; “and who told you these fine facts about Ma’amselle Adrienne?”

“Why, Rene’s wife, who went to Paris to see a child she had weaned; and when she called at the Hôtel de Saint-Dizier she saw Madame Grivois, her godmother,—she, you know, is first *femme-de-chambre* to the princess. Well, then, this Madame Grivois told her all this, and of course she must know all about it as she belongs to the household.”

“Oh, that Grivois is a nice gossip—a worthy woman! Why, not long ago she was one of the gayest ladies I ever met with—full of tricks; and now she is like her mistress, so pious and sanetimonious! Umph! why she is now a devotee!—like mistress like maid. And the princess, too—she who is now so stiff-starched and very correct—why I remember the time when she used to play fine pranks: about fifteen years ago what a frolicsome miss was she! You remember that handsome hussar colonel who was quartered at Abbeville? You must

remember—an emigrant who had served in Russia, and to whom the Bourbons gave a regiment at the Restoration!"

"Yes, I remember very well; but there you go again with your ill-natured remarks!"

"*Ma foi!* not I,—I only tell the truth. The colonel spent all his time at the château, and the world said that he was on very good terms with her holiness—princess of to-day. Ah! what a time we had of it then! Every evening, plays or fêtes at the château. What a devil—what a rattler that colonel was! How well he acted! I recollect, as though it was but yesterday——"

The steward was cut short in his recollections by a stout female servant, wearing the Picardy costume and cap, who came into the room in a hurry, and said to her mistress,—

"Mistress, there is some gentleman who is asking for master; he has just come from St. Valery in a post-chaise, and he says his name is Monsieur Rodin."

"M. Rodin!" said the steward; "ask him in instantly."

* * * * *

A minute afterwards M. Rodin entered. He was, according to custom, more than humbly dressed. He made a low bow to the steward and his wife, who, on a sign from her husband, left the room. The cadaverous countenance of M. Rodin, his almost imperceptible lips, his small reptile-like and half-closed eyes, nearly covered by the placid upper lid, and his clothes almost beggarly, combined to render his appearance anything but prepossessing. Yet this man, when it was requisite or politic, knew how, by a devilish skill, to assume so much kindness and sincerity, to make his phrases so agreeable and so insinuating, that, by degrees, the disagreeable and repulsive effect which his first appearance conveyed was destroyed, and he almost always succeeded in seizing his dupe or victim in the twisting folds of his hypoerisy by the aid of his language, which was as apparently yielding as it was honeyed and treacherous. It is said that the ugly and the evil have their fascination as well as the handsome and the good.

The honest steward looked at this individual with surprise, when he recollected the pressing recommendations of the intendant of the Princess de Saint-Dizier. He expected a totally different personage, and could hardly conceal his astonishment when he said,—

"I have the honour of seeing M. Rodin?"

"Yes, sir; and here is another letter from the intendant of the Princess de Saint-Dizier."

"Pray, sir, draw near the fire whilst I read this letter. The weather is so bad," said the steward, with much respect, "may I offer you any thing?"

"A thousand thanks, my dear sir; I leave again in an hour."

Whilst M. Dupont was reading, M. Rodin cast around him a scrutinising glance at the interior of the room; for, like a skilful man of the world, he often drew his most correct and useful inferences from appearances, which often betray the taste and habits, and also afford some idea of character; but, for once, his sagacity was at fault.

"Very well, sir," said the steward, after he had finished the letter; "the intendant renews his instructions that I will place myself entirely at your orders."

"Oh! I shall give you but very little trouble, and not detain you long."

"Sir, it is an honour."

"*Mon Dieu!* I know how fully you must be employed, for, as I came in, I was struck with the order and perfect arrangement which I observed every where—a proof, my dear sir, of the regularity and care which you display."

"Sir—really—you flatter me."

"Flatter you! a poor old man like me does not think of that: but, to business. You have here a room which is called the Green Chamber?"

"Yes, sir; it is the apartment which the late Count-Duke de Cardoville used as his own study."

"Have the kindness to conduct me to it."

"Unfortunately, sir, that is impossible. After the death of the count, and when the seals were removed, a quantity of papers were shut up in the chamber in a cabinet, and the lawyers took the keys away with them to Paris."

"The keys! oh, here they are!" said M. Rodin, shewing the steward a bunch, on which was a large key and several small ones.

"Ah, sir, that alters the case. You want some papers, then?"

"Yes, certain papers, and a small wooden casket with silver hinges; do you know it?"

"I do, sir; I have often seen it on the table of the count when he was writing, and it must be in the large china cabinet, of which you have the key."

"Be so good, then, as lead me thither, as I have the authority of the Princess de Saint-Dizier."

"Yes, sir; and is the princess quite well?"

"Perfectly; she is, as usual, wholly absorbed in heavenly things."

"And Mademoiselle Adrienne?"

"Alas, my dear sir!" said M. Rodin, with a deep and commiserating sigh.

"Mereiful Heavens! what can you mean? Surely, nothing has happened to that excellent young lady?"

"You do not understand me."

"Is she ill?—Speak, I beseech you, and terminate my uneasiness."

"No, no! she is well. Unhappily, her health is only equalled by her extreme beauty."

"*Unhappily!*" repeated the registrar, in extreme amazement.

"Too truly I said so," replied Rodin; "for when youth, beauty, and high health are joined to a perverse spirit, and a bold, reckless disregard of all that is wise and good, it becomes rather a source of regret that all these personal advantages, so dangerous in the hands of one who, probably, has not, for violence of conduct and unbridled humours, her equal upon earth, should probably lead but to perdition. But let me pray of you, my dear sir, to speak of other things—the subject is too painful for me," added M. Rodin, in a voice of deep emotion, and wiping the corner of his right eye with the tip of the little finger of

his left hand, as though anxious to conceal the tear that had gathered there.

The registrar did not perceive the tear, but he saw the action, and was much struck with the alteration in M. Rodin's voice; he therefore replied, in a tone of sympathising regret, "I have been thoughtless enough to distress you, I fear—let me crave your pardon for my inadvertence; I was not aware ——"

"Nay, my good friend, it is rather for me to ask you to excuse this involuntary weakness—tears are rare visitors at my age; but had you seen, as I did, the despair of that excellent princess, whose only fault has been that of having been too indulgent—perhaps, weakly so—to her niece; and so to have encouraged her in her—— But again, let me beg we may change the subject of our discourse, my very dear sir."

After a momentary silence, during which M. Rodin appeared struggling to regain his usual calmness, he said to M. Dupont,

"As far as regards the green chamber, then, my dear sir, one part of my mission is fulfilled; there is still another matter to talk over with you, and, before I commence it, I must recall to your memory a circumstance you may probably have forgotten—the fact of a Marquis d'Aigrigny, then a colonel of hussars quartered at Abbeville, having, about fifteen or sixteen years since, passed some time here."

"Ah! I recollect him well," answered Dupont; "a fine, soldierly, gentlemanlike man, as you would see in a thousand. I was talking of him to my wife, a very little while ago; he was the very life and soul of the château; and such a clever actor!—he always played the wild, rollicking characters, in all the private theatricals with which the company used to amuse themselves. I think I see him in the '*Two Edmonds*.' He used to play the part of the drunken soldier admirably! And what a voice he had!—when he sung the music of *Joconde* you might have heard a fly move its wings; every body said there was not such a singer in Paris."

Rodin, after complacently listening to the registrar, proceeded:

"You know, doubtless, that after a terrible duel with a violent Buonapartist, named General Simon, the Marquis d'Aigrigny (whose private secretary I have now the honour of being) determined upon forsaking the world, and devoting himself to the church?"

"Is it possible?—what a sacrifice!—so brave a soldier!"

"Yes, this brave soldier, so rich, so noble, so justly esteemed and every where sought after, resigned all these advantages to assume a humble black robe; and spite of his name, his rank, his high family connexions and influence, combined with his reputation and eloquence as the first preacher of the day, he is just what he was fourteen years ago—a simple abbé, instead of being an archbishop or a cardinal, as many are who do not possess either his merits or virtues."

M. Rodin said this in so natural and unaffected a manner, expressive of his own entire conviction of the truth and justice of all he asserted, that M. Dupont involuntarily exclaimed,

"What a fine, what a noble picture you have drawn!"

"Nay," answered M. Rodin, with a well-assumed air of ingenuousness, "nay, my dear friend, you overrate it;—to a heart like that of M. d'Aigrigny, such conduct was the mere simple dictate of his excel-

lent nature. But among his many fine qualities, he particularly possessed that of never overlooking merit in others, or of allowing men of honour, probity, and conscientious discharge of duty, to go unrewarded. Thus, therefore, my worthy M. Dupont, he has not failed to think of you."

"Is it possible M. le Marquis has condescended to ——"

"Only three days since I received a letter from him, in which you were particularly mentiond."

"He is, then, in Paris?"

"He is shortly expected to arrive there. About three months ago he set out for Italy; during the journey, he received the afflicting intelligence of the death of his mother, who had gone to pass the autumn at one of the estates belonging to the Princess de Saint-Dizier."

"Indeed! I was not aware of that."

"Yes, indeed; the blow fell on him with a crushing weight, for he was most tenderly attached to his parent. But we must all resign ourselves to the will of Providence."

"And may I be permitted to inquire what it was M. le Marquis did me the honour to say in his letter respecting me?"

"I am about to inform you: — in the first place, you must know this château is sold; the agreement was signed the evening previous to my quitting Paris."

"Ah, now you renew all my fears."

"As regards what?"

"Why, you see, I am fearful the new proprietor may not choose to continue me in my present office of registrar."

"Really, this is a fortunate coincidence! for it was precisely respecting your situation I wished to speak with you."

"Is it possible?"

"Certainly; and knowing full well the interest the marquis takes in you, I am most anxious, most desirous for you to retain your employment, and I will do all and every thing in my power to effect so desirable an end, if ——"

"Ah, my kind friend and benefactor!" exclaimed Dupont, interrupting Rodin; "what thanks do I not owe you! Heaven has surely sent you to my assistance."

"Nay, now you flatter me, my worthy M. Dupont; and I fear you will think less of my zeal to serve you when you find I am compelled to attach certain conditions to the service I propose to render you."

"Oh, if that be all, let me beseech you, sir, speak — say what you wish me to do: you will find me all obedience."

"The new occupant of the château is an elderly lady, worthy of the highest consideration and respect: Madame de la Sainte-Colombe is the name of this excellent lady."

"Bless me!" cried the steward, suddenly breaking in upon Rodin's eulogium on Madame de la Sainte-Colombe; "is it possible that the lady who has bought the château, and Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, are the same?"

"You are acquainted with her, then?"

"Why, sir, about a week ago, she came here to look at the estate. My wife insists upon it she is a great lady; but, between ourselves, from certain words she let fall ——"

“ Ah! you are an accurate observer, I see, my worthy M. Dupont; your opinion evinces your correct penetration. Madame de la Sainte-Colombe is *not* what may be styled a lady, either by birth or education. The fact is, I rather believe she was formerly neither more nor less than a milliner in the Palais Royal. You see I use no reserve with you, my excellent friend.”

“ And that, I suppose, was what she meant when she talked of the numerous French and foreign noblemen who were in the habit of frequenting her house.”

“ Most likely, when sent by their wives to order hats and caps, &c. However, one thing is very certain, that she continued to amass a large property; and having been in her youth, as well as more mature age, indifferent — alas! more than indifferent — to the well-being of her soul, Madame de la Sainte-Colombe is now bent upon following out a most praiseworthy and excellent course of life, and it is this very resolution which renders her, as I said just now, worthy of universal respect and veneration: for what is more calculated to deserve it than a hearty and sincere forsaking of all evil ways, and a clinging to that which is good? But that the repentance of this lady may be lasting, and her eternal welfare effectually secured, we must have your co-operation, my worthy friend.”

“ And in what manner can I possibly assist the work?”

“ You may do much; and in this manner, for example. You have no church in this hamlet, which is situated at equal distances between its two adjacent villages. Well, Madame de la Sainte-Colombe being naturally anxious to choose between the two ministers belonging to these churches, and aware that yourself and Madame Dupont have long inhabited this part of the country, will be sure to inquire of you or your wife the respective merits of the different clergymen.”

“ Oh, then we shall not be long in answering that question; the curé of Danicourt is one of the best men breathing.”

“ And that very piece of information is precisely what you must conceal from Madame de la Sainte-Colombe.”

“ You amaze me!”

“ On the contrary, you must boast to her, day and night, of the surpassing virtues and goodness of the curé of the other parish, M. de Roiville, in order that this dear lady may be induced to confide to him the salvation of her immortal soul.”

“ And why must this preference be accorded?”

“ For a very good and sufficient reason. If you or your wife — no matter which — can induce Madame de la Sainte-Colombe to choose as I wish her to do, you may rely upon being continued in your present office of steward: to that I pledge my honour, and, what I once promise, I never fail to perform.”

“ I doubt not, monsieur, your having the full power to continue me in my present situation,” said Dupont, perfectly convinced by the tone and look of authority assumed by Rodin of his being quite in earnest; “ but I should much wish to know —— ”

“ One word more,” said Rodin, interrupting him. “ It is but right, and I am quite willing to explain to you why I so particularly insist

upon your aiding me in leading the new owner of the château to prefer one curé to another. I should be deeply grieved, indeed, to allow you to fancy even the shadow of an interested motive existed, when my only reason is a desire to perform a good and charitable action. The curé of Roiville, for whom I am solicitous of procuring your kind offices, is, in the first place, a person in whose welfare M. l'Abbé d'Aigrigny takes a lively interest; then, as a second reason, I would urge his having an aged mother entirely dependent on him; thirdly, I am perfectly convinced that, were he entrusted with the spiritual guidance of Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, he would be enabled to effect a more decided improvement than any other person less endowed with patience and zeal. And then, as in all probability, so wealthy a penitent as Madame de la Sainte-Colombe would, from time to time, evince her grateful conviction of his valuable exertions in her behalf by an occasional offering of some of her superfluous riches, it follows, as a matter of course, that the poor mother would profit by the circumstance. And so you see, my excellent friend, the whole history of this great machination, which so deeply surprised and puzzled you. Directly I became aware of this lady's intention of buying the estate contiguous to the parish of our *protégé*, I wrote to apprise M. le Marquis of it; and he, immediately recollecting you, replied to the information by despatching a most kind letter, in which he spoke in the highest terms of your zeal and ability, requesting me to solicit of you the trifling favour I have just named, and which, as you perceive, it is so much to your interest to grant: for I repeat—and I will prove my words—that it rests entirely with me to continue you as land-steward or to nominate another in your place."

"Permit me to observe," said Dupont, after a few moments' reflection—"and you are so candid and polite that I fear not to offend you by adopting a similar candour—in proportion as the curé of Danicourt is beloved and respected throughout the country, so is M. le Curé of Roiville, to whom it is your wish to give the preference, disliked and dreaded for his bigoted and intolerant spirit. And, besides —"

"Go on."

"People do say —"

"Well, what do they say?—let us hear."

"It is generally reported, and almost universally believed, he is—a Jesuit!"

At these words M. Rodin burst into a fit of laughter, so natural and hearty, that the poor steward was rivetted to the spot with astonishment at mirth so unusual with M. Rodin, and also with the singularly sinister look expressed on his countenance, even while his features were convulsed with irrepressible laughter.

"A Jesuit!" repeated M. Rodin, whose hilarity seemed to increase at the very idea of any thing so ridiculous being urged against any man. "A Jesuit!—ha! ha! ha! My dear M. Dupont, you must excuse me; but how is it possible a person of your good sense, intelligence, and knowledge of the world, can listen to such exceeding nonsense? A Jesuit! Are there such things nowadays do you believe? Can you really put faith in these absurd jacobinical tales—

these hobgoblins of decayed Liberalism? I'll wager you what you please that you have been reading all these '*raw-head-and-bloody-bone*' stories in the *Constitutionnel*!"

"Still, sir, folks say ——"

"Say! why what is there that idle, gossiping, mischief-making people will not say? But wise and enlightened men, such as yourself, never listen to the floating scandal, always prefaced as what *persons say*; they busy themselves only with their own affairs, and do not sacrifice to a love of silly tattling an excellent situation, which will ensure them comfort and independence for life: for I tell you candidly, that unless you pledge yourself to obtain for my *protégé* the preference I desire as regards Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, I shall be obliged, though with regret, to appoint your successor as land-steward here without delay."

"But—but, sir!" exclaimed poor Dupont; "surely you will not consider me to blame if the lady, hearing the other curé every where extolled and eulogised, should prefer him to the one you wish me to recommend?"

"Of course not; but that will not occur. On the contrary, Madame de la Sainte-Colombe hearing the curé of Roiville the constant theme of praise and panegyric by people of long standing and good reputation in the place—like you and your wife, for instance, whom she will daily and hourly be in the habit of mixing with—and then hearing from the same individuals the most fearful and atrocious character of the minister of Danicourt, will infallibly prefer my *protégé*, and you will remain land-steward for the rest of your days."

"How can I calumniate an innocent man?" exclaimed Dupont, thoroughly bewildered in the midst of this fresh mental difficulty. "How can I utter falsehoods against one so good—so amiable?"

"My dear Monsieur Dupont," returned M. Rodin, with an air of painful reproach, "I trust you do not so far misunderstand me as to suppose I am urging you to do any thing against your conscience. I was merely putting a simple case before you—a plain supposition. You are anxious to be retained in your present situation, and I merely pointed out a certain means of obtaining your wish. I offered no advice in the matter; it is for you to decide as to its being a chance to accept or refuse—pray let that be understood."

"But, M. Rodin ——"

"One word more; or, rather, one condition more, which, indeed, is of greater importance than the other. Unfortunately, the ministers of our holy religion are but too frequently known to take advantage of the weakness of mind and character of their penitents, and to turn their very distaste for worldly possessions either to their own account or that of others. Now, though I believe our *protégé* wholly incapable of conduct so base, yet, to effectually guard my own responsibility, and, indeed, yours also—you having all the merit of introducing the spiritual adviser of Madame de la Sainte-Colombe—I could wish you to write me, twice in each week, a full and minute detail of all you see, hear, or observe, in the conduct, character, and habits of Madame de la Sainte-Colombe—even the books she reads, &c. &c.: for it is in these daily *minutiae* the influence of a spiritual director is most clearly traced, and I wish to be perfectly satisfied as to the conscientious manner in

which my *protégé* performs his duty, without his being at all aware of it. So that if it occurred to you that any thing at all blamable were going on, I should be immediately apprised of it through your weekly journal, which, I must impress upon you, should be most exact and circumstantial, even to the very most trifling detail."

"But surely, sir," remonstrated the unfortunate steward, "this is positive espionage!"

"Come, come, my dear M. Dupont, I cannot allow you to bestow so injurious an appellation on one of the most soothing blessings of life. *Confidence!* confidence, my friend! I ask you not to become a spy—I start at the word with the same horror and disgust you do: I but ask you, in strict confidence, remember to write me from day to day all that passes here, even to the most minute details. On these two conditions, which cannot be separated from each other, you remain, as you now are, land-steward to this estate. Otherwise, with deep regret, I shall be obliged to appoint another to serve Madame de la Sainte-Colombe."

"Ah, sir!" cried Dupont, trembling with emotion, "I conjure you to be generous, without imposing these hard conditions. This situation is the sole maintenance of myself and wife, and we are now too old to seek a fresh one: do not, therefore, allow the probity of forty years' standing to struggle against the horrors of want and misery, lest I sink under the temptation."

"My very good friend, you really talk like a mere child; pray shew more good sense. By this day week you will have the goodness to let me have your ultimate decision."

"Oh, pity us! I beseech you not to leave me so sore a temptation to contend with. Pray, pray pity us!"

The conversation was here interrupted by a violent noise, re-echoed by the surrounding heights.

"What can that be?" inquired M. Rodin,

Scarcely had he spoken the words than the same noise was repeated, with even an increased loudness.

"Guns are firing!" said Dupont, hastily rising from his seat: "probably some vessel is in distress, or requires a pilot."

"Husband!" exclaimed the steward's wife, as she hastily entered the apartment, "you may see from the terrace a steam-vessel and a ship out at sea, almost entirely dismasted; the waves are bringing them rapidly on to this coast. The three-masted ship fired the signal-guns you heard just now. Oh, they must perish!—there is not the slightest hope of escape."

"Dreadful!" cried M. Dupont, taking his hat and preparing to go out; "and to think we can only look on, and behold our fellow-creatures perish!"

"Are there no means of succouring these unfortunate vessels?" inquired M. Rodin.

"Alas! none. Should they be once drawn on these rocks, once caught among the breakers, no human power can avert their fate. Since the commencement of the equinox two vessels have already gone to pieces on this coast."

"And to lose not only their lives, but all the valuables they have on board!" exclaimed M. Rodin; "it is, indeed, most melancholy!"

"With such a tempest as at present rages," said the steward, addressing his wife, "I fear the chances of saving the passengers are very slight. Nevertheless I will do what I can: I will take all the farm-people out with me, and place them in different parts of the cliffs, so as to afford a probability of aiding any unfortunate beings who may be washed ashore. Do you light large fires in every room; get dry linen and garments ready; prepare warm cordials and restoratives. I dare not hope to save the poor souls, but at least it shall not be for want of trying. Will you accompany me, M. Rodin?"

"I should esteem it a sacred duty to do so," replied M. Rodin, who felt no inclination to expose himself to the fury of the storm, "could I entertain a hope of being in any way serviceable; but at my age, unfortunately, good-will is all that is left me, for my strength no longer seconds it. If, therefore, your amiable wife will direct me to the green chamber, I will take from it the various articles I came to fetch away, and then immediately return to Paris, for I am already much pressed for time."

"As you please, sir: Catherine will conduct you to the apartment you desire."

"And you," added the steward, speaking to the servant who stood by, "go and ring the alarm-bell as loudly as you can, and bid the people on the farm come to me at the foot of the cliffs with ropes and pulleys."

"Dear husband!" said the steward's wife, alarmed for his safety, "let me conjure you to be careful."

"Never fear, my kind Catherine; I will be cautious for your sake. Now, one kiss to bring me luck, and I am gone," returned the old man, who then ran hastily out of the room, saying,

"Quick, quick! By this time there probably does not remain a single plank of either of these unfortunate vessels."

"My dear madam," said the immovable Rodin, "may I ask you to conduct me, without further delay, to the green chamber. I really am losing very precious time."

"Please to follow me, sir," said poor Catherine, drying the tears which filled her eyes at the thoughts of her husband's danger, with whose dauntless spirit and unflinching courage she was too well acquainted not to fear he would peril a life so dear to her.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TEMPEST.

THE sea was a fearful sight to contemplate.

Enormous waves of dark-green hue, crested with a white foam, marked their rise and fall, by turns high and deep, against a broad streak of red light which overspread the horizon.

Above that were piled huge masses of deep black clouds, and, driven rapidly forward by the violence of the wind, a quantity of light clouds of a reddish grey hurried over the lowering sky.

The pale winter's sun, before it was obscured in the midst of the heavy clouds behind which it was slowly rising, threw a few cold

gleams on the raging billows, and lighted up here and there the foaming crests of the highest waves.

A belt of snow-white foam boiled and dashed furiously, until it was lost in the distance on the reefs with which this rocky and dangerous coast is studded.

In the distance, half-way up a rocky promontory which ran a long way into the sea, was the Chateau de Cardoville. Its glass windows shone in the rays of the sun, and its brick walls and slated and pointed roof stood out in bold relief in the midst of the vapoury sky.

A large ship in distress, which had nothing left but fragments of her sails fastened to the stumps of her masts, was driving fast towards the shore.

Now it dived down into the depths of the yawning waves, and now it rose again on the summit of the chafing waters.

A light is seen, followed by a dark sound, hardly to be heard amidst the roar of the tempest. It was a gun — the last signal of distress of this vessel which, in spite of all that could be done, must be lost and dashed to pieces on the iron-bound coast.

At this moment a steam-boat, with her stream of black smoke above her, coming from the east and going westward, was making every effort to clear off from the coast and leave the reefs on her lee.

The dismasted ship, according to the direction in which she was driving, must of necessity pass before the steamer in her fatal course towards the rocks, on which wind and tide impelled her.

In a moment a violent blast of wind took the steam-ship on the weather-bow, and a mountainous wave dashed furiously over the deck; and in a moment the chimney was washed away, the paddle-box broken, and one of the wheels utterly destroyed. A second wave dashing over the stern threw the vessel quite out of her course; and so much damage was done, that she no longer answered helm, but drove rapidly towards the shore in the same direction as the three-master.

The latter, although further off from the reefs, yet offering to the wind and waves a larger surface than the steam-vessel, drove along quicker in their common track, and they soon came so near together that there was every dread that the two ships must come in collision; a new danger to be added to the horrors of the now certain shipwreck.

The three-masted ship was English, and called the *Black Eagle*. She had come from Alexandria with the passengers who had arrived from India and Java by the Red Sea, on board of the steam-boat, the *Ruyter*, and left that vessel to cross the Isthmus of Suez. The *Black Eagle*, on leaving the Straits of Gibraltar, had touched at the Azores, whence it sailed direct, and was beating up for Portsmouth when it was struck by a gale from the north-east, which is so prevalent in the Channel.

The steamer was the *William Tell*, coming from Germany by the Elbe, and having left Hamburg it was making for Havre.

These two vessels, the sport of the mighty waves, driven by the tempest and drawn by the tide, were running on to the reefs with fearful rapidity.

The deck of both ships presented a terrible sight. The death of



THE STORM.

all the passengers seemed certain, for a tremendous sea was dashing against the deep rocks at the foot of a precipitous cliff.

The captain of the *Black Eagle* was standing erect at the stern, holding on by a part of the broken mast; and, even in this extremity, gave his orders with calmness and decision. The boats had all been washed overboard, except a skiff, which it was impossible to make use of; and the only chance of safety, in case the ship did not go to pieces the moment she went on the reefs, was to establish, by means of a cable from the rocks, a sort of *go-and-come* — a communication, which is full of hazard, between the shore and the wreck of a ship.

The deck was covered with passengers, whose cries and alarm increased the universal confusion. Some, stupified with terror, clung to the shrouds and rattlins, awaiting death in a state of insensibility; others wrung their hands in despair, or rolled themselves on the deck, uttering fierce imprecations.

Here were women on their knees at prayer, whilst others hid their faces in their hands, as though, to hide death from their gaze. A young mother, as pale as a ghost, holding her infant closely pressed against her bosom, went from one sailor to another, beseeching them, and offering a purse full of gold and gems, if they will but save her child.

These cries, fears, and tears, contrasted with the silent and gloomy resignation of the sailors, some of whom, seeing death staring them in the face, took off a portion of their clothing, resolved to try at the last moment, by a last vigorous effort, to save their lives by buffeting with the waves; others, renouncing all hope, braved death with a stoical indifference.

Here and there touching or terrible episodes were seen, having their rise in deep and sad despair.

A young man, of eighteen or twenty years of age, with jet black hair and eyes, and a bronzed complexion, with features of perfect and most beautiful regularity, gazed on this scene of desolation and terror with that calm resignation which is peculiar to those who have often braved great perils. Wrapped in a cloak, with his back leaning against the netting of the bulwarks, he maintained himself in his position by placing his feet against the side of the cabin bulkhead. At this moment the unhappy mother, who, with her child in her arms and gold in her hand, had in vain addressed herself to the sailors, entreating them to preserve her child, seeing the young man with the dark complexion, threw herself at his feet, and held up her child before him in an attitude of inexpressible anguish. The young man looked, shook his head mournfully, and pointed to the furious waters, but, with an expressive gesture, seemed to promise the despairing mother that he would save the infant if possible; and then she, with intense agony of joy, bathed his dark hands with her bitter but grateful tears.

On another part of the deck of the *Black Eagle* was a passenger who appeared animated by the most active pity.

He was hardly twenty-five years of age, and long and curling light hair waved around his attractive features. He wore a black cassock and white band. Going to the most despairing, and from one to the other, he gave them words of pious hope and resignation; and to have

heard him console some, encourage others, in language full of zeal, tenderness, and perfect charity, he might have been supposed unaware or regardless of the perils he participated.

In this beautiful and mild face might be seen cool and holy intrepidity, a religious abstraction from all earthly thoughts, as, from time to time, he raised his full blue eyes, beaming with gratitude, love, and composure, as though humbly thanking God for having placed him in one of those formidable positions of trial in which a man of high-wrought feeling and courage can devote himself for his fellow-creatures, and, if not save all, at least die with them, pointing the way to Heaven. In truth, he might be deemed an angel, sent by the Creator to render less cruel the blows of an inexorable fatality.

Singular contrast!—not far from this young man, as glorious as an archangel, was a being who resembled the Demon of Evil.

Boldly stationed on the shattered end of the bowsprit, where he held on by means of some broken ropes, this man looked around on all that was passing on the deck.

A fierce, brutal, and horrid delight overspread his yellow features, of that peculiar tint which characterises the offspring of a white and Mulatto Creole. He only wore a shirt and cotton drawers, and round his neck was suspended by a cord a long tin case, such as that in which soldiers keep their discharge.

The more the danger increased, the closer the three-master neared the fatal reefs, and the more they drew near the steam-vessel (which collision threatened to destroy both ships, even before they should be dashed on the rocks), the more did the fiendish joy of this passenger reveal itself in desperate delight. He seemed desirous of hastening, by his savage impatience, the work of destruction which was now so imminent.

To see him feed greedily on all the agony, the terror, and despairings which were displayed before him, he might be taken for an apostle of one of those bloody divinities who, in barbarous climes, preside over murder and slaughter.

The *Black Eagle*, driven by the wind and the towering billows, now neared the *William Tell* so closely, that from the former vessel the passengers were seen collected on the deck of the *Tell*, which was in a sinking state.

Her passengers were but few. The sea that struck her, by carrying away the paddle-box and injuring the wheel, had also carried away nearly all the bulwarks on that side; and the waves, at every moment washing over the breach they had made, swept the deck with irresistible violence, carrying away in each rush of waters several victims.

Amongst the passengers who seemed saved from the one peril but to be dashed in pieces on the rocks, or crushed by the shock of the two meeting vessels, was a group which claimed the tenderest, the most painful interest.

Standing quite aft was a tall old man with bald head and grey moustache, who had tied round his body a long piece of rope which was fastened to the ship's side; and thus secured, he clasped in his arms, and hugged tightly to his breast, two young girls of fifteen or sixteen years of age, half-wrapped up in a reindeer-skin cloak; a large



THE SHIPWRECK.

P. 166.

dog, dripping with water, and barking furiously at the angry waters, was at their feet.

These young girls, embraced in the old man's arms, clung also tightly to each other; but, far from looking around them with fear, they raised their eyes to Heaven, as, though full of confidence and ingenuous hope, they were expecting to be saved by the interposition of some supernatural power.

A fearful and horrid cry was uttered by all the passengers on board both vessels, which resounded far above the rage of the tempest.

At the moment when, dipping down into the abyss of a monster-wave, the steamboat presented her broadside to the bow of the three-master, the latter, lifted up on high by a mountain of water, was suspended as it were in air above the *William Tell*, for the moment which preceded the collision of the two vessels.

It was a spectacle of sublime horror which no pencil can paint.

Yes, during such catastrophes—quick as thought—we may sometimes retain pictures so rapidly sketched by the mind's eye, that they seem but as a flash of lightning.

Thus when the *Black Eagle*, uplifted by the waves, was about to descend upon the *William Tell*, the young man with the archangel's countenance and light and flowing hair, stood upright in the bow of the three-master, ready to dash into the sea to save some victim from the closing waters.

He then saw on board the steamboat, which was fully visible to him from his elevated position, two young females, who stretched towards him their hands in supplication.

They seemed to recognise him, and looked at him with a sort of ecstacy—of religious adoration!

For a second, and in despite of the tempest's din—the coming wreck—the looks of these three beings met.

The features of the young man then expressed a sudden, a deep commiseration; for the two girls, with joined hands, implored his aid as their expected rescuer.

The old man, who had been struck down by the fall of a piece of the bulwark, was prostrate on the deck.

Soon all disappeared!

A volume of deluging waters rushed impetuously over the *Black Eagle*, and that ship and the *William Tell* dashed furiously against each other in a torrent of boiling foam.

At the fearful collision of these two masses of wood and iron, which grounded against each other, the timbers quivered and parted. There was, too, a harrowing cry:

A cry of agony and of death!

One cry, raised by a hundred human creatures sinking simultaneously into the abyss of waters!

And then nothing was seen!

A few moments after, in the hollows or on the summits of the waves, might be seen the broken timbers of the sunken ships, and here and there the contracted arms, the wan and despairing faces, of some wretches trying to reach the reefs of the shore at the risk of being dashed on them by the rebounding waves, which fell there in all their violence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CHATEAU DE CARDOVILLE. — THE SHIPWRECKED.

WHILE the steward proceeded to the coast, in hopes of saving such of his fellow-creatures as might have been spared from the inevitable destruction of the two vessels, M. Rodin, conducted by Catherine to the green chamber, had employed himself in selecting the various articles he was to convey to Paris.

A couple of hours had thus passed away, when M. Rodin, who had almost forgotten the fearful fate of the wrecked passengers, and took not the slightest interest in the exertions each inhabitant of the chateau was making to save them from a watery grave, returned to the apartment ordinarily occupied by the steward, a room which opened upon a long gallery. It was entirely empty when he entered it, bearing under his arm a small ebony casket, with silver clasps, blackened and tarnished by time, while in the breast-pocket of his half-closed great coat might be seen the end of a large red morocco pocket-book.

Had the cold, impassive features of the Abbé d'Aigrigny's confidential secretary been capable of expressing joy in any other manner than by a sardonic grin, now was the hour when he might have shone out all radiant, for things had hitherto all combined to work to the end he desired, and M. Rodin's reflections were of the most pleasing and happy description.

First placing the casket on a table, he said, in a low and well-satisfied tone,

"All goes well: these papers have been prudently left here until now, for it was at all times requisite to be on our guard against the diabolical spirit of that Adrienne de Cardoville, who appears to know, instinctively, things she never could have been told by any human being. However, happily the hour is fast approaching when we shall have no further occasion to fear her. Her fate will be a cruel one, 'tis true; but it must be so; such proud and independent natures as she possesses must be treated as our born foes: a character like hers is at all times inimical to our designs, but when it rises in direct opposition, and threatens to overthrow our dearest schemes, our most important plans—then—then, indeed, down with it and with her!—no mercy!—it were worse than childish to think of shewing any. As for La Sainte-Colombe, there we are safe; the steward is gained, for, spite of the fool's scruples of conscience, his dread of losing his situation will compel him to serve us. I shall keep him, because he will answer my purpose better than a stranger; and the very fact of his having lived here the last twenty years, will effectually prevent that ignorant and weak-minded Madame de la Sainte-Colombe from entertaining the slightest mistrust of him. Once let me place her in the hands of our *protégé* of Roiville, and I will answer for the rest. The path of these stupid, worldly-minded females is uniformly the same: in their youth they serve the devil; in mature age they lead others to serve him; in their old age they live in horrible dread of him; and this fear we must excite and

work upon until we have induced her to bequeath to us the château de Cardoville, which, from its isolated position, would form an excellent college. Thus far, then, all works as we could wish it. As for the affair of the medals, we are fast approaching the 13th of February, and, by the last accounts from Joshua, Prince Djalma is doubtless still kept a prisoner by the English, in some distant part of India, otherwise I should have heard from Batavia; while the daughters of General Simon will be detained a month longer at Leipsie. Nothing can be better than all our exterior relations; and as for the state of our home affairs——”

M. Rodin was here interrupted by the entrance of Madame Dupont, busily engaged in her benevolent preparations to receive her shipwrecked guests.

“Now, then,” said she, speaking to a stout servant who was assisting her, “light a good fire in the adjoining room, and set this warm wine on the hob; we may expect your master’s return every minute.”

“Well, my dear madam,” said Rodin, “do you expect to save any of these poor creatures?”

“Indeed, sir, I cannot say; my husband has been gone these two hours, and my knowledge of his undaunted courage and resolution, where there is any good to be done, makes me dreadfully uneasy; for, indeed, he carries his daring spirit beyond the limits of prudence.”

“Ha!” muttered Rodin to himself; “courageous even to imprudence!—I like not that!”

“And now,” resumed Catherine, “I am putting fresh clothes and linen to air by the fires—Heaven grant it may be but as serviceable as I wish it.”

“Let us at least hope that it will,” answered Rodin, blandly. “I assure you, my dear madam, I felt considerable regret that neither my age nor my infirmities permitted me aiding your worthy husband in his labour of love. I equally regret being unable to learn the result of his exertions, and to congratulate him if successful, for I am unfortunately compelled to depart immediately—my very moments are reckoned. May I beg of you to order my carriage to be got ready instantly.”

“Directly, sir,” said Catherine, going.

“One word, my dear, my excellent Madame Dupont. You are a woman of good sound sense and admirable judgment; I will, therefore, tell you that I have pointed out a way by which, if your husband chooses, he may continue to hold his present situation.”

“Is it possible!” exclaimed Catherine, in a glow of delight: then, clasping her hands, she added, “Oh, what thanks do we not owe you for your goodness! What would become of people at our age if my husband was to lose his present employment?”

“I have only added two trifling conditions to my promise of obtaining his further engagement here, and these conditions are mere nothings. However, I shall leave him to explain all that to you.”

“Ah, sir! Heaven has sent you to save and to serve us!”

“Nay, nay, you overvalue my poor services, which are only given on two conditions, as I before said.”

“Were there a hundred, we should most gratefully accept them! Think, for a moment, sir, what would become of us, were

M. Dupont forced to leave his situation here. Alas! we must starve, for we have saved nothing!"

"I may reckon, I see, upon your kind co-operation in the matter; and for your husband's sake, and the interests of both of you, endeavour to persuade him not to reject the only chance of escaping from instant dismissal."

"Madam!—mistress!" exclaimed a servant, rushing breathlessly into the chamber; "master has returned!"

"Has he many persons with him?"

"No, madam: he is alone."

"Alone? *Quite* alone?"

"Yes, madam, quite."

A few seconds only elapsed when M. Dupont entered the room, his clothes were streaming with wet, and his leathern gaiters covered with mud and clay; while, in order to prevent his hat being blown away by the tremendous gusts of wind, he had tied it on his head by means of his cravat, which was placed over the crown and knotted under his chin.

"Oh, how thankful I am to see you back safe and sound!" said his wife, affectionately embracing him. "Indeed, I was very uneasy!"

"Up to the present moment we have only saved three!"

"God be praised, my worthy M. Dupont!" said M. Rodin, piously casting up his eyes and hands; "your efforts have not been wholly in vain!"

"Three! only THREE! Merciful Father, how dreadful!" said Catherine.

"I am only speaking of those I saw myself, near the small bay of Goëlands; let us hope that along other parts of the coast a still greater number may have found safety."

"True, dear husband! and, happily, all parts of this coast are not as dangerous as in our immediate neighbourhood."

"And where are these poor creatures, so benevolently snatched by you from the jaws of death?" said M. Rodin, who could not avoid remaining a little while longer, and thought himself obliged to feign an interest he was far from feeling.

"They are slowly proceeding along the cliffs by the aid of our people. Poor things! they are so much exhausted they cannot walk very fast; so I thought I would hurry home to re-assure my wife (who is always anxious about me), and to give some necessary orders for their accommodation. In the first place, my dear," said the steward, speaking to Catherine, "you must get some female attire ready."

"Is there, then, a woman among the persons saved?"

"There are two young girls, fifteen or sixteen years of age at the utmost—mere children, but so lovely!"

"Poor little things!" uttered M. Rodin, in a voice of affected commiseration.

"They owe their lives to the individual by whom they are accompanied; and a noble fellow he is, too! a real hero!"

"A hero?"

"Yes; just fancy——"

"You shall tell me all this by and by. First of all, take off that wet coat, and slip on this nice dry dressing-gown, and take a hearty



THE ORPHANS DISCOVERED.

drink of this hot spiced wine, for you are shivering with the cold of those wet garments."

"I will not refuse so good an offer, for I feel cold as death. I was saying that the person who saved these young girls was a hero; and certainly the courage he displayed exceeded any thing I ever heard or read of. When I left the house with all the men I could collect, we descended by the little winding path from the extreme point of the cliff till we reached its base. You know the little bay of Goëlands, which is fortunately protected from the swell of the sea by five or six enormous blocks of stone—well, at the extremity of the bay what do you think we found? Why, the two young girls I was telling you of, quite insensible, their feet still resting in the water, but their bodies reclining against a rock, as though some one had placed them there after having withdrawn them from the violence of the sea."

"Poor, dear young creatures! what a piteous tale!" said M. Rodin, applying, as usual, the tip of the little finger of his left hand to the corner of his right eye, as though to dry a tear, which was rather difficult to find there.

"What most struck me, was the perfect resemblance they bore to each other," added the steward; "which was so remarkable, that I should say, unless you were in the daily habit of seeing them, it would be quite impossible to know one from the other."

"Twin sisters, no doubt," said Madame Dupont.

"One of these poor young things," pursued the steward, "held tightly clasped between her icy fingers a small bronze medal, suspended around her neck by a chain of the same metal."

M. Rodin generally observed a stooping position, as though bent with age and infirmities; but he suddenly sprang up at these words, while a slight tinge of ascending blood diffused itself over his usually colourless countenance. In any other individual these trifling alternations might have passed unnoticed; but in a person who, like M. Rodin, had long habituated himself to control each impulse, and dissimulate every emotion, they indicated a most violent revulsion of feeling and idea. Hastily approaching the steward, he inquired, in a voice which almost resisted even his master-hand to subdue the agitation of,

"Did you observe what device or inscription this medal bore? Some pious relic, I should guess, by the extreme care evinced by the poor girl to preserve it, even in what she might have supposed her dying moments."

"Indeed, sir," answered the steward, coldly, "I was too much engaged with the condition of the poor half-drowned children to think or care about the medal."

"And the resemblance between these young persons is very great, I think you said?"

"So great that I, for one, would not undertake to say I should be able to know which was which. In all probability the poor girls have lost one if not both their parents, for I observed they were dressed in deep mourning."

"Ah! dressed in mourning!" cried M. Rodin, with a second start.

"How very sad! So very young, and already perhaps orphans!" said Madame Dupont, wiping away the tears which rose from her kind-hearted sympathy.

"Well," resumed the steward, "we removed the poor things, all fainting as they were, to a more convenient spot, where the sand was harder and drier. While we were busied in endeavouring to recall them to life, we saw the head of a man appear just over one of the rocks, which he was endeavouring to climb, grasping feebly with one hand; we hastened to him, and, happily, just in time to save him from being carried off by the raging sea, for his strength was entirely exhausted, and just as we reached him he fell quite lifeless into the arms of our men. This noble fellow, it seems, not contented with having displayed such admirable courage in preserving the two girls, wished to attempt to rescue a third person also, to whom, after having placed the poor young things out of risk of drowning against the cliffs, he wished to return, amid all the violence of the sea, which continually threw him back upon the rocks; his last effort was to try to cling on by one hand to the masses of weed and wild-grass which grew from the crevices, but his strength had quite failed him, and we were barely in time to save him from perishing."

"You may well say he acted nobly!"

M. Rodin, bending downwards till his head almost rested on his breast, appeared not to hear any part of this conversation; his consternation, his surprise, increased, even as he reflected upon the singular events of the last three hours. These two young girls, attired in deep mourning, their age, their singular resemblance to each other, the medal around the neck of one of them, could be no other than the daughters of General Simon; but by what unaccountable chance had they been participators in the horrors of the late shipwreck? How had they obtained their liberty? How managed to free themselves from their imprisonment at Leipsic? And how was it he had never been apprised of the fact? Could they have contrived to make their escape? or had they been set at liberty? And, above all, why had he not been duly informed of all that had transpired? These secondary thoughts, which presented themselves in crowds to the mind of M. Rodin, were lost in the one overwhelming reflection—these children of General Simon were on the spot, to defeat the web so skilfully, so artfully spun, and which had cost such sleepless nights and days to perfect, now, by their presence, utterly destroyed and rendered abortive.

"When I speak of the saviour of these two poor girls," continued the steward, addressing his wife, and without observing the deep reverie of M. Rodin, "I dare say you picture to yourself a strong, herculean person; but, bless you! nothing of the kind. My hero is almost boyish in his appearance—so slight, so fair, and with such delicate features and light curling hair! The poor fellow, when we found him, had on only his shirt, a pair of black knee-breeches, and a pair of black worsted stockings, which certainly struck me as being a very strange style of dress; so I left the poor fellow a large cloak to wrap himself up in."

"It was a curious way to be dressed in, certainly," answered Catherine; "sailors never wear such garments as that."

"Besides, though the vessel he belonged to was English, I fancy my hero was a Frenchman, for he spoke our language as well as you or I do. But what brought the tears to my eyes was to see the two

poor girls, directly they came to themselves, go down on their knees, and, looking at him with an air of religious admiration, render thanks to him for their safety, as though he had been a god; then they looked anxiously around, as though seeking some other person, after which they uttered a few words, and threw themselves into each other's arms, sobbing as though their hearts would break."

"How distressing! alas, how many unfortunate victims may not this storm have swallowed up!"

"Before we quitted the cliffs the sea had cast ashore seven dead bodies, portions of the wreck, chests, &c. I summoned the custom-house officers and coast-guard, and they will remain throughout the whole of the day to keep watch; and if, as I hope, any other unfortunate beings should be enabled to reach the shore with life, I gave orders that they should immediately be brought hither. But listen — I hear the sound of voices! Yes, 'tis the poor shipwrecked souls!"

So saying, the steward, accompanied by his wife, rushed to open the door of the room, which, as we before mentioned, led out upon a long gallery, while M. Rodin, biting his flat white nails in convulsive and impotent rage, awaited with deep anxiety the arrival of the strangers; and quickly did a most touching picture present itself to his view.

From the bottom of this gallery, which was dark, and only lighted on one side by some lancet-paned windows, three persons, conducted by a countryman, advanced slowly.

This group consisted of two young girls and the intrepid person to whom they owed their lives. Rose and Blanche were one on each side of their rescuer, who, walking with much difficulty, leaned lightly on their arms.

Although he was fully twenty-five years of age, the youthful countenance of this man did not seem so old. His long light-brown hair, parted down his forehead, fell wet and soft on the collar of a large brown cloak, with which he had been covered. It would be a difficult task to describe the heavenly goodness which beamed in his pale and gentle face, as pure as any countenance which the magic pencil of Rafael ever produced; for this divine artist alone could portray the saddened expression of those sublime features, the calmness of his heavenward look, and his eye as clear and blue as an archangel's, or a martyr ascended to the skies.

Yes, of a martyr! for a blood-red circle already encompassed this beautiful head.

It was a painful sight to see above his light-brown eyebrows, and made still more bright in its ruddy colour by a strait cicatrix, which had been made some months before, and seemed to encircle his splendid brow with a cord of purple. It was still more sad to behold his hands cruelly pierced as by crucifixion, and his feet, which had been subjected to the same infliction; so that he walked with extreme agony, as his wounds had opened afresh as he crawled over the sharp-pointed rocks whilst he was struggling for his life.

This young man was Gabriel, the priest attached to the foreign missions, and the adopted child of Dagobert's wife.

Gabriel was a priest and a martyr — for in these our days there

are also martyrs, as in the time when the Cæsars threw the early Christians to the lions and tigers of the Circus.

In our days the children of the people — for it is always amongst them that are found the heroic and disinterested — it is the children of the people who display courage and sincerity, and go to all parts of the world to try and propagate their faith, and brave death with fearlessness and devotion.

How many of them, victims of barbarism, have perished, obscure and unknown, in the midst of the solitudes of the two worlds! And these simple soldiers of the cross, who have nothing but their faith and their courage, never have any return (or seldom) — never any of those loaves and fishes which the church has to bestow! The purple or the mitre never conceals their scarred brows, their mutilated limbs; but, like the majority of the soldiers of the army, they die forgotten!*

* * * * *

In their ingenuous gratitude the daughters of General Simon, once restored to their senses after the shipwreck, and sufficiently strong to climb amongst the rocks, would not allow any other person to have the care of supporting the faltering steps of him who had snatched them from certain death.

The black clothes of Rose and Blanche were streaming with water; their faces, which were excessively pale, expressed deep grief, and tears were in their eyes, which were sorrowful, downcast, and quivering with emotion and cold, as they reflected that they should never again see Dagobert, their guide and friend; for he it was whom Gabriel had in vain attempted to save by helping him to ascend the rocks. Unfortunately, strength had failed them both, and the soldier was swept away by a receding wave.

The appearance of Gabriel was a fresh surprise for Rodin, who had retired into a corner, whence he might observe all; but this surprise was so fortunate, and he was so delighted to see the missionary saved from the death which seemed so imminent, that the intense feeling which he had experienced at the sight of General Simon's daughters was greatly abated. It must not be forgotten that M. Rodin's plans required the presence of Gabriel in Paris on the 13th of February.

The steward and his wife, who were greatly affected at the sight of the orphan girls, approached them with eagerness.

"Sir! sir! good news!" said a country lad, as he entered. "Two more persons saved from the wreck!"

"Heaven be praised! Heaven be blessed!" said the missionary.

"Where are they?" inquired the steward, going towards the door.

"There is one who can walk, and is following on with Justin, who is leading him: the other was wounded against the rocks, and they are carrying him hither on a litter made of the branches of trees."

* We remember with deep interest the end of a letter written two or three years ago by a missionary, son of some peasants at Beauce. He wrote to his mother from Japan, and ended his letter thus:—

"Good bye, my dear mother; they tell me there is much danger where I am going to. Pray to God for me, and tell all our good neighbours that I love them, and often think of them."

This simple phrase, addressed from the centre of Asia to poor peasants in a hamlet of France, appears to us exquisitely touching.

“I will run and have him placed in the lower room,” said the steward, going out. “You, wife, can help the young maidens.”

“And the shipwrecked man who is able to walk, where is he?” inquired the steward’s wife.

“Here he is,” said the peasant, pointing to some one who came along the gallery with a quick step. “When he learned that the two young ladies were saved, and here, although he is old, and was bruised on the head, he made such quick strides that it was as much as I could do to get here first.”

The peasant had scarcely pronounced these words than Rose and Blanche, rising together by a spontaneous impulse, hurried towards the door. They arrived there at the same moment as Dagobert.

The soldier, unable to articulate a word, fell on his knees at the threshold, and lifted up his hands to the daughters of General Simon, whilst Kill-joy, running to them, began licking their hands.

The emotion was too strong for Dagobert, and when he had clasped the orphans in his arms his head fell back, and he would have dropped prostrate, but for the care of the countryman near him. In spite of the observations of the steward’s wife, as to their weakness and emotion, the two young girls would accompany the fainting Dagobert, who was carried into an adjoining apartment.

At the appearance of the soldier, M. Rodin’s face was contracted, as though by a spasm, for he had till that moment supposed the guide of the general’s daughters was dead.

The missionary, overwhelmed with fatigue, was leaning on a chair, not having yet observed M. Rodin.

Another person, a man with a yellow and sallow complexion, entered the apartment, and coming up to the missionary, said to him in French, but with a foreign accent,

“The Prince Djalma will be brought in directly; his first word was to ask for you.”

“What does that man say?” exclaimed Rodin, in a voice of thunder; for at the name of Djalma he had, with a single bound, sprung to Gabriel’s side.

“Monsieur Rodin!” exclaimed the missionary, greatly surprised.

“Monsieur Rodin!” exclaimed the other shipwrecked man; and from that instant his eye never quitted the correspondent of Joshua Van Daël.

“You here, sir!” said Gabriel, approaching Rodin with an air of deference and fear.

“What did that man say to you?” repeated Rodin, with a faltering voice. “Did he not utter the name of Prince Djalma?”

“Yes, sir; Prince Djalma was one of the passengers on board the English vessel which came from Alexandria, and which has now been wrecked. This vessel put in at the Azores, where I was, the ship that brought me from Charlestown having been obliged to remain there on account of severe damage she suffered in a heavy gale. I embarked on board the *Black Eagle*, where I met Prince Djalma. We were bound to Portsmouth, and thence I intended to make my way to France.”

Rodin did not interrupt Gabriel. This fresh shock completely paralysed his thoughts. At length, like a man who tries a last for-

cible effort, although he knows beforehand that it is vain, he said to Gabriel,

“And do you know who this Prince Djalma is?”

“A young man as brave as good, the son of an Indian king, dispossessed of his territory by the English.”

Then, turning towards the other shipwrecked man, the missionary said to him, in a tone of deep interest,

“How is the prince? are his wounds dangerous?”

“The bruises are not mortal, but they are very serious,” was the reply.

“God be praised!” said the missionary; and, turning towards Rodin—“Here, you see, there is another saved.”

“So much the better,” replied Rodin, in a brief and imperious tone.

“I will go to him,” said Gabriel, submissively, “unless you have any orders to give me.”

“Shall you be ready to set out hence in two or three hours, in spite of your fatigues?”

“Yes, if it be peremptory.”

“It is. You will go with me.”

Gabriel bowed to Rodin, who fell back in his chair like one bereft of his wits, whilst the missionary left the room with the servant.

The man with the sallow complexion remained, unperceived by Rodin.

This man was Faringhea the Mulatto, one of the three Strangler chiefs, who had evaded the pursuit of the soldiers in the ruins of Tehandi. After having murdered Mahal the smuggler, he had stripped him of the despatches written by M. Joshua Van Daël to Rodin, and also of the letter by which the smuggler was to have been received as a passenger on board the *Ruyter*. Faringhea having escaped from the hut in the ruins of Tehandi, without being even seen by Djalma, the latter, when he met him on shipboard, after his escape (the particulars of which will be hereafter explained), not knowing that he belonged to the Phansegars, had treated him during the voyage as a fellow-countryman.

Rodin, with his eye fixed, his countenance livid and mute with rage, was biting his nails to the quick, not perceiving the Mulatto, who, after having silently approached him, placed his hand familiarly on his shoulder and said to him,

“Your name is Rodin?”

“Who are you?” asked Rodin, starting, and lifting up his head quickly.

“Your name is Rodin, isn't it?”

“It is. What then?”

“You live in the Rue Milieu-des-Ursins, at Paris, don't you?”

“Yes. But I again ask, what do you want?”

“Nothing, now, my brother; but hereafter, much.”

And Faringhea went away slowly, leaving Rodin much alarmed; for this man, who quailed at nothing, had been struck by the sinister looks and repulsive physiognomy of the Strangler.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DEPARTURE FOR PARIS.

PROFOUND silence reigned throughout the Château de Cardoville. The tempest had considerably abated, and the hoarse sound of the waves, dashing sullenly and heavily upon the shore, was now only heard.

Dagobert and the orphans were established in warm and comfortable chambers on the first-floor of the château.

Djalma, too severely hurt to be carried to the upper rooms, had remained in a lower apartment. At the moment when the ships struck, a despairing mother had placed her infant in his arms. In vain did he attempt to snatch the unhappy babe from a certain death, the effort only impeded his own struggle for his life, and he was eventually dashed to pieces when driven on the rocks.

Faringhea, who had contrived to induce a belief in his affection for him, remained to watch over him.

Gabriel, after having offered all the consolation in his power to Djalma, returned to the chamber allotted to him; and faithful to his promise to Rodin, to be ready to set out at the end of two hours, would not lie down in bed, but, having dried his garments, went to sleep in a large high-backed chair before a sparkling fire.

This apartment was situated near those occupied by Dagobert and the two sisters.

Kill-joy, who seemed to have very great confidence in the honesty of the château, had left the door of Rose and Blanche's chamber, and had laid himself down before the fire, at the corner of which the missionary was sleeping.

Kill-joy, with his muzzle stretched forth on his extended paws, enjoyed all the delight of repose after so many perils by flood and field. We will not take upon us to affirm that he thought constantly of poor old Jovial, unless, as a mark of his remembrance, it might be observed that he had an irresistible impulse to bite all the grey horses he met since the death of his venerable companion, although up to that time he had always been the most inoffensive dog that ever breathed to horses of every colour.

After a few moments one of the doors of the chamber opened, and the two sisters entered with a timid air. Having reposed themselves, awakened, and dressed, they began to be uneasy concerning Dagobert, although the steward's wife, after having shewn them his apartment, and came again to tell them that the village doctor did not find any cause for apprehension in the old soldier's contusions, still they quitted their room, hoping to meet with some one who could inform them more precisely on the subject of their anxiety.

The high back of the old-fashioned arm-chair in which Gabriel was sleeping completely concealed him, but the orphans, seeing Kill-joy quietly lying at the foot of the chair, thought it was Dagobert who was reposing there, and they approached the seat on tiptoe.

To their great astonishment they saw Gabriel sleeping there. Quite surprised, they stood motionless, neither daring to advance nor recede for fear of waking him.

The long, light chestnut locks of the missionary were no longer wet, and now curled round his neck and shoulders, whilst the paleness of his complexion was the more striking from the deep purple hue of the damask cover of the chair. Gabriel's beautiful countenance expressed a painful melancholy, either arising from the operation of an oppressive dream, or else that he always repressed strong emotions which betrayed themselves when he was sleeping. In spite, however, of the sadness and grief of his appearance, his features preserved their character of heavenly sweetness and attraction, for nothing is more touching than suffering goodness. The two young girls cast down their eyes and blushed as they perceived the sleeping missionary.

"He sleeps, my sister," said Rose, in a gentle whisper.

"So much the better," answered Blanche, in a low tone, and making a signal with her uplifted finger, not to disturb his repose; "we shall be able to observe him more at our ease. For, all through the time we were on board the same vessel with him, we never could take courage to examine his features."

"How sweet and heavenly is the expression of his countenance! It must be he we have seen in our dreams."

"Assuring us he would watch over and protect us."

"And well has he kept his word."

"But *this* time he does not deny us the happiness of beholding our deliverer."

"Not as it was in that dark night when we were freed from our imprisonment at Leipsic."

"Yes, then it was he who rescued us—who restored us to liberty."

"And this morning we should have perished but for his powerful aid."

"But yet, dear sister, it seems to me, that when he visited us in our dreams, his whole countenance seemed as though shining with a radiant brightness."

"Yes, you know it almost dazzled us to behold him. And then he did not appear so sad and dejected as he now does."

"That was because, you see, he came to us from heaven; but now he is on earth!"

"And, sister, had he then these deep red scars all round his forehead?"

"Oh, no! or we should have observed them."

"And look at his hands! they have the same marks of wounds."

"But angels cannot be wounded; therefore, dear sister, he is not an archangel, as we thought."

"Nay, but suppose he received these injuries while seeking to prevent some unhappy creatures from committing sin, or in preserving unfortunate beings, like ourselves, from certain death!"

"Yes, to be sure! you are quite right, dear sister. Doubtless, he has incurred much harm and risk in defence of those he protects, as he does us; and oh! how noble and excellent do these scars make him seem!"

"What a pity he has not opened his eyes!"

"They look so kindly and gently at us."

"I wonder he never spoke to us of our mother during the voyage."

"You know we were never alone with him; he did not like to mention her before others."

"But we are alone *now*."

"Shall we pray to him to tell us more about our beloved parent?"

At these words the orphans exchanged a look of innocent confidence, while a bright glow tinged their cheeks, and an indescribable feeling made their young hearts beat with increased quickness beneath the black robe which covered them.

"Yes, yes, sister, dear; let us kneel, and beseech him to speak to us."

"Oh, how *our* hearts beat!" said Blanche, feeling perfectly sure that her every feeling was reciprocated by her sister; "and yet it is a happy sensation—is it not, dear Rose?—as though we were expecting some great blessing."

The two sisters approached the arm-chair on which the young priest was sleeping, stepping cautiously on tiptoe, and then kneeling down, one on each side of him, held up their clasped hands, as in fervent supplication, forming a picture an artist would have delighted to copy.

Then elevating their lovely faces towards Gabriel, whispering in the tender voice which well assorted with the youthful sweetness of their looks, they meekly uttered,—

"Gabriel! tell us of our mother."

At the sound of his name the missionary gave a slight start, half-opened his eyes, and, under the influence of a half-awakened consciousness of what was passing around him, a sudden feeling of delight possessed him at the sight of the two fair creatures kneeling at his feet, and invoking his name in such gentle yet sweet voices.

"Who calls?" said he, at length, awakening thoroughly, and raising his head.

"'Tis we — Rose and Blanche."

It was now Gabriel's turn to blush, as he recognised the two interesting objects his hand had snatched from a watery grave.

"Rise, my sisters!" said he, at length; "you should kneel only to your God!"

The orphans, in prompt obedience to his words, instantly rose from their supplicating position, and placed themselves by his side, each holding the other by the hand.

"It seems you know my name," said the young missionary, smiling kindly at them.

"Oh, yes! we could not forget it."

"But from whom did you learn it?"

"From yourself!"

"From me?"

"You told us you were called Gabriel, when you brought us the message from our mother; when you informed us she had sent you to protect us, and that you would ever watch over us."

"I, my sisters!" cried the astonished missionary, utterly at a loss to comprehend a word of this discourse. "You are under some great mistake. I see you to-day for the first time in my life."

“And in our dreams you have visited us.”

“Yes! Now do you not recollect visiting us in our dreams?”

“The first time you came was in Germany, about three months ago. Pray look at us well, and then, I am sure, you will recollect us.”

Gabriel, spite of his surprise, could not restrain a smile at the simplicity with which these children of nature besought him to recollect the dreams which had flitted over their innocent slumbers; then, still more and more perplexed, he exclaimed,—

“I visited you in your dreams?”

“Yes, when you gave us all those excellent counsels!”

“And even when we suffered so much sorrow, in our prison even, we thought of all the good advice we had received from you, and were comforted and filled with fresh courage.”

“Was it not you who freed us from our dungeon at Leipsic, that dark night, that we could not even discern you?”

“I?”

“Who but you could thus have come to our help, and that of our old and dear friend?”

“We told him truly, that we were sure you would love him, because he so tenderly loved us, although he cared so little about angels!”

“And all this morning, during the raging of the storm, we were scarcely at all afraid.”

“We were certain you would come to save us!”

“Yes, my sisters, the Almighty did, this day, most graciously send me to your assistance. I was returning from America, but I have never been at Leipsic in my life; it could not, therefore, have been me who liberated you from prison. Tell me, my sisters,” continued he, smiling with tender kindness on the two orphans, “for whom do you take me?”

“For a good angel, whom we have already seen in our dreams, and whom our dear mother has sent from heaven to protect us.”

“My dear sisters, I am only a poor priest, who, by some chance, doubtless, resembles an angel you have seen in your dreams, where alone you can see him—for mortals, such as we are, are not permitted to behold the dwellers of heaven!”

“Then, we cannot see our mother’s angel, except in a dream!” said the sisters, looking sorrowfully at each other.

“Heed not that, my dear sisters,” said Gabriel, affectionately, taking the hands of the young girls within his own: “dreams, like every thing else, proceed from God; and since the remembrance of your mother was mingled with yours, bless Him doubly for sending it.”

At this instant a door opened, and Dagobert appeared.

Up to the present moment, the innocent pride the orphans felt in the idea of being protected by an archangel had made them entirely overlook the circumstance they had heard, through Dagobert, of his wife having adopted and brought up a deserted child, named Gabriel, who was now a priest and a missionary.

The soldier, although he obstinately persisted in declaring his hurt was nothing but a *white wound* (to use a favourite term of General Simon), had been most carefully attended to by the surgeon of the

village, and then wore a black bandeau round his forehead, which increased the natural repulsiveness of his features.

Great was his surprise upon entering the apartment, to behold a stranger familiarly clasping the hands of Blanche and Rose within his own; and this astonishment may be conceived, when it is known that Dagobert was perfectly ignorant of Gabriel's having saved the lives of the orphans, as well as of his having attempted to save his own, during the horrors of the wreck. While tossing among the waves, and vainly striving to cling to the rocks against which he was flung, the soldier had only very indistinctly perceived Gabriel, when, after having snatched the sisters from a certain death, he had struggled hard and fruitlessly to come to his succour. And when, after being conveyed to the château, Dagobert had found the sisters in safety, fatigue, emotion, and the pain of his wound, so entirely overpowered him, as to throw him into a state of utter unconsciousness, so that he had not observed the presence of Gabriel.

Spite of the bandage, which nearly covered his forehead, the thick, grey, shaggy brows of the veteran expressed, by their deep furrows, his surprise and displeasure at beholding a stranger so familiarly holding the hands of Rose and Blanche; but directly the sisters perceived him, they rushed towards him, threw themselves into his arms, and caressed him with the loving fondness of children welcoming a beloved parent. His anger was quickly dissipated by these tender marks of affection, although he continually kept glancing in a suspicious manner towards the young missionary, who had now risen from his seat, and was so placed that his countenance could not be perfectly distinguished.

"And how is your wound?" inquired Rose, anxiously; "we learnt that, happily, it was not dangerous."

"Does it still give you pain?" asked Blanche, tenderly.

"No, my children; but the *commanding-officer* of the village would insist upon wrapping me up in this manner. Why, if I had had my head sliced all over with sabre-cuts, I would not have made all this fuss about it. I look like an affected old milksop, with all this bandaging. It is nothing but a *white wound*, and I don't want this thing in my eyes. I wish particularly to see who ——" Saying these words, the soldier seized his bandage, as though about to remove it.

Rose eagerly caught his arm—"Will you leave that alone?" cried she. "At your age to be so foolish and unreasonable! Oh, fie!"

"Well, don't scold! and I will do as you—— I will not take this thing off my head, if you say I must not!" Then drawing the sisters into a corner of the room, he said to them, looking towards the young priest from the corner of his eye,

"Who was that gentleman who was holding you by the hands when I came in?—he looks like a clergyman. But you see, my children, you must be careful how you make acquaintances with people, because——"

"Who is that gentleman?" exclaimed the sisters, both at once. "Why, without him we should never have had the happiness of embracing you again."

"What do you mean?" cried the soldier, suddenly drawing up his tall figure, and eagerly observing the missionary.

"It is our guardian angel!" added Blanche. "But for his timely aid we should have perished in this morning's wreck."

"Can it be possible — can it indeed be he?"

Dagobert could say no more; his heart seemed to swell almost to bursting; tears filled his eyes, and rushing, with extended hands, to the missionary, he exclaimed, in a tone of deep emotion and gratitude impossible to describe,

"Sir, I owe you the lives of these dear children! I know the heavy debt of everlasting gratitude it lays me under. I will not attempt to say more, because these words comprise every expression I could use."

But, as though suddenly struck with a recollection of the past, he cried, "But, tell me, was it not you who, when I was trying to cling to a rock, to prevent myself from being carried away by the waves — was it not you who held out your hand? Yes! certainly! I am quite sure, now I see your light hair, your youthful countenance—yes, yes! you it was, indeed! Now I perfectly recognise you!"

"Unhappily, sir, my strength wholly failed me, and I had the grief to see you fall back again into the sea."

"I can offer you no further thanks than I have already done," said Dagobert, with touching simplicity; "in preserving these dear children for me, you have done a hundred times more to claim my gratitude than had you saved my life over and over again! But what courage! what a noble spirit!" cried the soldier, with admiration; "and so young, and with a look gentle and modest as a young maiden!"

"What!" inquired Blanche, joyfully; "did our Gabriel come to your assistance also?"

"Gabriel!" said Dagobert, interrupting Blanche, and addressing himself to the priest, "Is your name Gabriel?"

"It is, sir!"

"Gabriel!" repeated the soldier, becoming each instant more and more surprised. "And a priest?" added he; "a foreign missionary? And who brought you up?"

"An excellent and generous woman, whom I venerate as the best of mothers; for such she has ever been to me, since, a poor deserted babe, she first took pity on my helpless state, and reared and treated me as her own son."

"You mean Françoise Baudoin, do you not?" said the veteran, deeply moved.

"I do," replied Gabriel, in his turn greatly astonished. "But how do you know this?"

"She is the wife of a soldier, is she not?" pursued Dagobert.

"She is, indeed, the wife of one of the bravest of men, who, from a spirit of noble devotion, is passing his life in exile far from his wife and son, my dear and excellent brother—for proud, indeed, I am to call him by that name."

"When! oh, when did you quit my Agricola — my wife?"

"Can it be possible? can you be, indeed, the father of Agricola? Oh, I knew not, until now, the debt of gratitude I owed to God!" cried Gabriel, joining his hands with an expression of deep thankfulness.

“And my wife! my child!” resumed Dagobert, in a tremulous voice; “oh, tell me they are well! Is it long since you heard from them?”

“The last accounts I received, now about three months ago, were as good as you could wish.”

“This is too much, almost,” sobbed the old soldier, — “this joy is more than I can bear.”

And, unable to bear the sudden rush of happiness in his present weakened state, the veteran sunk back in his chair.

Then, for the first time, the sisters called to mind the letter of their father relative to the wife of Dagobert having adopted a deserted child, and bestowed upon it the name of Gabriel; at this recollection, and happy conviction, that the very Gabriel of her fostering stood before them, their delight knew no bounds.

“Then our Gabriel and yours is the same!” cried Rose, throwing her arm around the old man’s neck. “Oh, what joy! what happiness!”

“Yes, my darlings! he belongs to us all equally.” Then addressing Gabriel the soldier said, with passionate emotion, “My child! my noble, intrepid child! give me your hand! My own boy—for are you not my Agrieola’s brother?”

“Oh, sir, what goodness is this!”

“Come, come! no thanks, if you please, after all you have done for me—after the heavy debt I owe you.”

“And is my adopted mother aware of your return to France?” inquired Gabriel, to escape from the praises of the soldier.

“I wrote to her about five months since to apprise her of it, but said I should return alone. I will tell you hereafter my reasons for so doing. Does she still reside in the Rue Brise-Miche? It was there my Agrieola was born.”

“She does.”

“In that case she must have received my letter. I would have written to her from my prison at Leipsic, but I found it utterly impossible.”

“In prison! Can you have been suffering from imprisonment?”

“Yes; I came from Germany by the Elbe and Hamburg, and I should be at Leipsic now, but for an event which would make one believe in the devil—only a devil of a good sort.”

“What do you mean? Pray explain this event to me.”

“That would be difficult, for I cannot even explain it to myself; but these two young ladies,” added he, pointing smilingly to Rose and Blanche, “pretend to know more about it than I do, and are continually saying to me, ‘It was the good archangel that came to our relief; Dagobert, it was our guardian angel, we tell you. Now will you persist in declaring that Kill-joy is the best defender we can possibly have?’”

“Gabriel, I await you!” suddenly uttered a stern, harsh voice, which made the missionary start.

The whole party quickly turned to where the voice proceeded from, while Kill-joy growled his usual deep note of approaching danger.

The words had been spoken by M. Rodin, who was standing at an open door which communicated with the corridor: his features were

cold, calm, and impassive, as usual; while his piercing glance rapidly surveyed the soldier and the two sisters.

"Who is this man?" inquired Dagobert, from the first glimpse of M. Rodin's countenance disliking the singularly unprepossessing and sinister expression it wore. "What does he want with you?"

"I must depart with him," answered Gabriel, in a constrained and mournful tone. Then addressing Rodin, he said, "A thousand pardons, sir! I will attend you instantly."

"What!" exclaimed Dagobert, stupefied with astonishment; "depart the very instant we meet, after so long an absence! No, no! I swear you shall never go! I have too much to inquire of you, and to tell you. Come, come, my boy, let us bear each other company, and enjoy each other's society through the journey to Paris."

"Alas, it is impossible! he (pointing to Rodin) is my superior, and I must perforce obey."

"Your superior! why, he is dressed in plain clothes!"

"He is not obliged to wear an ecclesiastical dress."

"Oh, nonsense! Since he is not in uniform, and you have no police officer in your service, send him to the right-about—blow him to the —"

"Believe me, resistance is useless; and be assured, that were it left to my own choice, whether to go or remain, I would not hesitate one instant."

"I was not mistaken, then," muttered Dagobert, between his teeth, "in feeling sure that man's ill-looking visage boded no good to any one:" then added, with a vexed and impatient manner, "Shall I speak to him? I tell you what," whispered he to Gabriel, "if you will give me leave, I will just politely ask him to take himself off as quickly as he can, and that the faster he flies out of the way the better we shall like it."

"I entreat of you," said Gabriel, "not to interfere; it would be of no avail. I know my duty, and that I have no will but that of my superior. Upon my arrival at Paris I will hasten to see yourself, my adopted mother, and dear brother Agricola."

"Well, if it must be so, it must be! I have been a soldier too many years not to understand what subordination means," said Dagobert, whose irritated manner strongly belied the submission he professed. "We must bear these contrarieties with courage,—take the fortune of war as we find it. So farewell, my brave boy, till the day after tomorrow!—then don't forget the Rue Brise-Miche, for I shall assuredly be in Paris to-morrow evening—at least, so they tell me here, and we start directly. I say, though, you seem to keep up a strict discipline in your corps!"

"Yes," said Gabriel, with an involuntary shudder; "the discipline is most excessively rigid and severe." A half-stifled sigh accompanied these words.

"Well, then, let's say Good by, at once. Parting is a thing I don't like, because I can't see the necessity of it: however, never mind, we shall soon meet again; for, after all, it is not worth while fretting about a paltry twenty-four hours, which will soon pass away—won't they, my children?"

"Adieu! adieu!" replied the missionary, in a voice tremulous with emotion, and affectionately returning the vehement grasp of the old soldier's hand.

"Farewell, Gabriel," murmured the orphans, deeply sighing, and gazing on the features of the young priest with eyes suffused with tears.

"Adieu, my sisters!—my ever dear sisters!" responded Gabriel, quitting the room with Rodin, who had not lost one word or incident of this scene.

Two hours afterwards, Dagobert and the orphans quitted the castle to proceed to Paris, ignorant that Djalma still remained at Cardoville, being prevented by the severe injuries he had received from continuing his journey.

The Mulatto, Faringhea, unwilling, as he said, to abandon a fellow-countryman, remained to watch over the young prince.

* * * * *

We shall now conduct the reader to the residence of Dagobert's wife, in the Rue Brise-Miche.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LA RUE BRISE-MICHE. — DAGOBERT'S WIFE.

THE day following the fearful storm which had thrown the poor shipwrecked travellers on the benevolence and hospitality of the inhabitants of Cardoville castle, the following transactions occurred in Paris.

Nothing could be more gloomy or suspicious-looking than the aspect of the Rue Brise-Miche, one end of which led into the Rue Saint Merry, and the other into the small square of the eloisters adjoining the church.

At this end the street or lane, which was scarcely eight feet wide, was shut in by immense black, slimy, dilapidated walls, whose excessive height effectually shut out both light and air; even during the longest day of the year it was rare for a straggling sunbeam to find admittance into this dismal spot, while, during the damp, cold winter weather, a thick chilling fog, which seemed to penetrate the very bones, pervaded this species of oblong well, the pavement of which was ever covered with slippery mud.

It was about eight o'clock, and the faint, lurid light of the lamp suspended at its entrance could barely serve to disperse the murkiness of the night, when two men, half hidden in an angle of the wall, held the following discourse with each other:—

"Now then," observed one, "you understand, don't you? You are to watch in the street till you see them enter No. 5."

"I know!" answered the other.

"And when you have seen them go in, in order to be doubly sure, ascend to the room occupied by Françoise Baudoin, under pretext of asking whether the little humpbacked sempstress lives there?—she that is sister to the woman known as the *Queen of the Bacchanals*."

“ All right.”

“ Mind, you must be sure to find out where this Bacchanal Queen lives—her humpbacked sister will tell you ; and such persons as she is change their nest as often as a bird, and it is very difficult to find them when wanted.”

“ Make yourself easy ; I will try it on with Humpy, to get out of her where her sister is to be heard of.”

“ Well, then, by way of inspiring you with fresh resolution, I will await your return at the little public-house opposite the cloisters, and you shall have your share of something nice and hot to drink.”

“ That is too good an offer to refuse, for it is very cold to-night.”

“ You need not tell me that ! Why, this morning the water froze upon my sprinkling brush, and I was almost stiffened like a mummy in my chair at the church-door. Ah, my boy, it is no sinecure to be a distributor of holy water !”

“ If it were not for the nice little pickings belonging to the office, I suppose you would resign.”

“ Now, then, good luck attend you ! Don't forget No. 5, the little alley, beside the dyer's shop.”

“ All right ! all right !” exclaimed the man, as the pair separated, the one to proceed towards the square of the cloisters, the other to take the opposite end of the lane, where it led into the Rue Saint Merry. It was no difficult matter to find the number sought ; a high, narrow building, exhibiting the same wretched appearance as the other houses in the same street. Having ascertained the precise tenement he wished for, the man commenced walking backwards and forwards before its door. If the exterior of these houses appeared dull and uninviting, no words can adequately describe the squalor, the gloom, and misery of the interior. No. 5 even exceeded its neighbours in dirt and dilapidation. The water, which oozed from the walls, trickled down the dark, filthy staircase. On the second floor, a few bundles of straw had been thrown on the narrow landing-place, for the purpose of wiping the feet of those compelled to ascend the muddy stairs ; but this straw, now reduced to mere dung by wet and long lying there, augmented the sickening accumulation of fœtid odours arising from want of air, damp, and foul exhalations ; for, spite of a few openings made in the almost ladder-like staircase, it was but seldom a beneficent breath of air could find its way, and, at the best, a dim glimmering light strove with palpable darkness which reigned around.

In this neighbourhood, one of the most densely populated in Paris, such houses as this are occupied by the working classes, who congregate in masses in these wretched, cheerless, and unwholesome dwellings.

No. 5 was a building of this description.

A dyer occupied the ground-floor, the deleterious vapours from his workshop increasing the stench of the whole premises : various artisans, with their families, carried on their different trades in apartments on the upper floors ; while work-people, of either sex, dwelt in small or large rooms, according to the number of their party, and employed themselves in earning a scanty living as they best could.

A chamber, four stories high, was the residence of Françoise Bau-



FRANCOISE BAUDOIN.

doin, the wife of Dagobert. A single candle flickered in this humble abode, consisting of a room and small closet adjoining. Agricola occupied a small garret at the very top of the house.

The old crazy walls of the chamber were covered with a dingy faded paper, which had divided into cracks as the plaster gave way; in one corner stood the bed, while scanty curtains, running on an iron rod, concealed the miserable windows; the floor, from being washed instead of dry-rubbed, had assumed the appearance of being bricked; at the further end was a round iron stove, on which was placed an earthen pot, forming the whole of the culinary apparatus; while opposite stood a wooden table, painted yellow, and ornamented with brown stripes, in imitation of marble, while on it stood a master-piece of patience, skill, and ability, in the shape of a very minute house, made of iron, every component part of which had been fashioned by the hand of Agricola Baudoin, son of Dagobert.

A plaster crucifix, suspended against the wall, and surrounded by branches of the blessed box-tree, various images of saints, clumsily designed, and coloured in the most absurd manner, further adorned the wretched chamber, and evinced the devotional bias of its occupant.

Between the windows stood an old-fashioned walnut-tree press, black with age; an old arm-chair, covered with faded green velvet (Agricola's first present to his mother), a few rush-bottomed chairs, and a work-table, on which lay several pieces of coarse dyed cloth, completed the furniture of this poor room, badly secured by an old wormeaten door; the adjoining closet merely contained a few household requisites. Mean and slender as this description may appear, it yet faithfully paints the interior of a dwelling that to many labouring persons would seem rich in comforts. In the first place, the bed boasted of two mattresses, good clean sheets, warm blankets, and counterpane; the old-fashioned walnut-tree press contained a comfortable supply of linen for every purpose: and, secondly, the wife of Dagobert had, for her own exclusive occupation, a room as large as those in which numerous artisans, with large families, were compelled all to huddle together, only too happy if their sons and daughters could be accommodated with separate sleeping places, and if their sheets or coverlets were under their own care, and not, by dire necessity, committed to the guardianship of the pawnbroker.

Françoise Baudoin, seated beside the little stove, which, in so cold and damp an evening, gave out but little warmth, was busy in preparing the evening meal for her son Agricola.

The wife of Dagobert was about fifty years of age; she wore a short jacket of blue cotton, with small white flounces, a stuff petticoat, a white handkerchief tied round her head and fastened under her chin: her countenance was pale and thin, her features regular, and expressive at once of the most perfect goodness and the utmost resignation. A better or more actively good and industrious mother could not be found. Unaided, save by her own unwearied energy, she had contrived, by the labour of her own hands, not only to educate and bring up her son Agricola, but also Gabriel, who, deserted when a mere infant, found a friend, and more than parent, in this noble-minded and courageous woman.

In her youth she had in a manner anticipated the strength of future

days, by devoting herself, for twelve successive years, to labour which was rendered lucrative by incessant toil and exertions, so great as to render it almost a species of self-destruction. And, with every self-denial a human being could practise, poor Françoise (and be it remembered that, in *her* time, poor artisans were paid splendidly to what they are nowadays) actually managed to earn fifty sous (or about 2s.) a-day ! and with this pittance she contrived to give a decent education both to her son and her adopted son also.

At the end of twelve years her health was ruined, her strength all but exhausted ; but, at least her boys had wanted for nothing, and each had received an education suitable to their station in life. At this time, M. Françoise Hardy took Agricola as an apprentice, while Gabriel prepared to enter a seminary under the active patronage of M. Rodin, whose constant communications with the confessor of Françoise Baudoin had, since about the year 1820, become frequent and earnest.

This woman, whose piety had always, however unenlightened, been the prevailing feature in her character, was one of those children of simplicity and perfect goodness whose ignorant, yet devoted attachment to her faith, would have, in earlier ages, gained for her the wreath of martyrdom — one of those pure and heavenly minds, in whose untaught breasts instinct almost supplies intelligence.

The only evil consequence resulting from this blind bigotry was the most perfect determination, amounting to obstinacy, when Françoise thought herself called upon, to obey the spiritual guide to whom for so many years she had yielded implicit submission ; and believing his word, his command, as emanating from a Being her very soul adored, no power, no representation, could have induced her to dispute it : had even any discussion arisen on the subject, no earthly inducement could have moved her from her fixed resolve to follow unquestioningly the path marked out by her confessor ; her resistance would have been, like herself, calm, still, and resolved — like her conscience, firm and uncompromising.

In a word, Françoise Baudoin was one of those pure-minded, devoted, but ignorant and credulous persons, who may sometimes, even unconsciously, become, in wicked hands, the unwitting instruments of fearful actions.

For some time past, the ill state of her health, and, above all, the serious injury her eye-sight had received from her unceasing toil, had compelled her, against her will, to rest from her labours ; and, now that she could with difficulty work above two or three hours a-day, she passed all the rest of her time at church.

At the end of a few moments Françoise arose, laid all the fragments of coarse cloth, at which she had been working, at one side of the table, and proceeded to lay the cloth for her son's supper with the most maternal solicitude. She took from the press a small leathern bag, containing an old battered silver cup and a slight fork and spoon, so thin and so much worn that the edge of the spoon was sharp as that of a knife ; these she diligently wiped and polished, and placed her *silver* service (Dagobert's wedding present to her) beside the plate of her son. These articles, independent of the trifling intrinsic value attached to them, were the most precious of all Françoise's earthly possessions, from the endearing associations connected with them, and

bitter had been the tears shed by her when, under the pressure of some unexpected misfortune, such as illness, or cessation from employment, she had been compelled to carry these treasures to the pawnbroker's.

These preparations completed, Françoise a second time repaired to the closet, and from the lower shelf took a bottle of water, and another about two-thirds full of wine, both of which she placed beside her son's plate, and then resumed her place to watch his supper.

Although the hour for Agricola's return was but little past, yet the countenance of the mother expressed both uneasiness and sorrow; and it was easy to perceive, by her red and swollen eyes, that that grief had found vent in heavy weeping. Alas! the poor woman, after long, painful uncertainty, had just arrived at the distressing conviction that her eye-sight, which had been long failing her, would ere long prevent her from working even the two or three hours she had latterly been enabled to do.

A most excellent needlewoman in her youth, in proportion as her eye-sight failed her she was compelled to relinquish the finer description of employment, and merely take work of a coarser sort, for which the pay was necessarily less, till, at the period of her appearing before the reader, her only occupation was in making sacks for the army, which required sewing about twelve feet round, the price for making of which was two sous a-piece, she finding her own thread, &c.; this work being both troublesome and painful to the fingers, she could not at the utmost earn above six sous a-day.

It is grievous to think of the great number of unhappy females whose ill health, many privations, old age, or sickness, have so weakened their bodily strength, that it is with extreme difficulty they can even earn this paltry pittance. It would seem as though their gains decreased at the very period when, from years and infirmities, their wants are daily increasing.

Happily for Françoise, she had a most excellent prop in her son. A first-rate workman, and thankfully profiting by all the privileges granted by M. Hardy to those who chose to work over-hours, his labour brought in as much as five or six francs a-day—at least double that gained by his fellow-workmen; therefore, admitting that his mother gained nothing, he could well have maintained them both.

But the poor woman, so economical and self-denying as to refuse even necessaries for herself, had, since her daily and assiduous visits to the sacristy, exhibited habits of the most ruinous expense. Scarcely a day passed in which she did not cause two or three masses to be said, or tapers to be burnt, either in reference to Dagobert, from whom she had been so long separated, or else for the safety of her son's soul, which she shuddered to believe was in the high road to perdition.

Agricola possessed so good, so generous a heart, and so tenderly did he love and revere his parent, and so deeply did he sympathise with her many sorrows, both of body and mind, that never once did he murmur at seeing his week's earnings, the whole of which he regularly gave to his parent, thus appropriated to pious purposes.

Occasionally only had he ventured to remark to his mother (with as much respect as tenderness), that it deeply pained him to see her, at her age, denying herself those comforts her years and failing health

doubly demanded, that she might expend the means required for her own comfort in devotional purposes.

But what could he say further, when his fond and exemplary parent would say to him, with eyes overflowing with tears, "My child, it is to procure your eternal welfare and that of your father?"

To attempt to argue with Françoise as to the efficacy of masses or candles in securing the past or present salvation of Dagobert, would have been to open a controversy which Agricola, out of respect for his mother's implicit belief in the sincerity of her religious notions, had ever carefully abstained from touching upon; he, therefore, gave up the dear enjoyment of those visions of ease and happiness for his dear mother, which had nerved his arm to extra toil, and made all labour sweet, in the fond hope of providing every enjoyment for her old age.

To a low cautious tap at the door, the voice of Françoise merely answered—"Come in!"

The visitor entered.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SISTER OF THE BACCHANTE QUEEN.

THE person who entered at Françoise's bidding was a young woman of about eighteen years of age, diminutive in stature, and cruelly deformed. Without being absolutely humpbacked, her figure was entirely awry; she stooped excessively—so much, indeed, as to cause her chest to fall inwards in a complete hollow, while her head was completely buried between her shoulders. The features which composed her countenance were tolerably good and regular, but the face itself was long, thin, and pallid, deeply marked with the small-pox, yet expressive of the utmost sweetness and gentle resignation. By a strange caprice, Nature had bestowed on this disfigured head, hair so beautiful and luxuriant, as might have excited the envy of any modern *belle*, and which she wore in one thick lustrous plait, twisted again and again round her head, and ultimately forming a rich bright knot at the back of it.

She carried an old basket in her hand. Though miserably clad, the neatness and cleanliness of her apparel struggled powerfully with the meanness of her attire. Spite of the extreme cold, she was dressed only in a cotton gown of indefinable colour, spotted over with some kind of light flowers or dots; but from the frequent washing of the garment its primitive hue, as well as pattern, was so completely effaced as to render all guesses on the subject fruitless.

It was easy to read in the deep expression of resigned suffering, so strongly marked on the features of this poor girl, a long and habitual endurance of slights, miseries, pain, and contempt. From her very birth she had been an object for all the bitter jests and jeers the vulgar and the coarse-minded are accustomed to bestow on bodily deformity, wholly forgetful from whose hand such a visitation cometh; and, in consequence of the dreadful distortion of her figure, had even been nicknamed "*Humpy*," an appellation which at length became the only

title by which she was ever addressed. And so completely did custom familiarise even her friends with a name, the very uttering of which must ever remind the unfortunate being of her severe affliction, that even Gabriel and Agricola, as kind and compassionate towards her as others were unfeeling and brutal, never called her by any other.

“Humpy,” as we shall henceforward style her, had been born in the house in which Dagobert’s wife had resided for the last twenty years; so that the poor girl had in a manner been brought up with Agricola and Gabriel.

It would appear as though there existed some unfortunate beings doomed to misfortune from their very birth. Humpy had a very beautiful sister, on whom their mother, Perrine Soliveau, the widow of a small ruined tradesman, lavished all her blind and absurd affection; bestowing on her less-favoured child only contempt, dislike, and ill-usages. Frequently would the poor weeping girl, driven from her mother’s presence, fly to the kind-hearted Françoise, who permitted her to shed her tears of bitterness on her maternal bosom; then kindly consoling and encouraging her, would divert her mind from dwelling further on her painful position, by instructing her in all she knew herself—namely, to read and to sew.

Accustomed by their mother’s example to pity and commiserate poor little Humpy, Gabriel and Agricola, far from imitating the rude jeers and insulting language of other boys of their age, who would even proceed to inflict blows on the unoffending girl, took delight in shewing her every kindness in defending and protecting her.

Matters proceeded thus till the sisters had reached the respective ages of fifteen and seventeen, when their mother died, leaving them both in a state of the greatest destitution.

Céphyse was a good-hearted girl, though ridiculously spoiled and indulged by her mother. She was clever, intelligent, and active, though in mind and character as completely dissimilar to her sister as she was unlike her in person. She was one of those restless, vivacious natures, whose animal spirits are ever overflowing, and requiring constant bustle, excitement, and diversion, to keep them up to the same level.

For some time submitting to the sage counsels of Françoise, Céphyse tried to restrain her love of pleasure and ease, and to submit herself to the privations of her orphan state. She too acquired under the same kind tuition as her sister a knowledge of plain sewing, and for a whole year managed to maintain herself by the produce of her needle; but unable to endure the severe self-denial she was constrained to practise, and finding that, spite of her most assiduous efforts, she could scarcely provide the merest necessaries of life, Céphyse, young, beautiful, and impetuous, beset with seductive propositions and brilliant offers—for so they appeared to the young sempstress, when they promised her abundance of food, an assurance of being preserved from the severity of the cold, comfortable clothing, and an exemption from working at least fifteen hours a-day in a wretched, close, and unhealthy garret—yielded at length to the impassioned vows of a young clerk in an attorney’s office, who forsook her ere long; when she transferred herself and her charms to the protection of a merchant’s clerk, and fickle, in her turn, quitted him for a travelling clerk, and,

guided by whim and natural volatility, changed her lover almost as frequently as she did the fashion of her robe.

Briefly, after a year or two of alternate changes and varieties in her loves and lovers, C ephyse had become the idol of a world composed of grisettes, students, and clerks; and so great was the fame and celebrity she had obtained in all the *bals des barri eres* by her decided tone and manner, by her really original humour, her indefatigable ardour in the pursuit of pleasure, and, above all, for her frolicsome gaiety and inexhaustible flow of spirits, that she was unanimously styled "*The Bacchante Queen*;" a dignity she shewed herself capable of supporting in its most minute detail.

From the period of her sister's accession to this noisy species of royal elevation, poor Humpy heard of her only by chance, and at long intervals. She deeply deplored her wretched mode of life, and sincerely praying she might soon quit it, the patient girl devoted herself with unceasing industry to her needle, as a means of livelihood; but, alas! working sixteen or eighteen hours a-day, the utmost she could earn was four francs a-week.

Humpy's employment consisted in making, by Fran oise's instruction, coarse shirts for the army and working classes, for which her payment was three francs (2s. 6d.) a dozen!! Yet she was expected to make them neatly; to stitch the collars, wristbands, &c., to attend carefully that the form and sloping of each piece was accurately done, to overcast the button-holes, and sew on buttons, &c.; so that, working without intermission the hours stated, she could barely complete fourteen or sixteen shirts in eight days, including even the Sunday as a day of toil. The result of all these weary hours of continued labour was an income of four francs a-week!

Neither was this poor girl's case a peculiar or isolated one. No! thousands of young women could no more *then* than *now* earn a larger sum.

Who will deny, after this plain statement, that the mode of remunerating females is as unjust as it is cruel, cold-hearted, and unworthy of a civilised age? They receive just half the pay of men who occupy themselves with their needle, such as tailors, waistcoat-makers, glovers, &c. &c. Yet women work an equal number of hours, are weak, delicate, liable to fall sick from too close an application to their needle, and are frequently compelled, in addition to their work, to provide for the little household wants of the family—possibly have young sickly children.

And Humpy continued to live upon her four francs a-week!! True she lived, that is to say, that by dint of toiling incessantly fourteen or sixteen hours a-day she did manage to avoid being actually starved to death, or perishing with the cold. But the privations she endured! No!—*privations* will not sufficiently express the wretchedness, the destitution, the daily and hourly need of nearly all that is really required to preserve the body in health, to keep alive that vital spark, breathed into man by the breath of God—that is to say, a safe and weather-proof dwelling, wholesome and sufficient food, with warm, cleanly garments. *Mortification* would better express the total want of those comforts, essentially and imperatively needful for the prolongation of our existence, and which in an enlightened age, such as the

present, ought to be cheerfully accorded to the active and industrious workman or woman, whose integrity and health are their only earthly possessions.

'Tis true the wild denizen of nature, living in uncivilised climes, can subsist alone and unaided, but *he* has free choice of each animal of the forest for food; or he may select any bird that flies—he may take from the abundance of the rivers or lakes—he may eat of the fruits of the earth, and warm and shelter himself beneath the wide-stretching arms of the leafy trees: “no man sayeth him nay.” But the dweller in civilised lands, disinherited of these mighty gifts of a munificent Creator, and taught, while smarting under every privation, to regard the rights of proprietorship as sacred and holy, may at *least* claim, in return for the labour and toil which enriches his country, the simple reward which shall give him wherewithal to live *healthily*—neither more nor less. For can life consist in dragging on a weary and ceaseless strife, in the narrow limits which separates existence from the tomb, with cold, hunger, sickness, and every consequent misery?

And further to display the lengths to which this mortification may be carried by a pitiless world, deaf to the repeated representations of such as plead for a just remuneration for the labour of thousands of honest and industrious, though half-starved, fellow creatures, we will give an exact detail of the mode in which four francs a-week will enable any poor female to live.

May these particulars suffice to obtain sympathy, if not relief, for so large a body of unfortunate beings, who endure, with such patience and resignation, a mode of existence, which is just so much like life, as it serves each moment to display the pains and sorrows of the primeval curse—that by the sweat of his brow man should eat bread.

To drag on such a daily chain of wants and privations, requires virtue of the firmest and most uncompromising description; and while society, organised as it now is, either tolerates or imposes such heavy burdens, it has no right to question the conduct of unhappy beings who sink into guilt, not because they are naturally depraved, but because they are hungry, cold, and wretched. Behold, then, the various items which consumed the poor sempstress's four francs a-week:—

	centièmes.
Six pounds of bread, second quality	84
Two pails of water	20
Lard or dripping (butter being too dear)	50
Coarse salt	7
A bushel of coals	40
A pint of dried vegetables	30
Three pints of potatoes	20
A candle	33
Needles and thread	25
Total	3 <i>l.</i> 9 <i>c.</i>

In order to save her firing, La Mayeux prepared a species of soup twice or thrice in the week, on a small stove placed on the landing-place of the fourth story, the intermediate days she took the soup quite cold.

Thus, after barely allowing herself one scanty comfortless meal a-

day, there remained less than a franc, ninety-one centièmes (or about nine pence English), to provide her with clothing, washing, and lodging.*

By a wonderful chance, the position of La Mayeux was rendered singularly easy in one respect, and that was as regarded her rent. Agricola, who well knew the over-sensitiveness of the poor girl, had arranged with the porter to let her have a small chamber at the very top of the house, for the trifling sum of twelve francs a-year; for this small and confined space, which barely admitted a bed, a table, and a chair, Agricola also paid eighteen francs per annum, making up, with La Mayeux's twelve, the thirty which formed its real price. So that, after defraying her share of the monthly rent, there remained about seven pence over for all other claims and purposes.

Hundreds, nay, thousands of females, subsisting like La Mayeux, by the produce of their needle, have not the happy privilege she enjoyed of an apartment to herself. Those who are without either home or friends, buy a piece of bread or any common food for their day's subsistence, and for the payment of one or two sous per night obtain half a bed with some female companion, in a wretched room in which there are generally five or six beds, the greater number of which are occupied by men, who usually form, in these abodes of dirt and squalor, the largest proportion of visitors. And, spite of the disgust and repugnance with which a virtuous and pure mind at first beholds this manner of indiscriminate sleeping, there is no help for her; the landlord or landlady of the house would never take the trouble to arrange separate rooms for the separate sexes, and the streets is her only alternative if she refuses the present asylum.

And supposing that a sempstress should desire to provide a furnished room for herself, however meanly or wretchedly she may do it, an outlay of from thirty to forty francs is indispensable. And how is this sum to be obtained out of the hardly earned pittance of four or five francs a-week? which barely suffices to give her clothing sufficient to appear in, or to buy her so much food as shall prevent her from being starved to death.

Alas! alas! the unhappy victim of poverty and scanty pay is, however reluctantly, compelled to resign herself to this corrupt and

* Some of these details, which have been submitted to the most rigid scrutiny, the result of which has been the eliciting of particulars still more distressing, are taken from a most clever work by M. Janoma, a mechanist, and published in the *Ruche Populaire*; a journal conducted by artisans and working people, with as much impartiality as truth, under the superintendence of M. Duquesne, a printer. M. Janoma adds, and but with too much truth, "We have both known and seen women and children subsisting for months together on soup made without either butter or grease—nothing but bread boiled in water, with a little salt!" The same writer wisely remarks that the workwoman cannot purchase her provisions in large quantities, because her employer has not always work to give her; thus, therefore, she is constrained to buy a small loaf, a ha'porth of salt, a single candle, &c., which is much to her disadvantage, fractions of pieces always being on the profit side of the seller instead of the buyer.

We shall further add, that under any circumstances the poor always pay nearly double the price given by the rich, from being compelled to buy in small quantities, and to pay ready money. Thus a load of wood, which might have been bought for half the sum, is sold out in fagots to the poor, and realises from seventy to eighty francs the load.

demoralising mode of life ; which, by imperceptible degrees, wears away the finer edges of that modest and chaste reserve which has preserved her from the attacks of the libertine or the seductions of the wicked. Vice ceases to inspire her with the horror it once did—she now sees in it the only means of escape from the intolerable hardships of her situation—she yields to her fate—and another lost creature furnishes a theme for the animadversion of the rich fundholder, who laments the difficulty of placing virtuous attendants about his young daughters ; “ the present race of females being,” as he says, “ so very depraved !”

But to return to the hard-worked, ill-paid sempstress. There are other evils to be considered: the small pay, the aching head and fingers, are, after all, blessings to be eagerly sought for in comparison with the reverse of the picture.

Suppose she is without work at all for two or three days !

Should she fall sick, and be incapable of working ! And what so likely to produce disease as insufficient or unwholesome food, want of air, of rest, of common care ? all which generally tend to weaken the body and enervate the system to such a degree as to render all exertion painful, while the symptoms are not sufficiently alarming or dangerous to claim the privilege of admission into an hospital.

Then what becomes of these destitute creatures ? The imagination sickens and turns away from the painful and appalling picture.

To the unequal and insufficient payment allowed to female workers, the source of unimaginable guilt, wretchedness, and despair, may be attributed the misfortunes and crimes of thousands of poor creatures, striving in vain to live honestly and virtuously on four francs a-week ; and, be it well remembered, we are not describing an individual case, but the misery of an entire class. The character of La Mayeux, such as we shall endeavour to portray her, may serve as a model of the moral and bodily condition of thousands of fellow-creatures, battling against all the ills of life, upon a wretched hard-earned pittance of four francs a-week !

Poor Mayeux, spite of the assistance she owed, though unconsciously, to the generosity of Agricola, lived in a state almost amounting to absolute want. Her health, always feeble, became seriously affected by her many privations ; yet, by an excess of delicacy—although utterly ignorant of Agricola’s kind but generous aid—the poor girl affected to earn more than she really did, in order to avoid those offers of service which would have been most painful to her, from her knowledge of the many wants experienced both by Françoise and her son, and because it was wholly at variance with the naturally susceptible turn of her mind (a bias, indeed, which her constant humiliations and daily hardships had almost brought into a state of morbid sensitiveness) to crave the pity or seek the assistance of her dear friends, already so sorely bowed down with their own trials.

But, strange to say, the distorted, ill-favoured body Nature had bestowed on La Mayeux, concealed a deep and loving nature ; a heart generous and affectionate to any extent, and a mind of even poetic taste and cultivation—yes, cultivation ; for let us hasten to explain the improbability by saying, that this wondrous phenomenon had arisen from the example of Agricola Baudoin, whose early poetical

genius had quickly developed itself, and with whom La Mayeux had been almost entirely brought up.

The poor girl had been the first confidant of Agricola's literary essays, and when the young smith talked to her of the charm he experienced, and the recreation he found in the charms of poetry, and how its entrancing reveries solaced and refreshed him after a hard day's toil, the poor sempstress, endowed with a mind and understanding of no ordinary stamp, began to think how such a pursuit might also cheer her, in her long, tedious, and solitary days spent in bending over her needle.

One day that Agricola had just read to her a copy of his last verses, La Mayeux turned very red, hesitated, and at length, after many efforts, besought his patience while she, too, confided to him a poetical secret of her own.

The verses she repeated were, doubtless, deficient in both rhythm and harmony, but they were touching and simple; consisting merely of laments untinged by bitterness, and complaints unmarked by envy or ill will, but merely intended to reach the pitying heart of one dearly loved friend. From this hour she and Agricola mutually consulted and encouraged each other; but, with the exception of the young smith, no creature in the world suspected La Mayeux of being poetical: on the contrary, thanks to her extreme shyness and awkwardness, she passed with most persons as not being far removed from a fool.

The soul of this unfortunate girl must have been noble and magnanimous, for never, in these her wild and untaught verses, did one line expressive of anger, hatred, or discontent at her lot, find admission: it was one strain of gentle sadness of despair, mingled with submission and resignation to a fate too hopeless to promise relief; a continued flow of infinite tenderness and loving-kindness, combined with a keen sympathy for all similarly situated and affected as herself; a chant of universal charity and good-will towards all unhappy beings, doomed like herself to bear the double burthen of bodily deformity and extreme misery; still, occasionally breaking out into eulogiums upon the charms of beauty, which she praised without envying, and admired at a distance with the admiration she experienced at beholding the bright and glorious sun.

But the young poetess did not recite all her compositions, even to Agricola; and there were some verses she would have died ere he should have heard. The young smith, without being regularly handsome, had a fine, manly, prepossessing countenance; was as good-hearted as noble, ardent, courageous, and generous; his disposition was mirthful yet gentle, and open as that of a child, while his mind was of the highest order of intellectual excellence.

The poor sempstress, brought up with him, loved him with all the depth of a passion such a nature as hers would feel for the one person upon earth on whom was concentrated all her fondest affection, but which an instructive consciousness of its being impossible to reciprocate such a regard made her carefully bury in the recesses of her own heart. Compelled by her own reflections to this reserve, this profound concealment, La Mayeux sought not to escape from her love. "What would it ever signify?" said she, mentally: "Agricola would never

know any thing about it." And, besides, her habitual and well-known sisterly affection for him was always a sufficient explanation of the lively interest she took in all that concerned him; and from the same cause the deadly anguish she endured when, after having bravely combatted in 1830, Agricola had been carried home to his mother's covered with blood and wounds, passed unheeded.

Deceived equally with others as to the existence of a warmer sentiment, the son of Dagobert had never for one instant suspected the deeply rooted attachment of La Mayeux.

Such, then, was the humbly attired individual who entered the chamber of Françoise, while she was engaged in preparations for her son's supper.

"Is it you, my poor Mayeux?" said she: "I have not seen you all day. You have not been ill, I hope? Come and give me a kiss."

The young girl tenderly embraced the mother of Agricola, and replied,—

"I had some work I was obliged to finish, Madame Françoise, and I did not wish to lose a minute. I have only just finished it. I am going out for a few coals; do you want any thing?"

"No, my child, thank you. But I am very uneasy. It is half-past eight, and Agricola is not yet returned." Then she added with a sigh, "He works himself to death for me. Ah, my dear Mayeux, I am very unhappy! My eyesight is quite gone; at the end of a quarter of an hour I can see nothing—nothing at all; all is misty and confused. I cannot work many minutes together, even at making these coarse sacks. The idea of being wholly a burden on my son almost breaks my heart."

"Ah, Madame Françoise! what would Agricola say if he heard you?"

"Oh! I know full well; the dear boy thinks of nothing but me, and that makes me grieve the more. And then, too, I always remember that, because he will not quit me, he denies himself the privileges his fellow-workmen enjoy from the kind indulgence of their wealthy and excellent employer, M. Hardy. Instead of inhabiting here a wretched garret, where air and light can scarcely find admittance, he might, like the rest of the establishment, have a large, light, airy chamber—cool and healthy in summer, and well-warmed and comfortable in winter—looking out upon trees and gardens, of which he is so fond; and all this he might have at a very trifling expense, and so save himself the long fatiguing walk from hence to his workshop, which is situated in the environs of Paris."

"But he forgets all his fatigue when he sees you again, Madame Bandoin; and as he knows full well how greatly you love this place in which he was born—Why, M. Hardy has even offered to give you apartments with Agricola, in the establishment he has built for his workpeople at Passy."

"But then, my child, I must have abandoned my parish and my church; and—I—cannot do that."

"Hush! Madame Françoise; I hear some one coming. Yes," said La Mayeux, her pale cheeks turning a deep red; "'tis he! Now your fears are over."

And as she spoke, the sounds of a rich sonorous voice, chanting a merry song, were heard on the stairs.

"I must not let him find me in tears," said the affectionate mother, hastily wiping the large drops from her eyes. "This is his only respite from toil and fatigue. Do not let me destroy the only peaceful enjoyment he ever obtains, that of spending an hour with his half-blind mother.

CHAPTER XXX.

AGRICOLA BAUDOIN.

THE poet-smith was a tall young fellow, about four-and-twenty years of age, active and powerful, with a pale complexion and black hair and eyes, with an aquiline nose, and a bold, energetic, and open countenance. His resemblance to Dagobert was the more striking as he wore, according to the custom of the time, a thick brown moustache, and his beard, cut to a point, only covered his chin, his cheeks being cleanly shaved from the angle of the jaw to the temples. He was attired in velveteen trousers, a blue blouse stained with the smoke of the forge, a black silk handkerchief tied carelessly round his sinewy neck, and a cap with a short peak. The only thing that contrasted with these garments of toil was a magnificent large flower of deep purple, with petals as white as silver, which the smith held in his hand.

"Good evening, mother dear," he said, as he entered and embraced Françoise; then, nodding his head in a friendly way to the young girl, he added, "Oh! good evening, little Mayeux."

"You are late this evening, my dear boy," said Françoise, turning towards the little pan in which was the small repast of her son. "I was getting uneasy."

"Uneasy about me or the supper, mother?" inquired Agricola, gaily. "Oh, the deuce! will you never forgive me for keeping my supper waiting a little bit? Though it is because you think it will spoil. You naughty woman, you! go along with you!"

And as the smith said this, he kissed his mother again.

"Leave off, you naughty boy, you! you will make me upset the pan."

"That would be a pity, mother, of course, since it smells so good. Let's see what you've got for me."

"No, no; wait and see."

"I'll bet a wager that you've got some potatoes fried in lard, which I adore."

"Isn't it Saturday?" said Françoise, in a tone of gentle reproach.

"True," said Agricola, exchanging a knowing smile with La Mayeux. "But, talking of Saturday, here, mother, are my week's wages."

"Thank you, my dear boy; put it in the wardrobe."

"I will, mother."

"Ah!" said the young workgirl, as Agricola was placing the money in the wardrobe, "what a beautiful flower you have in your hand, Agricola! I never saw such a one; and in the depth of winter, too! Only look, Madame Françoise."

"Yes, mother," said Agricola, going towards his mother to shew her the flower. "Look, admire, and, above all, smell it; it is impossible to have a sweeter and more agreeable scent—it is a mixture of vanilla and orange flower."*

"Yes, my dear child, the odour is delicious. How beautiful it is, too! Where did you find it?"

"Find it, mother!" said Agricola, laughing. *Diable!* do you think these flowers are picked up in the highway coming from the Barrier du Maine to the Rue Brise-Miche?"

"And how, then, did you find it?" said La Mayeux, who shared Françoise's curiosity.

"Ah! what, curious? Well, then, I'll tell you; and it will account for my being a little later than usual, my dear mother, although something else detained me as well. It is really an evening of adventures. I was coming home at a good pace, and had already reached the corner of the Rue de Babylone, when I heard a little low and plaintive howl. It was still rather light, and when I looked down, I saw one of the prettiest little dogs I ever beheld, no bigger than my fist, black and red, with his ears falling on the ground, and feathered all down to its very paws."

"It was lost, no doubt," said Françoise.

"Yes. I took the poor little thing up, and it began to lick my hands. It had round its neck a piece of wide red satin riband, tied in a large bow. I looked under the riband, and discovered a small collar made of little links of gold, or gilt metal, with a small plate. I took a match out of my tobacco-box, rubbed it, and obtained light enough to read,

"LUTINE belongs to Mademoiselle Adrienne de Cardoville, Rue de Babylone, No. 7."

"Why, fortunately, you were in the very street," said La Mayeux.

"As you say. So I took the little thing under my arm, and, turning down the street, I came to a long garden wall, at the end of which I reached the door of a little lodge, which, no doubt, belongs to a large mansion which is situated at the farther end of the park wall; for this garden is just like a park. I looked up and saw the No. 7, which had been freshly painted, over a small wicket door. I rung the bell, and, after a few minutes, which, no doubt, were passed in examining me (for I thought I saw two eyes through the grating of the wicket), the door opened. But, now, you'll hardly believe what I am going to say."

"Why not, my child?"

"Because it is just like a fairy tale."

"A fairy tale?" said La Mayeux.

"Yes, for I was and am still quite dazzled and bewildered with all I saw. It is like the vague remembrance of a dream."

* The splendid flower of the *Crinum amabile*, a beautiful bulbous hot-house plant.

"Well, go on—go on! tell us all about it," said the good mother, so interested that she did not perceive that her son's supper was beginning to scorch a little.

"Well, then," replied the young smith, smiling at the curiosity which his recital inspired, "a young woman opened the door, so handsome and so singularly but beautifully dressed, that she looked like a lovely portrait of the olden time. I had not spoken a word before she exclaimed,

"'Ah, sir! what, have you found Lutine, and brought him back again? Oh, how glad Ma'amselle Adrienne will be! Follow me—come along—or she will regret not to have had the pleasure of seeing you herself, and thanking you.' And, without giving me time to reply, the young person made me a sign to follow her. And now, mother dear, to tell you all I saw that was fine and magnificent, as I crossed a small apartment, only half-lighted up, but which smelt deliciously, would be a perfect impossibility. The young lass tripped along very quickly, and opened a door. There, then, was a sight! I was so astonished that I can remember nothing but a sort of combination of gold and light, crystal and flowers; and, in the midst of all this glitter was a young lady—oh! so beautiful! Such a beauty as one only sees in dreams. She had red hair, or rather bright gold colour. It was charming. I never in my life saw such hair. And then, too, she had black eyes, red lips, and was so fair that I cannot compare her to any thing. That's all I remember, for I tell you I was so surprised, so astounded, that I seemed as though I was looking through a veil.

"'Mademoiselle,' said the young girl, whom I never could have taken for a *femme de chambre*, she was so elegantly dressed, 'here is Lutine. This gentleman has found him, and brought him back.'

"'Ah, sir!' said the young lady with the golden locks, in a voice which sounded like a silver bell; how can I ever thank you sufficiently? I am so foolishly fond of Lutine.' Then judging, no doubt, by my dress, that she might, and perhaps ought to thank me otherwise than by words, she took a small silk purse, which was beside her, and said to me, with some hesitation certainly, 'Sir, I am afraid you have had a great deal of trouble in bringing Lutine here, and you have, perhaps, lost much precious time; pray allow me'—and she offered me the purse."

"Ah, Agricola," said La Mayeux, in a tone of vexation, "how people mistake!"

"Wait for the end, and you will forgive the young lady. Seeing, no doubt, by the glance of my eye, that she had wounded me by such an offer, she took from a magnificent vase of porcelain, which was near her, this superb flower; and, addressing me in a voice full of sweetness and kindness, which shewed how much she regretted having wounded me, she said,

"'Then, at least, sir, you will accept this flower!'"

"You are right, Agricola," said La Mayeux, with a melancholy smile; "it is impossible to make a more gracious amends for an involuntary offence."

"Worthy young lady!" said Françoise, wiping her eyes; "how well she understood my Agricola!"



AGRICOLA RETURNING LUTINK.

P. 290

“Didn’t she, mother? Well, at the very moment when I was taking the flower, without venturing to lift up my eyes, for, although I am not timid, yet there was something in this young lady so commanding, although she was so amiable, a door opened, and another very handsome young girl, tall and dark, attired in a very peculiar but becoming costume, said to the young lady with the red hair, ‘Mademoiselle, *he is there.*’ She rose directly, and saying to me, ‘A thousand pardons, sir; I shall never forget that I have owed to you a moment of deep gratification — pray do not forget my address, and the name of Adrienne de Cardoville,’ she withdrew.

“I did not say one word in reply. The young girl conducted me back again, and, making me a very nice curtsy at the door, lo and behold! I found myself again in the Rue de Babylone, as much overcome and astonished, I tell you again, as if I had just come out of an enchanted palace.”

“Really, my dear boy, it is quite like a fairy tale; isn’t it, little Mayeux?”

“Yes, Madame Françoise,” said the young girl, with an absent and thoughtful air, which Agricola did not remark.

“What touched me most,” he resumed, “was, that this young lady, delighted as she was at having her little pet back again, instead of forgetting me, as so many others would have done in her place, did not bestow all her attention upon it, which shews consideration and feeling; doesn’t it, Mayeux? I really think her so good and kind-hearted, that in any important case I should not hesitate to address her.”

“Yes, you are right,” replied La Mayeux, still more pensively.

The poor girl was suffering acutely; she did not experience any hatred or jealousy against the young unknown lady, who by her beauty and her wealth, her delicacy and her conduct, seemed to belong to a sphere so high and grand, that La Mayeux’s imagination could not even reach it; but, involuntarily reflecting on her own forlorn position, the poor lone creature had never before so keenly felt the pangs of deformity and misery. Still such was the humble and calm resignation of her noble mind, that the only feeling that arose within her against Adrienne de Cardoville was the offer of her purse to Agricola. But the delicate and feeling way in which the young lady had repaired her error deeply affected poor Mayeux.

Yet her heart was sorely wounded, and she could not repress her tears when she looked at the splendid flower, so full of beauty and odour, which, presented by a hand so charming, must be most precious to Agricola.

“Now, mammy,” said the young smith, who did not see La Mayeux’s emotion, “you have heard the main cause of my delay—story No. 1. Story No. 2 is, that as I entered I met the dyer on the stairs, whose arms were all of a splendid bright green colour. He stopped me in a great fright, and told me that he had seen a well-dressed man walking backwards and forwards, as though he were a spy watching the house.

“‘Well,’ said I, ‘what’s that to you, master Lorient? Are you afraid he’ll steal the secret of your splendid green dye, which ornaments your arms up to your shoulder?’”

“But who can the individual be, Agricola?” said Françoise.

“Upon my word, my dear mother, I have not the slightest idea nor the smallest care. I told Daddy Lorient, who chatters always like a magpie, to go back to his cellar, as no doubt this spy was about of as much consequence to him as to me.”

So saying, Agricola went to place the little leather purse which held his wages in the drawer in the press.

At the moment when Françoise placed her saucepan on the corner of the table, La Mayeux, rising quietly, filled a dish with water, and taking it towards the young smith, said, in a soft and timid voice,

“For your hands, Agricola.”

“Thanks, my little Mayeux!—how kind you are!” Then, in the most natural and unaffected accent in the world, he added,

“There, take my beautiful flower for your pains.”

“What! will you give it to me?” exclaimed the little sempstress, in a voice full of emotion, whilst a hue of crimson overspread her pale and interesting countenance; “will you really give it to me?—this magnificent flower, which the handsome, good, kind, rich lady gave you?” And poor Mayeux repeated, with a bewildered air, “What! will you really give it to me?”

“Why, what the deuce should I do with it? Can I put it on my breast, or have it mounted as a pin?” said Agricola, laughing. “I am very sensible of the charming way in which the young lady thanked me, and was delighted at having found her little dog; but I am also delighted to give you this flower, particularly as you admire it so much. You see the day’s work has been a good one.”

And as he said this, the young smith (whilst La Mayeux took the flower, all trembling with delight, emotion, and surprise) washed his hands, all blackened with iron filings and smoke of charcoal, that in a moment the clear water became as black as soot.

Agricola, looking at La Mayeux so as to direct her attention to this metamorphosis, said to her in a low and laughing tone,

“Here’s ink of the cheapest for us paper-stainers! I wrote some lines yesterday, with which I am not at all displeased. I’ll read them to you.”

As he spoke, Agricola wiped his hands carelessly with the front of his blouse, whilst La Mayeux took away the basin, and having emptied it, returned it to the shelf, and carefully placed her flower beside it.

“Why did not you ask me for a towel?” said Françoise, looking at her son and shrugging her shoulders. “Wipe your hands on your blouse!”

“Why, it is burnt all day by the forge fire, so it won’t be the worse to be a little moistened at night—eh! Am I a naughty boy again, mother? Oh! scold me if you dare: I should like to see you——”

Françoise’s reply was to take her son’s head in her hands—that head so full of frankness, resolution, and intelligence—look at him for a moment with maternal pride, and then kiss his forehead many times most affectionately.

“Come, dear boy, and sit down; you stand all day at the forge, and it is getting late.”



THE FLOWER.

P. 202.

“Well, then, old lady, take your arm-chair. What! is our quarrel to begin all over again? I’m just as well on this stool.”

“No, you are not. You ought to rest as much as possible after such a hard day’s work.”

“Oh, you tyrant of a mother! Isn’t she, my dear Mayeux?” said Agricola, merrily, as he took his seat. “Well, I am a very obedient boy, and I am always so comfortable in your arm-chair: I never was seated so comfortable in my life since the day in July when I had a roll on the throne at the Tuileries.”

Françoise Baudoin stood up at one end of the table, and cut a slice of bread for her son; whilst La Mayeux took the bottle, and poured some wine into his silver cup. There was something almost affecting in the earnest attention of these two excellent hearts, who loved him they tended so dearly.

“What! you won’t sup with me?” said Agricola to La Mayeux.

“Thank you, Agricola, but I have dined,” said the sempstress, casting down her eyes.

“Oh, I only asked you out of politeness, for you have your whims, and nothing in the world will induce you to eat with us. And there’s that mother, too—she will dine all alone; and in that way she deprives herself very much, I know.”

“But, my dear boy, no! no!—it is better for my health to dine early. Well, is it nice?”

“Nice?—why it’s excellent! it is cod with turnips! and I doat on cod. I ought to have been a fisherman at Newfoundland.”

The worthy fellow, be it said, found the mess any thing but relishing or satisfactory after a hard day’s work, and the untempting dish had been a little burnt, moreover, during his story; but he knew he should rejoice his mother if he dined *maigre*, so he affected to like his fish exceedingly to the great delight of the mother, who said, with a satisfied air,

“Oh! I can see you relish it my dear lad: on Friday and Saturday next I will make you some more.”

“Thankye, thankye mother; only not two days running—that will over do me. Well, now let us talk of what we will do to-morrow, on Sunday. Let us amuse ourselves, for during some days, mother, you seem very sad, and I can’t make it out. I think, perhaps, you are angry with me?”

“Oh! yes, my dear son, you are a model for——”

“Well then, prove it to me, and shew me that you are happy by taking some amusement: perhaps, too, our little neighbour here will do us the honour to accompany us, as she did last time,” said Agricola, making a low bow to La Mayeux.

The poor girl blushed, looked down, and her countenance took the impression of deep pain—but she made no answer.

“My dear child, I have my religious duties to attend to all day: you know that,” said Françoise to her son.

“Well, then, in the evening! I will not ask you to go to the theatre, but they tell me there is a fellow that does conjuring tricks very cleverly.”

“But that is a sort of theatre!”

“Oh, really, mother, that is being too particular.”

“ My dear boy, I do not wish to hinder any one else from doing as they please.”

“ That’s true enough—forgive me, mother ! Well, if it is fine we will go and walk round the Boulevards, and poor little Mayeux will go with us ; it is three months since she went out, for unless she goes out with us, she never goes out.”

“ No ! go out alone, my dear, and enjoy your Sunday, which you well deserve to do.”

“ Come, my good Mayeux, and help me to persuade my mother.”

“ You know, Agricola,” said the little needlewoman, blushing and casting down her eyes ; “ you know I ought not to go out with you and your mother.”

“ Why not, mademoiselle ? may I, without impertinence, ask the reason of your refusal ?” said Agricola gaily. The young girl sighed deeply and then replied :

“ Because, I will not again expose you to the chance of a quarrel on my account, Agricola.”

“ Ah ! your pardon,” said the smith, with an air of regret, and he struck his brow impatiently. This is what La Mayeux alluded to :—

Sometimes, but very seldom, for she was very careful even about that, the poor girl had walked out with Agricola and his mother, and for the humble sempstress those days had been unexampled fêtes. She had watched and worked many nights, and fasted many days, to buy a tidy cap and little shawl, that she might not disgrace Agricola and his mother, and her five or six walks on the arm of him whom she secretly idolised had been the only days of happiness she had ever known.

During their last walk, a brutal, vulgar fellow, had pushed his elbow against her so violently, that the poor girl could not repress a shriek of pain, to which the coarse wretch replied—“ So much the worse for you, you humpbacked——”

Agricola, like his father, was endowed with that patient endurance which real strength and courage give to noble hearts, but when there was a gross insult to chastity, his violence was irrepressible. Irritated at the brutality and coarseness of the fellow, Agricola had dropped his mother’s arm and hit this man, who was about his own age and make, two as fearful blows as the powerful and hard hand of a smith could apply to the “ human face divine.” The scoundrel shewed fight, but Agricola gave him so sound a drubbing in the presence of the approving spectators, that he ran away, amidst the shouts of the multitude.

It was to this adventure that poor La Mayeux adverted when she declined going out with Agricola, in order that he might not get into a quarrel on her account.

We may imagine the smith’s regret for having involuntarily renewed the recollection of this painful circumstance : alas ! the more painful for La Mayeux than Agricola could suppose, for she loved him devotedly, and had been the cause of his quarrel through her infirmity, which excited ridicule.

Agricola, in spite of his strength and resolution, had the sensibility of a child, and when he reflected that this remembrance must be very

painful to the poor girl, a big tear started in his eye, and, stretching out his arms to her like an affectionate brother, he said to her,

“Forgive my stupidity, and come and kiss me.”

And so saying, he imprinted two hearty kisses on the pale and thin cheek of La Mayeux.

At this warm salute, the lips of the young girl turned pale, and her poor heart beat so violently that she was compelled to lean against the table.

“Come, come, you forgive me, don't you?” inquired Agricola.

“Yes, yes,” she said, vainly contending with her emotion; “and pray in turn forgive my silly weakness: but the recollection of this quarrel always distresses me—I was so frightened for you. Suppose the people had taken the part of that rude fellow?”

“Oh! I never in all my life was so frightened!” said Françoise, coming to La Mayeux's aid without knowing it.

“Oh! as for that, mother,” replied Agricola, in order to give another turn to the conversation, which was alike disagreeable to him and the sempstress; “You are a soldier's wife, and he an old horse-grenadier of the imperial guard—oh! that was inexcusable. Oh, my dear brave father! Really, now, I hardly dare think of his arrival—it turns my senses topsy-turvy.”

“His arrival!” said Françoise, sighing. “Heaven grant it.”

“What, mother! do you doubt? *Parbleu*, he must come—you have had too many masses said for that not to happen.”

“Agricola, my child!” said Françoise, interrupting her son, and shaking her head mournfully; “do not talk in that way, especially about your father.”

“No, no; I really do all sort of odd things to-night. I am really a fool or an ass. Forgive me, mother, dear! I really have done nothing all night but beg pardon. You know, when I talk my nonsense it escapes me in spite of myself, and I never mean to offend you.”

“It is not me you offend, my child.”

“It's all the same, for I know nothing worse than to offend one's mother. But what I was saying as to my father's return, that will and must soon occur.”

“But we have not had a letter from him these four months.”

“Remember, mother, in the letter which he dictated—for he told us, with a soldier's frankness, that, although he could read tolerably well, he was no great penman—in that letter he told us not to be uneasy about him, as he should be in Paris the end of January, and that three or four days before his arrival he would let us know by what barrier he should arrive, that we might go and meet him.”

“True, my child! and yet, though we are in the month of February, we have no tidings.”

“Oh! that's the reason why we shall see him soon; I could go further, and say I should not be surprised if our good Gabriel was to arrive at nearly the same time. His last letter from America left a hope for it. What happiness, my dear mother, if all the family were reunited!”

“May Providence hear you, my child! It would, indeed, be a day of joy to me!”

"And that day will soon arrive, mother, be assured. As to my father, I say 'no news is good news.'"

"Do you remember your father, Agricola?" inquired La Mayeux.

"*Ma foi!*" to tell the truth, what I most remember was his great hairy cap, and his moustache, which frightened me so confoundedly. It was only the red riband of his cross, and the white stripes of his uniform, and the bright breadth of his sabre, that reconciled me to him: wasn't it, mother? But what ails you, mother? why do you weep?"

"Alas, poor Baudoin! he must have suffered so much in being separated from us at his age—sixty. Oh, my dear child! my heart is ready to burst when I think that our misery is only going to change its aspect."

"What do you mean?"

"Alas! I gain next to nothing."

"Well, and I, then! Is there not a chamber for him and you, and a table for him and you? My dear good mother, as we are talking of household affairs," added the smith, giving to his voice a true expression of tenderness, that he might not annoy his mother, "let me say one word. When my father returns, and Gabriel too, there will be no occasion to have any masses said for them, nor to burn any more candles. Well, thanks to such economy, the dear old daddy will have his bottle of wine every day, and his tobacco for his pipe. Then, on Sundays we will procure him a nice little dinner from the cook's shop."

Several taps at the door interrupted Agricola.

"Enter," said he.

But instead of entering, the person who knocked but half-opened the door, and there was only to be seen a hand and arm of splendid green, which made gestures to the smith.

"Oh, its Daddy Lorient, the prince of dyers," said Agricola. "Enter without any ceremony, friend Lorient."

"Impossible, my lad; I am reeking from head to foot with dye. I shall stain Madame Françoise's floor all green."

"So much the better; it will then look like a green field, and I adore the country."

"Joking apart, Agricola, I really want to speak to you directly!"

"What, about the man who is playing spy? Oh! don't annoy yourself. What can he have to concern you or me?"

"No; I think he's gone, or the fog is so thick that I cannot see him. But that's not it; come to me, I want you: it is, really now, a very important matter," added the dyer, with a mysterious air,— "a matter, too, which concerns you only."

"Me only!" said Agricola, rising with great surprise. "What can it be?"

"Go and see, my dear boy," said Françoise.

"I will, mother; but devil fetch me if I can think what it all means."

The smith then left the room quickly, leaving his mother and La Mayeux together.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE RETURN.

FIVE minutes after he had left, Agricola returned. His face was pale and agitated, his eyes filled with tears, his hand tremulous, but yet his countenance expressed extraordinary joy and tenderness. He stopped for a moment at the entrance, as if his emotion prevented him from approaching his mother.

Françoise's sight was so much enfeebled that she did not at first remark the change in her son's physiognomy.

"What is the matter, my dear?" she inquired.

Before the smith could reply, La Mayeux, more quicksighted, exclaimed,—

"Agricola, what ails you? how pale you are!"

"Mother," said the artisan, in an agitated voice, going up to Françoise, without replying to La Mayeux; "mother, I have something to say which will very much surprise you; promise me that you will contain yourself."

"What do you mean?—how you tremble! Look at me, dear!—Yes, indeed, La Mayeux was right—how very pale you look!"

"My dearest mother!" and Agricola, going on his knees before Françoise, took her two hands in his; "I must—you do not know—but—"

The smith could not finish, tears of joy stifled his voice.

"You weep, my dear boy! Oh! what causes this? you alarm me, love!"

"It is not alarm I would cause you—quite the contrary," said Agricola, wiping his eyes; "you will be delighted. But, once again, do not excite yourself,—for too great joy is as trying as too great grief."

"What mean you?"

"Didn't I tell you that he would soon come?"

"Your father!" exclaimed Françoise, as she rose from the chair. Her surprise and emotion were so excessive that she placed one hand on her heart to still its throbbings, and then she felt as though she would faint.

Her son rose and supported her. La Mayeux had until then considerably kept out of the way during this scene, which so completely absorbed Agricola and his mother, but she then timidly drew nigh, thinking she might be useful, for Françoise's features altered more and more.

"Come, mother, courage!" said the smith; "now the truth is told, you have only to rejoice over my father's return."

"My poor Baudoin! after eighteen years' absence! I cannot credit it!" said Françoise, bursting into tears. "Is it true?—Oh! can it be true?"

"It is so true, that, if you will promise not to be too much excited, I will tell you when you will see him."

"Soon?—oh! soon?—shan't I?"

"Yes, very soon."

"But when will he come?"

"He may be here from one moment to another—to-morrow—even to-night."

"To-night?"

"Yes, indeed, mother. I must tell you he is close at hand—he is here!"

"He is—he is——"

Françoise could not finish.

"Just now he was below; but before he came up he begged the dyer to see me, that I might prepare you to see him; for the dear father was afraid that so sudden a surprise might make you ill."

"Oh!——"

"And now," exclaimed the smith, with an expression of the deepest happiness, "he is here—he is waiting! Ah! dearest mother, for the last ten minutes I have hardly been able to contain myself, my heart beats as though it would come through my side."

And going to the door he opened it.

Dagobert, holding Rose and Blanche by the hand, appeared on the threshold.

Instead of throwing her arms round her husband's neck, Françoise fell on her knees and prayed.

Lifting up her soul to God, she thanked Him with the profoundest gratitude for having heard her vows, her prayers, and thus responded to her offerings.

For a second the actors in this scene remained silent and motionless.

Agricola, through a feeling of respect and delicacy which struggled violently against the impetuous ardour of his tenderness, did not throw himself on Dagobert's neck, but waited, with ill-restrained impatience, until his mother had concluded her pious prayer.

The soldier felt the same sensation as the smith, but both repressed their feelings, and they exchanged looks expressive of their love for each other, and their affection for the worthy woman who, in the excess of her pious zeal, forgot a little too much the creature for the Creator.

Rose and Blanche, overcome and deeply moved, looked with interest on the kneeling woman; whilst La Mayeux, silently shedding tears of joy at the thought of Agricola's happiness, retired into a dark corner of the room, feeling that she was an intruder, and must be overlooked in the midst of this family reunion.

Françoise rose, and made a step towards her husband, who caught her in his arms.

In a moment there was a deep silence.

Dagobert and Françoise did not utter a word, only broken sighs, sobs, and deep breathings of joy were heard. When the old couple lifted up their heads, their countenances were calm, joyous, and serene; for true expressions of simple and pure feelings never leave behind them marks of excitement and violent agitation.

"My children," said the soldier, in a voice full of emotion, pointing out Françoise to the girls, who, when her first emotion was over, had looked at them with astonishment; "this is my good and excellent wife, and she will be to General Simon's daughters what I myself have been."

"Then, madam, you will treat us as if we were your own children," said Rose, going with her sister up to Françoise.

"General Simon's daughters!" exclaimed Dagobert's wife, more and more surprised.

"Yes, my good Françoise, they are. I have brought them from a long distance, not without trouble; but I will tell you all that another time."

"Poor little dears! they look like two angels," said Françoise, regarding the orphans with equal interest and admiration.

"And now for us two," said Dagobert, turning to his son.

"Yes, now," said Agricola.

It is impossible to paint the excessive delight of Dagobert and his son, the tenderness and energy of their embraces, yet the soldier broke in upon them every now and then to look Agricola in the face, leaning his hands on the broad shoulders of the youthful smith, that he might with more ease gaze on his manly and frank countenance, and his well-formed and powerful frame; after which he again strained him to his bosom, saying, "What a fine lad! what a well-grown, good-looking fellow it is!"

La Mayeux, still remaining in the corner of the room, participated in the happiness of Agricola, but feared that her person, though not yet observed, might be considered intrusive. She wished to retire without being observed, but that was impossible. Dagobert and his son concealed nearly the whole of the door, and she therefore remained perforce, fixing her eyes on the lovely faces of Rose and Blanche. She had never in her life seen anything more lovely, and the extraordinary resemblance between the two sisters increased her surprise, whilst their mourning attire seemed to bespeak that they were poor; and thus, involuntarily, La Mayeux, felt more sympathy for them.

"Dear girls! they are cold—their little hands must be frozen; and unfortunately the fire in the stove has gone out," said Françoise.

She then tried to warm in her own the hands of the orphans, whilst Dagobert and his son were abandoning themselves to the outpouring of tenderness so long restrained.

The moment when Françoise had said that the fire in the stove was extinct, La Mayeux, anxious to make herself useful as an excuse for her presence, which might be thought ill-timed, ran to the little cupboard in which the charcoal and wood were kept, and taking out some small bits knelt down before the stove, and, by the aid of some sparks still retained in the ashes, lighted up the fire, which soon drew up and sparkled, and then filling a coffee-pot with water she placed it over the fire, that it might be useful to make some warm drink for the young girls.

La Mayeux employed herself in this with so little noise and so quickly, and there was so little attention paid to her in the midst of the display of feeling which was exhibited, that Françoise, fully occupied with Rose and Blanche, did not remark the heating of the stove until she felt its warmth, and soon after heard the bubbling of the boiling water in the coffee-pot.

This phenomenon of a fire which lighted of itself, did not at the moment strike Dagobert's wife, who was so completely absorbed by

the thoughts of how she should lodge the two young girls, for, as we know, the soldier had not announced their intended arrival.

All at once three or four loud barks were heard outside the door.

"Ah! it is my old Kill-joy," exclaimed Dagobert, opening the door for his dog: "he wishes, of course, to be introduced to the family."

Kill-joy jumped joyfully into the room, and very speedily made himself *at home*. After having rubbed his long muzzle in Dagobert's hand, he went round to Rose, Blanche, Françoise, and Agricola; then finding that but little attention was paid to him, he sniffed out La Mayeux, who kept herself still in a corner of the room, and acting on the popular axiom of "*My friend's friends are my friends*," Kill-joy licked the hands of the young sempstress, whom all else had forgotten.

By a curious feeling, this caress moved La Mayeux even to tears, and she several times passed her long, thin, and white hand down the intelligent head of the dog; then thinking that she could no longer be useful, as she had done all the small service it was in her power to render, she took the beautiful flower which Agricola had given to her, opened the door softly, and went out so stealthily that no one observed her departure.

After the expressions of mutual affection, Dagobert, his wife and son, bethought them of the actual realities of life.

"Poor Françoise!" said the soldier, looking towards Rose and Blanche, "you did not expect such an agreeable surprise?"

"I only regret, my dear husband," replied Françoise, "that the daughters of General Simon will have no better apartment than this humble chamber; for, with Agricola's garret——"

"That makes up our hôtel, and there are certainly some more splendid; but comfort yourself, the poor children are accustomed not to be very particular. To-morrow I will go arm-in-arm with my son, and I'll venture to say that it will not be he who will walk most upright and proudly of the two. We will go and find the father of General Simon at M. Hardy's factory, in order to talk matters over."

"To-morrow, father!" said Agricola to Dagobert; "you will not find M. Hardy or Marshal Simon's father at the manufactory."

"What do you say, my boy?" said Dagobert; "the Marshal?"

"Certainly; since 1830, the friends of General Simon have obtained the recognition of the title and rank which the Emperor had conferred on him after the battle of Ligny."

"Really?" cried Dagobert with emotion, "though that ought not to surprise me—for after all it is but justice; and when the Emperor said a thing, the least that could be done was to say it after him. But it is well—I like it. It goes to my heart—it moves me," Then addressing the two young maidens, "My loves, you hear! on your arrival at Paris, you are daughters of a duke and marshal; although to see you in this humble crib one would hardly credit it, my poor little duchesses: but patience, and all will be well yet. Old Simon must have been delighted, my boy, to learn that his son was restored to his rank."

"Oh! he said he would sacrifice all ranks and all titles to see his son again; for it was during the general's absence that his friends solicited and obtained this justice for him. Moreover, the marshal is

expected every hour, for his last letters from India lead us to expect his immediate arrival."

At this Rose and Blanche looked at each other, their eyes filling with large tears.

"Thank Heaven! I and the dear girls look anxiously for his return. But why should we not find M. Hardy or old M. Simon at the factory to-morrow?"

"Why, they left ten days ago, to visit and get particulars of an English manufactory established in the south; but they will return in a day or two."

"*Diable!* that annoys me. I relied on seeing the general's father, to talk over some very important matters. But I suppose you know where to write to him; so let him know to-morrow, my dear fellow, that his granddaughters have arrived in Paris. In the mean time, my dears," he added, turning to Rose and Blanche, "my good wife will share her bed with you; and as in war times we must put up with war fare, why, my darling pets, you will be no worse off here than you were on your journey."

"You know we shall always be well off near you and madame," said Rose.

"And then we can think of nothing else but the delight of being at last in Paris, since it is here that we shall so soon find our dear father," added Blanche.

"It is in that hope that we will all take patience," said Dagobert; "but then, after what you expected to see in Paris, you must be much astonished, my children. Why, up to this time, you have not found it the city paved with gold, which you dreamt of. But that can't be helped—patience, patience! You will find that Paris is not such a bad place as it may seem to be."

"And then," added Agricola, gaily, "I am sure that the young ladies will find, when General Simon does arrive, that Paris will be a real golden city."

"You are right, M. Agricola," said Rose, smiling: "you have guessed exactly!"

"What, ma'amselle, do you know my name?"

"To be sure we do, M. Agricola. We often spoke of you to Dagobert, and since with Gabriel," added Blanche.

"Gabriel!" exclaimed both mother and son, with surprise.

"Yes, Gabriel!" replied Dagobert, making a significant sign to the two orphans. Bless you, we have as much to tell you as would require a fortnight, at least, to complete the tale; and, among other wonderful things, you will hear how and where we met Gabriel. All that I shall now say about him is, that in his way, and for one of his calling, he deserves to be the brother of this dear boy (I cannot help *calling* you boy, my dear son, because as such I have always *thought* of you—so don't take it amiss), and that they are just fit for each other. Good, excellent wife!" continued Dagobert, with emotion, "it is and was a noble, a brave act, to take this poor, forlorn, deserted child, and, spite of your poverty, to bring it up as tenderly as your own."

"Husband, so trifling a service scarcely merits praise."

“Ah! but I think it does; and I shall set a greater value on you than ever, for your motherly kindness and courageous conduct towards the forlorn boy. However, he will be here himself, to thank and bless you, to-morrow morning.”

“Is my dear brother then returned?” cried the young smith. “Who will say, after all this, that there are not certain days marked out for happiness? And where did you fall in with our dear Gabriel?”

“Why don’t you call me *father* every time you speak to me?” interrupted Dagobert, whose eyes and ears seemed to revel in the delight of beholding and listening to each word that fell from his newly recovered treasure. “You owe me a long arrear, of eighteen years’ standing, and I expect that dear name will be repeated till you have paid off the debt; unless, indeed, you are ashamed of your weather-beaten old parent since you have taken to poetry and making songs. Ah! you see I know all about you, though I have been away.”

“My dear, dear father, how could you for a moment fancy such a thing?”

“There, my noble fellow! cheer up—I was trying a joke with you. No! I know at a glance you are not the paltry coward to be ashamed of an old father, though he does happen to be all the worse for wear. But as for Gabriel, I will tell you just now where and in what manner we fell in with him; for if you expect to get any sleep to-night, you will find yourself mistaken. You shall give me a share of your room, and we will gossip on till morning. Kill-joy will find a resting-place, as usual, outside the door of the apartment where these dear children sleep, and——”

“Dear husband!” interrupted Françoise, “I am sadly forgetful, but the joyful surprise of the last hour has quite overpowered me. Surely these young ladies and yourself will take some supper: Agricola will fetch something for you from the *traiteur’s* directly.”

“What say you, my children?” inquired Dagobert; “do you feel disposed to cat?”

“Oh no, thank you, kind Dagobert! we are too happy to be hungry.”

“At least,” said Françoise, “have a little warm wine and water, just to warm you, my dear young ladies! It is, I am sorry to say, all I have to offer you.”

“To be sure they will accept your good offer, my dear wife,” answered Dagobert for them: “the poor things must be very tired, and had better retire to rest! While you prepare their bed, I will depart with my boy here, and lodge myself in his chamber till to-morrow morning, when these young ladies will probably have arisen; and then I will come and have a talk with you, by way of giving poor Agricola a little respite.”

At this moment a knock was heard at the door.

“It is that good little Mayeux come to see if we want any thing,” said Agricola.

“I fancied she was here when your father entered the room,” said Françoise.

“And so she was, dear mother, but the poor girl was so fearful of being in the way that she retired without your perceiving her.”

“That knock was too loud for her gentle tap, Agricola. See then who it is, my dear,” rejoined Françoise.

Before the smith had time to reach the door it opened, and a well-dressed man of respectable look advanced several steps into the chamber, casting a rapid glance around, and finally fixing his eyes with earnest gaze on Rose and Blanche.

“Excuse me, sir,” said Agricola, hastily advancing towards him, “if I remind you that it is usual for persons knocking at doors to wait until they are *told* to enter. What is your pleasure?—whom do you want?”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” answered the stranger with extreme politeness, and speaking very slowly and deliberately, evidently with a view to prolong his stay. “I really beg a thousand pardons! I am quite vexed at my inadvertence. I feel so confused—that, really——”

“Well, well, sir!” interrupted Agricola, impatiently; “that is sufficient, and more than sufficient: have the goodness now to state your business here.”

“May I take the liberty of asking whether a deformed young sempstress, by name Mademoiselle Soliveau, does not live here?”

“No, sir!—up stairs!” said Agricola.

“Then, upon my word, sir,” exclaimed the man of politeness, commencing a series of profound bows, “I am thoroughly ashamed of having committed so great a mistake; the truth was I believed myself at the door of the young person I mentioned, and whom I wished to see respecting some work required by a lady of high respectability.”

“It is somewhat late,” returned Agricola, much surprised, “to come upon such an errand. However, Mademoiselle Soliveau is well known to us, and you can see her to-morrow—she has now retired to rest.”

“Then there is nothing left but to reiterate my excuses, and to beg you will pardon.”

“That will do, sir!” cried Agricola, advancing closer towards the door.

“May I venture to hope that madame here, and these young ladies with the gentleman I see opposite, will also kindly accept my apologies for thus unintentionally intruding on them; and permit me to assure them——”

“Really, sir,” interrupted Agricola, “if you go on thus, you will require even greater indulgence to overlook the length and tediousness of your excuses, which seem to me as though you never purposed bringing them to a close. Good night, sir! it is past our hour of receiving visitors.”

Agricola's rebuke, which brought a smile on the countenances of the two sisters, pleased Dagobert excessively. He stroked down his moustache with the utmost complacency, and whispered to his wife, “That is a clever boy of ours! I like his spirit—not afraid of anything! He does not astonish you as much as he does me, because you have been always used to him; but he is a fine fellow, I must say, though he is my son.”

During these few remarks, the ceremonious stranger, after casting

a searching glance at the orphans, Dagobert, and Agricola, quitted the room.

Directly he had departed, Françoise, having drawn one mattress from the bed and laid it on the ground for herself, began arranging her own bed for the reception of the sisters; placing her finest and whitest sheets for their use, and superintending their preparations for the night with almost maternal solicitude.

Dagobert and Agricola, meanwhile, wended their way towards the garret occupied by the latter.

At the instant when the young smith, bearing a light in his hand, was preceding his father up the stairs, just as he passed the chamber occupied by La Mayeux, the young girl spoke hastily from the dark corner in which she had ensconced herself, and said, "Agricola, a serious danger threatens you!! I must speak to you!" These words had been uttered so rapidly, and in so low a tone, that Dagobert heard them not; but, observing Agricola start suddenly, and an evident tremor pass over him, the old soldier called out:

"What, now, my boy! what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, father!" answered the young smith, turning quickly towards him. "I stopped, because I feared you could not see your way up these strange stairs."

"See!" exclaimed the delighted old man: "why, bless you, my boy, I seem to have changed my old limbs for those of a lad of fifteen, and to have borrowed his eyes also." And the veteran, not remarking the astonishment painted on the countenance of Agricola, took his arm, and the two entered the small attic in which they were to pass the night.

* * * * *

Very few minutes after the man of polished manners had returned from his visit of inquiry to Dagobert's wife, touching the abode of La Mayeux, he was hastening towards the extremity of the Rue Brise-Miche.

He quickened his steps as he approached a hackney-coach drawn up in the little square of the cloister Saint-Merry.

Concealed in this fiacre, his whole person enveloped in a large cloak, was M. Rodin.

"Well?" said he, in an interrogative tone.

"All right!" answered the other; "the two young girls, and the man with the large grey moustache, have all three gone into Françoise Baudoin's house. I followed them; but, before I knocked at the door of their apartment, I listened for several minutes to what they were saying. I found out that the two girls were to share the bed of Françoise Baudoin, while the old fellow with the grizzled beard was to partake the chamber of the young smith."

"Very well!" said Rodin.

"I did not like," continued the polite speaker, "to insist upon seeing the humpbacked sempstress about the Bacchante Queen to-night; besides, it will serve as a pretext for my calling again to-morrow, to ascertain what effect has been produced by the letter she would receive by the evening's post, respecting the young smith."

"Make a point of that. Now, then, you will proceed at once (late

as it may be) with a message from me to the confessor of Françoise Baudoin; desire him to come to me without delay. Say he will find me in the street Milieu-des-Ursins, and do you accompany him. Stay, I *may* not have returned, but bid him await me should I be absent; and tell him, further, to use all speed, as business of vital importance induces me to summon him so late."

"All shall be faithfully performed," replied the polished man, bowing low to Rodin, whose fiacre drove rapidly away.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AGRICOLA AND LA MAYEUX.

AN hour after these scenes, a most entire silence reigned in the house in the Rue Brise-Miche—a flickering light, visible through two squares of a glass door, shewed that La Mayeux was still watching; for this dark hole, without air, without light, only admitted the daylight by this door, which opened in a narrow and obscure passage made in the rafters.

A miserable bed, a table, an old trunk, and a chair, so filled this chilly abode, that two persons could not sit down in it, unless one were seated on the bed.

The magnificent flower which Agricola had given La Mayeux had been carefully placed in a glass of water on a table loaded with linen, and shed its sweet perfume, and expanded its purple chalice, in the centre of this squalid closet, with its damp and grey plaster walls, which a miserable candle feebly lighted.

La Mayeux, sitting dressed on her bed, with her features full of grief, her eyes overflowing with tears, was leaning with one hand on the pillow of her couch, inclining her head towards the door, listening with intense anxiety, hoping every instant to hear the step of Agricola.

The young creature's heart beat violently; her face, usually so wan, was now slightly coloured, so deep was her emotion. Sometimes she cast her eyes with affright on a letter which she held in her hand—a letter which had arrived by post this evening, and had been placed on her table by the dyer (who was also porter to the house), whilst La Mayeux had been present at the interview between Dagobert and his family.

After some time the young girl heard a door close to her own open very gently.

"Here he is, at last!" she exclaimed; and Agricola entered the room.

"I waited until my father was asleep," said the young smith in a low voice, his countenance betraying curiosity rather than uneasiness; "but what is the matter, my good little Mayeux? How unhappy you look! what makes you weep? What is the danger about which you have to speak to me?"

"Here, read," replied La Mayeux, in a trembling voice, and handing to him hastily an open letter.

Agricola held it towards the light and read on as follows :

A person who cannot disclose his name, but is fully aware of the fraternal interest which you take in Agricola Baudoin, warns you that this young and worthy artisan will in all probability be arrested to-morrow.

"Me!" cried Agricola, looking at the girl with an air of extreme astonishment; "what can this mean?"

"Read on!" said the sempstress hastily, clasping her hands.

Agricola resumed, hardly able to believe his eyes.

His song of the "FREE WORKMEN" has been made a matter of criminal accusation. Many copies of it were found amongst the papers of a secret society, whose leaders have been put in prison after the detection of the conspiracy in the Rue des Prouvaires.

"Alas!" said the little workwoman, bursting into tears, "now I understand it all. That man who was prying about this evening, as the dyer said, was no doubt watching for your arrival."

"Oh, nonsense! the accusation is absurd," said Agricola; "do not vex yourself about it, my good Mayeux. I never bother myself about politics; my verses only prove my love of my fellow-creatures, and if any copies of them were found amongst the papers of a secret society, it is no fault of mine."

And he threw the letter on the table disdainfully.

"Read on, I pray you read on," said La Mayeux to him.

"Certainly, if you request it."

And Agricola continued.

A warrant to arrest him is issued; his innocence no doubt will be made evident sooner or later, but he will do well in the mean time immediately to get out of the way; that he may avoid an imprisonment which may last for two or three months, and which would be a dreadful blow to his mother, of whom he is the sole support.

A sincere Friend, who must remain unknown.

After a moment's silence the smith shrugged his shoulders, his countenance became composed, and he said with a laugh to the sempstress,

"Courage, my good little Mayeux—this is a mere hoax; it is an attempt to make us April fools by anticipation."

"Agricola, for the love of heaven," said the sempstress in a beseeching tone, "do not treat this so lightly. Believe in my presentiments—attend to this warning."

"Again, my poor dear girl, I tell you, it is more than two months since my song of the '*Workmen*' was printed, and it is not in the least political; besides, they would not have waited until now if they meant to prosecute me."

"But only reflect on all the circumstances. It is not two days since the plot in the Rue des Prouvaires was discovered; and if your verses were unknown until then, having been now seized with the persons arrested for this conspiracy, why nothing more is requisite to implicate you."

"Implicate me! verses, in which I boast of the love of labour and charity! Really Justice must be blind and proud. We must then give every dog a stick to feel his way with."

"Agricola," said the young girl in despair at seeing the smith



AGRICOLA READING THE LETTER.

jocose at such a moment, "I beseech you, hear me: no doubt in your verses you uphold the holy duty of labour, but you lament in painful lines the unjust lot of the poor artisans who are hopelessly sentenced to the miseries of life; you maintain the holy brotherhood, but your good and noble heart is indignant with the selfish and the wicked. In fact you advocate with all your energy the enfranchisement of work-people less fortunate than yourself, who have not such employers as the generous M. Hardy. Well, tell me, Agricola, in these troublous times is there more wanting to implicate you, if several copies of your songs have been seized, together with the individuals arrested?"

At these sensible and excited words of this worthy creature, who drew her reasoning from her heart, Agricola was moved, and began to contemplate the warning more seriously.

Seeing him thus serious, La Mayeux continued:

"And then remember Remi, your fellow-workman!"

"Remi?"

"Yes, a letter of his, although one apparently of no importance, was found on a person arrested last year on a charge of conspiracy, and he was put in prison for a month."

"True, Mayeux; but the injustice of the charge was speedily recognised, and he was liberated."

"After having passed a month in prison; and that is what you are very sensibly advised to avoid. Agricola, pray think of this—a month in prison—and your mother."

These words of La Mayeux made a deep impression on Agricola, who took up the letter and read it again attentively.

"And the man who was watching all the evening about the house," continued the young girl; "I cannot help associating the two circumstances. Alas! what a blow for your father and your poor mother, who can no longer earn anything. Are not you now their only reliever? Only think what would become of them if they were deprived of your labour!"

"Yes, that would be a heavy blow," said Agricola, throwing the letter on the table. "What you say about Remi is perfectly just; he was as innocent as I am—an error of justice, no doubt involuntarily, but not the less cruel. But even now let me say, they do not arrest a man without hearing him."

"But they arrest first and hear afterwards," said La Mayeux with bitterness; "then after a month or two they restore him to liberty, and if he have a wife and children who have no dependence but his daily toil, what are they to do whilst their only support is in gaol? They hunger—they thirst—and they weep."

At these simple and touching words of La Mayeux, Agricola was deeply moved.

"A month without labour!" he said, with a sad and thoughtful air, "and my mother and father, and the two young girls who now form part of our family until the Marshal Simon or his father arrive in Paris. Oh, you are right! and in, spite of myself, this thought frightens me."

"Agricola," said La Mayeux suddenly, "if you were to consult M. Hardy—he is so kind, and his character stands so high, so much

esteemed, that in offering his word for you they would perhaps not prosecute you?"

"Unfortunately M. Hardy is not in Paris, he is travelling with Marshal Simon's father."

Then, after a brief silence, Agricola added, as if desirous to overcome his apprehensions,

"But no, I cannot believe this letter; after all, it is best to await the result of events. I shall at least have the chance of proving my innocence at a first examination; for you know, Mayeux, whether I was in prison or obliged to conceal myself, my labour would not aid my family."

"Alas! that is true," said the poor girl; "what can we do? what is best to be done?"

"Ah, my dear father," said Agricola, "if this misfortune were to happen to-morrow, what a waking for him who went to sleep so full of happiness!"

And the smith concealed his forehead in his hands.

Unfortunately the fears of La Mayeux were by no means exaggerated, for it will be remembered that in the year 1832, before and after the conspiracy of the Rue des Prouvaires, a great many arrests took place amongst the working classes, in consequence of a violent re-action against democratic principles.

Suddenly La Mayeux broke the silence which had lasted for some minutes, a deep colour suffused her features, which was a token of constraint, pain, and hope mingled.

"Agricola, you are saved!" she said.

"How?"

"The young lady, so handsome and so kind, who, when she gave you this flower (and she pointed to it) did so with a delicacy which soothed your feelings; she must have a generous heart, go and see her."

At these words, which she seemed to pronounce by making a desperate effort over herself, two large tears rolled down the cheeks of La Mayeux.

For the first time in her life she experienced a feeling of acute jealousy; another woman was so happy as to be able to aid him she idolised—she, a poor helpless, powerless, wretched creature!

"Do you think so?" said Agricola with surprise; "what could the young lady do in such a matter?"

"Did she not say, Remember my name, and, under any circumstance, address yourself to me?"

"She did."

"This young lady, in her high condition, must have powerful friends who could protect and defend you; go and see her to-morrow morning; tell her all without any reserve, and ask her aid and protection."

"But, my dear Mayeux, what do you suppose she can do?"

"Listen. I remember hearing my father say once, that he had saved one of his friends from going to prison by giving security for him; it will be easy to convince this young lady of your innocence, and she will be your security, and then I should think you would have nothing more to fear."

“ Ah, my poor girl ; ask such a service of any body ! that is not to be done.”

“ Believe me, Agricola,” replied La Mayeux sorrowfully, “ I would not advise you to ask anything which could lower you in the eyes of any person, and particularly in the eyes of this lady. You do not ask her for money, but only to become security in order that you may continue your labour, and that your family may not be deprived of its sole support. Believe me, Agricola, such a request is only noble and worthy on your part ; the heart of this lady is generous, she will understand you, and the security will be nothing for her, whilst it will be every thing for you. The lives of all your family depend upon it.”

“ You are right, good Mayeux,” said Agricola with deep sorrow ; “ and perhaps my best step is to ask this request. If this young lady consents to render me this service, and a security will really keep me out of prison, I shall be prepared for whatever turns up. But, no, no,” added the smith, rising, “ I shall never dare to address this young lady. What right have I to do so ? What is the small service I have rendered to her in comparison with that which I ask of her ?”

“ Do you think, then, Agricola, that a generous heart measures the services it can render by those which it has received ? Believe me the heart is not so selfish ; I am but a poor creature who cannot be compared with any body—I am nothing—I can only be nothing. Well ! I am still sure—yes, Agricola, I am sure that this young lady, so far above me, will feel as I do under these circumstances. Yes, as I do, so will she comprehend your cruel position, and will do with joy, pleasure, and gratitude, what I should do ; if alas ! I could do anything but only devote myself uselessly——”

In spite of herself, La Mayeux pronounced these last words with so deep and touching an expression—there was something so affecting in the comparison, which this unfortunate, obscure, despised, miserable, and decrepit creature made between herself and Adrienne de Cardoville, the resplendent type of all that was young, beautiful, and wealthy, that Agricola was moved to tears, and, taking one of La Mayeux’s hands, he said, in a voice of deep emotion,

“ How good you are ! how full of noble sentiment, good sense, and real delicacy !”

“ Unfortunately I can only advise you——”

“ And your advice shall be followed, my excellent Mayeux ; you have the most exalted mind I know ; and you persuade me to this attempt by making me believe that the heart of Mademoiselle Adrienne de Cardoville is like your own.”

At this sincere compliment and simple comparison, La Mayeux forgot nearly all she had just suffered—so delightful, so consolatory were her feelings. If, indeed, for certain human beings fatally destined to suffering, there are griefs unknown to the world beside, there are also for them, humble and gentle joys unknown to others : the least word of soft affection which elevates them in their own eyes is so grateful, so delightful to the poor souls habitually endured to disdain, hardships, and, above all, to the deep desolation of their own distrust.

“ Well, then, that is settled ; and you will go to-morrow morning to the young lady—won’t you ?” inquired La Mayeux, whilst fresh hope sprang up within her breast. “ At day-break I shall go down

and watch at the street door to see if I observe any suspicious person, so that I may warn you."

"Good and excellent girl!" said Agricola, more and more moved.

"You must try and go before your father awakes; the young lady lives in a lonely quarter, and going there will be almost to conceal yourself."

"I think I hear my father's voice," said Agricola suddenly.

The room of La Mayeux was so near the attic of the smith, that he and the sempstress listening heard Dagobert, who was in the dark, say,

"Agricola, are you asleep, my dear boy? I have had my first nap and my tongue wants to be wagging."

"Go quickly, Agricola," said La Mayeux, "your absence will make him uneasy; and be sure you do not go out in the morning before I have seen you to say if anything has happened to cause suspicion."

"Agricola! what, ain't you there?" said Dagobert in a louder tone."

"Here I am, father," said the smith, leaving the closet of La Mayeux, and going into his father's garret.

"I had been to close the shutters of the loft which had been opened by the wind; I thought the noise might awaken you."

"Thanks, my brave boy; but it was not the noise that roused me," said Dagobert gently: "it was a strong desire for talking with you. Ah, my dear lad, it is quite a fever that devours an old fool of a father, who has not seen his son for eighteen years."

"Will you have a light father?"

"No, no, that's a luxury; we can talk in the dark, and then I shall have a new pleasure in seeing you to-morrow morning at day-break: it will be as though I saw you for the first time, or second time."

The door of Agricola's chamber closed, and La Mayeux heard no more.

The poor girl threw herself with her clothes on upon her bed, and did not close an eye all night, waiting with agony for daylight, that she might watch for Agricola's safety.

However, in spite of her anxieties for the morrow, she sometimes fell into melancholy reveries, comparing the conversation she had had in the silence of the night with the man she loved in secret, with what might have been that conversation if she were beautifully attractive—if she were loved as she did love, with chaste and deep devotion. But then reflecting that she could never have the heavenly charm of reciprocal love, she found her consolation in the hope of having rendered service to Agricola.

At day-break La Mayeux rose gently, and, descending the staircase noiselessly, went to watch that no harm threatened Agricola.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE MORNING.

THE night, which had been damp and foggy, gave place to a clear though cold frosty morning; and looking upwards through the small skylight which opened from Agricola's garret, and afforded the only means of ventilating the apartment, a tiny patch of blue sky could be discerned.

The chamber occupied by the young smith was scarcely superior to that of La Mayeux. Over the small deal table, on which he wrote his poetical inspirations, hung a small portrait of Béranger, the people's idol and favourite poet—in whose hearts he will ever live, as the immortal writer whose rare and wonderful genius celebrated their glories and bewailed their misfortunes, while he informed their minds and enlightened their understanding.

Although the day had hardly dawned, Dagobert and his son were already risen; the latter had sufficient self-command to conceal his uneasiness from his parent, for his had been a restless pillow, and the more he reflected the more serious grew his fears.

The recent discovery of the rash enterprise in the Rue des Prouvaires had led to a considerable number of arrests, and the finding several copies of his song of the "*Free Workmen*" in the house of one of the principals in the conspiracy, might, indeed, temporarily compromise the safety of the young smith. However, as we before said, these mental reflections were carefully hidden from his father, who was far from suspecting the distress of mind under which his "dear boy" laboured.

Seated by the side of their small bed, the soldier, who at the first glimmer of light had arisen and shaved and dressed himself with military precision, sat with Agricola, whose hands he affectionately held in his own, while from time to time his eye wandered over the beloved features of his newly restored son, on whose fine manly figure he gazed with intense delight and gratified pride.

"Ah, you are laughing at me, my boy!" said he, at length; "you are smiling to see an old fellow like me so proud of his son!—but last night I could not half see you as I do now by the help of daylight. Now I can observe every feature. I can see the exact colour of your eyes—your hair—and, what an old fool I am!—do you know I like to see you with those fine moustaches? What a capital grenadier or horse-soldier you would make! Tell me, my dear son, did you never wish to be a soldier?"

"Think of my poor mother if I had!"

"Right, quite right; and, besides, I cannot help thinking that soldiering days are gone by, and the only use now for old fellows like myself, is to be placed in the chimney-corner like an old rusty carbine: we have done *our* work, I expect."

"Yes," answered Agricola, "but if your time *has* gone by, they were days of heroism and glory while they lasted;" and then looking

tenderly and proudly at his father, he added, in a tone of exultation, "for me, 'tis glory enough to feel and know myself your son!"

"As for that, my dear boy," replied the gratified old man, "I can but say that, if an old father's love is worth being proud of, then I give you leave to boast as you will; and if I feel such tenderness for you now, what will it be when we have lived longer together. For my part I feel like a hungry, half-starved wretch, who has been kept a length of time without food: a little will not do to satisfy the cravings of hunger, and it must be a hearty meal, indeed, that will disgust him. Ah! I shall tire you out, my boy, I fear. I can hardly believe that I shall have you to look at, as I do now, every morning and evening, and every day—the very idea seems to overpower and bewilder me—I cannot understand so much happiness being in store for me."

These words made Agricola start, and a thrill of anguish pervaded his frame as he thought of the threatened separation, which would so cruelly overthrow the fond anticipations of his father.

"And you are quite happy," continued the old man, "are you not, under so kind a master as M. Hardy?"

"Indeed you may say so," answered the son; "a more just, generous, or upright man, does not exist. Ah, did you but know the wonders he has effected in his manufactory! Compared with other establishments it is a perfect heaven upon earth!"

"Really!"

"You will be able to see and judge for yourself; the very countenances of his workpeople exhibit joy and sincere affection wherever his name is mentioned, and all revere and love him as the best of masters and most generous of friends."

"Why, your M. Hardy must be a sort of magician!"

"Yes, my dear father, a magician powerful enough to render labour attractive, and a matter even of pleasure to those engaged in it, and that by kind treatment and a liberal remuneration. In the first place, he gives us all a share in the profits of our work, so as to create an interest in its success; then he has built large and commodious buildings, in which, at a less cost than they could obtain the most humble lodgings, the workpeople are accommodated with large, airy, cheerful apartments, and where, besides, they can have all the benefits of constant companionship and mutual society: but you will see—you will see!"

"Paris may well be called the city of wonders! Well, thank my stars, I have once more returned to it, and never, as I trust, to leave you or your good mother again!"

"I hope, dear father," answered Agricola, suppressing a sigh, "that we shall not be called upon to part! It will be the greatest possible delight, both to my mother and myself, to have you always with us, and to make you forget the dangers you have passed, as well as all you have suffered."

"Suffered! Not I—not a bit; or, if I have, devil take me if I have not forgotten all about it in this joyful meeting. Look me well in the face, and tell me if you can perceive the least mark of suffering. I tell you that, from the instant of my putting my foot in this house, all my troubles flew away, and I felt myself a young man again. Ah! you shall see me walk by and by. I will wager a trifle, now, I shall

leave you behind. Mind you dress yourself in all your best, and when we go out together—eh, my boy?—won't the people stare at us! I'll be bound when they look at your black moustache, and then see my grey one, they will say, 'There goes father and son!' Now I think of it, let us just plan out our day. First, I want you to write to the father of General Simon, telling him of the arrival of his grandchildren in Paris, and that he will be so good as to hasten hither without delay; his presence being required upon very important business relative to the children. While you are writing, I will step down stairs and say a few words to my old woman, and just see how my two little dears are, and wish them good morning. We will have a bit of something to eat together, and then your mother will go to mass I suppose, for I see she has all her old fancy for that sort of thing. Well, if it amuses *her*, what matters? And while she is at church, we will take a little turn out together."

"Father," said Agricola, with some embarrassment, "this morning, unfortunately, I cannot go out with you!"

"Not go out with me! why, it is Sunday, you know!"

"I am aware of it, dear father," said Agricola, hesitating; "but I promised to go all the morning to the manufactory, to complete a piece of work which is wanted in a hurry, and were I to fail, it would be a considerable loss as well as inconvenience to M. Hardy. I shall soon be at liberty again."

"Well," said the soldier, with a sigh of regret, "I had promised myself, my boy, to have my first walk in Paris with you this morning. But it cannot be helped—you must mind your work, because you have so good a master, and, also, because it gives you the means of maintaining your mother. Yet it is vexatious—devilishly vexatious; but stay! see how soon happiness spoils us, and makes us selfish and unjust. Look at me now, grumbling away like an old ehurl, just because my promised pleasure is put off for a few hours, without recollecting that for eighteen years I have been hoping for the happiness of beholding you, without once venturing to be sure I should ever have my desire gratified. Bah! I am nothing better than an old fool! So let us say no more about it, but '*vive la joie*,' and my dearest son, Agricola;" and, as though to indemnify himself for his disappointment, the old soldier gaily and affectionately embraced his son.

Poor Agricola shuddered, even in the midst of his father's caresses, lest he should see the door open and La Mayeux's apprehensions be realised.

"I am better now," said Dagobert, cheerily; "come, let us talk a little about affairs of business. Do you know where I shall be able to find the addresses of all the notaries in Paris?"

"No, I do not; but nothing is more easy."

"I want to know, because, by order of the mother of the two children I brought with me, I sent by post from Russia some highly important papers, which were directed to some notary in Paris, to whom I was to have gone directly I reached that city. For fear of forgetting it, I had carefully written down the name and address in my pocket-book, but it was stolen from me on the road; and all I can

do to recollect this man's name, I cannot knock it into my head: still I fancy, if I see it in any printed list, I should know it again."

Two distinct taps at the garret-door made Agricola start from his seat with a beating heart; for involuntarily he thought of the warrant for his apprehension, and fully believed the persons had arrived to put it in force.

Dagobert, who had quickly turned his head in the direction from which the noise proceeded, did not observe the alarm depicted on his son's countenance, but exclaimed, in a firm voice,

"Come in!"

The door opened, and Gabriel, attired in black cassock and round hat, appeared before the astonished pair.

To recognise his adopted brother at a glance—to rush towards and clasp him in a fond, brotherly embrace, was the work of an instant.

"My dear brother!"

"Agricola!"

"Gabriel!"

"After so long an absence!"

"You have come at last!"

Were the only words exchanged between the missionary and the young smith, and they held each other in a close embrace.

Dagobert, both affected and deeply charmed with this unaffected display of brotherly affection, was obliged to dry the large drops which gathered in his eyes. There was, indeed, something indescribably touching in the tenderness of these two young men, whose hearts so closely resembled each other, while their outward forms were so entirely different: the fine manly countenance of Agricola presenting a powerful contrast to the extreme delicacy and almost angelic sweetness of Gabriel's physiognomy.

"I learned of your approaching arrival by my father," said the young smith, at length, to his adopted brother, "and expected to see you from one minute to the other; and yet my happiness is increased a hundred fold!"

"And my dear mother!" said Gabriel, affectionately pressing the hands of Dagobert, "did you find her quite well?"

"Yes, my dear son! and she will grow stronger every day now we are all once more united around her. There is nothing like joy for improving the health."

Then, addressing Agricola, who, forgetful of his fears of arrest, was regarding the missionary with ineffable affection, he said,

"Who would think, now, that under this delicate exterior, and a countenance gentle as that of a young girl, our Gabriel conceals the heart and courage of a lion? for I told you with what intrepidity he saved the lives of General Simon's daughters, and then strove to preserve mine likewise."

"For Heaven's sake, Gabriel!" cried the young smith, who for several minutes had been attentively surveying the missionary, "what is the matter with your forehead?"

Gabriel, who had thrown aside his hat, was so placed that the light of the small window fell directly on his pale mournful countenance, so



THE MEETING OF AGRICOLA AND GABRIEL.

P. 24.

as to completely display the circular scar which surrounded his forehead from one temple to the other.

In the midst of the various emotions and rapid events which had followed the shipwreck, Dagobert had not, during his short conference with Gabriel in the Château de Cardoville, observed the cicatrice which encircled the brows of the young missionary; but now, having his attention directed to it by Agricola, he exclaimed, with surprise,

“What is the meaning of that most singular mark on your forehead?”

“And look, dear father, he has deep scars on his hands also!” exclaimed the young smith, seizing one of the hands which the missionary had extended towards him, as though to calm his uneasiness.

“Gabriel, my excellent boy! what does all this signify? and who has inflicted these fearful wounds?” Then, taking the missionary’s hand, he in his turn examined it with the air of a connoisseur, saying,

“When I was in Spain, one of my comrades was taken down from a cross by the road-side, where the monks had first nailed him, and then left him to perish of hunger and thirst. Ever after he bore on his hands marks precisely similar to these.”

“My father is right!” cried Agricola, deeply affected. “Yes, it is easy now to see the cause of these scars: my dear brother’s hands have been pierced also!”

“Do not heed such trifles,” said Gabriel, while a look of unaffected modesty suffused his countenance. “I was sent upon a mission to the savages in the Rocky Mountains, who not only refused to hear me, but first crucified me, and then commenced scalping me, when a merciful Providence saved me from their murderous hands.”

“Poor boy!” exclaimed Dagobert; “were you unarmed, or was your escort insufficient to protect you?”

“We are not allowed to carry arms,” said Gabriel, with a gentle smile, “and we never have any escort.”

“Well, then, your comrades—the party who were sent along with you—did they make no effort to defend you?” cried Agricola, impatiently.

“I was quite alone, dear brother.”

“Alone?”

“Yes, with merely a guide.”

“What!” cried Dagobert, unable to comprehend or believe what he heard—“do you really mean to say that, alone and unarmed, you ventured into the midst of this land of savages?”

“This is sublime devotion, indeed!” murmured Agricola.

“True religion,” replied Gabriel, with simple earnestness, “cannot be imposed by force: ’t is by gentle persuasion alone these poor barbarians could be brought to embrace the truths and heavenly doctrines of our holy creed, which enjoineth *charity* above all things.”

“But when persuasion fails——” interrupted Agricola, hastily.

“Then, my brother, ’t is our willing duty to die, if needs be, in support of the faith we profess—pitying and praying for those who refuse to hear us; for ours is a religion of love and peace.”

A momentary silence prevailed after this simple and touching reply.

Dagobert was too courageous himself not to fully comprehend the calm yet devoted heroism of his adopted son, whom, as well as Agricola, he gazed on with the most intense admiration, mingled with respect.

Gabriel, without in the slightest degree affecting an excessive share of modesty, seemed unfeignedly at a loss to understand the impression he had caused; and, addressing himself to the soldier, he said, in a tone of uneasiness,

“What is the matter with you, my father?”

“The matter?” cried the old man; “why, it is just this, that after having for thirty years fancied myself as brave as any man, I have found my master—my superior—and here he stands,” taking Gabriel’s hand affectionately in his own.

“But what have I done, to deserve such praise?”

“I tell you what, my noble fellow!” exclaimed Dagobert, pointing enthusiastically to the wounds on Gabriel’s temples—“those scars are as glorious and honourable—nay, more so—to you than the wounds such as we, who are fighters by profession, pride ourselves on having received in battle.”

“My father is right,” added Agricola, with animated tones: “ah! such courage, charity, and resignation as this would indeed make me love and venerate you, as *priest*, almost as my mother does.”

“Nay,” said Gabriel, in painful confusion, “let me beseech you not to overrate my humble doings thus! Do not praise me more than I deserve.”

“Praise you!” returned Dagobert; “why, just look here: when I was sent to face the enemy, did I go alone? was not my captain there, to witness my doings? and were not my comrades sharers of my danger? And then, if my courage failed me, had I not my pride and vanity to spur me on? without mentioning the inspiring battle-cry—the smell of the powder—the sound of the trumpets—the roar of the cannon—with my horse neighing, prancing, and curvetting under me, as though the devil stung him. And, best of all, did I not know the Emperor himself was there? and that, in return for having my skin well riddled with bullets, he would bestow on me a bit of riband or a stripe of gold lace, to make a plaster! Ay, to be sure, I knew all this well enough; and so I got the credit of being a brave sort of fellow. But you, my fine lad, who face all manner of dangers alone and unobserved, are a thousand times bolder and braver than myself, when you go, unarmed and unseen by your commander, to encounter enemies a hundred times more formidable and ferocious than any we ever meet in the open battle-field, where we fight away in squadrons, protected by a shower of howitzers and cannon-balls.”

“My excellent father!” repeated the young smith, “how worthy of you it is thus to do justice to the courage of another!”

“Ah, dear Agricola!” cried Gabriel, “our kind parent’s indulgent view of my conduct makes him exaggerate the little good I have been able to do, and which is, after all, so natural.”

“Natural!” quickly responded the old soldier: “yes, for gallant fellows such as you are it may be natural; but let me tell you the breed is a rare one—seldom more than one at a time!”

“Rare, indeed!” added Agricola; “for courage such as my brother has evinced is the most difficult sort to meet with. What!

with the anticipation of an almost certain death, you departed alone, naught in your hand but a crucifix to excuse and preserve you, to preach charity and brotherly love to savages; who, in return for this act of self-devotion, seize you, torture you, and threaten you with a lingering death! and all this you bear without one angry or resentful feeling, and patiently await your end with a smile and blessing for your murderers on your lips! and all this bodily anguish you endure in the thick shade of their pathless woods—alone, unknown, unseen—with no other hope, should you even escape from the hands of your tormenters, than to hide your deep scars beneath the humble robe of a priest! My father is right—seek not to disown his just praise; for even I must declare you stand here as brave a man as he himself!”

“And besides,” resumed Dagobert, “the poor boy is all the while working for ‘JACK NOBODY,’ as one may say; for as you observe, my son, his courage and devotion, with a body seared and seamed all over, will never change his black gown into a bishop’s robe.”

“Nay,” said Gabriel, with a smile of angelic sweetness, “I am not so disinterested as I appear: should I prove worthy of it, a mighty recompense awaits me on high.”

“Oh! as to that, my dear boy, I won’t pretend to talk of matters I don’t understand; but what I will say is, that my old cross would be as well placed on your cassock as on my uniform.”

“But such recompenses are never bestowed on humble priests like Gabriel,” said the smith; “and yet, if you only knew, my dear father, what brave and virtuous spirits may be found among the portion of the priesthood called insultingly the ‘*lower clergy*,’ what hidden merit and devoted zeal for their fellow-creatures may be met with among the obscure and humble curés of the villages of France, treated both harshly and unfeelingly by their bishops, who impose on them a pitiless yoke, from which there is no escape! Yet these poor priests are workmen, like ourselves, whose emancipation all generous hearts should unite in demanding. Sons of the people as we are, they require the same redress, the same justice, we poor mechanics and artisans so loudly call for. Am I not right, Gabriel? You will not contradict me, my dear brother—you, whose highest and most ambitious earthly wish was to have been appointed curé to a little village flock, because, as you justly observed, you know so well how much good a man so placed might do.”

“My desire is still the same,” replied Gabriel, sorrowfully; “but, unhappily——.” Then, as though seeking to escape from painful thoughts, and desirous of changing the conversation, he said to Dagobert, “Let me beseech you to do yourself more justice than to depreciate your own courage by exalting that of another. Your courage must be great—very great; for to look on a field of battle after the conflict is over, and to behold the carnage and slaughter of one’s brethren, must be a trying sight for a generous heart like yours, my father. Heaven be praised! if we fall by man’s hand, at least we slay not!”

As the missionary uttered these words, the soldier suddenly sprang up, and gazed at him with surprise.

“This is most singular!” exclaimed he.

“What is singular, my father?”

"Why, it struck me deeply to hear Gabriel make that last remark : it was so precisely what I used to feel after an action—I mean as I got older."

Then, after a short silence, Dagobert added, in a grave and sorrowful tone, by no means habitual to him,

"Yes, what Gabriel has just remarked exactly expresses my thoughts, during active service, as old age crept on. Ah, my children ! many a time, when I have been on duty at the outposts, at the end of a hard day's fight—alone—all still, where such deep tumult had prevailed—and the moon shining full on the field, of which we were left masters, but which was now strewed with the bleeding corpses of some eight or nine thousand men—some of them old friends and comrades through many a toilsome campaign—then such a sight ! and one's own reflections would strip off all the intoxicating enjoyment of killing or being killed (for it is a sort of intoxication while its influence is upon one) ; and I used to say to myself, 'Here is a field, covered with fellow-creatures, in the morning strong and rejoicing in their strength—now cold, stiff, and insensible to all that we strive, and quarrel, and contend for ! Why have so many fellow-creatures thus been cut down ?—why left thus, like mere burthens to the blood-stained grass they lie on ?—why, oh why !' But these reflections did not hinder me from setting-to again just the same when the morning charge sounded ; and there I was again, cutting and slashing as fiercely as ever ! But when, with weary arm, I wiped my bloody sword upon my horse's mane, at the conclusion of the action, I still found myself repeating, 'Why, why has my hand taken the lives of so many fellow-creatures who never offended me ?' "

The missionary and the smith regarded each other with looks of astonishment, as they heard the old man give utterance to this singular retrospect of his past life.

"Alas !" replied Gabriel, "'t will be ever thus with generous hearts at the solemn time and place you have been describing ! Then the false enthusiasm of glory disappears, and man is left alone with the noble instincts his Creator infused into his soul when He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

"Which proves most clearly, my dear child, that your nature is superior to mine ; for these noble instincts, as you call them, have never abandoned you. But how did you manage to escape from the claws of the enraged barbarians, after they had crucified you ?"

At this inquiry from Dagobert, Gabriel started ; and so visible an embarrassment came over him, that the soldier continued,

"Nay, my boy, if my question be one you either cannot or ought not to answer, forget that it was ever spoken."

"I have nothing to conceal, either from you or my brother," replied the missionary, in an agitated tone : "I only hesitated from the fear of being unable to make that intelligible to you which, in fact, I have not been able to understand myself."

"What do you mean ?" inquired Agricola, with astonishment.

"Doubtless," answered Gabriel, colouring deeply, "it must have been some delusion of my senses. During the awful moments in which I waited death (I trust, with resignation), my mind, exhausted and weakened, must have been the dupe of some appearance, which, though

unaccounted for up to the present instant, will one day explain itself from natural causes. Had I any tangible clue to assist me, I should have endeavoured to discover who this female was."

Dagobert, who listened most attentively to the missionary, was completely amazed; for he also had vainly sought how to account for the unexpected succour which had enabled him and the orphans to escape from the prison at Leipsie.

"Of what woman do you speak?" asked the smith of the missionary.

"Of her who saved me."

"Was it a woman who saved you from the hands of the savages?" inquired Dagobert.

"Yes," replied Gabriel, deeply buried in his recollections—"a woman, young and handsome."

"And who was she?" asked Agricola.

"I do not know. When I asked her, she answered, '*I am the sister of the afflicted!*'"

"Whence did she come? where was she going to?" said Dagobert, singularly interested.

"'*I am going where they suffer!*'" was her reply," answered the missionary; "and she went on her way towards the north of America, those desolate regions where there is eternal snow and endless night."

"Like Siberia," said Dagobert, pensively.

"But," resumed Agricola, addressing Gabriel, who seemed to become more and more thoughtful, "in what way did this woman come to your succour?"

The missionary was about to reply, when a blow, cautiously struck on the door of the chamber, renewed the alarm which Agricola had forgotten since the arrival of his adopted brother.

"Agricola," said a gentle voice outside the door, "I wish to speak to you for an instant."

The smith recognised the voice of La Mayeux, and opened the door. The young girl, instead of entering, retired into the dark passage, and said in a disturbed voice:

"Oh, Agricola! it has been broad daylight for the last hour, and you are still here—what imprudence! I have been watching below in the street, and up to this time have seen nothing which has given me any cause of alarm: but they may come and apprehend you at any moment, and I entreat you to make haste and go to Mademoiselle de Cardoville; you have not a moment to lose."

"If Gabriel had not come I should have gone; but how could I resist the happiness of staying a few minutes with him?"

"Gabriel here!" said La Mayeux, with agreeable surprise, for we have already said that she had been brought up with him and Agricola.

"Yes," replied Agricola; "for the last half-hour he has been here with me and my father."

"How delighted I shall be to see him again!" said La Mayeux. "He must have come in whilst I went to your mother for a moment, to ask if I could be of any use to her in getting anything for the young ladies; but they were so tired that they are still asleep. Madame Françoise begged me to give you this letter for your father, which she has just received."

"Thanks, good Mayeux."

"Now you have seen Gabriel, do not delay any longer: only think what your father would suffer if you were arrested in his presence."

"You are right, and I must go. I had forgotten all my alarms with him and Gabriel."

"Go as quickly as you can, and perhaps in a couple of hours, if Mademoiselle de Cardoville does you this great service, you may be able to return quite safely for yourself and friends."

"True, and in a minute or two I will go."

"I will return and watch at the door; if I see anything I will come up stairs as quickly as possible to tell you. But pray do not delay."

"Make yourself easy."

La Mayeux descended the staircase rapidly to go and watch at the street door, and Agricola went back to the attic.

"Father," said he to Dagobert, "here is a letter which my mother has just received and begs you to read."

"Well, read it for me my boy." Agricola read as follows:

"Madame,—I learn that your husband is entrusted by M. General Simon with an affair of great importance. Will you be so kind, as soon as your husband arrives in Paris, as to beg him to come to my office at Chartres without the least delay. I am desired to hand to *himself, and no one else*, some papers indispensably necessary to the interest of M. General Simon.

"DURAND, Notary at Chartres."

Dagobert looked at his son with an air of astonishment, and said to him,

"Who could have told this gentleman that I was expected in Paris?"

"Perhaps the notary whose address you have lost, and to whom you sent the papers, father," said Agricola.

"But his name was not Durand, and I well remember he was a notary at Paris and not at Chartres. But then," added the soldier, after a moment's reflection, "if he has papers of great importance which he must only hand to me——"

"Why you cannot, I think, do otherwise than go as soon as possible," said Agricola, almost rejoiced at a circumstance which would take his father away for nearly two days, during which his (Agricola's) fate would be decided one way or the other.

"Your advice is good," said Dagobert to him.

"Does it come across your plans?" inquired Gabriel.

"A little, my dear boy, for I relied on passing the day with you; but duty first, pleasure afterwards. I have come safely from Siberia to Paris, so I need not have much fear in going from Paris to Chartres when it concerns a matter so important. In twice twenty-four hours I shall be back again. However, it is very singular; devil fetch me if I thought of leaving you to-day to go to Chartres! Fortunately I leave Rose and Blanche with my good wife, and their angel Gabriel, as they call him, will come and keep them company."

"Unfortunately that will be impossible," said the missionary in a sad tone; "this visit on my return to my good mother and Agricola, is also a visit of farewell."

“What! of farewell?” said Dagobert and Agricola at the same time.

“Alas, yes!”

“Going again on another mission?” said Dagobert. “That is impossible!”

“I cannot answer you on that point,” said Gabriel, stifling a sigh; “but for some time to come I cannot, ought not to visit this house.”

“My dear fellow,” replied the old soldier with emotion, “there is in your manner something that bespeaks constraint, oppression. I know men, and he whom you call your superior, and whom I saw for a few moments after the shipwreck at the Château de Cardoville, has a bad countenance; and oh! I am sorry to see you enlisted under the banner of such a captain.”

“At the Château de Cardoville!” said the smith, struck with the resemblance of the name; “was it at the Château de Cardoville that you were received after your shipwreck?”

“Yes, my boy—does that surprise you?”

“Not at all, father! And do the owners of the château reside there?”

“No; for the steward, whom I asked, that I might thank them for the kind hospitality which we had received, told me that the person to whom it belonged lived in Paris.”

“What a singular coincidence,” said Agricola to himself, “if this young lady should be the owner of the château which bears her name!”

This reflection reminding him of his promise to La Mayeux, he said to Dagobert,

“Father, excuse me, but it is getting late, and I must be at the workshop at eight o’clock.”

“Well, then, my son, pray go. Our party is delayed till my return from Chartres. Embrace me once more, and then be off as quick as you can.”

From the moment when Dagobert had spoken to Gabriel of “constraint and oppression,” he had remained lost in thought; and at the moment when Agricola came to him to shake his hand, and say adieu, the missionary said to him, in a grave, solemn tone, and an air of resolution, which surprised the smith and the soldier,

“My good brother, one other word: I came also to say that some days hence I shall have need of you; and you, also, my father, if I may call you so,” added Gabriel, in an affectionate voice, turning towards Dagobert.

“What do you mean? what is it then?” exclaimed the smith.

“Yes,” replied Gabriel, “I shall have need of the counsel and the aid of two men of honour, two men of resolution; I may rely on you two, may I not? At any hour, at any day, at any time, on a word from me, you will come?”

Dagobert and his son looked at Gabriel in silence, so greatly had his accent surprised them. Agricola felt his heart throb—if he were a prisoner at the moment when his brother required him, what could he do?

“At any and every hour of the day and night, my dear fellow,

you may rely on us," said Dagobert, as much surprised as interested. "You have a father and a brother—make use of them!"

"Thanks, thanks," said Gabriel; "you make me very happy."

"Do you know one thing?" added the soldier: "if it were not for the robe you wear, I should think there was a duel in the wind, by the way you ask us."

"A duel!" said the missionary, starting. "Yes! there may be, perhaps, a strange, a terrible duel, at which I shall require two such seconds such as you—a FATHER and a BROTHER."

* * * *

A few moments afterwards, Agricola, who had by this time become very uneasy, went hastily to the abode of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, whither we will also conduct the reader.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE HÔTEL DE SAINT-DIZIER.—THE PAVILION.

THE hôtel de Saint-Dizier was one of the most extensive and elegant mansions in the Rue de Babylone, at Paris.

Nothing could be more formal, more striking, and more dull, than the sight of this ancient abode. Immense window-frames, with small panes of glass, and painted a greyish white, made the large blocks of hewn stone of which it was built, blackened as they were by the sun, more sombre still.

This abode was similar to all those built in the same quarter, about the middle of the last century. It was a large full-fronted building, with a triangular pediment and a sloping roof raised from a first floor, and a ground floor, by which you ascended by a flight of steps. One of the façades faced a large court-yard, bounded on each side by arcades communicating with extensive outbuildings; another façade looked upon the garden, which was actually a park of twelve or fifteen acres, and on this side two semicircular wings, one on each side of the main centre, formed two galleries.

As in nearly all the large houses in this quarter, so was there here, at the extremity of the garden, what they called the *little hôtel*, or small house.

It was a *pavillon à la Pompadour*, circular, and in the charming bad taste of the period, presenting in every part, where the stone had been prodigally employed, an immense quantity of leaves, love-knots, wreaths of flowers, flying Cupids, &c. &c. This pavilion, in which Adrienne de Cardoville lived, consisted of a ground floor, to which access was given by a peristyle, elevated by several steps; a small vestibule leading to a circular *salon*, lighted from above. Four other apartments led from this; and several rooms above, which were concealed in the higher story, were reached by a private staircase.



GEORGETTE AND LUTINE.

These out-buildings to large mansions are in our days unoccupied, or converted into orangeries; but, by a rare exception, the pavilion of the hôtel de Saint-Dizier had been cleared and restored, and its white stone shone like Paros marble, and its lively and renewed appearance contrasted strangely with the dull and sombre building, which was seen from the extremity of a large band of sward, planted in various patches, with clumps of gigantic tress.

The following scene passed here the morning after that on which Dagobert had arrived at the Rue Brise-Miche with General Simon's daughters.

The clock of the neighbouring church struck eight, and the bright early sun of winter shone brilliantly in the pure blue sky behind the large and full-leaved trees, which formed a dome of verdure above the little pavilion of Louis XV.

The door of the vestibule opened, and the sun's rays fell on a charming creature, or rather two charming creatures, for one of them, although occupying a lower step in the ladder of creation, was not the less remarkable for her extreme beauty.

In other words, a young girl and a splendid little dog of King Charles's breed appeared under the peristyle of the little hôtel.

The girl's name was Georgette, that of the little dog Lutine. Georgette was eighteen years of age, and never did Florine or Marton, never did a *soubrette* of Marivaux, present a more arch countenance, an eye more sparkling, a smile more attractive, teeth more white, cheeks more rosy, a form more slender, foot better formed, or figure more attractive.

Although it was very early, Georgette was dressed with care and nicety. A small cap of Valenciennes lace, with side-pieces coming over the ears, something after the fashion of the peasant girls, trimmed with pink ribands, and placed coquettishly at the back of her head, displayed beautiful bandeaux of light chestnut hair, which encircled her fresh and pretty face. A gown of grey levantine, with a small lawn handkerchief fastened round her waist by a large bow of pink satin, set off to advantage her round but thin waist; whilst an apron of snow-white holland, trimmed round the bottom with three large hems, between which was open work, added another attraction to her graceful shape. Her sleeves, short and broad, were edged with a quilting of lace, displaying to advantage her plump, firm, and white arms; which her long gloves of *peau de Suède* that reached to her elbows, defended from the severity of the weather. When Georgette lifted up her gown to descend the steps more quickly, she displayed to the regardless eyes of nature the lower part of a well-formed leg in a white silk-stocking, and a beautiful little foot in a slipper of black satin *turc*.

When a *blonde*, like Georgette, has also a *piquant* expression; when her blue eyes sparkle with gaiety and innocence; when a joyous liveliness brightens her transparent skin, she has yet more *freshness*, more attraction, than a *brunette*.

This complaisant and pleasant-mannered *soubrette*, who had on the previous evening introduced Agricola into the pavilion, was first *femme de chambre* of Mademoiselle Adrienne de Cardoville, niece of Madame the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

Lutine, so luckily found by the smith, barked joyfully, and bounded, ran, and sported on the turf. She was little larger than a good sized fist; her glossy hide, of bright black, shone like polished ebony, under the large red satin riband which was round her neck; her feet, with longer silky fringe, were of a deep red, as was her muzzle, which was singularly flat; her large eyes shone with intelligence, whilst her feathered ears were so long that they touched the ground.

Georgette seemed as active and as full of mirth as Lutine, whose sport she encouraged, by running after her and then from her on the greensward.

At the sight of a second person, who advanced sedately towards them, Lutine and Georgette stopped suddenly in the midst of their mirth. The little *King Charles*, who was in advance a few steps, as bold as a lion and faithful to his name, stood firmly on her strong little paws and boldly awaited the enemy, shewing two rows of small sharp teeth, white as ivory.

The *enemy* consisted of a woman of mature years, accompanied by a fat dog of the pug breed, of a sandy colour, and his tail curling like a corkscrew, and with a large paunch, bright skin, and his neck rather on one side; he walked with his legs very wide apart, with an air of great seriousness and importance. His black muzzle, his morose and suspicious look, and two tusks sticking out on each side of his mouth, which kept his lips from closing, gave to the animal an expression of singular repugnance and crabbedness. This disagreeable brute, the perfect type of what might be called a "*devotee's dog*," answered to the name of *Monsieur*.

Monsieur's mistress was a female about fifty years of age, of middling height, and stout, attired in a dress as demure and sombre as that of Georgette's was becoming and gay. It consisted of a brown gown, of a *mantelet* of black silk, and a bonnet of the same colour; her features must have been agreeable in her youth, and her full-coloured cheeks, marked eyebrows, and coal-black eyes full of fire, were little in unison with the formal and austere look which she endeavoured to assume.

This demure matron, with the slow and measured step, was Madame Augustine Grivois, first *femme* of Madame the Princesse de Saint-Dizier.

Not only did the ages, countenances, and dress, of these two females offer so complete a contrast, but the difference extended equally to the animals that accompanied them. There was as much variety between Lutine and Monsieur as between Georgette and Madame Grivois. When the latter saw the little *King Charles*, she could not restrain a movement of surprise and annoyance, which was not lost on Georgette.

Lutine, who had not retreated an inch since Monsieur had appeared, looked at him courageously and with an air of defiance, and then advanced towards him with an air so decidedly hostile that the pug, though three times as big as the small *King Charles's* breed, uttered a cry of distress, and then took hasty refuge behind Madame Grivois, who said to Georgette, in a sharp voice,

"It seems to me, ma'amselle, that you need not set your dog on to fight with mine."

“No doubt it was to shelter your respectable and ugly animal from these rencounters that you yesterday endeavoured to lose Lutine, by driving her into the street by the little garden-gate. Fortunately, however, a worthy and honest young man found Lutine in the Rue de Babylone, and brought her back to my mistress. But may I inquire, madame, how it is that I have the pleasure of seeing you out so early this morning?”

“I am desired by the princess,” replied Madame Grivois, unable to conceal a smile of triumphant satisfaction, “to see Mademoiselle Adrienne this very moment, as I have a most important matter to communicate to her.”

At these words Georgette turned exceedingly red, and could not repress a slight appearance of uneasiness, which, however, fortunately escaped Madame Grivois, who was watching over Monsieur’s safety, to whom Lutine was drawing nigher, with a very threatening aspect. Georgette, having subdued this momentary emotion, replied boldly,

“Mademoiselle went to bed very late, and desired that I would not disturb her before noon.”

“That may be so; but, as I am only obeying the orders of the princess, her aunt, I must trouble you, if you please, ma’amselle, to wake your lady this instant.”

“My lady takes orders from no one; she is here in her own house, and therefore I shall not wake her until twelve o’clock, according to her orders.”

“Then I will go myself.”

“Florine and Hebe will not open the door to you. I have the key of the *salon*, and it is only through the *salon* that you can obtain access to mademoiselle.”

“What! will you dare to refuse to allow me to execute the princess’s orders?”

“Yes, I dare commit the heinous crime of not allowing my lady to be aroused.”

“Yes, truly, this is one of the results of the blind goodness of the princess to her niece!” said the matron, with an air of regret. “Mademoiselle Adrienne no longer respects her aunt’s commands, but surrounds herself with young wantons, who, from the moment they rise, are dressed up like ornamented shrines.”

“Ah, madame! how can you find fault with costume, you who formerly were so remarkable for your style—the most coquettish of all the princess’s ladies? And that system goes on from generation to generation until the present day.”

“What do you mean by ‘from generation to generation?’ Would you imply that I have lived for a century? You become impertinent, ma’amselle.”

“I was alluding to the generation of *femmes de chambre*: for, except yourself, no one stays more than two or three years with the princess—she has too many odd ways for the poor girls——”

“I beg, ma’amselle, that you will not speak thus of the princess. Her name ought only to be mentioned on bended knees.”

“Yet, if one would say a little bit of scandal——”

“Dare you?”

“Not later than last evening, at half-past eleven o’clock——”

"Last evening!"

"A hackney-coach stopped a few yards from our hôtel, a mysterious personage, wrapped in a mantle, alighted, and tapped very carefully, not at the door, but on the glass of the porter's window; at one o'clock this morning the hackney-coach was still there in the street, awaiting the mysterious personage in the cloak, who, during this time, was no doubt pronouncing the name of the princess on his bended knees."

Whether Madame Grivois was really not aware of the visit made to Madame Saint-Dizier by Rodin (for it was he) on the previous night, after he had learnt the arrival of General Simon's daughters in Paris; or whether concealment of the fact was her policy, she replied, with a disdainful shrug of the shoulders,

"I really do not know what you mean, ma'amselle; and I did not come here to listen to your impertinences. But again I ask, will you, or will you not, conduct me to Mademoiselle Adrienne?"

"I repeat that my lady is asleep, and has given me orders not to disturb her before noon."

This conversation had taken place at some distance from the pavilion, the peristyle of which was visible at the end of a long avenue which ended in a quincunx.

Suddenly Madame Grivois exclaimed, stretching out her hands in that direction,

"Ah! is it possible? What have I seen?"

"Well, what did you see?" said Georgette, turning towards her.

"What have I seen?" repeated Madame Grivois, in amazement.

"Yes, what?"

"Mademoiselle Adrienne!"

"And where?"

"Why, going very rapidly up the steps. I knew her directly by her figure, her bonnet, her cloak—— Come in at eight o'clock in the morning!" exclaimed Madame Grivois. "I can scarcely credit my eyesight."

"Mademoiselle? You saw mademoiselle?" and Georgette began to laugh violently. "Ah, I understand; you want to find your revenge for my true story about the hackney-coach of last night. Well, that's clever of you, any how!"

"I repeat, that at this very moment I saw her."

"Come, come, Madame Grivois, if you speak seriously, you must have lost your senses——"

"Ah! lost my senses, eh? because my eyesight is too good. The little door which opens from the street leads into the quincunx near the pavilion, and no doubt it is by that that mademoiselle has entered. Oh! how it will affect the princess when I tell her! But her presentiments did not deceive her. Only see to what an extent her weakness for the caprices of her niece have led her! It is monstrous! really monstrous! and although I saw it with my eyes, I can hardly credit it."

"If that is the case, madame, I will now conduct you to my lady, that you may be assured that you have been deceived by your vision."

"Oh, you are very cunning, my dear; but not too deep for me,

You offer to let me in now—of course you will, because now you know that I shall find Mademoiselle Adrienne within.”

“But, madame, I assure you——”

“All I can say, ma'amselle, is, that neither you, nor Florine, nor Hebe, shall remain here twenty-four hours longer: the princess must put a stop to such scandalous behaviour, and I will go this moment and tell her all about it. Go out at night!—return at eight o'clock in the morning! I am really quite upset at the very idea; and if I had not seen it with my own eyes I could not have believed it. After all, this might have been expected to happen, and no one need to be astonished. I am sure that every body to whom I may relate this horrid story will say, ‘Oh, I'm not surprised at all! Oh! what pain this will give the worthy princess!—what a blow it will be for her!’” And Madame Grivois returned with great haste to the hôtel, followed by Monsieur, who appeared as indignant as his mistress.

Georgette ran lightly and nimbly towards the pavilion, in order to warn Mademoiselle Adrienne de Cardoville that Madame Grivois had seen her, or thought she had seen her, enter secretly by the little garden-gate.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ADRIENNE'S TOILET.

ABOUT an hour had passed since Madame Grivois had seen, or thought she saw, Mademoiselle Adrienne de Cardoville enter the pavilion of the Château de Saint-Dizier at so early an hour.

To explain and not apologise for the eccentricity of the following descriptions, we must throw some light on the peculiar characteristics which marked the disposition of Mademoiselle de Cardoville.

This originality consisted in an extreme independence of spirit, joined to an innate aversion from every thing that was ugly or repulsive, and a surpassing desire to surround herself with all that was beautiful and attractive.

The painter the most devoted to colouring, the statuary the most devoted to contour, do not feel more deeply than Adrienne the enthusiasm which the sight of perfect beauty always inspires in fine minds.

And it was not only the pleasures of the sight, that this young lady delighted to gratify; the harmonious modulations of singing, the melody of instruments, the cadence of poetry, gave her extreme pleasure; whilst a harsh voice, a discordant noise, made her experience the same painful and almost grievous impression which she involuntarily experienced at the sight of a hideous spectacle. Loving flowers and perfumes even to passion, she enjoyed sweet odours as she did sweet music, as she did the sublime and beautiful. Must we also confess an enormity? Then Adrienne was dainty, and appreciated most fully the pulpy freshness of fine fruit, the delicate flavour of a pheasant cooked to a turn, and the delicious *bouquet* of generous wine.

But Adrienne enjoyed all this with exquisite reserve, and it was a part of her faith to cultivate, with the utmost refinement, the senses with which the Creator had endowed her; and she would have considered it the height of ingratitude to have carried these tastes to excess, or to have debased them by unworthy application of their enjoyment, from which abuse she was also preserved by the strict and perfect delicacy of her taste.

The HANDSOME and UGLY with her were but other words for the GOOD and ILL.

Her worship of grace, elegance, and physical beauty had led her to the worship of moral beauty; for if the expression of a base and low passion makes the loveliest countenance ugly, so the plainest faces are ennobled by the expression of generous feelings. In a word, Adrienne was the most complete personification, the *beau idéal*, of SENSUALITY; not that common sensuality so uninformed, unintelligent, ill-directed, and always false, corrupted by habit or the necessity of indulging in gross delights, in which refinement is utterly lost sight of, but of that exquisite sensuality which is to the senses what poignancy is to wit.

The independence of this young lady's mind was excessive; and certain humiliations imposed on her sex by her social position had revolted her past description, and she had boldly resolved to cast off the oppression of their yoke.

Let us say distinctly, there was nothing masculine in Adrienne's character; she was a woman the most *feminine* that can be imagined; a woman in her graces, her whims, her charms, her dazzling and *womanly* beauty; a woman in her timidity as by her audacity; a woman in her hate of the brutal despotism of men as well as by the disinclination to link herself blindly, utterly, to some one who should deserve such devotion; a woman too, in her sparkling and somewhat paradoxical spirit; a superior woman, in fact, because of her contempt, so just and full of mockery, for certain men greatly elevated in society or grossly flattered, whom she had met in the *salons* of her aunt, the Princesse de Saint-Dizier, when she lived with her.

These necessary explanations given, we will introduce the reader to Adrienne de Cardoville, who had just left her bath.

We lack the brilliant colours of the Venetian school to display this charming scene, which seemed to belong rather to the sixteenth century, in some palaces of Bologna or Florence, than to Paris, at the bottom of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, in the month of February, 1832.

The dressing-closet of Adrienne was a sort of small temple, which might have been erected to the worship of Beauty, through gratitude for having bestowed so many charms on the softer sex, not that they should neglect them, not that they should cover them with ashes, not that they should be debased by contact with coarse and sordid sackcloth,—but for the expression of gratitude for being enriched with all the attractions of grace, and all the splendour of decoration, that the handiwork of the Divinity may be admired by all.

The light was admitted into this semi-circular apartment by a double window, which made the apartment air-tight, and for whose origin we are indebted to Germany. The walls of the pavilion, formed of large square blocks of stone, made the embrasure of the window



ADRIENNE'S TOILET-CHAMBER.

very deep, and it shut from without by a frame made of a single pane of glass, and within, of a square of ground glass; and in the space of nearly three feet between these two windows was a box filled with peat earth, in which were planted climbing plants, which, wandering about the ground glass, formed a thick garland of leaves and blossoms.

Hangings of granite-coloured damask, shaded with arabesques of a lighter hue, covered the walls; whilst a thick carpet, of the same tint, was spread over the floor. This sombre ground, almost a neutral tint, set off the other decorations admirably.

Under the window, which looked to the South, was Adrienne's toilet-table, which was a masterpiece of elaborate goldsmith's work.

On a large slab of lapis lazuli were seen numerous vases of brilliant red, the tops of which were splendidly enamelled; smelling-bottles of rock crystal, and other toilet requisites, in mother-o'-pearl, tortoise-shell, and ivory, encrusted with ornaments in gold of the most exquisite workmanship; two large silver figures, modelled with classic purity, supported a large oval swing-glass, which, instead of being enclosed in a formal carved and twisted frame, was bordered with a wreath of natural flowers, daily renewed and arranged with all the care and taste of a bouquet for a ball.

Two enormous blue china vases, beautifully covered with a rich purple and gold design, and standing at least three feet high, were placed at each side of the toilet-table, full of camelias, hibiscus, and gardenias, in full bloom, forming a mass of the most delicious odours as well as colouring.

At the end of the chamber opposite the window, and also surrounded with another clustering assemblage of the rarest flowers, was a small marble model of the enchanting group of Daphnis and Chloe, the most chaste and exquisite personation of graceful modesty and youthful beauty; while two golden lamps, burning and diffusing the richest odours, were placed on the slab of malachite which supported this charming group.

A large coffer of frosted silver, standing upon claws of gilt bronze, with raised ornaments of gold and vermeil, and glittering with precious stones of every colour, served to contain the different articles required for the toilet; two Psyche glasses, furnished with girandoles, some first-rate copies of Raphael and Titian, painted by Adrienne herself, representing only persons of exquisite beauty; consoles of Oriental jasper, supporting ewers of silver and vermeil, covered with an alto-relievo of the rarest kind, and containing the most delicate essences and scented waters; a divan of downy softness, some chairs, and a table of gilded wood, completed the fittings-up of an apartment redolent of the choicest sweets.

Adrienne, who had just taken her bath, was sitting before her toilet, surrounded by her three attendants.

From whim, or perhaps from that predominant love of beauty and harmony in all things which formed so striking a part of her character, Adrienne insisted that the young girls by whom she was waited upon should possess a natural loveliness, further increased by the most tasteful and becoming costume.

Georgette, in her bewitching attire as the *soubrette* of Marivaux,

has been already described, and it is sufficient to say that her two companions were every way equal to her in graceful prettiness.

One of them, named Florine, was a tall, elegant girl, whose whole contour reminded the spectator of the hunting Diana. She was a clear, pale brunette, with thick, rich, glossy hair, black as the raven's wing, twisted in a thick coil around her head, and fastened at the back by a golden bodkin; like the other attendants she wore her arms uncovered, for the greater facility of employing them at the toilet of her mistress. She was dressed in a robe of that peculiar green so frequently met with in Venetian paintings, the skirt of her robe was ample, and the tightly fitting corsage, cut squarely over the bosom, displayed a snowy cambric tucker finely plaited, and clasped down the front with some golden buttons.

The third of Adrienne's serving-maids had so sweet, so open, and so blooming a countenance, a shape so perfect, yet so delicate, that her mistress had bestowed on her the appellation of *Hebe*: her dress of pale pink was so fashioned as to reveal her fair round throat and arms naked to the shoulder.

The physiognomies of these three young persons were smiling and happy, their features exhibited none of that sour suspicion, begrudging obedience, offensive familiarity, or mean abject deference, so commonly resulting from a state of servitude.

In the attention and assiduity which they lavished upon Adrienne, they appeared actuated as much by affection and choice as by respect, and seemed to delight in bestowing a fresh lustre upon the brilliant beauty of their young mistress; in their zeal and anxiety to adorn and embellish her they worked with all the pleasure an artist would give to some "*œuvre d'art*," and evinced as much joy as pride and fondness in the success of their labours.

The sun shone brightly on the toilet-table placed opposite the window. Adrienne was seated in a low chair with a high back; she was dressed only in a wrapping-gown of pale blue silk, figured over with a device of the same colour; a silk cord and tassels confined it round her waist, graceful and slender as that of a child of twelve years old; her beautiful and birdlike throat was uncovered, as were her hands and arms of incomparable beauty. Spite of the common-place comparison, we can liken the dazzling whiteness of this smooth, polished skin, to nothing but the finest ivory; and so firm, so healthy was its texture, that a few drops of water, which had remained among the roots of her hair on quitting the bath, trickled down her shoulders like pearls rolling over white marble.

What heightened still more the vivid carnation peculiar to persons so fair, was the deep red of her dewy lips, the transparent pink of her little ear, her expanded nostrils, and her exquisitely shaped and glossy nails; wherever, in fact, the pure life-blood could rise to the surface, it betokened health, strength, and youth.

The eyes of Adrienne were large and black, sometimes sparkling with playful malice, at others, languishing and half-bid beneath their long curled fringes, as dark as the finely arched brows which surmounted them; for, by a charming freak of nature, her eyelashes and eyebrows were jet black, while her hair was strongly tinged with red.



THE TOILET OF ADRIENNE.

Her forehead, small as those of Grecian statues, completed the perfect oval of her face; her delicately shaped nose was slightly aquiline; her teeth were of dazzling whiteness; while her ripe, rosy mouth, seemed formed but for pleasure, smiles, and happiness.

It was impossible to imagine a more easy, yet dignified, manner of carrying the head; and this graceful, yet queenlike air, was materially owing to the immense distance from her ear and throat to the tip of her dimpled shoulders.

We have already spoken of the hair of Adrienne as being of a reddish hue, but it was that peculiar colour which several of the most admirable female portraits painted by Titian, or Leonardi da Vinci, possess. Nothing could be more bright, more glossy, than those masses of golden coloured hair, waving in natural beauty as though liquid gold were circulating in fine silky thread; and so long was this luxuriant ornament, that when standing it nearly touched the ground, or its fair owner could almost enfold herself in it like the Venus rising from the sea.

At this instant the aspect was doubly charming, for Georgette, standing behind her mistress, had just collected the thick mass, almost too much for her tiny hand to grasp, while the bright sun shone with reflected splendour on the rich tresses and redoubled their lustre.

As the fair waiting-maid plunged the ivory comb in the midst of the enormous silken tresses, it almost seemed as though bright sparks issued forth, while the morning's light and sun, as they played among the thick long ringlets which parted off the forehead, fell down the fair cheeks of Adrienne, glittered and flickered over the golden threads, and playfully wanted with the quantity of curls which hung over the snowy bosom of the bewitching person we are describing.

While Georgette, standing behind her mistress, thus braided and arranged her beautiful hair, Hebe, kneeling on one knee, and having on the other the small foot of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, was occupied in placing on it a fairy-like slipper of black satin, and sandalling it over a thin open-worked silk stocking, which permitted the delicate pinky whiteness of the skin to be visible, and displayed an ankle of most exquisite delicacy and proportions. Florine, standing at a trifling distance, presented to her mistress a vermeil box, containing a paste of most fragrant perfumes, with which Adrienne lightly touched her dazzlingly white hands and taper fingers, the extremity of which appeared tinged with carmine.

We must not forget Lutine, who, reposing on the lap of her mistress, opened her large eyes as wide as possible, and seemed to follow the different phases of Adrienne's toilet with profound attention.

A silver bell having sounded without, Florine, at a sign from her mistress, went out, and soon returned with a letter on a small silver waiter.

Whilst her attendant completed her toilet, Adrienne opened the letter, which was from the land-steward of Cardoville, and as follows:—

“Mademoiselle,—Knowing your goodness of heart and generosity, I take leave to address myself to you with confidence. For twenty years I served the late Count-Duke of Cardoville, your father, with zeal and probity: I think I may say so much. The château is sold, so that my

wife and myself are on the eve of being turned away, and shall be without any resource; which, at our age, mademoiselle, is very hard——'

"Poor creatures!" said Adrienne, breaking off; "my father did always say how devoted and honest they were."

She continued:

"We have one means left of keeping our place; but that is dependent on a degree of baseness which we could never submit to—my wife and I would rather starve first——'

"Capital! excellent!—always the same!" said Adrienne; "dignity in poverty is the perfume of the wild flower."

"To explain, mademoiselle, the unworthy task which is required of us, I ought first to tell you that, two days ago, M. Rodin arrived from Paris——'

"Ah! M. Rodin!" said Mademoiselle de Cardoville, again interrupting herself; "the secretary of the Abbé d'Aigrigny! I am not now astonished at any baseness or dark intrigue. Well, to go on:"

"M. Rodin came from Paris to tell us that the estate was sold, and that we might still retain our situations, if we would assist him in making the new proprietress take for her confessor a certain noted priest; and, the better to effect this, we must agree to calumniate another curate, a most excellent man, much respected and beloved in the district. This was not all: I was to write secretly, twice a-week, all that occurred in the château. I must own, mademoiselle, that these disgraceful propositions were disguised as much as possible, and concealed under very specious pretexts; but, in spite of the form in which they were more or less skilfully put, the real meaning was just as I have the honour to inform you, mademoiselle——'

"Corruption, calumny, and treachery!" said Adrienne, in an accent of deep disgust. "I cannot think of these individuals without awaking involuntarily in my mind thoughts of darkness, venom, and black atrocious reptiles — they are, indeed, hideous in their aspect. I prefer to think of the mild and benignant faces of poor Dupont and his wife."

Adrienne continued:

"Do not suppose, mademoiselle, that we hesitated for one moment. We may quit Cardoville, where we have resided for twenty years, but we will leave it with honour. Now, mademoiselle, if, amongst your influential acquaintances, you, who are so good, could procure us a situation by your recommendation, we might perhaps, mademoiselle, be relieved from our cruel embarrassment——'

"Certainly, they shall not address me in vain. To snatch the good people from M. Rodin's claws is a duty and a pleasure, and is both just and dangerous; but I like to brave those who are powerful and oppressive."

Adrienne continued:

"After having spoken to you of ourselves, mademoiselle, allow us to implore your protection for others, for it would be wrong to think of ourselves only. Two vessels have been wrecked on our coast three days ago; a few passengers only were saved, and brought here, where my wife and myself have given them every thing that their immediate necessities have demanded. Some of them have gone on to

Paris; but one still remains here. His injuries have prevented him, up to the present time, from leaving the château, and will detain him here yet some days longer. He is a young Indian prince, about twenty years of age, and he appears to be as amiable as he is handsome, which is not saying a little, although he has the dark complexion which all his countrymen have also——

“An Indian prince! Twenty years of age! Young, good, and handsome!” exclaimed Adrienne, gaily. “That is charming, and decidedly out of the common way: this shipwrecked prince has my utmost sympathy. But what can I do for this Adonis from the banks of the Ganges, who has been thrown on the coast of Picardy?”

Adrienne's three women looked at her with but little surprise, accustomed as they were to the singularities of her character. Georgette and Hebe smiled discreetly; Florine, the tall, handsome, pale brunette, smiled also, but a moment after, and it would seem, upon reflection, as if she had been first and particularly employed in attending to and recollecting every word that fell from her mistress, who being deeply interested in her Adonis from the banks of the Ganges, as she termed him, continued the perusal of the steward's letter:

“One of the Indian prince's countrymen, who stayed with him to take care of him, has given me to understand that the young prince lost every thing he possessed in the world, and was actually at a loss for the means to reach Paris, where his immediate presence was requisite on very important matters. It is not from the prince himself that I had these details—he appears too reserved and proud to make any complaint—but his fellow-countryman, more communicative, told me all this, adding, that the young prince had already undergone great troubles, and that his father, the king of a territory in India, had been recently killed and dispossessed by the English——”

“That is very strange,” said Adrienne, reflecting. “These particulars remind me that my father often talked to me of a relation of ours who married an Indian, a king of that country, with whom General Simon, who has been made marshal, took service.” Then interrupting herself she added, with a smile, “Oh! how strange it would be!—it is only to me that such strange things happen, and they call me an original: it is not I, as I think, but in reality Providence, who sometimes produces such strange things. But let me see if poor Dupont has given me the name of this handsome prince.”

“I am sure, mademoiselle, that you will excuse us; but we should have felt that we were very selfish in mentioning our own troubles only, when we have with us a brave and worthy young prince so much to be pitied. Pray, mademoiselle, believe me, for I am old, and have had great experience of mankind, and I assure you, that you have only to see the nobility and sweet countenance of this young Indian, and I assure you that you would at once feel the interest which I entreat you to shew for him. It would be quite sufficient to send him a small sum of money to buy him some European clothing, for he has lost his Indian attire in the shipwreck——”

“What! European clothing!” exclaimed Adrienne, gaily. “Poor young prince! Heaven preserve him from such, and me also! Chance sends me, from the remote parts of India, a mortal so favoured as never yet to have worn that odious European costume, those hideous *habits*,

those frightful hats, which make men so ridiculous, so ugly, that, in fact, there is no virtue in not finding them at all seducing creatures. Well, there comes a handsome young prince from that eastern clime where the men are attired in silk, muslin, and cachmere; and, most certainly, I will not lose so favourable an occasion to shew no European clothing, whatever poor old Dupont may say. But the name! the name of this dear prince! Again, I say, how singular, if it should prove to be my cousin from beyond the Ganges! I have heard, in my childhood, so much to the advantage of his royal father, that I should be delighted to offer his good son a worthy reception. But the name! the name! I want the name!"

Adrienne continued:

"If, in addition to this small sum, mademoiselle, you would afford him and his fellow-countryman the means of reaching Paris, you would do a great additional service to this poor young prince, already so unfortunate. I know, mademoiselle, that it may, most probably, please you, in your consideration of delicacy, to send this succour to the young prince without your name being revealed, and should this be the case, I beg you will make any use of me that may please you, and rely on my discretion; if, on the contrary, you would wish to send to him direct, I add his name, as it was written for me by his fellow-countryman, *Prince Djalma, son of Kadja-Sing, King of Mundi.*'

"*Djalma!*" said Adrienne, endeavouring to recall certain recollections. "*Kadja-Sing!* Yes, 'tis he!—those are the names my father so often repeated, when he told me that nothing in the world was or could be more chivalrous, more heroic, than that old Indian king, our relation by marriage; and it does not appear that the son has deteriorated from the sire. Yes, *Djalma! Kadja-Sing!*—yes, these are the names—they are not such common ones," she said, with a smile, "that one could forget or confound them with others. So, *Djalma* is my cousin! He is brave and good, young and charming, has never yet worn that frightful European habit, and is destitute of every resource. Delightful! it is too great happiness at once! Quick, quick! let us get up some pretty fairy tale, of which this handsome *Prince Cheri* shall be the hero. Poor bird of gold and silver plumage, wandering in our sad climate; at last he shall find here something to remind him of his own land of light and perfumes!" Then addressing one of her women,

"Georgette, take paper and write, my child!"

The young girl went to the gilded table, where there were writing materials, and said (after she had seated herself) to her mistress,

"I await mademoiselle's instructions."

Adrienne de Cardoville, whose lovely face was radiant with joy, happiness, and mirth, dictated the following note, addressed to a worthy old artist who had long taught her drawing and painting; for she excelled in these arts, as well as in all others:—

"My dear Titian, my good Veronese, my worthy Raphael,—You can do me an immense service, and I know you will do it, with that entire kindness I have invariably found in you. You will go and see directly the learned artist who designed my last costumes of the fifteenth century. I want now some modern Indian costumes for a young man—yes, a young man, sir!—and, as far

as I believe, you may take his measure by the Antinous—or, rather, the Indian Bacchus will be more *à propos*.

“ ‘These costumes must be perfectly correct, very rich, and particularly elegant. You will select the richest materials possible that resemble the tissues of India; and add, for cummerbands and turbans, six splendid long cachmere shawls—two white, two red, and two orange-colour: nothing suits brown skins like those hues.

“ ‘Having done this (and I can only allow you two or three days to complete all) you will start in my travelling-carriage for the Château de Cardoville, which you know well. There the steward, the worthy Dupont, an old acquaintance of yours, will introduce you to a young Indian prince, whose name is Djalma; and you will say to this high and mighty signor of another world that you have come from an unknown *friend*, who, acting as a brother, sends him what is requisite to avoid the odious fashions of Europe. You will add, that this friend awaits him with so much impatience, that he prays him to come to Paris without delay. If my *protégé* object because he is in pain, you must say that my carriage is an excellent bed; and you will arrange the couch in the berline as conveniently as possible. You must be careful to apologise, on the part of the unknown friend, for not sending to the prince either rich palanquins or even a small elephant; for, alas! we have no palanquins but at the opera, and no elephants but in the menagerie, which no doubt will make us seem very uncouth savages in the eyes of my *protégé*.

“ ‘As soon as you have decided on setting out, you must travel with all speed, and bring him here into my pavilion in the Rue de Babylone (how singular for him to live in the RUE DE BABYLONE!—that is an Eastern name for him, I think). Yes, conduct to me here the dear prince so fortunate as to be born in the land of flowers, diamonds, and sunshine.

“ ‘You will, moreover, be so obliging, my dear old friend, as not to be surprised at this new whim of mine, and especially not to indulge in any extravagant conjecture. Seriously, the choice I make of you in this circumstance—of you, whom I love and honour sincerely—will convince you that at the bottom of all this there is more than mere folly.’ ”

Whilst she dictated these last words, Adrienne's tone was as serious and elevated as it had before been pleasing and playful.

But she speedily reassumed her gay tone.

“ ‘Adieu, my old friend! I am a little like the captain of the ancient times, whose heroic nose and conquering chin you so often placed before me as models: I joke and jest most freely always at the moment when the fight begins—yes, the fight—for in another hour I shall fight a battle, a serious battle, with that dear devotee, my aunt. Fortunately courage and daring do not fail me, and I burn to engage in action with the austere princess.

“ ‘Adieu! a thousand kind and hearty *souvenirs* to your good wife! If I speak of her—mind, of her so justly respected—it is to assure you as to the consequences of this *carrying off* of a charming young prince on my behalf; for I must conclude where I ought to have begun, and tell you that he is charming.

“ ‘Again, adieu!’ ”

Then, addressing Georgette,

“Have you done, little maiden?”

“Yes, mademoiselle.”

“Ah! the postscript!”

“I send you a letter of credit on my banker for all expenses. Spare nothing: you know I am really a *grand signior*. I am compelled to use this masculine phrase, which you men—tyrants as you are—have exclusively appropriated as expressive of noble generosity.”

“Now, Georgette,” said Adrienne, “bring me a sheet of paper and the letter, that I may sign it.”

Mademoiselle de Cardoville took the pen which Georgette presented to her, and signed the letter enclosing an order on her banker, as follows:—

“Pay to M. Norval, or his order, the sum he may draw for his expenses in my name.

“ADRIENNE DE CARDOVILLE.”

During the whole of this scene, and whilst Georgette was writing, Florine and Hebe had continued to occupy themselves in completing the toilet of their mistress, who had taken off her dressing-gown and dressed herself, in order to go to see her aunt.

By the close, undivided, but yet concealed attention which Florine paid to the dictation of Adrienne’s letter to M. Norval, it was easy to see that, according to her custom, she was endeavouring to retain every word that fell from Mademoiselle de Cardoville.

“My little one,” said mademoiselle to Hebe, “go and send off this letter to M. Norval.”

Again the silver bell was heard without.

Hebe was going to the door to inquire who it was, and execute her mistress’s orders, when Florine ran before her, saying to Adrienne,

“Will mademoiselle allow me to carry this letter? I want to go to the large house.”

“Yes, you can go. Hebe, see who is at the door; and Georgette, seal this letter.”

At the end of a minute, whilst Georgette was sealing the letter, Hebe returned.

“Mademoiselle,” she said, as she returned, “the workman who found Lutine yesterday begs to see you for an instant: he looks very pale and sorrowful.”

“What, does he want me already? That is fortunate,” said Adrienne, in a mirthful tone. “Tell the good, honest fellow, I will see him, and shew him into the little *salon*; and, Florine, do you go and send this letter away without delay.”

Florine went out.

Mademoiselle de Cardoville, followed by Lutine, went into the little *salon*, where Agricola awaited her.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE INTERVIEW.

ADRIENNE DE CARDOVILLE entered the *salon*, in which Agricola awaited her, dressed with the most extreme yet elegant simplicity. A robe of dark blue kerseymere, fitting tightly to the shape, and embroidered down the front with broad black lacings, according to the prevailing mode of the day, admirably displayed her nymph-like figure and finely proportioned bust; a small square cambric collar was turned back over a broad-eeked riband tied in a neat rosette, serving at once as a slight substitute for a throat handkerchief, and giving a suitable finish to her dress. Her magnificent golden hair hung down her lovely countenance in a profusion of bright glittering ringlets, some of them even reaching her waist.

Agricola, the better to elude his father's suspicions, and to confirm him in the idea of his being really obliged to go to the manufactory for M. Hardy, had not dared to dress himself in any but his working clothes; the only difference he had ventured to make was to put on a new blouse, and to tie a black silk handkerchief round his throat to support the collar of a shirt, which, if coarse, was white as hands could make it; his large, loose, grey trousers displayed boots brightly polished, while his muscular hands held a smart and new cloth cap: in a word, this blue blouse, embroidered with red, which allowed such easy play to the broad manly chest of the young smith, and developed his robust shoulders, falling in graceful folds round his youthful yet athletic figure, far from detracting from his naturally frank, prepossessing appearance, became him far more than the most elaborate labours of the tailor or hatter could have done.

Whilst waiting the appearance of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, Agricola mechanically examined a magnificent silver vase of most exquisite workmanship. A small plate of the same metal, attached to the marble pedestal on which the vase stood, bore these words, "*Sculptured by Jean Marie, a working sculptor, 1834.*"

Adrienne had stepped so lightly over the carpet of the apartment, which was only separated from the adjoining one by folding doors, which opened and shut without the least sound, that Agricola perceived not her approach; he started and turned quickly round, as a sweet silvery voice just behind him said,

"That is a handsome vase, is it not?"

"It is indeed, madame," answered Agricola, much embarrassed.

"You perceive I am a lover of justice," continued Mademoiselle de Cardoville, pointing to the small silver plate; "a painter affixes his name to his picture; an author subscribes his name to the book he writes: why then should not a workman in any art also distinguish the product of his labours in like manner?"

"And this name, madame——"

"Is merely that of a poor sculptor, who executed the work for a rich goldsmith, who, when he sold me the vase, seemed utterly

at a loss to comprehend my whim; he almost hinted my injustice, when, having informed me the name of the person who really produced this gem (in its way) I insisted that the name of the *workman*, and not the mere seller, should be affixed to the pedestal. If the artisan be denied riches, he should at least be permitted to enjoy the fame he earns; do you not agree with me?"

Had Adrienne tried ever so hard, she could not better have selected a subject of more absorbing interest to the young smith, who, recovering his first confusion, replied,

"Being myself a workman, I can but feel doubly touched with this act of justice and impartial praise."

"That being the case, I am, indeed, delighted to have had the present opportunity of evincing to you the sincere interest I take in the working classes. But pray be seated;" and with an affable wave of the hand she pointed to an arm-chair of purple silk, embroidered with gold, seating herself upon a *causeuse* of the same material.

Percieving the returning confusion of Agricola, who cast down his eyes as though fearful of presuming too far, should he accept the gracious permission to prolong his stay by taking a seat, Adrienne said gaily, pointing to Lutine,

"This poor little creature will always be a living source of grateful recollections for all your kindness, and I accept your visit to-day as a happy omen that my earnest wishes are about to be realised: an indescribable something whispers to me that you have found some means by which I can be serviceable to you."

"Madame," replied Agricola boldly, "my name is Baudoin; I am a working smith, in the employ of M. Hardy, at Plessy, near Paris. Yesterday you offered me your purse, which I refused; but I now come to ask you for perhaps ten, twenty times the sum you then proffered me. I will explain myself better by and by, as to what I mean; but the hardest part is to give utterance to those words, which seem to scorch my lips as I pronounce them: but they are spoken now, and I feel much relieved."

"Be assured, I both respect and appreciate the delicacy of your scruples," said Adrienne; "but had you known me better, you would have felt no apprehension in applying to me. What sum do you require?"

"I do not know, mademoiselle."

"You do not know?"

"Indeed, mademoiselle, I am so entirely ignorant on the subject, that I have not only come to request you will generously aid me with the sum I need, but also have the goodness to tell me what amount I do require!"

"But," said Adrienne, smiling good-naturedly, "you must explain yourself more clearly; for, spite of my readiness to serve you, you have not yet told me in what way I can best do so."

"Well, then, mademoiselle, in a few words, this is precisely the case: I have a dearly loved and excellent mother now falling into years, who, in her youth, ruined her health by excessive labour to maintain and educate not only myself, but a poor deserted child she took charge of. It is now my turn to work for and support her, and, thanks to Providencé, I have been happy enough to do so. But I

have only my daily work to depend upon, and if I am prevented from attending to that, my poor mother will be left destitute."

"Be under no fears for your mother, she can never want while I take an interest in her."

"And do you interest yourself for her, mademoiselle?"

"Assuredly!"

"You know her, then?"

"Yes, *now* I do!"

"Ah, mademoiselle," said Agricola, with much emotion, and after a brief silence, "I understand you. Ah! you have a noble heart! La Mayeux was right!"

"La Mayeux!!" exclaimed Adrienne, regarding Agricola with the most unfeigned surprise, for these words were quite an enigma to her.

The young artisan, whose mind was too nobly constituted to be capable of blushing for the poverty or personal disadvantages of his friends, replied stoutly,

"Mademoiselle, I was going to explain that La Mayeux is the name of a poor, but industrious young needlewoman, with whom I have been brought up; the poor girl is called La Mayeux because she has the misfortune to be deformed, so that you may easily imagine *her* place in this world is as low and humble as yours is great and elevated; but for noble and delicate feelings—for real generosity of heart! Ah, mademoiselle! there I am sure she is even your equal. Ah! if you had only heard how quickly she understood your real motives and kindness in giving me that beautiful flower yesterday!"

"I assure you, monsieur," said Adrienne, sincerely touched by these simple phrases, "that I feel more flattered and honoured by the comparison you have just made, than in the highest eulogium you could pronounce. The heart which remains good and delicate after the long endurance of heavy troubles, is a treasure indeed!"

"It is as easy, with youth and beauty to aid us, to be good and amiable, as it is to pass for generous and delicate-minded when we have riches at our command."

"I accept your flattering comparison, but upon condition that you quickly enable me to prove my right to it. Pray continue your little history."

Spite of the gracious affability of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, there was in her whole manner so much of that natural dignity which is always associated with independence of character, elevation of mind, and nobleness of sentiment, that Agricola, forgetting the extreme loveliness of his protectress, soon felt for her a species of affectionate and profound respect, singularly opposed to the age and vivacity of the young creature who excited it.

"Were it *only* on my mother's account," continued Agricola, "I should not be so very fearful of the consequences of being obliged to leave my work, because poor folks always help each other. My mother is much beloved throughout the house we live in, and our kind and worthy neighbours would do their utmost to assist her; but, poor things! they have nothing to spare, and they must take from their own families to give to her; and the very thoughts of such a thing would

grieve my dear mother far more than wanting herself. But it is not solely for her I require to keep to my employment, but for my father also, whom we have not seen until now for eighteen years: he has just returned from Siberia, where he staid out of devotion to his old general, *now* Field-marshal Simon."

" Marshal Simon!" exclaimed Adrienne, eagerly, and with great surprise.

" Do you know him, madame?"

" Not personally; but he married a branch of our family."

" Oh, how glad I am to hear that!" cried the smith. " Then the two young ladies my father brought from Russia are related to you?"

" Has the marshal two daughters?" demanded Adrienne, becoming still more astonished as well as interested.

" Yes, mademoiselle! two angelic creatures of about fifteen or sixteen years of age: they are twins; so gentle and pretty, and so exactly alike, it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. Their mother died in exile, and the little she possessed having been confiscated, they have journeyed all the way from the furthest part of Siberia in the most humble manner, with no other companion than my father, who tried to make up by zeal and devotion for the many privations they were compelled to endure. And he was as tender with them—ah! madame, you would scarcely believe the tenderness with which my brave father watched over them; you would hardly think, to look at him, that, with the courage of a lion, he could soften himself down to the gentleness of the fondest mother."

" And where are these dear children now?" said Adrienne.

" At our house, mademoiselle; and that was one of the reasons which rendered my situation so unfortunate and perplexing, and gave me courage to lay my case before you. It is not that I fear being able by my daily labour to provide for the wants of our little household, even in its present enlarged state, but what will become of them all if I am arrested?"

" Arrested? you! and for what?"

" Here, mademoiselle, have the goodness to read this letter, which was sent to La Mayeux, that poor deformed girl I was telling you about; but she is like a sister to *me*."

So saying, Agricola placed in the hands of Mademoiselle de Cardoville the anonymous letter received by the young sempstress.

After having perused it, Adrienne said to the smith with surprise, " So, you are a poet it seems!"

" Indeed, mademoiselle," answered the smith, " I have neither the ambition nor presumption to aspire to that title; but when I go home to my mother, after my day's toil is over, or, indeed, sometimes while busy at the forge, to amuse or recreate myself I sometimes indulge in making a few rhymes, an ode or two, or may be a song——"

" And this '*Song of the Working Man*,' (*Chant des Travailleurs*) which is alluded to in the letter, is, I suppose, of a dangerous and seditious description."

" Oh, no, mademoiselle! very far from it: for I have the good fortune to be employed by M. Hardy, who takes delight in rendering his workpeople as happy as others do the reverse; and I merely ven-

tured to make a warm, candid, and just appeal in favour of the less fortunate class of my fellow-workmen—nothing more, I assure you. But you are aware, mademoiselle, in such troubled times as the present, when fresh discontent and conspiracy are being daily detected, the innocent are frequently involved in their consequences, and have, at the very least, a short imprisonment to undergo before they can be cleared of the charge made against them. Now, were such a misfortune to befall me, what would become of my mother, my father, or the two orphans, whom we consider as part of the family until the return of General Simon? So, mademoiselle, as my only chance of escaping a blow that would bring such distress and misery to those most dear to me, I have presumed to ask of you to give a security for me, so that I should not be compelled to quit the workshop for a prison, but might, in perfect security, earn all that would be requisite for our family's support."

"Well, Heaven be praised!" replied Adrienne, gaily, "yours is an affair very easily arranged! Henceforward, my poetical friend, you shall draw your inspirations from happiness, not sorrow, which forms but an ungenial muse. In the first place, the security you require shall be lodged in the proper hands."

"Oh, madame! how can I ever thank you as I ought! You have saved us from a grief you can form no idea of."

"It fortunately happens that our family doctor is upon most intimate terms with a very important minister (form what conjectures you may, you will not be much out); now the doctor I speak of has extreme influence over the mind of this great statesman, for he had the happiness of recommending to him, for the good of his health, to retire to the delights of private life the very evening preceeding the day in which he was dismissed from his place in the government: be, therefore, quite easy on the subject, and if the security be not deemed sufficient, we will think of some better means."

"Madame!" exclaimed Agricola, with deep feeling and profound emotion, "I shall in all probability owe my mother's life to your goodness. Believe me, nothing shall ever make me forget your goodness of to-day."

"Nay, I beseech you, do not magnify so mere a trifle! Surely, it is but fair, those who have too much should be permitted to help others who have not sufficient. Another thing I have to say is, the daughters of General Simon are my relations, and shall take up their abode here with me,—it will be more fitting for all parties. Inform your good mother of this, and say that, when I come this evening to thank her for her hospitality towards my young relatives, I will take them away with me."

Suddenly one of the folding doors which separated the *salon* from the adjoining apartment opened abruptly, and Georgette, pale and trembling, presented herself.

"Oh, mademoiselle!" exclaimed she, "something very extraordinary is going on in the street!"

"What do you mean? explain yourself!"

"I had just let my dressmaker out by the little side-gate, when I fancied I saw some very ill-looking men attentively observing the

walls and casements of the little building adjoining the pavilion, as though they were watching some one."

"Madame," said Agricola dejectedly, "you see I was not mistaken — 'tis me they seek!"

"What say you?"

"I imagined I was watched from the Rue Saint-Merry here — there is now no further doubt on the subject. They saw me enter your doors, and now wish to arrest me; and now that your kind sympathy is awakened for my mother, and that I have nothing to fear for the daughters of General Simon, rather than be the cause of the slightest annoyance to you I will hasten to give myself up."

"Have a care!" said Adrienne, quickly; "liberty is too valuable to be abandoned voluntarily: besides, Georgette may be mistaken. However it may be, let me entreat you not to surrender yourself; take my advice, and avoid an arrest. You will by so doing materially aid the steps I propose to take to ensure your safety, and it has always appeared to me, that Justice invariably seems to have a particular fancy for keeping those who have once fallen into her hands!"

"Mademoiselle," said Hebe, also entering the apartment with an alarmed look and manner, "a man has just knocked at the little gate; he wants to know whether a young man dressed in a blue blouse did not enter a little while ago? He says, that the person he is in search of is named Agricola Baudoin, and that he has something of great importance to communicate to him!"

"That is my name, certainly," said Agricola; "but the rest is a subterfuge to induce me to go to him."

"Evidently!" said Adrienne; "and we must oppose cunning to cunning. And what answer did you make, child?" added she, addressing Florine.*

"Madame, I replied that I knew nothing of the person inquired for."

"Perfectly right. And what became of the man after that?"

"He went away, madame!"

"No doubt to return again quickly," said Agricola.

"That is very probable," resumed Adrienne; "therefore must you resign yourself to the necessity of staying here a few hours. I am, unfortunately, obliged to go this very instant to attend my aunt, the Princess de Saint-Dizier, upon some very important affairs, for which she has summoned me to an interview it is quite impossible to put off; nor, indeed, have I the least wish to do so, as the unexpected intelligence you have given me respecting the daughters of General Simon makes me still more desirous of seeing the princess. Remain here, then, I charge you; since any attempt to quit the place would, I am convinced, be followed by your immediate arrest."

"Madame, I pray you to pardon my refusal of your kind shelter; but, again I repeat, I cannot—I ought not to accept of it."

"And wherefore?"

"The men who feigned having a message to deliver to me had recourse to that expedient, doubtless, to draw me into their power, in

* Query, Hebe?—English Translator.

order to spare the necessity of commencing a legal search for me on your premises ; but, foiled in this, be assured, madame, unless I go forth they will enter, and not for worlds would I have you exposed to such indignity : besides, since I have nothing to fear for my mother, why should I care for a prison ?”

“Have you forgotten the pain, the uneasiness, the terror, your imprisonment would occasion your mother? is this nothing? And then your father, and the poor sempstress, whom you love as a brother, and whose heart and fineness of feeling you said but now resembled mine, will you forget them? Oh, no! be patient, and you will spare all these torments to those you love. Stay quietly, here; and before evening I feel quite assured, that, either by giving the necessary guarantee, or by other means, I shall be able to free you from all further inquietude.”

“But, mademoiselle, should I even accept your generous offer it will avail me little—I shall be found here.”

“No, you will not! there is in this pavilion, which formerly served for many strange purposes, a hiding-place, so marvellously contrived as to elude the most diligent research. Georgette will conduct you to it. You will find it a very comfortable spot: you may even write some of your best verses for me, should the situation inspire you.”

“What kindness!” exclaimed Agricola. “How can I ever hope to return it! How can I ever have merited ——”

“How have you merited it?” interrupted Adrienne; “I will tell you. Admit, that neither by your excellent character nor present position you had power to interest me—admit, also, that I have not contracted a sacred debt to your father, for the tender and assiduous cares bestowed on the children of General Simon, my relation; but think, at least, of Lutine—of dear, pretty Lutine,” said Adrienne, pointing, smilingly, to the little animal, “whom you restored to my fond affection. But, seriously, if I seem to treat the matter lightly,” continued this strange and wild being, “it is because I know that there exists not the least danger for you, and because my spirits are unusually high to-day; indeed, I know not when I have felt so happy. Now, then, monsieur, write your name and address, with that of your mother, in this pocket-book, and be as quick as possible. Then, follow Georgette; and be sure to write me some very pretty verses, if, indeed, you do not feel too tired of your confinement, which, remember, will save you from a prison.”

While Georgette conducted the smith to his hiding-place, Hebe brought her mistress a small grey beaver hat and feathers, for Adrienne had to cross the park to arrive at the grand hôtel occupied by the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

* * * * *

A quarter of an hour after this scene, Florine entered mysteriously into the chamber of Madame Grivoise, principal attendant on the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

“Well?” inquired Madame Grivoise of the young girl.

“Here are the notes I have taken this morning,” said Florine, giving a paper to the duenna; “fortunately, I have a good memory.”

"At what o'clock, precisely, did she come in this morning?" said the duenna.

"Who, madame?"

"Mademoiselle Adrienne!"

"She has not been out, madame; we attended upon her at nine o'clock, when she took her bath."

"Well, then, she must have returned before nine o'clock, after being out all night; for, most certainly she did re-enter these walls at an early hour, evidently after having been abroad all night."

Florine regarded Madame Grivoise with the utmost astonishment.

"I do not understand you, madame!"

"Will you venture to assert that Mademoiselle Adrienne did not enter the park this morning, about eight o'clock, by the little side-gate? Will you dare to utter such a falsehood?"

"I had been very poorly all yesterday, madame, and did not quit my bed till nine o'clock this morning, when I assisted Georgette and Hebe to attend upon mademoiselle at her bath. I assure you, most solemnly, madame, that I am utterly ignorant of whatever might have occurred previously."

"That alters the case. Well, then, be sure to inquire the particulars of what I have just mentioned of your two companions, who, having no mistrust of you, will tell you every thing you wish to know."

"I will, madame!"

"What has mademoiselle been doing this morning since you have been in attendance on her?"

"Mademoiselle dictated a letter to M. Norval, which Georgette wrote, and I asked leave to take charge of it, in order to obtain a pretext for leaving the house, and also for noting down what I had observed."

"Good! and where is this letter?"

"Jerome has just gone out with it. I gave it to him to put into the post."

"You stupid girl!" exclaimed Madame Grivoise, "why could you not have brought it to me?"

"As mademoiselle dictated her letter, according to custom, in a loud voice, that Georgette might hear the better, I knew the contents of it, and have written them in my paper here."

"That is not the same thing—it is probable that it would have been desirable to keep back that letter altogether: the princess will be very vexed about it."

"I thought I was acting rightly!"

"Bless me! I know well enough you don't want for good-will, and, during the six months you have been here, you have given entire satisfaction; but you have committed an act of great indiscretion this time!"

"Pray, excuse it, madame; believe me, what I do is painful enough to me!" And, so saying, the young girl stifled a rising sob.

Madame Grivoise surveyed her a few instants with a fixed gaze, then added, in a cool, sarcastic tone,

"Well, then, my dear, if your scruples stand in the way, your best

plan is to quit your post : you are free to go whenever you please—be assured you can very well be spared.”

“You know, madame, perfectly well, that I am *not* free,” said Florine blushing. Tears rose to her eyes as she added, “I am under the directions and control of M. Rodin, who placed me here.”

“Then what is the use of all these sighs and regrets?”

“Spite of myself, it is impossible not to feel remorse. Mademoiselle is so kind, so good, so confiding.”

“Oh, she is perfection, no doubt! but you have something else to do, than to ring her praises in *my* ears! What did she after concluding her letter?”

“The young artisan who found Lutine, and brought her back yesterday, came to ask to speak with mademoiselle.”

“Is he still with her?”

“I do not know; he went in just as I was coming out with the letter.”

“You must contrive to find out what this person wanted with mademoiselle.”

“I will, madame!”

“Does Mademoiselle de Cardoville appear particularly thoughtful, uneasy, or alarmed, at the prospect of her approaching interview with the princess? She takes so little trouble to conceal her thoughts that you cannot help knowing.”

“Mademoiselle appeared as gay as usual, and even indulged in several jokes.”

“Ah! she jokes, does she?” said the duenna; adding, between her clenched teeth, but in a tone so low that Florine could not catch it, “Those laugh best who laugh last! Yes, spite of her hardihood, and her diabolical disposition, she would tremble and implore mercy, did she but know what this day awaits her.”

Then addressing herself to Florine, she said,

“Return to the pavilion, and avoid these fine scruples with which you are troubled, or they may one day play you a trick you don’t expect. Now go, and remember what I say.”

“I can never forget, madame, that I belong to M. Rodin!”

“That will do. Now depart for the present.”

Florine quitted the grand hôtel, and crossing the park regained the pavilion.

Madame Grivoise immediately repaired to the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

PART IV.

HOTEL DE SAINT-DIZIER.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A JESUITESS.

WHILST the preceding scenes were passing in the Pompadour Temple, occupied by Mademoiselle de Cardoville, other events occurred in the large hôtel occupied by the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

The elegance and magnificence of the pavilion in the garden contrasted strangely with the sombre interior of the hôtel, the first-floor of which was inhabited by the princess; for the arrangements of the ground-floor were such that it was only suited for fêtes, and for a long time Madame de Saint-Dizier had renounced all worldly splendours, and the gravity of her domestics, all aged and dressed in black, the deep silence that reigned in the house, where every body seemed to talk in a whisper, and the almost monastic regularity of this immense mansion, gave to the whole establishment of the princess a dull and severe character.

A man of the world, who united to high courage a remarkable independence of character, speaking of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, (with whom Adrienne de Cardoville was going, as she wrote, to *fight a great battle*), said,

“That I might not have Madame de Saint-Dizier for my enemy, I, who am neither a fool nor a coward, have, for the first time in my life, committed an act of folly and cowardice.”

And this man spoke sincerely.

But Madame de Saint-Dizier had not all at once reached this high degree of *importance*.

A few words are necessary, in order that we may clearly explain many phases of the life of this dangerous, implacable woman, who, by her affiliation to THE ORDER, had acquired a secret and formidable power; for there is something still more to be dreaded than a *Jesuit*, and that is a *Jesuitess*; and when a certain class are scrutinised, we learn that unhappily there exist many of these “*affiliated*” of the gown more or less short.*

Madame de Saint-Dizier, who in her youth was a splendid woman, had been during the latter years of the Empire, and the early years of the Restoration, one of the most fashionable women of Paris, with a stirring, energetic, dashing, domineering spirit—a cold heart with a

* The lay members of the order are termed Jesuits of the *Short Gown* (*Robe Courte*).

warm imagination; she had been much devoted to gallantry, not through tenderness of feeling, but from love of intrigue, loving as men love play—from the excitement it produces.

Unfortunately, such had been the constant blindness and carelessness of her husband, the Prince de Saint-Dizier, (eldest brother of the Comte de Rennepont, Duke de Cardoville, Adrienne's father) that during his life he never said a word which could be interpreted into a suspicion of his wife's gaieties.

Thus doubtless, not finding enough difficulties in her amours, which were besides so very little thought of during the Empire, the princess, without renouncing her course of life, and, fancying that it would throw a little more relish and freshness into her cup of pleasure, resolved to ally with it the zest of political intrigue.

To attack Napoleon, to dig a mine under the feet of Colossus, would, at least, promise sensations capable of satisfying the most exacting character.

For some time all went on marvellously well; handsome and witty, skilful and treacherous, seductive and perfidious, surrounded by adorers whom she excited to fanaticism, mingling a kind of ferocious coquetry in leading men on to risk their heads in serious conspiracies, the princess hoped to revive the Fronde, and had a secret correspondence, which she carried on most vigorously with several personages of great foreign influence, and well known for their hatred to the Emperor and France. It was this that led to her first epistolary relations with the Marquis d'Aigrigny, then a colonel in the Russian service, and aide-de-camp of Moreau.

But one day all these fine plots were discovered, and several of Madame de Saint-Dizier's cavaliers were sent to Vincennes, and the Emperor, who might have taken a terrible revenge, contented himself with exiling the princess to one of her estates near Dunkirk.

At the Restoration, the *persecutions* which Madame de Saint-Dizier had suffered for the good cause were of service to her, and she even acquired considerable influence in spite of the levity of her conduct.

The Marquis d'Aigrigny having taken service in France, had established himself there. He was a fascinating person, and soon became the fashion; and as he had corresponded and conspired with the princess without knowing her, these circumstances necessarily led to a *liaison* between them.

Unbridled selfishness, a desire for the excess of pleasure, intense hatred, strong love of pride and despotism, and that base sympathy whose treacherous attraction brings together the most perverse dispositions without blending them, had made of the princess and the marquis rather two accomplices than two lovers.

This union, based on egotistical and hateful feelings, in the fearful support which two characters of this dangerous stamp could lend each other against a world in which their spirit of intrigue, gallantry, and slander had made them many enemies—this *liaison* had lasted up to the period when, after his duel with General Simon, the marquis had entered *the Seminary*, although the motive of his sudden resolution was disclosed to no one.

The princess not having heard the hour of conversion yet strike for

her, continued her worldly course with a fierce, jealous, hateful ardour, for she found her best years had passed away. The following fact will shew this woman's character:—

Still agreeable, she resolved to conclude her worldly career by a great and final triumph, just as a celebrated actress retires from the stage whilst she still charms, in order to cause regrets for her departure. Desirous of giving this last consolation to her vanity, the princess selected her victims skilfully. She threw her eyes on a young couple, who idolised each other, and, by dint of cunning and management, she carried off the lover from his mistress, a lovely creature of eighteen, who adored him.

Having assured this success, Madame de Saint-Dizier quitted the world with all the *éclat* of her triumph. After many lengthened conferences with the Abbé Marquis d'Aigrigny, then a famous preacher, she quitted Paris abruptly, and went to spend two years on her estate near Dunkirk, taking with her only one of her attendants, Madame Grivois.

When the princess returned no one could recognise the woman once so frivolous, gay, and dissipated. The metamorphosis was complete, extraordinary, almost fearful. The Hôtel Saint-Dizier, formerly open to liveliness, fêtes, pleasures, became silent and austere. Instead of what is called the *elegant world*, the princess only received at her abode females celebrated for their piety, men of importance, noted for the extreme severity of their religious and monarchical principles. She surrounded herself particularly with certain distinguished members of the upper clergy; a congregation of females was placed under her patronage, and she had her confessor, chapel, almoner, and even director, but this latter was only *in partibus*. The Marquis Abbé d'Aigrigny remained really her spiritual guide. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to say, that for a long time all other *liaison* had ceased between them.

The sudden conversion, so complete and so very much talked about, struck vast numbers with admiration and respect; a few, more penetrating, smiled.

One example amongst a thousand will testify the frightful power which the princess had acquired since her affiliation, and it will also prove the undermining, revengeful, and pitiless character of the woman whom Adrienne de Cardoville was so rashly desirous to brave.

Amongst the persons who smiled, more or less, at the conversion of Madame de Saint-Dizier, were the young and charming couple whom she had so cruelly severed before she proudly quitted the scene of her worldly gallantries. They both, more in love than ever, had again come together, after the passing storm that had separated them for a time, confining their vengeance to some lively pleasantries on the conversion of the woman who had worked them so much ill.

Some time afterwards a terrible fatality weighed down the two lovers.

A husband, until then blind, was suddenly enlightened by anonymous revelations. A fearful discovery followed. The young lady was lost.

As to the lover, vague reports, not established, but full of concealments, perfidiously managed, and a thousand times more odious than a

distinct accusation which can at once be established or destroyed, were spread abroad about him with so much pertinacity, such deep cunning, and in so many different ways, that his best friends left him, one after the other, submitting, almost unconsciously, to the slow and irresistible influence of that incessant and confused whispering which resolves itself into something like this:—

“ Well! you know * * * ? ”

“ No.”

“ Well, they do say very unpleasant things about him.”

“ Really!—and what sort of things ? ”

“ I can't precisely say, but there are very nasty stories afloat—rumours which sadly affect his honour.”

“ The devil there are!—that's bad indeed! That explains why he has been received so coolly every where, lately.”

“ For my part, I intend, in future, to *cut* him.”

“ And so shall I,” &c. &c.

This world is so formed that it often requires no more than this to destroy a man, whose great success has created envy. And so it was with the man of whom we speak. The unfortunate gentleman, seeing the gap that was forming around him, and feeling the ground giving way beneath his feet, did not know which way to seek, or how to lay hands on the invisible enemy whose blows he felt, for he never suspected the princess, whom he had not seen since his adventure with her. Desirous, at any sacrifice, to know the source of this neglect and contempt, he addressed himself to an old friend, who answered him in a manner which was scornfully evasive; the other took fire, and demanded satisfaction. His adversary said to him,—

“ Find two seconds, acquaintances of yours and mine, and I will go out with you.”

The unhappy man could not find one.

At last, forsaken by all, and unable to obtain any clue to this conduct, suffering immensely from the fate of his wife, who was lost to him, he went mad with rage, anguish, and despair, and ended his existence.

On the day of his death, Madame de Saint-Dizier said that such a life, so shameless, ought to have such an end; that he who for so long a time had sported with all laws, human and divine, could only terminate his miserable existence by the last crime—suicide! And Madame de Saint-Dizier's friends repeated and carried about these terrible words with an air contrite, pious, and full of conviction. This was not all: hand in hand with the chastisement came the recompense.

Persons who remarked could not help seeing that the favourites of the religious coterie of Madame de Saint-Dizier reached high positions with singular rapidity. *Virtuous* young men, religiously attentive to the duties laid down by the curates, were wedded to young rich orphans of the “*Sacred Heart*,” who were reserved as such rewards; poor young girls, who, too late, learned what a devotee husband really is, when selected and imposed upon them, and expiating in bitter tears the deceitful favour of being admitted into a false and hypocritical world, in which they were alone and helpless, and which would crush them if they dared to complain of the union to which they had been sentenced.

In the saloons of Madame de Saint-Dizier there were made prefects, colonels, receivers-general, deputies, academicians, bishops, peers of France, from whom, in return for the vast influence used in their behalf, was only required unremitting support on all points affecting the Order; to communicate, and sometimes in public; to swear an unrelenting war with every thing that was impious or revolutionary; and, above all, to correspond confidentially on *different subjects of their choice* with the Abbé d'Aigrigny; which was a very agreeable amusement, for the abbé was the most amiable, most witty, and, above all, the most accommodating man in the world.

By the way, we will give an historical fact, which only required the fitter revenging irony of Molière or Pascal. It occurred during the last year of the Restoration. One of the high dignitaries of the court, a firm and independent man, did not *practise*, as the good fathers term it—that is to say, did not take the holy communion. This neglect, when considered relatively to his high position, might cause injury, by its bad example; and the Abbé Marquis d'Aigrigny was despatched to him. He, knowing the lofty and honourable mind of the recusant, felt that, if by any means he could induce him to *practise*, the *effect* would be most profitable, went to work like a man of worldly wisdom, and knowing whom he was addressing made but very light of the dogma, the religious act and fact itself, but insisted strongly on the compliance with custom the salutary example which such a step must produce on the public mind.

“Monsieur l'Abbé,” said the individual applied to, “I have a higher respect for religion than you yourself have, and I should think it an infamous juggle to communicate without conviction.”

“Oh come, come, unbending man, frowning *Alcestis!*” said the Marquis Abbé, with a crafty smile, “we will reconcile your scruples and the profit you will derive, be assured, from complying with my advice. We will arrange for you a BLANK COMMUNION (*une communion blanche*); for, after all, what is it we ask?—but the appearance of the thing.”

Now a *communion blanche* is when the *host* has not been consecrated.

The Abbé Marquis was repulsed with indignation; but the dignitary was dismissed from his post.

And this is by no means a solitary case. Evil to those who opposed themselves to the principles and interests of Madame de Saint-Dizier and her friends! sooner or later, directly or indirectly, they were hit in the most cruel way—some in their credit, some in their dearest relations; others in their honour, others in the official situations in which they lived, and that by some silent, concealed, perpetual action—by some terrible and mysterious dissolvent, which, unseen, undermined reputation, fortune, position the most solidly based, up to the very moment when they were suddenly and for ever destroyed, in the midst of general surprise and alarm.

We may now understand how, under the Restoration, the Princess de Saint-Dizier became singularly powerful and dreaded. At the revolution of July she formed a fresh system of *alliance*, and, strange to say, still preserving those connexions of family and society with several persons very faithful to the worship of the fallen monarchy,



THE LETTER.

P. 261.



MADAME DE SAINT-DIZIER.

P. 261.

still more influence and power were attributed to her. Let us say, too, that the Prince de Saint-Dizier dying childless several years before, his personal fortune, which was very considerable, returned to his younger brother, the father of Adrienne de Cardoville, who had died eighteen months since, leaving his young daughter the last and only representative of this branch of the Rennepont family.

The Princess de Saint-Dizier was awaiting her niece in a large saloon hung with dark-green damask; and the furniture, covered in the same way, was of carved ebony, as was also a bookcase piled with pious productions.

Some sacred paintings and a large crucifix of ivory, on a black velvet ground, combined to give this apartment a dull and conventual appearance.

Madame de Saint-Dizier, seated before a large desk, was sealing several letters, for she had a very extensive and varied correspondence. Though about forty-five years of age, she was still handsome; years had enlarged her figure, which had been remarkably elegant, and was yet advantageously displayed under her high black gown. Her cap was very simple, and, ornamented with grey ribands, displayed her light-brown hair plaited in thick bandeaux.

The first look of her simple and dignified air was very striking; and in vain was it to seek in this countenance, then full of regret and composure, any trace of the agitation of her past life. To see her so grave and reserved, no one could believe her to be the heroine of so many intrigues, so many tender adventures; and the more so, if by chance she heard any remark that trenched on levity, this woman's face (who had persuaded herself that she had become a mother of the church) expressed a real and painful astonishment, which soon became an air of offended chastity and scornful pity.

However, when it was necessary, the smile of the princess was still full of grace, and even of seducing and irresistible kindness. Her full blue eye could, on occasion, beam affectionately and encouragingly; but if her pride was offended, or any one dared to cross her will or injure her interests, and she could without fear of compromise allow her resentment full scope, then her face, habitually placid and serious, betrayed a cold and implacable wickedness.

At this moment Madame Grivois entered the cabinet of the princess, holding in her hand the *report* which Florine had given her respecting Adrienne's morning's occupation.

Madame Grivois had been for twenty years in the service of Madame de Saint-Dizier, and she knew all that a *femme de chambre* can and ought to know of her mistress, when that mistress has been very gay. Was she voluntarily retained by the princess?—she, the well-informed witness of the multiplied errors of youth? This was not known. It was only evident that Madame Grivois enjoyed great privileges with the princess, and was considered by her rather as a companion than a waiting-woman.

“Here, madame, are Florine's notes,” said Madame Grivois, handing the paper to the princess.

“I will look at it directly,” replied Madame de Saint-Dizier. “My niece is coming here: during the conference, at which she will be

present, you will conduct into her pavilion a person who will soon be here, and who will inquire for me."

"Very well, madame."

"This person will take a precise inventory of every thing in Adrienne's pavilion. You will see that nothing is omitted: this is of the greatest importance."

"Yes, madame; but if Georgette and Hebe refuse?"

"Make yourself easy: the man who is empowered to take this inventory has a power which, when they know, these girls will not dare oppose either the inventory or any other measures he may choose to take. You must not fail, when you accompany him, to insist on certain facts which will materially tend to confirm the reports which you have for some time spread about."

"Make yourself easy, madame: those reports have already acquired the consistency of truth."

"Well, then, soon now the insolent and haughty Adrienne will be subdued, and compelled to ask pardon—and of me too——"

An old *valet de chambre* opened the folding-doors, and announced,

"M. the Abbé d'Aigrigny!"

"If Mademoiselle de Cardoville comes," said the princess to Madame Grivois, "request her to wait an instant."

"Yes, madame," said the duenna, who left the room with the *valet de chambre*.

Madame de Saint-Dizier and M. d'Aigrigny remained alone.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE PLOT.

THE Abbé Marquis d'Aigrigny was, as may have been conjectured, the personage whom we have already seen in the Rue Milieudes-Ursines, whence he had set out for Rome about three months before.

The marquis was clothed in deep mourning and with his usual elegance. He did not wear a cassock; but his black frock-coat, which fitted accurately, and his well-cut waistcoat, displayed the elegance of his figure, whilst his black cassimere trousers exhibited to advantage his foot, encased in patent-leather boots. The tonsure was lost in the slight baldness which had commenced at the back part of his head. Nothing, in fact, in his garb revealed the priest, unless it might be the entire want of whiskers or moustache, which was remarkable in so manly a countenance; his freshly shaved chin rested on a high and full black cravat, tied with a military air, which reminded you that this renowned preacher, at this period one of the most active and influential chiefs of the Order, had, under the Restoration, commanded a regiment of hussars, after having made war with the Russians against France.

Having only arrived that morning, the marquis had not seen the

princess since his mother, the Dowager-Marchioness d'Aigrigny, had died near Dunkirk, on an estate belonging to Madame de Saint-Dizier, calling in vain on her son to soothe the bitter anguish of her parting hour; but an order, which had compelled the Marquis d'Aigrigny to sacrifice the most sacred sentiments of nature, had arrived from Rome suddenly, and he had instantly set out for that city, not without a display of hesitation, remarked and denounced by Rodin: for the love which D'Aigrigny had for his mother was the only pure feeling which had constantly attended him through life.

When the *valet de chambre* had discreetly retired with Madame Grivois, the marquis approached the princess with emotion, and extending his hand said, in a stifled voice,

"Herminie, have you concealed nothing from me in your letters? Did not my mother curse me in her last moments?"

"No, Frederic! I assure you, no! She was most desirous to see you, but her mind soon wandered, and in her delirium she called for you constantly."

"Yes!" said the marquis, bitterly; "her maternal instinct told her, no doubt, that my presence might, perhaps, have restored her to life."

"I entreat you to forget such saddening recollections. The misfortune is irreparable!"

"Once again, and for the last time, tell me, and tell me truly, was not my mother cruelly affected by my absence? She could not suspect that a more imperious duty could summon me elsewhere?"

"No, no, I tell you! Before her mind wandered she knew that there had not yet been time for you to have reached her. All the sad details which I wrote you on the subject were precisely true: so, pray take comfort."

"Yes, my conscience ought to be tranquil! I obeyed my duty in sacrificing my mother! and yet, in spite of myself, I could not attain that entire detachment of feeling which is commanded in these terrible words,—'*He who hateth not his father and his mother, and even his own soul, cannot be my disciple.*'"*

"Doubtless, Frederic, these sacrifices are most painful; but in exchange, what influence! what power!"

"That is true," said the marquis, after a moment's silence. "What would not one sacrifice to reign in the shade over those all-potent of the earth who rule in open day? My recent journey to Rome has given me fresh ideas as to our formidable power."

"Oh, this power is great!—excessive!" said the princess; "and the more so, the more formidable, and the more assured, as it works mysteriously on minds and consciences."

"I tell you, Herminie," said the marquis, "I have had under my orders a splendid regiment, and I have very often experienced the deep and manly delight of command. At my voice the horsemen were moved, the trumpets sounded, my officers, brilliant with golden

* In reference to this assertion, we find the following commentary in the *Constitutions of the Jesuits*:—"In order that the character of this language may come in aid of the feelings, it is wise to accustom one's self to say, not I HAVE parents, or I HAVE brothers; but I HAD parents, I HAD brothers."—*General Exumination*, p. 29, *Constitutions*. Paulin, Paris, 1843.

embroidery, galloped fiercely to repeat my orders; all the brave, ardent, and battle-scarred soldiers obeyed me as one man, on any signal, and I felt myself proud and powerful, holding as I did in my hand all the valour which I thus controlled, as I controlled the impetuosity of my war-horse. Well! now, in spite of adverse times, I feel myself a thousand times fuller of action, of authority, strength, and audacity, at the head of this black and silent militia, which thinks, wishes, and obeys, mechanically, according to my will!"

"You reason most truly, Frederic," replied the princess, quickly. "When we reflect, with what contempt do we think upon the past! Like you, I often compare the present with it, and then what satisfaction do I feel in having followed your counsels! For, after all, without you I should have played but that miserable and ridiculous part which a woman must always go through when she reaches a certain age, after having been handsome and admired. What should I have done? I might in vain have attempted to attract again around me a selfish and ungrateful world—those coarse men, who only think of women as long as they are made subservient to their passions or flatter their vanity: or I might still have had left to me the resource of keeping up what is called an agreeable house—for others—yes, and given fêtes; that is, I might have received a crowd of indifferent persons, and have created a rendezvous for young lovers, who, following each other from room to room, only come to you that they may be together: an agreeable position assuredly, that you may collect together a giddy, laughing, loving set, who consider the luxury and *éclat* with which you surround them as embellishments due to their gay and impertinent amours." There was so much severity in the words of the princess, and her countenance expressed so much hate and envy, that the violent bitterness of her regret escaped her in spite of herself. "No! no!" she continued; "thanks to you, Frederic, after a final and brilliant triumph, I broke from that world which else would so soon have abandoned me! Yes, one so long its idol and its queen! I have changed my kingdom, and instead of dissipated men, whom I ruled over because my frivolity was superior to their own, I see myself now encircled by men of first-rate importance, feared and all-powerful, many of whom govern the state itself: I am as much devoted to them as they are devoted to me. It is now only that I enjoy the happiness of which I had always dreamed; I have an active part, a powerful influence in the first interests of the world; I have been initiated into the most important secrets; I have been enabled to strike heavily and surely all who have railed at or hated me; I have been able to raise beyond their hopes those who have served, respected, and obeyed me."

"And there are madmen, blind creatures, who think we are crushed because we have to contend against an adverse period!" said M. d'Aigrigny with disdain; "as if we were not every where prepared and organised for the struggle; as if, in the struggle, we should not pour forth new power and fresh activity! No doubt the times are adverse, but they will become better. You know it is almost certain that in a few days, the 13th of February, we shall have at our disposal a means of action sufficiently potent to re-establish our influence, which has been momentarily shaken."

"Assuredly! the affair of the medals is so important!"

"I should not have made so much haste to return hither, but from my anxiety to be present at what may be for us so great an event."

"You have learnt, no doubt, the singular fatality which has so nearly destroyed all our plans, so ably conceived and laid?"

"Yes, immediately I arrived I saw Rodin."

"Who told you——"

"The inconceivable facts of the arrival of the Indian and General Simon's daughters at the Château de Cardoville, after the double shipwreck, which has cast them on the coast of Picardy, when we believed the young girls at Leipsie and the Indian at Java, for our precautions were so carefully taken. Really," added the marquis, with vexation, "it would almost seem that some invisible power protects this family!"

"Fortunately, Rodin is a man of resources and activity," resumed the princess. "He came here last night, and we had a long conference."

"And the result of your conference is excellent. The soldier will be sent away for a couple of days, the confessor of his wife is fully instructed, and the rest will work by itself. To-morrow these young girls will not give us further cause for alarm. The Indian only is left, and he is at Cardoville, dangerously hurt, so that we shall have time to act."

"But that is not all," replied the princess; "there are besides, without including my niece, two persons who, for the sake of our interests, must not be in Paris on the 13th of February."

"Yes, M. Hardy! But his dearest and most intimate friend betrays him, and by him we have drawn M. Hardy into the south, whence it is impossible he can return before a month. As to that vagabond wretch, the workman they call *Conche-tout-Nud*——"

"Ah!" exclaimed the princess, with an air of offended modesty.

"That fellow will not trouble us. Then there is but Gabriel on whom rests our vast but certain hope; he will not be left alone for one moment until the important day. All, therefore, seems to promise success, and it is for us a question of life or death; for, on my return, I stopped at Forle, where I saw the Duke d'Orbano, whose influence over the king, his master, is all-powerful—absolute; so entirely has he got him into his own hands. It is with the duke alone, therefore, that there is any occasion to treat."

"Well!"

"D'Orbano declares he can (and I am sure of his power) assure to us a legal existence, strongly protected in his master's states, with the exclusive privilege of educating the rising generation. By the aid of such advantages we only require two or three years' establishment in that country to be so firmly rooted, that the Duke d'Orbano must, in his turn, come to us for protection; but, at this moment, he is all potent, and demands one absolute condition for his services."

"And this condition?"

"Five millions (200,000*l.*); and an annual pension of a hundred thousand francs (4000*l.*)"

"That is a large sum!"

"Yet it is but little when we reflect that, let us only set foot in that country, we should soon work that sum back again; which, after

all, is hardly the eighth-part of what the medals, properly managed, will insure to the Order."

"True—nearly forty millions (1,600,000*l.*)," said the princess, with a reflective air.

"Then the five millions, which D'Orbano asks, will be but an advance—it will be returned by voluntary donations; because, by the increase of influence which the education of the children will give us, we shall have our hold on the families. Oh! those who govern do not see when we are working our interests we are working theirs, and that, in abandoning to us education, which we desire above all things, we form and fashion the people to that mute and uncomplaining condition, to the submission of the serf and the brute, who assure the quiet of states by the passiveness of mind. They do not see that this blind and passive obedience, which we demand of the masses, serves as a bridle to lead and master them; whilst we ask from the fortunates of the world those appearances only which ought, if they had but a knowledge of their corruption, to give additional stimulant to their pleasures."

"It is no matter, Frederick," replied the princess; "as you say, the important day is at hand, and with nearly forty millions, which the Order may secure by the happy result of the affair of the medals, we may, assuredly, dare great things. As a lever in your hands, such a means of action would have incalculable effect, at a time when every thing and every body are bought and sold."

"But, then," said M. d'Aigrigny, with a thoughtful air, "it is of no use to disguise the fact: here the re-action continues—the example of France is every thing. We can hardly maintain ourselves in Austria and Holland—the resources of the Order diminish daily. It is a moment of crisis, but it may be lengthened. Thus, thanks to this enormous resource, the affair of the medals, we may not only contend against chances, but establish ourselves even more firmly. Thanks to the offer of the Duke d'Orbano, which we decide on accepting; and then, from this invincible centre, our radiations will be incalculable. Ah! the thirteenth of February!" said M. d'Aigrigny, shaking his head: "that day may become an epoch as eventful to our power as that of the council, which in a manner gives fresh life."

"And, therefore," pursued the princess, "must we spare nothing to succeed, at any price. Of the six persons you have cause to fear, five either now are, or will be, in no condition to oppose you; there only remains my niece, and you well know I merely awaited your arrival to take definitive measures. All my plans are arranged, and this very morning we will commence putting them into practice."

"Have your suspicions increased since you last wrote?"

"They have; and I am now quite convinced she knows a great deal more than she affects to do."

"Such has always been my opinion, and therefore, six months ago, I persuaded you to adopt the measures you have done, in order to provoke her to demand her emancipation from all control; the consequences of which have rendered it easy for us now to take steps which would otherwise have been impossible."

"At length, then," exclaimed the princess, with an expression of

bitter and rancorous exultation, "at length this proud spirit shall be broken, and I be avenged for the insolent sarcasms I have been compelled to bear in silence, lest I should retort in such a way as to excite her suspicions. Yes, to-day will see me able to pay back all I have been obliged to endure from that imprudent and ungovernable girl, whose daily and hourly task it seemed to incense and irritate me still more against her."

"Those who offend *you*, offend me likewise; you know well my hatred and revenge ever accompany yours."

"And you! how frequently have you been made the subject of her biting jests and poignant raillery!"

"My impulses rarely deceive me," said the marquis, in a harsh and abrupt tone, "and I feel certain that girl will one day prove a dangerous, ay, most dangerous, enemy to us."

"Therefore are we more imperatively called upon to put it out of her power to harm us," replied Madame de Saint-Dizier, fixing her eyes with a steady gaze on the marquis.

"Have you seen Doctor Baleinier, and the guardian, M. Tripeaud?" inquired he.

"They will be here this morning. I have well prepared them."

"Did you find them disposed freely to enter into your wishes against Adrienne?"

"Perfectly so; and one very excellent thing is, that my niece entertains not the slightest mistrust of the doctor, who has always possessed her entire confidence. Besides this, a most singular, and to me wholly inexplicable circumstance, has just come to aid us."

"What mean you?"

"This morning, Madame Grivois went, according to my orders, to remind Adrienne that I expected her about mid-day upon important business; as she approached the pavilion, Madame Grivois either saw, or thought she saw, Mademoiselle de Cardoville return home by the small garden gate."

"Can this be possible!" exclaimed the marquis; "have you absolute proofs of this strange fact?"

"At present I have no further corroboration than the voluntary testimony of Madame Grivois; but, now I think of it," said the princess, taking up a paper which lay beside her, "here is the daily report drawn up by one of Adrienne's waiting-women."

"She whom Rodin contrived to place about your niece?"

"The same; and, as this creature is wholly dependent on Rodin, she has hitherto served us most faithfully: perhaps we shall find in this paper some confirmation of what Madame Grivois affirms she beheld."

Scarcely had the princess commenced reading the contents of the journal, than she suddenly exclaimed, in a tone of alarm,

"What do I see? This Adrienne must be some fiend in human shape!"

"What is the matter?"

"The steward of Cardoville, writing to my niece to implore her protection, informs her of the young Indian prince being at the castle. She is well aware of his relationship to her, and despatches a letter forthwith to her old instructor in drawing, Norval, desiring him to set out post for Cardoville, in order to bring back Prince Djalma; he who, at all risks, and at any cost, must be kept away from Paris."

The marquis turned ghastly pale, as he said to Madame de Saint-Dizier, "If this be not some fresh whim of your capricious niece, the eagerness and anxiety she evinces to convey this relation from Cardoville here, proves that she knows even more than you have ever dared to suspect her of. There can be no further doubt, but that she is perfectly acquainted with the whole affair of the medals—she may ruin every thing : beware, beware !"

"Then," returned the princess, resolutely, "there is no further time for hesitation. We must proceed even to greater extremities than we first proposed. Let all be finished this morning."

"That is scarcely possible !"

"Pardon me," returned the princess, impatiently, "all things are possible to determined minds. The doctor and M. Tripeaud are with us, and will support us in everything."

"Although equally confident as yourself of the readiness and zeal of the doctor and M. Tripeaud in this business," said the marquis, thoughtfully, "yet I think we must not touch upon the question of executing our designs to-day, which might alarm them if too hastily explained, until we have had our proposed conference with your niece. Spite of her cunning, we shall easily manage to elicit from her what we want to know. And, if our suspicions be correct, if she really knows that which it would be so unsafe and dangerous she should be acquainted with, then there must be no further temporising—not an hour's delay—all hesitation must be at an end : we have no choice."

"Have you apprised the man we were speaking of?" said the princess, after a short silence.

"He will be here about twelve o'clock; he is sure not to be later."

"I have been thinking, we can perfectly well accomplish our purpose here; this room is only separated from the small salon by a small door, covered with a curtain, which can be let down, and your man can easily hide behind it."

"Excellent !"

"He is entirely to be depended upon, I suppose?"

"Quite, quite so ! We have frequently employed him under similar circumstances, and have ever found him discreet, clever, and useful !"

At this instant some one tapped lightly at the door.

"Come in," said the princess.

"Doctor Baleinier wishes to know if Madame la Princesse can see him?" inquired the *valet de chambre*, who presented himself.

"Certainly ! request him to walk in."

"There is also a person M. l'Abbé desired to meet here at twelve o'clock, and whom, according to his orders, I have desired to wait in the oratory."

"It is the man we were speaking of," said the marquis to the princess ; "we must introduce him here at once—it would be quite useless for Doctor Baleinier to see him just at present."

"Bring the person you have shewn into the oratory here," said the princess ; "then, when I ring, you will request Doctor Baleinier to walk in ; and should Baron Tripeaud call, conduct him to us at once. After that, I am not at home to any person but Mademoiselle Adrienne."



THE ENEMIES OF ADRIENNE.

P. 299.



THE ESPIONAGE.

P. 299.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ENEMIES OF ADRIENNE.

THE *valet de chambre* of the Princess de Saint-Dizier soon returned with a little pale-faced man, dressed in black and wearing spectacles; he bore under his arm a long case, covered with black leather.

"M. l'Abbé, I presume, has explained to you what you will have to do?"

"Yes, madame," answered the individual addressed, in a small, shrill voice, bowing most profoundly.

"Will this apartment be suitable to your purpose?" inquired the princess, as she conducted him to an adjoining chamber, separated from the salon only by the masked door.

"It will do extremely well, madame la princesse," replied the man with the spectacles, with another and still lower bow.

"You may then remain in this apartment. I will come and inform you when you are wanted."

"I shall wait your commands, madame la princesse."

"And be sure to attend carefully to the instructions I have given you," added the marquis, unfastening the curtains which hung before the opening.

The thick material of which they were composed fell heavily to the ground, and completely concealed the little personage in spectacles.

The princess rang the bell, and almost immediately a servant announced Doctor Baleinier, a most important person in this history.

Doctor Baleinier was about fifty years of age, of middle stature, stout, and with a round, rosy, shining countenance; his smooth grey hair, which he wore somewhat long, was parted down the middle of his forehead, and lay flat on his temples. He continued the old custom of black satin breeches, because, perhaps, he had a good leg; whilst he had gold buckles at his knees and in his bright morocco leather shoes. He wore a black waistcoat, coat, and cravat, which gave him somewhat of a clerical air; and his white plump hand was half concealed by a plaited ruffle of fine cambric, and the sedateness of his countenance did not prelude its nicety.

His countenance was smiling and intelligent, his small grey eye bespoke unusual sagacity and penetration; and Doctor Baleinier, a man of the world and of pleasure, a refined eater, a witty talker, attentive even to obsequiousness, supple, ready, and insinuating, was one of the oldest of the creatures of the coterie which the Princess de Saint-Dizier had drawn around her.

Thanks to that all-powerful support of which the world did not know the source, the doctor, who had been long unnoticed in spite of his real skill and indubitable merit, found himself under the Restoration pleasantly endowed with two lucrative medical sinecures, and by degrees, with a large list of patients; but we must add, that once under the patronage of the princess, the doctor began suddenly to be most

scrupulous in his religious duties—took the communion once a-week, and publicly at the high mass of St. Thomas Aquinas.

At the end of a year, a certain class of invalids, induced by the example and enthusiasm of Madame de Saint-Dizier's coterie, would not hear of any medical man but Doctor Baleinier, and his list of patients soon swelled to a large number.

We may easily judge of calls for the Order to have amongst its *out-door members* one of the most celebrated practitioners of Paris.

A physician has also his priesthood.

Admitted at all hours into the most secret intimacy of families, a physician knows, guesses, and can do many things.

Like the priest, he has the care of the sick and dying.

And where he who is charged with the health of the body, and he who is charged with the health of the soul, understand each other, and work mutually for one common interest, there is nothing (at least the exceptions are very few) which they cannot obtain from the weakness or the fear of the dying; not for themselves, for the laws deny that, but for the third portions, belonging, more or less, to that most convenient class, the *men of straw*.

Dr. Baleinier was thus one of the most active and valuable external members of the whole congregation of Paris.

When he entered, he kissed the hand of the princess with most perfect gallantry.

“Always punctual, my dear Monsieur Baleinier.”

“Always happy, always most desirous to attend your commands, madame.” Then turning to the marquis, whom he shook heartily by the hand, he added:

“At last we have you again! Do you know that three months is a very long time for your friends——”

“The time is not so long for those who depart as for those who remain, my dear doctor. Well; the great day has come at last: Mademoiselle de Cardoville is coming here directly.”

“I must say, that I feel some uneasiness,” said the princess: “if she had any suspicion——”

“That is impossible,” said M. Baleinier; “we are the best friends in the world. You know that Mademoiselle Adrienne has always had the greatest confidence in me. The day before yesterday we laughed together excessively, and I made, according to my usual habit, some remarks on her somewhat eccentric mode of life, and on the singular turn of ideas in which I found her on that occasion.”

“Pray, M. Baleinier, do not fail particularly to insist on this circumstance, however trifling it may seem,” said Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a significant glance at the marquis.

“But which are, indeed, of great importance,” replied he.

“Mademoiselle Adrienne replied to my observations,” answered the doctor, “by laughing at me in the most lively, sprightly manner imaginable, for I must own this young lady possesses the most brilliant sparkling wit of any female of my acquaintance.”

“Doctor! doctor!” interrupted Madame de Saint-Dizier, “none of this *weakness* from *you*, I beg!”

Instead of any immediate attention to this remark, M. Baleinier took his gold snuff-box from the pocket of his waistcoat, opened it, and

helping himself to a pinch of snuff continued, while slowly inhaling it, to regard the princess with an air so significant and satisfactory as seemed to have the effect of setting her quite at ease.

"My *weakness*, madame!" said M. Baleinier at length, while gently shaking off with his white hand a few grains of snuff which had fallen on the folds of his shirt front; "have I not done myself the honour to step forward and voluntarily proffer my aid in the difficult position in which you are now placed?"

"And you are the only living creature who really could be of service," added M. d'Aigrigny.

"Thus you see, then, madame," resumed the doctor, "I am not a *weak* person, since I perfectly comprehend the character and extent of the part you wish me to play; but you have assured me that such immense interests are at stake——"

"Immense, indeed!" rejoined M. d'Aigrigny; "an interest beyond all calculation!"

"With that impression on my mind, I did not allow myself to hesitate for a moment," replied M. Baleinier. "Be quite, easy, I pray you, and allow me, as a man of taste and judgment, to admire and do justice to the brilliant and remarkable powers of Mademoiselle Adrienne's mind, and when the moment for acting arrives, you will judge how far my admiration interferes with my duties to you."

"That moment may be nearer than we suppose," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, exchanging a look with M. d'Aigrigny.

"Well, I am always ready," answered the doctor. "I can depend upon myself as far as I am concerned; I only wish I felt equally tranquil as regards other matters."

"Is not your *Maison de Santé* in as first-rate celebrity as it is possible for such an establishment to be?" said Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a half smile.

"As for that," replied the doctor, "I have only to complain of the number of my patients increasing beyond my powers of accommodating them. No, that is not the subject of my uncasiness; but, while we are awaiting the arrival of Mademoiselle Adrienne, I will just say a few words respecting an affair with which she is but indirectly connected; it refers to the person who has purchased the estate at Cardoville, a certain Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, who, thanks to the skilful management of Rodin, has established me as her medical adviser."

"Indeed!" said D'Aigrigny. "Rodin wrote me on the subject, but without entering into particulars."

"The fact is this," continued the doctor; "this Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, who seemed at first so tractable, has lately evinced a great disposition to retrograde in her conversion; two of her spiritual advisers have already renounced all hopes of saving her. Not knowing how to proceed, Rodin despatched Philippon to her. Now Philippon is clever, determined, persevering, and possessed of patience enough to wear any body out; he was just the man we wanted. Knowing Madame de la Sainte-Colombe was one of my patients, Philippon applied to me for my assistance, which was very readily granted, and we agreed together as to our mode of co-operation. I was to appear entirely a stranger to him, while he was to give me daily accounts of the moral condition of his penitent, in order that, by a very

inoffensive medicine (for, in reality, the health of my patient was very triflingly affected), I might be able to produce alternations of health, or a slight derangement of it, according as her spiritual director was satisfied, or otherwise, with her religious progress, in order that he might be able to say to her, ' You see, inadame, while you steadfastly pursue the right road, grace produces an equally salutary effect on your body as your soul, and you are well : but do you, on the contrary, relapse into your former sins, behold you experience a return of bodily infirmities and physical ills—evidently proving the all-powerful influence of faith, not only on the mind but the body.' ”

“ It is, doubtless, painful,” said M. d'Aigrigny, with the most perfect *sang froid*, “ to be obliged to employ such means to save a fellow-creature from perdition ; but we must at all times adopt our modes of action to the understanding and disposition of the individual concerned.”

“ Besides,” resumed the doctor, “ madame la princesse may recollect that I often, very successfully, employed these methods in the convent of Sainte-Marie, for the safety of the soul of some of our invalids. These alternations vary, at the utmost, only from being ‘ quite well ’ to becoming ‘ a little ailing ; ’ but, however slight the change effected, it is frequently sufficient to work very efficaciously on certain minds. And thus had it progressed most beneficially with Madame de la Sainte-Colombe ; indeed she appeared to be in so certain a path of mental cure, that Rodin considered he might with safety direct Philippon to advise his penitent to retire to the country, fearing the probability of her relapsing if she continued in Paris. This advice, coupled with her own desire to appear as the Lady Bountiful of the parish, determined her to purchase the estate of Cardoville (which, by the by, was a capital investment for her money) ; but, behold ! yesterday, this unfortunate Philippon came to acquaint me that Madame de la Sainte-Colombe was on the point of experiencing a fearful relapse—fearful, indeed, for it is one quite out of the reach of medicine. Now this mischief has all arisen from a conversation this lady has had with a certain Jaques Dumoulin, of whom you know something, I am told, my dear abbé, and who has managed, I know not how, to form an acquaintance with her.”

“ This Jaques Dumoulin,” said the marquis, with disgust, “ is one of the men we despise while we make use of them. He is a writer full of gall, envy, and hatred, and he possesses a species of sharp, coarse eloquence. We pay him well to defend us from the attacks of our enemies, though it is really painful to vindicate, through the medium of such a pen, the principles we adopt and revere. He is a poor, miserable seamp, always at a tavern, and generally carried home in a state of intoxication ; but still the fellow has a most inexhaustible vein of abuse, and is, besides, well versed in all theological controversies : so that, at times, his services are really very valuable to us.”

“ Well, though Madame de la Sainte-Colombe must at least have numbered sixty years, it would appear that Dumoulin has matrimonial designs upon the large fortune of this lady. You will do wisely, I think, to apprise Rodin, in order that he may take steps to preserve her from the sinister designs of this aspirant to her gold. But I must beg a thousand pardons for detaining you so long with these disagreeable particulars. *Apropos* of the convent of Sainte-Marie, of which I

did myself, just now, the honour of making mention, madame," added the doctor, addressing himself to the princess; "is it long since you were there?"

The princess exchanged a quick glance with M. d'Aigrigny, and replied:

"Why, about eight days ago."

"Then you will find much change: the wall which was between that and my *Maison de Santé* has been pulled down, and they are about to build up a new mansion and a chapel, as the old one was too small. Besides, I must say, to the praise of Mademoiselle Adrienne," added the doctor, with a singular half-smile, "that she had promised me, for the chapel, a copy of the 'Virgin' of Raphael."

"Indeed! that was very *à propos*," said the princess. "But it is nearly twelve o'clock, and M. Tripeaud has not arrived."

"He is the acting guardian of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, and has managed her affairs as the old acting man of the comte-due," said the marquis, evidently pre-occupied; "and his presence is indispensably requisite to us. He ought to be here before Mademoiselle de Cardoville, who may come at any moment."

"It is a pity that his portrait cannot replace him here," said the doctor, with a meaning smile, and taking a small pamphlet from his pocket.

"What is that, doctor?" inquired the princess.

"One of those anonymous pamphlets which appear from time to time; it is called the *Scourge*, and the picture of Baron Tripeaud is there sketched with so much truth that it ceases to be satire. It becomes reality: see, or hear rather. This etching is entitled, 'TYPE OF THE LYNX.'

"*M. the Baron Tripeaud*.—This man, who shews himself, who conducts himself, as grossly servile towards certain superiors in the social scale, as he does coarsely and brutally to those who are dependant on him—this man is the living and repulsive incarnation of the worst portion of the commercial and industrial aristocracy, of the *monied man*, the cold-blooded speculator, heartless, soulless, faithless, who would play at pitch-and-toss as to the death of his mother, if his mother's death would have any effect on the rise or fall of the funds.

"Such men have all the hateful vices of a newly enfranchised class; not of those whom honourable, patient, and worthy toil have nobly enriched, but of those who have been suddenly favoured by the blind caprice of chance, or by a happy cast of the net in the foul waters of stock-jobbing.

"Once risen, these men hate the people, because the people remind them of their origin, at which they blush. Without pity for the frightful wretchedness of the masses, they attribute it to their idleness and debauchery, because this foul calumny is a palliation for their brutal selfishness.

"But this is not all.

"From the elevation of his strong box, and his double right as an eligible representative, M. the Baron Tripeaud, like many others, insults the poverty and political incapacity,—

“Of the soldier of fortune, who, after forty years’ service and warfare, can hardly exist on his scanty retiring pension ;

“Of the magistrate, who has spent his life in fulfilling sad and painful duties, and is so miserably remunerated at the close of his days ;

“Of the scholar, who has illustrated his country by his useful labours ; or the professor, who has instructed whole generations in every class of human knowledge ;

“Of the modest and virtuous country priest, the purest representative of the Gospel in its charitable, paternal, and popular interpretation, &c. &c.

“In this state of things, must not Monsieur the *Baronde l’industrie* have the most perfect contempt for the crowds of honest folk, who, after having given to their country their youth, mature years, their blood, their intelligence, and their knowledge, see themselves denied the rights which *he* enjoys ? Yes, *he !* because he has gained a million at a game forbidden by law, or by some discreditable undertaking !

“It is true that the optimists say to these outcasts of civilisation, whose proud and honest poverty they cannot too much honor and venerate,—

“*Buy property*—then you will be eligible as electors.’

“We now come to the biography of M. the Baron.

“André Tripeaud, son of an ostler at a country inn ——”

At this moment, the two folding-doors opened, and the *valet de chambre* announced, “M. the Baron Tripeaud !”

Doctor Baleinier pocketed his pamphlet, saluted the financier most cordially, and even rose to shake him by the hand.

The baron entered, making most respectful salutations from the moment the doors were opened.

“I have the honour to attend the princess’s orders—she knows that she may always rely on me.”

“I rely on you most entirely, Monsieur Tripeaud, and especially in the present peculiar circumstance.”

“If the princess’s intentions respecting mademoiselle continue precisely as they were ——”

“They do precisely, sir ; and that is the reason why we have all met here to-day.”

“Madame la Princesse may feel assured of my concurrence, which I have already promised to her. I think, also, that the greatest severity ought now to be employed, and that it is even requisite ——”

“That is our opinion, also,” said the marquis hastily, making a sign to the princess, and looking towards the spot where the man with the spectacles was concealed ; “we are all agreed,” he added, “only let us perfectly understand, not to leave any point concerning the interests of this young lady in doubt, for it is her interests which alone guide us ; let us, therefore, excite her sincerity by all possible means.”

“Mademoiselle has come from the garden of the pavilion, and begs to know if she can see my lady,” said the *valet de chambre*, who again presented himself, after having knocked at the door.

“Tell mademoiselle that I am waiting for her,” said the princess ; “and now I am not at home to anybody—do you hear ?—not to any-

body." Then lifting the screen, behind which the man was hidden, Madame Saint-Dizier gave him a look of intelligence, and then returned to the salon.

It was strange, but, during the short space which preceded the arrival of Adrienne, the different actors in this scene seemed disturbed and embarrassed, as if they somehow dreaded her appearance.

At the end of a minute, Mademoiselle de Cardoville entered into her aunt's apartment.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SKIRMISH.

As she entered, Mademoiselle de Cardoville threw into an arm-chair her grey beaver hat, which she had put on to cross the garden, and displayed her beautiful golden hair, which fell on each side of her face in long and graceful curls, and was twisted up in a large knot at the back of her head.

Adrienne presented herself without boldness, but yet perfectly self-possessed; her countenance was smiling and animated, and her large black eyes seemed more than usually sparkling. When she saw the Abbé d'Aigrigny, she made a slight movement of surprise, and a slight derisive smile passed over her ruby lips. Having made a kind nod of the head to the doctor, and passed in front of Baron Tripeaud without looking at him, she saluted the princess with a half-curtsey, in the best possible taste.

Although the appearance and carriage of Mademoiselle de Cardoville were highly *distingués*, in the best style, and particularly remarkable for their womanly grace, yet there was perceptible a *something* resolute, independent, and haughty, very rare amongst females, and especially young ladies at her age; and her movements, without being abrupt, yet had nothing of constraint, stiffness, or formality—they were, in fact, free and independent, like her disposition; and it was easy to see in her the full circulation of life-blood and youth, and to judge that this organization, so entirely open, loyal, and decided, had never as yet submitted to the restraint of affected rigour.

It was strange that the Marquis d'Aigrigny, although a man of the world, of great wit, a churchman remarkable for his eloquence, and especially as a man of control and authority, experienced an unaccountable discomfort, an inexpressible and almost painful restraint, in presence of Adrienne de Cardoville. He, always so much under self-control; he, habituated to the exercise of unbounded power; he who had often, in the name of his Order, treated on terms of equality with crowned heads, felt himself embarrassed, and ill at ease with himself, in the presence of this young girl, who was as remarkable for her frankness as for her wit and biting satire. Yet as men who are accustomed to impose on others are close on hating those persons,

who, instead of submitting to their influence, jest at and embarrass them, so it was not precisely a feeling of affection which the marquis experienced for the niece of the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

For a long time, and contrary to his usual practice, he had ceased to try with Adrienne that seductive power, that fascination of language, to which was mainly owing the irresistibility of his demeanour; but with her he was cold, short, and serious, and assumed a frigid and haughty dignity, and austere formality, which utterly paralysed the amiable qualities with which he was gifted, and which usually served his purpose so well and satisfactorily. Adrienne was greatly amused at all this, but most imprudently, for the most vulgar motives very often produce implacable hatred.

Having thus premised, the different feelings and interests which actuated the several actors in this scene may be easily penetrated.

Madame de Saint-Dizier was seated in a large arm-chair at the corner of the fire-place.

The Marquis d'Aigrigny was standing upright before the fire.

Doctor Baleinier, seated near a writing-desk, had resumed his perusal of the Baron Tripeaud's biography.

The baron seemed to be very attentively examining a picture on a scriptural subject hung against the wall.

"You sent for me, aunt, to talk over some important matters?" said Adrienne, breaking the embarrassing silence which had pervaded the salon since her entrance.

"Yes, mademoiselle," replied the princess, with a cold and stern air; "and it is a conversation on a most serious matter."

"I am quite at your service, aunt. Shall we go into your library?"

"There is no occasion for that, we can talk here." Then addressing the marquis, the doctor, and the baron, she said, "Gentlemen, will you please to be seated."

They accordingly took their places round the cabinet table of the princess.

"May I inquire, aunt," asked Mademoiselle de Cardoville, with surprise, "in what manner our conversation can possibly concern these gentlemen?"

"These gentlemen are old friends of the family; all that can affect you interests them, and their counsels ought to be listened to, and received by you with respect."

"I have no doubt, aunt, of the very particular friendship of M. d'Aigrigny for our family, still less can I doubt the profound and disinterested devotion of M. Tripeaud; M. Baleinier is one of my old friends: but before I accept of these gentlemen as spectators, or, if you like better, aunt, as confidants of our conversation, I wish to be instructed as to the subject which is to be discussed before them."

"I thought, mademoiselle, that amongst your singular pretensions you had at least frankness and courage."

"Oh, aunt!" replied Adrienne, smiling with mock humility, "I have no greater pretensions to frankness and courage than you have to sincerity and goodness; let us, therefore, *agrec*, once for all, that we are what we are—without pretension."

"Be it so," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, in a dry tone. "For a long time I have been accustomed to the displays of your independent

spirit, and I think that, frank and courageous as you are said to be, you ought not to fear speaking out before persons, as serious and respectable as these gentlemen, as you would if we two were alone."

"It is, then, an interrogatory in form which I am to undergo; and on what point?"

"It is not an interrogatory; but, as I have the right to watch over you, and as you abuse my weak complianee with your humours more and more, I am desirous of putting an end to that which has lasted too long already; and I am also desirous, before these friends of our family, to signify to you my irrevocable resolution as to the future. And in the first place let me tell you, that up to this period you have entertained a very false and imperfect idea of my power over you."

"I assure you, aunt, that I have never entertained any idea, false or true; for it is a point on which I have never thought at all."

"That was my fault: I ought, instead of complying with your fancies, to have made you rather to feel more severely my full authority. But the moment has come when you must be made to submit: the heavy blame of my friends has opened my eyes before it is too late. Your disposition is self-willed, independent, and headstrong, and it must be altered I tell you; and I, moreover, tell you it shall be altered."

At these words, harshly spoken, and before persons not allied to her, and whose severity seemed wholly uncalled for, Adrienne raised her head haughtily; but mastering her emotion, she replied, with a smile,

"You say, aunt, that I shall alter: that will not surprise me. We have seen conversions quite as singular."

The princess bit her lip.

"A sincere conversion is never singular, as you term it, mademoiselle," said the Abbé d'Aigrigny, coldly; "but, on the contrary, very meritorious and most exemplary."

"Exemplary!" retorted Adrienne. "That's as it may be; for, if faults are converted into vices —"

"What mean you, mademoiselle?" exclaimed the princess.

"I speak of myself, aunt: you reproach me with being independent and resolute; if by accident I were to become hypocritical and wicked, why, really I would rather preserve my dear little naughtinesses, which I love as spoiled children. I know what I am, but not what I might then become."

"Still, Mademoiselle Adrienne," said the Baron Tripeaud, with a sententious and conceited air, "you cannot deny that a conversion —"

"I believe that M. Tripeaud is extremely strong on the conversion of every kind of thing, into every sort of profit, by every possible means," said Adrienne, in a marked and disdainful tone: "but the subject before us is not his business."

"But, mademoiselle," replied the financier, taking courage from a look of the princess, "you forget that I have the honor to be your sub-guardian, and that —"

"It is perfectly true that M. Tripeaud has that honour, and I never could clearly understand wherefore," said Adrienne, with increased *hauteur*, and not even looking at the baron; "but at present we are

not guessing riddles. I beg, therefore, aunt, to learn the motive and the end of this meeting."

"You shall be satisfied, mademoiselle; I will explain myself in a way perfectly clear and precise. You will learn the line of conduct which you must henceforward pursue, and if you refuse to submit with obedience and respect due to my commands, I shall then see what I have to do."

It is impossible to depict the imperious tone, the harsh demeanour, of the princess, as she said these words, which were enough to startle a young girl accustomed, up to that time, to live and do as she pleased. Yet, perhaps, contrary to the expectation of Madame Saint-Dizier, instead of replying with temper, Adrienne looked her full in the face, and said laughingly,—

"Really, then, it is a decided declaration of war; this becomes amusing."

"It is no declaration of war," said the abbé, in a severe tone, wounded by Mademoiselle de Cardoville's expressions.

"Ah, Monsieur l'Abbé!" she replied; "you, an old colonel, are very hard on a jest! you, who owe so much to war! you who, thanks to war, have commanded a French regiment, after having for so long a time fought against France—in order, no doubt, that you might know alike the strength and weakness of your enemies!"

At these words, which called up painful remembrances, the marquis turned red and was about to reply, when the princess exclaimed,—

"Really, mademoiselle, this conduct is most intolerable!"

"Is it, aunt?—then I will confess my error, and will not even say that it is amusing, for, really, it is not at all so; but, at least, it is curious, and, perhaps, even," added the young lady, after a moment's silence,— "perhaps, even rather bold: but I like boldness. Since, then, we are on this point, and are to decide upon a course of conduct which I am to comply with, under penalty of——" then checking herself, and addressing her aunt, "Under what penalty, aunt?"

"You will learn: continue."

"I will then, before these gentlemen, deliver to you, in a clear and precise manner, my determination. As it required time before it was ripe for execution, I have not mentioned it to you before; for, as you know, it is not my custom to say 'I will do this,' but 'I have done so and so.'"

"Certainly; and it is this habit of culpable independence that you must break through."

"It was not my intention to have informed you of my resolution for the present, but I cannot resist the pleasure of telling you a portion of it to-day, as you seem so desirous to learn and approve of it. But I beg of you, aunt, first to speak; it might so happen that our opinions are completely accordant."

"I like better to find you in this mood," said the princess; "I find in you the courage of your pride and your contempt of all authority. You talk of boldness, your own is excessive."

"I am at least fully determined to do what others, through weakness, unfortunately, dare not do; I will dare. This, I think, is clear and precise enough."

"Very clear—very precise," said the princess, exchanging a look

of intelligence and satisfaction with the other actors in this scene. "Positions thus established very much simplify matters. I ought, though, to warn you, for your own sake, that this is a very serious affair—more so than you think, and that there is but one way in which you can dispose me to be indulgent; and that is, by substituting for the arrogance and habitual irony of your language the modesty and respect which becom a young lady."

Adrienne smiled, but made no reply.

There was a brief silence, and some looks exchanged again between the princess and her three friends, which implied that a serious battle was about to follow these skirmishings, more or less lively.

Mademoiselle de Cardoville had too much penetration, too much sagacity, not to observe that the Princess de Saint-Dizier attached very serious importance to this decisive conversation; but the young lady did not understand how her aunt could hope to impose on her her absolute will; threats of having recourse to means of coercion seemed to her ridiculous. Nevertheless, knowing the vindictive character of her aunt, the dark power she wielded, the terrible vengeance she had sometimes taken; reflecting, also, that men, in the positions of the marquis and the doctor, could not be called in to assist at such an interview but from weighty motives, the young lady reflected for a moment before she gave battle.

But very speedily, for the very reason of her vague suspicions of some danger at hand, she, so far from succumbing, resolved to face and brave her, exaggerating if possible the independence of her own ideas, and maintaining to the last, in spite of all and every thing, the determination which she, on her side, meant to notify to the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE REVOLT.

"**MADemoiselle,**" said the princess to Adrienne de Cardoville, in a cold and severe tone, "I owe it to myself, I owe it to these gentlemen, to recall, in a few words, the events which have been passing now for some time. Six months ago, after your mourning for your father, and when you were eighteen years of age, you asked my leave to enjoy your fortune and be emancipated from control. I was weak enough to comply. You wished to leave this hôtel and establish yourself in the pavilion in the garden, away from all *surveillance*, and you then began a series of extravaganees, each more excessive than the other. Instead of contenting yourself with one or two waiting-maids taken from the class in which they are usually found, you have selected companions, whom you have dressed in a manner as whimsical as it is extravagant; whilst you, in the solitude of your pavilion, have, it is true, attired yourself in every costume of bygone times in turns. Your caprices, your follies, have been boundless and unreasonable; not only have you never fulfilled your religious duties, but you have had the audacity to profane one of your salons by erecting some sort of a pagan altar, in which there is a marble group re-

presenting a young man and young woman (the princess pronounced these words as if they burnt her lips); it is, perhaps, called an object of art, but no object of art could be more unfitly placed than in the apartment of a young person of your age. You have passed whole days entirely secluded and alone, without receiving any person; and Dr. Baleinier, the only one of my friends whose confidence you have preserved, having at length obtained admittance to you, has frequently found you in such a high state of excitement, that he has had the greatest fears for your health. You have always chosen to go out alone, without being in any way accountable to any person for your actions; and at length it has pleased you at last, upon all occasions, to set your own will above my authority. All this is true, is it not?"

"This picture of the past is not very flattering," said Adrienne, with a smile; "but I will not say that I could not recognise any of the features."

"Well then, mademoiselle," said the Abbé d'Aigrigny, speaking with much deliberation, "you confess that all the facts which your aunt has adduced are scrupulously true?"

All eyes were now turned on Adrienne, as if her reply were of extreme importance.

"I should think, sir, that I am accustomed to live so openly that such a question is perfectly useless."

"These facts, then, are confessed," said the Abbé d'Aigrigny, turning to the doctor and the baron.

"These facts, remain completely substantiated," said M. Tripeaud, with a consequential air.

"May I inquire, aunt," said Adrienne, "the use of this long preamble?"

"This long preamble, mademoiselle," replied the princess, with dignity, "serves to reveal the past so that it may operate upon the future."

"This is really something, my dear aunt, a little in the style of the mysterious utterings of the Cumæan sibyl. Something very terrible must be to follow."

"Perhaps so, mademoiselle; for nothing can be more terrible for certain dispositions than obedience and duty; and your disposition is of that class which is inclined to rebellion."

"I confess the fact undisguisedly, aunt; and so it will be until the time when I can cherish obedience and respect duty."

"Whether you cherish or respect my orders or not is of little consequence, mademoiselle," said the princess, in a harsh and brief tone; "but from this very day, this very moment, you must begin to submit yourself entirely and blindly to my will,—in a word, you shall do nothing without my permission: it must and shall be so."

Adrienne looked steadfastly at her aunt for a minute, and then burst into a fit of loud and real laughter, which echoed through the large apartment.

M. d'Aigrigny and the Baron Tripeaud made gestures of indignation.

The princess looked at her niece with an angry air.

The doctor raised his eyes to Heaven, and, clasping his hands together over his stomach, sighed with much compunction.

"Mademoiselle, such bursts of laughter are very ill-timed," said

the Abbé d'Aigrigny; "the language of your aunt is most serious, and deserves a very different reception."

"Oh, sir!" said Adrienne, repressing her mirth; "whose fault is it if I laugh so loud? How could I remain unmoved, when I heard my aunt speak of a blind submission to her orders? Can the swallow, accustomed to fly freely through the air, to enjoy the full sunlight, live, exist, in a mole-hill?"

At this reply, M. d'Aigrigny affected to regard the other members of this kind of family consultation with profound astonishment.

"A swallow! what does she mean?" asked the abbé of the baron, making him a sign which the other understood.

"I really do not comprehend," replied Tripeaud, looking in his turn at the doctor; "she talks of a mole—I never heard of such a thing—never, really!"

"This then, mademoiselle," said the princess, appearing to participate in the surprise of the other persons; "this, then, is the reply you make to me?"

"Certainly," replied Adrienne, astonished in her turn that they should affect not to understand the figure of speech she had made use of, as she was often in the habit of using poetic and pictorial similes.

"Really, madame, really!" said Dr. Baleinier, smiling blandly, "we must be indulgent; my dear Mademoiselle Adrienne has such a lively disposition, such a mirthful, excitable temperament—she is really the most delightful little madcap I ever knew, and I have told her so a hundred times in my capacity of an old friend, who is allowed to say——"

"I can perfectly comprehend that your regard for mademoiselle makes you very indulgent; but it is not the less true, doctor," said M. d'Aigrigny, appearing to reproach the physician for taking part with Mademoiselle de Cardoville, "that these are most wild replies when there is a discussion on questions so grave and serious."

"The misfortune is, that mademoiselle does not comprehend the seriousness of this conference," said the princess, with a severe air. "Perhaps she will comprehend it now, when I shall tell her my commands."

"Let us hear those commands, aunt."

And Adrienne, who had been sitting on the further side of the table opposite to her aunt, placed her little rosy chin in the hollow of her beautiful hand, with an air of graceful mockery which was charming.

"From to-morrow," replied the princess, "you will quit the pavilion in which you dwell. You will dismiss your women—you will return and occupy two rooms here, which have no approach but through my apartment—you will never go out alone—you will accompany me to religious duties—your freedom will cease, in consequence of extravagances clearly and distinctly made out. I shall take upon myself the entire arrangement of all your expenses; I shall order your dresses, in order that you may be modestly dressed as you ought to be; and in fact, until you attain your majority, which is not now indefinitely deferred, thanks to the intervention of a family consultation, you will not have any sum of money at your command. Such is my will."

"And certainly your resolution, Madame la Princesse, cannot be too much applauded," said the Baron Tripcaud. "And you must be

supported in displaying the greatest firmness, for such conduct ought to be put a stop to."

"It is more than time to terminate such scandalous behaviour!" added the abbé.

"Caprice, excitement of habit, however, may palliate many things," said the doctor, with an hypocritical air.

"Unquestionably, doctor," replied the princess dryly to the doctor, who played his part admirably; "but that is in reference to dispositions which deserve it."

Madame de Saint-Dizier had expressed herself in a precise and firm manner, and seemed convinced of the possibility of executing all she had menaced her niece with. M. Tripeaud and M. d'Aigrigny gave their full assent to all the princess had said. Adrienne then began to perceive that there was really something serious in agitation, and then her gaiety gave way to bitter irony, and an expression of aroused independence.

She rose suddenly from her seat, her countenance was somewhat suffused, whilst her nostrils expanded, her eye glistened, and raising her head, she shook her bright and flowing hair with a gesture full of natural dignity, and, after a moment's silence, replied to her aunt in an emphatic tone:

"You, madame, have spoken of the past; I will now say a few words, to which you have urged me—yes, urged me, and I regret to say it. I left your dwelling because it was impossible that I could any longer live in an atmosphere of dark hypocrisy and basest perfidy."

"Mademoiselle," said M. d'Aigrigny, "such language is as violent as it is unreasonably!"

"Sir, since you interrupt me I will say two words to you," said Adrienne peremptorily, and looking steadfastly at the abbé. "What examples did I find in my aunt's abode?"

"Excellent examples! mademoiselle."

"Excellent, sir? Was it because I saw there daily her conversion, the accomplice of your own?"

"Mademoiselle, you forget yourself!" said the princess, pale with rage.

"Madame, I do not forget; I remember, as every body else must. No more! I had no relative from whom to seek an asylum—I wished to live alone—I desired to have my income, because I would rather spend it myself than allow it to be wasted by M. Tripeaud."

"Mademoiselle!" exclaimed the baron, "I cannot understand how you can allow yourself——"

"Enough, sir!" said Adrienne, imposing silence on him by a gesture of the most cutting *hauteur*. "I am speaking of you, and not to you."

Adrienne continued:

"I resolved, therefore, to expend my revenue according to my own tastes; I have embellished the retreat I selected. To waiting maids ugly and ill-informed, I have preferred good-looking young girls, well brought up, though poor; their education not permitting me to put them to domestic drudgery, I have made their situations agreeable and light: they do not serve me, they render me service; I pay them, but it is I who am grateful. These are niceties which I know

you do not comprehend, madame. Instead of seeing them badly or ungracefully dressed, I have given them attire which suits their handsome faces, because I like what is young and handsome ; and if I dress in any peculiar way, that is nothing to any body but my looking-glass. I go out alone, because I like to go wherever my fancy may lead me. I do not go to mass—true. If I had a mother alive, I would tell her what my devotions were, and she would embrace me tenderly. I have raised a pagan altar to Youth and Beauty—that is true : because I adore God in every thing that is beautiful, good, noble, and great, and my heart from morning to night repeats this fervent and sincere prayer : ‘ Thanks, Almighty Father ! thanks.’ M. Baleinier, you say, madame, has often found me in my solitude, a prey to strange excitement—that is true, also ; because at such moments, escaping by thought from all that makes the present so hateful, so painful, so repulsive, I have sought refuge in the future, and then I have conjured up magic horizons—then I have seen visions so glorious that I have been carried away in sublime and divine ecstacy, and belong no more to this earth.”

As she pronounced these words with much enthusiasm, the physiognomy of Adrienne seemed to glow with inspiration, and at the moment she was out of the world which existed around and about her.

“ It is then,” she continued, with increasing excitement, “ I breathe a pure, vivifying, and free air—oh, yes, free ! free ! and so wholesome, so congenial to the soul ! Yes, instead of seeing my sisters painfully submitted to an egotistical, humiliating, and brutal control, to which they owe the seducing vices of slavery, sleek fraud, seducing perfidy, cajoling mendacity, despicable resignation, odious obedience, I see them, those noble sisters, worthy and sincere, because they are free—faithful and devoted, because they have a choice ; neither despotic nor servile, because they have no master to rule or flatter ; cherished and respected indeed, because they could withdraw from a faithless hand a hand faithfully given. Oh, my sisters ! my sisters ! I see them ; they are not only comforting visions, they are also sacred hopes !”

Led away in spite of herself by the excitement of her ideas, Adrienne kept silent for a moment, that she might alight *on earth again*, and did not remark that the actors in this scene looked at each other with a delighted air.

“ But what she says is really delightful, beautiful !” murmured the doctor in the princess’s ear ; “ if she had arranged it with us, she could not have spoken better.”

“ It is only by exciting her through a course of extreme severity that she will *touch the point to which we must drive her*,” added M. d’Aigrigny.

But it would appear, that the irritation of Adrienne was dissipated when it came in collision with the generous feelings that pervaded her.

Addressing M. Baleinier, she said :

“ But, doctor, it must be confessed that nothing is so ridiculous as to give way to the enjoyment of certain thoughts in the presence of persons incapable of appreciating them. I have given you a fine opportunity for deriding that excitement of temperament with which

you sometimes reproach me; and I, to allow myself to be led away at so serious a moment, for it appears this is a very serious moment! But then, my good M. Baleinier, when an idea comes into my mind, it is as impossible for me not to follow it up as it was impossible that I should not run after butterflies when I was a good little girl."

"And Heaven only knows whither those brilliant butterflies of every hue, which came across your mind, have led you. Ah, the mad head—the foolish fancy!" said M. Baleinier, smiling with a paternal and indulgent air; "when will you be as reasonable as you are charming?"

"From this instant, doctor," replied Adrienne, "I will at once abandon my reveries for realities, and speak a language perfectly positive, as you shall hear."

Then addressing her aunt, she continued:

"You have communicated to me, madame, your will; I will now communicate mine:

"In less than a week I shall leave the pavilion I inhabit for a mansion which I have fitted up according to my taste, and I shall live there as I please. I have neither father nor mother, and am therefore not accountable for my actions to any person but myself."

"Really, mademoiselle," said the princess, shrugging her shoulders, "you are talking nonsense! you forget that society has imperscriptible rights of morality, and that we are empowered to see them enforced; and, rely on it, we will do so."

"Well, then, madame, it must be you, then, and M. d'Aigrigny, and M. Tripeaud, who represent the morality of society. That is an ingenious idea, certainly. Is it because M. Tripeaud has considered I must confess my fortune as his own? Is it because——"

"Really, really, mademoiselle!" cried Tripeaud.

"Presently, madame," said Adrienne to her aunt, without deigning a reply to the baron, "as the opportunity serves, I shall take leave to ask of you information as to certain interests which, I believe, have been concealed from me until now——"

At these words of Adrienne, M. d'Aigrigny and the princess were startled. They exchanged looks of pain and uneasiness. Adrienne did not remark it, and continued:

"But that we may come to the point, madame, I will be explicit. I will live precisely as I may choose. I do not think, if I were a man, that at my age they would inflict upon me the severe and humiliating system of tutelage which you desire to impose, for having lived as I have lived hitherto—that is to say, honourably, freely, and generously, in sight of all."

"The idea is absurd! 'tis madness!" exclaimed the princess. "It is to countenance demoralisation, and the forgetfulness of all modesty to the last degree, to desire to lead such a life!"

"Then, madame," said Adrienne, "what opinion have you of many poor girls of humble origin, orphans like myself, who live as free and alone as I mean to do? They have not had, as I have had, a refined education, which elevates the soul and purifies the heart. They have not, as I have, riches, which defend from all the bad temptations of misery, and yet they live honest and proud in their distress."

"Vice and virtue have no existence for such low-lived creatures!" exclaimed the Baron Tripeaud, with an expression of harshness and fierce contempt.

"Madame, you would turn away one of your lackeys who dared to use such language before you," said Adrienne to her aunt, unable to repress her disgust; "and yet you compel me to hear such things!"

The Marquis d'Aigrigny pressed Tripeaud's knee under the table, who had spoken in the princess's salon as he would at the Exchange, and said quickly, to repair the baron's coarseness,

"Mademoiselle, there is no comparison between such people and a young lady of your station."

"For a Catholic, M. l'Abbé, the distinction is not very Christian-like," replied Adrienne.

"I know the force of my words, mademoiselle," replied the abbé, formally; "and the independent life you would lead, against all reason, must involve sad consequences for the future: for, perhaps, some day or other, your family may wish to marry you, and then——"

"I will spare my family that trouble, sir. If I desire to marry, I will marry myself—that, I think, is but fair: though, to tell the truth, I am but little tempted to wear the heavy chain which selfishness and brutality rivets round our necks."

"It is really quite unbecoming, mademoiselle," said the princess, "to speak thus slightly of this Institution!"

"Before you, madame, assuredly; and I pray you to forgive me for having shocked you. You are afraid that my independent manner of living will frighten away my snitors—that is another reason why I will persist in my independence, for I have a horror of suitors. All I desire is to frighten them away, and give them a bad opinion of me, and to effect that there is no better way than to appear to live exactly as they live themselves. And so I rely on my whims, my follies, and my cherished defects and faults, to preserve me from the tiresome attentions of being sought after in marriage."

"You shall be perfectly satisfied on that point, mademoiselle," replied Madame de Saint-Dizier, "if, unfortunately (and it is much to be feared), the report should spread abroad of your having so entirely discarded all regard to appearances and propriety, as to be seen returning home at eight o'clock in the morning (as I am told you have been), though, I confess, I neither can nor dare give credit to such an enormity."

"Nay, madame, but you are wrong in refusing your belief; for it is——"

"Then you confess it!" exclaimed the princess.

"I never disown my actions, madame: I did return home this morning at eight o'clock!"

"Gentlemen!" cried the princess, "you hear her!"

"Ah!" exclaimed M. d'Aigrigny, in an undertone.

"Ah!" echoed the baron, in a false and subtle voice.

"Ah!" murmured the doctor, with a deep sigh.

As the mingled lamentations arose, Adrienne was on the point of speaking, with a view of justifying herself; but by the slightly contemptuous curl of her lip it was evident she afterwards disdained all explanation.

"And so this disgraceful report is really true?" resumed the

princess. "Ah, mademoiselle! although you have long taught me to be astonished at nothing you do, it required your audacious reply to convince me of the present flagrant violation of decency and propriety!"

"I have always imagined, madame, that there was much greater audacity in uttering a falsehood than in speaking the truth."

"And where had you been, mademoiselle? and upon what business?"

"Madame," said Adrienne, interrupting her aunt, "equal to my determination of not soiling my lips with falsehood is my resolution of not repeating that which I think advisable to conceal. Added to which, I should be wanting in self-respect could I condescend to answer so repugnant an accusation. Let us drop the subject, if you please; all your importunities concerning it will be useless: let us rather go back to the point we were discussing. You wish to impose on me a system of rigid *surveillance*, while I intend to follow my own inclinations as to quitting the pavilion I now occupy, and to dwell there or elsewhere, according as my inclinations may decide. Now one of us must needs yield to the other: which shall it be?—time will decide. But another thing: this hôtel is mine. It is indifferent to me your remaining here, now I have left it; but the ground-floor is uninhabited, and contains, without reckoning the reception-rooms, two complete suites of apartments, which I have disposed of for some time."

"Really, mademoiselle!" said the princess, casting a look of surprise at M. d'Aigrigny; then adding, ironically, "And may I be permitted to inquire to whom you have disposed of them?"

"Madame, I require them for the accommodation of three persons belonging to my family."

"What, in Heaven's name, do you mean!" exclaimed Madame de Saint-Dizier, becoming still more and more astonished.

"I mean, madame, that I am desirous of exercising the rites of hospitality towards a young Indian prince, my relation by my mother's side: he will arrive here in two or three days, and I wish to have the apartments ready for his reception."

"Do you hear this, gentlemen?" inquired M. d'Aigrigny (affecting utter amazement) of the doctor and M. Tripeaud.

"This passes all imagination!" said the baron.

"Alas!" said the doctor, with compunction, "the sentiment is generous in itself; but still this wild little head——"

"Excellent, indeed!" cried the princess. "Certainly I cannot prevent you, mademoiselle, from giving utterance to the most extravagant desires, but it is to be hoped you do not mean to stop short in your projects,—surely this is not *all*?"

"Not quite, madame! I have this morning learned that two young females, also my relations by my mother—two young girls of about fifteen years of age — orphans, the children of Marshal Simon, arrived in Paris yesterday, after a long journey, and are now staying with the wife of the brave soldier who has brought them hither from the most distant part of Siberia."

At these words M. d'Aigrigny and the princess suddenly started, and surveyed each other with undisguised alarm; so little did they an-

anticipate the intelligence of the return of General Simon's daughters reaching the ears of Adrienne, that the circumstance was a perfect thunderbolt to them.

"You are, doubtless, astonished to find me so well informed," said Adrienne; "fortunately, I am enabled to promise myself the power of surprising you still more shortly. But, to return to the daughters of General Simon: you must feel aware, madame, that it is quite impossible I can allow them to be a burthen to the worthy persons with whom they have found a temporary asylum; and although the people are as honest and good as they are industrious, still it is no fitting residence for my young relatives. I, therefore, propose placing them in one of the suites of apartments on the ground-floor, with the soldier's wife, who will make an excellent housekeeper for them."

As Adrienne concluded, M. d'Aigrigny and the baron exchanged looks, while the latter said aloud—

"Decidedly her head is quite turned!"

Adrienne, without deigning to notice M. Tripeaud, proceeded:

"General Simon is expected to arrive in Paris every hour: only imagine the delight it would be to me, to present to him his two sweet children, and to prove that they have received every care and attention! To-morrow morning I will send the necessary milliners and dress-makers to provide them with a suitable wardrobe. Oh, I will so arrange every thing that, on their father's return, they shall shine forth in dazzling loveliness! I am told they are beautiful as angels; but I, profane mortal that I am, will convert them into loves."

"Pray, mademoiselle, have you quite finished your ecstasies?" said the princess, in a sardonic tone, her wrath momentarily increasing; while M. d'Aigrigny, calm and outwardly collected, could with difficulty suppress his mortal agonies. "Pray take the trouble of recollecting," continued the princess, addressing herself to Adrienne; "cannot you continue to augment this interesting family colony with some stray branch of your maternal pedigree you may have overlooked? Upon my word, no queen could proceed more magnificently than you propose doing!"

"And in good truth, madame, I purpose bestowing on my family a truly royal reception, such a one as is due to the son of a king and the daughters of Maréchal the Duc de Ligny. It is so charming to be able to add to other luxuries that of open, free, and unbounded hospitality."

"The principle is not to be found fault with, certainly," returned the princess, becoming more and more agitated; "it is only a pity that, in order to carry out your vast ideas, you have not the mines of Potosi at your command!"

"*Apropos* of mines and vast riches; that is precisely a point upon which I was desirous of conversing with you, madame, and I scarcely think I can find a more fitting occasion. However large my present fortune may be, it is as nothing compared with the immense wealth which may, from hour to hour, be expected to descend to our family; and with this immediate expectancy, perhaps, madame, you will be less severe upon what you are pleased to style my royal prodigality."

The position of M. d'Aigrigny became momentarily more and more difficult to endure.

The affair of the medals was so important, that he had even concealed it from Doctor Baleinier; even when requesting his aid for the preservation of immense interests he forbore to advert to this. Neither was M. Tripeaud better informed on the subject; and the princess believed she had so completely destroyed every paper belonging to Adrienne's father, which could have given her the information she evidently possessed respecting the accession of wealth she had just alluded to, that she could scarcely credit her senses; and not only did she join in the consternation experienced by the abbé, of finding Mademoiselle de Cardoville mistress of a secret so carefully concealed from her, but she fully participated in his apprehensions of her divulging it. Interrupting her niece, therefore, she exclaimed,

"Mademoiselle, there are certain family matters upon which secrecy should be observed; and, although unable to understand your recent allusion, I desire you will change the subject of your conversation."

"Nay, madame! I understood from yourself we were now entirely a family party; witness the not very amiable words we have permitted ourselves to give and to take!"

"Mademoiselle, it is useless holding any further argument! When family matters, whether mutually understood and admitted or not, are discussed, it is always folly to enter upon them unless you hold every fact, and can substantiate what you advance."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, madame, what have we been discoursing upon for the last hour, if it be not matters of interest and importance? And, really, I cannot understand your present confusion and embarrassment——"

"I am neither astonished nor embarrassed, mademoiselle; but, after the wild and extravagant things you have been saying for the last two hours, it is no wonder one becomes stupified and bewildered."

"You must pardon me, madame; but you really are very considerably agitated and confused," pursued Adrienne, gazing at her aunt with fixed attention; "and M. d'Aigrigny also, which, joined to certain suspicions I have not yet had time to clear up——" Then, after a pause, Adrienne continued, "Have I then judged aright? We shall see!"

"Mademoiselle," exclaimed the princess, completely losing all further self-command, "I desire—I command you to be silent!"

"Ah, madame!" said Adrienne, "for a person ordinarily so self-possessed, you betray yourself sadly!"

At this moment, so fraught with danger to the wishes of the princess and the Abbé d'Aigrigny, chance came most opportunely to their relief.

The door suddenly opened, and a *valet de chambre* presented himself, with so terrified and agitated a countenance, that the princess quickly exclaimed,

"What is the matter, Dubois?"

"Your pardon, Madame la Princess," returned the man, "for thus intruding against your positive commands; but the commissary of police is below, desiring to speak with you instantly; he is down stairs, and several of his assistants are in the court-yard, accompanied by a party of soldiers."

Spite of the extreme surprise caused by this novel incident, the princess gladly availed herself of it to take prompt measures, in concert with M. d'Aigrigny, relative to the threatening disclosures made by Adrienne, and, rising, she said,

"M. d'Aigrigny, will you be kind enough to accompany me while I go to ascertain the meaning of this visit from the police?"

M. d'Aigrigny then followed Madame de Saint-Dizier into the adjoining apartment.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE HÔTEL DE SAINT-DIZIER.—TREACHERY.

THE Princess de Saint-Dizier, accompanied by M. d'Aigrigny and the servant, stopped in the room adjoining that in which they had left Adrienne, M. Tripeaud, and the doctor.

"Where is the commissary of police?" inquired she of the *valet de chambre*, who had announced to her the arrival of that functionary.

"He is in the blue salon, madame."

"Then, ask him from me to be so kind as wait for a few moments."

The *valet de chambre* bowed, and left the apartment.

Then Madame de Saint-Dizier came suddenly up to M. d'Aigrigny, whose countenance, usually firm and haughty, was pale and downcast.

"You see," she exclaimed in a hasty tone, "Adrienne knows all now: What are we to do?—What is to be done?"

"I do not know," said the abbé, with a fixed and absorbed look: "this discovery is a terrible blow."

"All is lost, then?"

"There is but one means of safety left," said M. d'Aigrigny, "and that is—the doctor."

"But really?" exclaimed the princess; "so suddenly?—this very day?"

"Two hours hence it will be too late: this idiot of a girl will have seen the daughters of Marshal Simon."

"But, Frederic, it is impossible—M. Baleinier will never agree—he will have all his preparations to make, which should be done after the interrogatory of this morning."

"That cannot now be thought of," replied the abbé quickly; "the doctor must do it now, at any and all risk."

"But with what excuse?"

"I will endeavour to find one."

"Supposing that you hit upon some pretext, Frederic, if we must act to-day nothing is prepared—*down there*."

"Oh, rely upon it, by habitual precaution they are always ready."

"But how are we to forewarn the doctor at this very moment?" replied the princess.

"To ask him, would awaken your niece's suspicions," said D'Aigrigny; "and that must carefully be avoided."

"Unquestionably," replied the princess, "this confidence is one of our greatest resources."

"There is one way," said the abbé, suddenly; "I will write a few lines to Baleinier—one of your people will take it to him as if it came from somewhere else—from some sick person in great haste."

"An excellent idea!" said the princess. "You are right: here upon the table are writing materials—quick, quick! But will the doctor succeed?"

"To say the truth I can hardly hope it," said the marquis, sitting down to the table with anger almost irrepressible. "Thanks to this interrogatory, which has, indeed, been beyond our hopes, and which our man concealed behind the screen has doubtless taken down carefully in short-hand—thanks to the violent scenes which must necessarily take place to-morrow and next day, the doctor using skilful precautions will be able to act with the most perfect certainty. But to ask him that to-day—at this moment—really, Herminie, it is a folly to think of it!" And the marquis tossed away the pen he held in his hand, and then added with a deep and bitter expression of irritation,—“At the very moment of success, behold all our hopes crushed! Ah, the consequences of all this are incalculable! Your niece has done us immense mischief!—immense mischief!”

It is impossible to describe the intense anger, the implacable hate, with which M. d'Aigrigny pronounced these last words.

"Frederic!" exclaimed the princess, with anxiety, and striking her hand quickly on the hand of the abbé, "I entreat you not to despair yet; the doctor's mind is so fertile in resources, and he is so completely devoted to us—let us try once more."

"Well, there is at least the chance," said the abbé, resuming the pen.

"Viewing things at the worst," said the princess, "suppose that Adrienne does go this evening to Marshal Simon's daughters, it is just possible that she will not find them."

"We cannot hope that; it is impossible that Rodin's orders could be so quickly executed—if so, we should have received the information."

"That is true; but write to the doctor: I will send Dubois to you, and he will take your letter. Courage, Frederic, and we shall still bring this intractable girl to her senses." Then Madame de Saint-Dizier added, with bitter rage, "Oh, Adrienne! Adrienne! you shall pay dearly for the insolent sarcasms and anguish you have caused us."

As she was leaving the room the princess turned round and said to M. d'Aigrigny,

"Wait for me here; I will let you know what the commissary of police's visit means, and we will return to the room together."

The princess then left the apartment. M. d'Aigrigny wrote some hasty words with a tremulous hand.



TREACHERY.

P. 290.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE SNARE.

AFTER Madame de Saint-Dizier and the marquis had left the room, Adrienne had remained in her aunt's cabinet with M. Baleinier and Baron Tripeaud.

When she heard the announcement of the arrival of the commissary, Mademoiselle de Cardoville felt very uneasy, for she had no doubt that, as Agricola had feared, the magistrate had come to demand authority for making a search in the hôtel and the pavilion, in order to find the smith whom they believed to be hidden there. Although she believed Agricola's hiding-place quite secret, yet Adrienne was not at her ease; and by way of making sure in case of an unfortunate result, she had before her a very excellent opportunity for recommending her *protégé* to the doctor, the intimate friend, as we have already said, of one of the most influential ministers of the day.

The young lady went up to the doctor, who was discoursing in a low tone with the baron, and in her most gentle and insinuating voice said,

"My dear Doctor Baleinier, I wish to say two words to you;" and as she spake she looked towards a deep recess in the window.

"I am at your order, mademoiselle," replied the doctor, rising and following Adrienne to the window.

M. Tripeaud, who felt himself no longer supported by the presence of the abbé, and who was very much frightened of the young lady, was delighted at this diversion, and that he might appear to be doing something, he placed himself before a sacred painting, which it seemed as though he was never weary of admiring.

When Mademoiselle de Cardoville was so far away from the baron that he could not overhear her, she said to the doctor, who with his habitual bland smile was awaiting until she addressed him:

"My good doctor, you are my friend, as you were my father's. Just now, in spite of the difficulty of your position, you shewed yourself most courageously my only partisan."

"Not at all, mademoiselle; pray do not say such a thing," said the doctor, affecting an angry tone. "*Peste!* you will get me into a terrible mess! Pray not a word of that!—not a word! *Vade retro Satanas!*—that is, Pray leave me alone, dear little *démon* as you are!"

"Fear not," said Adrienne, with a smile; "I will not compromise you: but do allow me to remind you how often you have made me an offer of your services—have spoken to me of your devotion."

"Put me to the test, and see if I will keep my word or not."

"Well, then, give me a proof this moment," said Adrienne, quickly.

"That I will, for I like so much to be taken at my word! What can I do for you?"

"You are still very intimate with your friend the minister?"

"I am, and attending him for a hoarseness, which always comes

on him the day before he is called on to give his ministerial development. He rather likes it."

"You must procure from your minister something very important for me."

"For you!—in what way?"

The *valet de chambre* entered, and, handing a letter to M. Baleinier, said to him,

"A strange servant has this moment brought this letter for you, sir—it is in great haste."

The doctor took the letter, and the *valet de chambre* left the room.

"These are the disagreeables of merit," said Adrienne, smilingly; "they will not leave for a moment's repose my poor dear doctor."

"Oh, do not mention it, mademoiselle!" said the doctor, who could not repress a gesture of surprise when he recognised M. d'Aigrigny's writing: "these plagues of sick persons really believe we are made of iron, and can give them all the health they require; they are really merciless. But you will allow me, mademoiselle?" said M. Baleinier, looking at Adrienne before he unsealed the letter.

Mademoiselle de Cardoville replied by a gracious nod of the head.

The Marquis d'Aigrigny's letter was not long. The doctor perused it in a moment, and, in spite of his habitual prudence, shrugged his shoulders, and said, in a quick tone,

"To-day!—it is impossible! The man is mad."

"Oh, no doubt it is some poor invalid, who has placed all his hope in you—who is waiting for, calling for, you; so pray, my dear M. Baleinier, be kind, and do not reject his prayer: it is so delightful to fulfil the confidence which any one has in you!"

There was something at the same time so remarkably congruous, and at the same time so contradictory in the subject of this letter, written at the very moment to the doctor by Adrienne's most implacable enemy, and the language of commiseration which she had used in so tender a voice, that Doctor Baleinier was struck by it. He looked at mademoiselle with an air almost embarrassed, and replied,

"It is indeed one of my patients, who relies much upon me—indeed too much—for he asks of me an impossibility. But why should you interest yourself in an unknown person?"

"If he is unhappy, I do know him. My *protégé*, for whom I request your interference with the minister, was almost as little known to me: and now I am interested in him to the last degree; for, if I must tell you, my *protégé* is the son of the worthy old veteran who has conducted hither the daughters of Marshal Simon from the depths of Siberia."

"What! Your *protégé* is——"

"A worthy artisan, the support of his family; but I ought to tell you every thing. This is the way the whole affair has gone on——"

The confidence which Adrienne was about to repose in the doctor was interrupted by Madame de Saint-Dizier, who, followed by M. d'Aigrigny, opened the door of the closet with considerable violence.

On the physiognomy of the princess there was an expression of



ADRIENNE AND HER AUNT.

l. 993.

infernal delight, hardly concealed under the mask of highly wrought indignation.

M. d'Aigrigny, as he entered, gave Doctor Baleinier a look of inquiry and uneasiness.

The doctor replied, by a shake of the head, in the negative.

The abbé bit his lips in mute rage; for, having built his last hopes on the doctor, he now believed his plans ruined for ever, in spite of the fresh blow which the princess was about to give to Adrienne.

"Gentlemen," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a harsh and hasty tone, for she was nearly choking with her malevolent satisfaction, "gentlemen, pray be seated: I have strange news, curious intelligence to give you with respect to this—person."

And she looked at her niece with an air of hatred and contempt impossible to portray.

"What! What about, my dear child? What now?—what next?" said M. Baleinier, with a soothing air, before leaving the window where he was with Adrienne,—“whatever happens, rely on me.”

And so saying, the doctor went and seated himself between M. d'Aigrigny and M. Tripeaud.

At the insolent address of her aunt, Mademoiselle de Cardoville had raised her head disdainfully. Her colour had mounted, and, impatient and irritated at the new attacks which threatened her, she came towards the table where the princess was seated, and said, in a tone of emotion, to Dr. Baleinier,

"I shall await for you at home, as soon as you can come, my dear doctor. You know I must speak to you." And Adrienne walked towards the arm-chair, in which she had left her bonnet.

The princess rose suddenly, exclaiming,

"What are you doing, mademoiselle?"

"I am going away, madame. You have signified to me your pleasure, and I have signified mine to you—that will suffice. As to the affairs of interest, I shall empower some one to make my claims."

Mademoiselle de Cardoville took up her bonnet.

Madame de Saint-Dizier, seeing her prey about to escape her, ran hastily towards her niece, and, throwing off all appearance, seized her arm violently with her convulsed hand, and said,

"Stay!"

"Oh, madame!" said Adrienne, in an accent of excessive disdain, "has it come to this?"

"You wish to escape—you are afraid!" said Madame de Saint-Dizier, looking at her with an air of contempt.

With the words "*You are afraid*," it would have been possible to make Adrienne de Cardoville dare the fury of a furnace. Disengaging her arm from the grasp of her aunt, with a gesture full of nobleness and pride, she threw her bonnet back again on the arm-chair, and, returning to the table, said to the princess with dignity,

"There is something even stronger than the profound disgust with which all this inspires me, and it is the fear of being accused of cowardice. Speak, madame!—I hear you." And with head erect, complexion suffused, the look half-concealed by a tear of indignation, arms crossed over her bosom, which, in spite of herself, palpitated with

deep emotion, tapping the carpet with her pretty foot, Adrienne fixed upon her aunt an eye of confidence and determination.

The princess was anxious to distil, drop by drop, the venom with which she was gorged, and to make her victim suffer as long as possible, sure that she would not escape her.

"Gentlemen," said Madame de Saint-Dizier, in a restrained voice, "I will tell you what has occurred: I was informed that the commissary of police desired to speak to me, and I went to him. He apologised, with pain, for the necessity of discharging an important duty: a man, against whom a warrant had been issued, had been seen to enter the pavilion in the garden——"

Adrienne started,—there was no longer any doubt but that it was Agricola's affair; but she remained quiet, relying on the security of the hiding-place into which she had ordered him to be hid.

"The official," continued the princess, "asked me to allow him to make a search for this man, either in the hôtel or the pavilion. He had a right to do so. I begged him to begin with the pavilion, and I accompanied him. In spite of the unjustifiable conduct of mademoiselle, I did not for a moment think, I must say, or believe, that she had mixed herself up in any way with any low affair with the police. I was deceived."

"What do you mean, madame?" exclaimed Adrienne.

"You will hear, mademoiselle," said the princess, with an air of triumph. "Every one has his turn. A short time since and you were full of mockery and disdain. I went with the commissary, I say, in his search. We entered the pavilion, and I will allow you to guess my astonishment, and the amazement of the magistrate, at the sight of the three creatures we saw attired like girls at the theatre. The fact has been at my request noted down in the depositions, for such preposterous extravagancies ought to be made known to everybody."

"Madame la Princesse has done wisely," said M. Tripeaud, with a bow. "It was quite right to instruct justice on this point."

Adrienne, too much interested in the fate of the artisan to think of replying either to Tripeaud or to Madame de Saint-Dizier, listened in silence to conceal her disquietude.

"The magistrate," continued Madame de Saint-Dizier, "began by closely interrogating the young girls, and inquiring if any man had been, to their knowledge, introduced into the pavilion occupied by mademoiselle, and they replied with singular audacity that they had not seen any person enter."

"Good, honest-hearted girls!" thought Mademoiselle de Cardoville, with satisfaction; "then the poor workman is saved, and Dr. Balemier's protection will effect the rest."

"Fortunately," replied the princess, "one of my women, Madame Grivois, had accompanied me: this worthy person, recollecting that she had seen mademoiselle come in this morning at eight o'clock, said *naïvement* to the magistrate that the man they were looking for might very easily have entered by the small garden door, which, perhaps, mademoiselle had, by mistake, left open when she entered."

"It would have been advisable, Madame la Princesse," said Tripeaud, "to have mentioned, also, in the *procès verbal*, that mademoiselle had returned home at eight o'clock in the morning."

"I see no occasion for that," said the doctor, who played his part to admiration; "that could have nothing to do with the object of the commissary's search."

"But, doctor——" said Tripeaud.

"But, baron," replied Dr. Baleinier, in a decided tone, "that is my opinion."

"It is not mine, doctor," added the princess. "I, as well as M. Tripeaud, have thought it was important that the thing should be inserted in the *procès verbal*; and I saw, by the confused and pained appearance of the magistrate, how much he was distressed at having to make an entry of such scandalous conduct in a young person placed in so high a position in society."

"Ah, doubtless, madame!" said Adrienne, whose patience was exhausted; "and I can believe your own modesty almost equal to that of this abashed commissary of police. But it seems to me that your mental conscience was alarmed a little too soon; you might both have reflected that there was nothing extraordinary in the fact of my going out at six o'clock in the morning, and returning home at eight o'clock."

"The excuse is somewhat tardy, but not the less clever," said the princess, spitefully.

"I make no excuse, madame!" replied Adrienne, haughtily; "but, as M. Baleinier has kindly said a word in my behalf through friendship for me, I give the simple explanation of a fact, which I did not feel myself bound to apologise for before you."

"Then the fact will remain in the deposition until mademoiselle gives the explanation," said M. Tripeaud.

The Abbé d'Aigrigny, leaning his forehead on his hands, remained almost unconscious of this scene, so entirely was he absorbed with all the consequences he foresaw would arise from the approaching interview between Mademoiselle de Cardoville and the daughters of General Simon, for he could not venture to prohibit Adrienne's going to them, as she had engaged to do, that evening.

Madame de Saint-Dizier resumed:

"The circumstance which so greatly shocked the commissary, is as nothing to that which remains for me to tell you, gentlemen. We searched the pavilion throughout without finding any one, when just as we were about quitting the sleeping apartment of Mademoiselle Adrienne, for we had reserved our visit to this chamber till the last, Madame Grivois drew my attention to a portion of the gilt moulding surrounding a false door, which did not appear to join as closely as the rest. We directed the visiting officer to this peculiarity; his people examined it—tried it by pressing against it in every direction, when a panel suddenly slipped away and discovered—how shall I bring myself to say what? No! never can my tongue declare the disgraceful, the shameful tale! I cannot, I dare not utter it!"

"Then, madame!" said Adrienne, who found to her great chagrin that Agricola's hiding-place had been discovered, "I dare take upon myself to spare you the recital which so much offends your delicacy. I merely request that what I am about to say may not be construed into any desire or intention of justifying myself."

"Yet, methinks, mademoiselle," cried Madame de Saint-Dizier,

with a bitter smile of contempt, "the circumstance of a man being found concealed in your bed-chamber may be deemed worthy of explanation by any young person careful of her reputation."

"A man hid in her bed-chamber!" exclaimed the Marquis d'Aigrigny, suddenly rising from his meditative attitude, with an air of indignation which barely covered the intense and cruel joy with which he heard the news.

"Is it possible?" added Baron Tripeaud; "a man in the sleeping apartment of mademoiselle! I trust that fact was also entered into the *procès verbal*?"

"It was! it was!" replied the princess, with a triumphant air.

"But this man," said the doctor, with an hypocritical air, "was doubtless a common thief, a robber, who had surreptitiously entered: the thing explains itself—every other suspicion were—— No, no, the thing is not credible!"

"Your extreme indulgence for Mademoiselle Adrienne leads you astray, M. Baleinier," observed the princess, in a dry sarcastic tone.

"Yes, yes," interposed Tripeaud; "the sort of thieves who are found hid in young ladies' bed-rooms are a very distinct class; usually very young, very handsome, and extremely rich!"

"You are also mistaken, monsieur, in the present case," replied Madame de Saint-Dizier, "Mademoiselle Adrienne does not possess such elevated views, but proves that a young woman may not only be criminal, but ignobly so. Indeed, I am no longer astonished at the sympathy mademoiselle so openly expresses for the lower orders of people; and it adds considerably to the touching and pathetic part of this affair, that the man caught in her private apartment was dressed in a common blouse."

"A blouse!" exclaimed the baron, with the most supreme disgust. "Why, he must have been quite a low fellow! Really it makes one's hair stand on end only to hear of such things!"

"The man is a working smith," said the princess; "he confesses it; and, to do him justice, he really is a very good-looking individual, and, doubtless, following out the singular adoration mademoiselle professes for beauty in general——"

"Enough, madame! enough!" said Adrienne, who, disdaining to reply, had hitherto listened with fast-increasing indignation to her aunt's bitter taunts and malevolent insinuations. "I was, a little while ago, about to exculpate myself from one of your odious aspersions; I will not expose myself a second time to a similar weakness—one word only, madame, this honest and loyal artisan has no doubt been arrested?"

"Most assuredly! and taken to prison under a strong escort. That grieves you to the heart, does it not, mademoiselle?" answered the princess, in a triumphant tone. "Your tender concern for this interesting smith must be great indeed, since it actually deprives you of your ironical assurance."

"Yes, madame; for I have more important and weighty matters to attend to, than to indulge myself with railing even at that which is both hateful and ridiculous," answered Adrienne, whose fast-gathering tears filled her eyes as she thought of the cruel uneasiness the imprisonment of Agricola would occasion his family; and taking up her

hat, she placed it on her head, tied the ribands of it, and, addressing herself to the doctor, she said, "M. Balemier, a little while ago I asked your protection and interest with the minister?"

"You did, mademoiselle, and I should be most happy to mediate for you with him in any manner you may desire."

"Is your carriage below?"

"It is, mademoiselle!" replied the doctor, greatly surprised.

"Will you, then, do me the favour to conduct me at once to the minister? Presented by you, he will not refuse me the favour, or rather the justice, I have to ask at his hands."

"How, mademoiselle!" said the princess; "do you presume to form such a determination without my orders, after what has just occurred? Your conduct passes all bounds!"

"It is, indeed, a pitiable extent of misconduct," added M. Tripeaud; "but we must not be surprised at any thing!"

D'Aigrigny started as Adrienne inquired of the doctor whether his carriage was in waiting? A gleam of joyous, unhopèd-for satisfaction shone in his eye, and scarcely could he restrain his violent emotion, when casting a rapid and significant glance at the doctor, who returned the look by twice dropping his eyelids in token of comprehending and consenting to his wish. When, therefore, the princess added, in a wrathful tone, addressing Adrienne,

"Mademoiselle, I totally forbid your quitting this apartment!"

M. d'Aigrigny observed to Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a peculiar inflexion of voice,

"I think, madame, we may venture to entrust Mademoiselle Adrienne to the care of our worthy doctor."

The marquis pronounced these last words in so significant a manner that the princess, having scrutinised alternately his countenance and that of M. Balemier, comprehended the proposed scheme, and her whole physiognomy became radiant with joy.

Not only had all this passed more rapidly than we can describe, but evening was closing in, and Adrienne, entirely pre-occupied in the painful consideration of Agricola and his family, perceived not the various signs exchanged between the princess, the doctor, and the abbé: nor, indeed, had she even remarked them, would she have been able to guess at their meaning.

Madame de Saint-Dizier, however, not choosing to appear to yield too easily to the observation made by the marquis, continued:

"Spite of the evident indulgence M. le Docteur is disposed to shew to Mademoiselle de Cardoville, I still see no positive reason to object to her accompanying him; however, I must beg the present concession may not be used as a precedent, as, from this hour, mademoiselle will have no will but mine."

"Madame la Princesse," replied the doctor, gravely, as though much hurt by the words of Madame de Saint-Dizier, "you must pardon me, if I say I do not consider I have exhibited any excessive leaning towards Mademoiselle de Cardoville. I have been just, nothing more. I am now ready to conduct her to the minister, if she wishes it. I am entirely ignorant what it is she wishes to solicit; but I believe her incapable of abusing the confidence she knows I have in her, by inducing me to support any unworthy recommendation."

Adrienne, much affected, held out her hand with frank cordiality to the doctor, saying,

"Make yourself easy, my excellent friend; you will thank me for the part you take, for in obliging me you are sharing in the delights of performing a really good action."

Tripeaud, who was not in the secret of the recently contrived scheme between the doctor and the abbé, said to the latter, in a low tone, and with a puzzled look,

"Are you really going to let her depart?"

"Yes, yes!" replied M. d'Aigrigny, hastily, feigning to listen to the princess, who was about to speak.

Madame de Saint-Dizier had, in fact, risen from her chair, and advancing towards her niece said, in a slow and measured tone, laying great emphasis on each word,

"One word more, mademoiselle! one other word in the presence of these gentlemen! Answer me! Are you, spite of all the terrible charges which are now against you, still resolved to refuse to acknowledge my authority, and to reject my control?"

"I am, madame!"

"And, notwithstanding the disgraceful exposure which has taken place, your intention of removing from my guardianship is still the same?"

"It is, madame!"

"And you positively refuse to submit yourself to the secret and decorous mode of life I am desirous of prescribing for you?"

"I have already told you, madame, that I should quit this house to live where and in what manner I pleased."

"And this is your final resolve?"

"It is my unalterable determination!"

"Reflect! It is most important to yourself to weigh the matter well — have a care!"

"I have told you my resolution once, madame. I never repeat my words unnecessarily."

"Gentlemen, you hear her!" cried the princess; "and you are my witnesses, that I have tried all in my power to bring her to reason and effect a reconciliation. Mademoiselle de Cardoville must, therefore blame herself alone for the steps which so audacious a disregard of obedience on her part compels me to adopt."

"So be it, madame!" answered Adrienne. Then addressing herself to M. Balcinier, she said, quickly, "Come, come, my dear doctor! I am dying with impatience: let us depart at once; each instant we delay is causing a worthy family to shed bitter tears."

So saying, Adrienne, followed by the doctor, hastily quitted the salon.

A servant belonging to the princess caused the carriage of M. Balcinier to draw up, and, assisted by him, Adrienne took her seat in the vehicle, without observing that the doctor said something in a whisper to the footman who opened the carriage-door. When the doctor had seated himself beside Mademoiselle de Cardoville, the servant closed the door, and almost immediately after called out to the coachman in a loud tone, "To the minister's hôtel, private entrance!"

The horses dashed off at full speed.



A FALSE FRIEND.

P. 200.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A FALSE FRIEND.

THE night had set in dark and cold.

The sky, which had been clear until sunset, was now covered with dark-grey elonds ; the wind, blowing harshly, raised in places the thick snow, which had begun to fall.

The lamps only threw a doubtful light into the carriage of Doctor Baleinier, where he and Adrienne were alone.

Adrienne's lovely face, beneath her small bonnet of grey beaver, faintly lighted up by the beams of the lamps, looked white and fair, from contrast with the dark hue of the material with which the carriage was lined, and which was odorous of that sweet, delicious perfume, almost enervating, which always proceeds from the garments of females who pay much attention to their toilet. The position of the young girl, as she sat by the doctor, was full of grace. Her elegant and pliant figure, confined in her high dress of blue cloth, impressed its supple motion on the soft cushion against which she leaned ; her small feet, crossed one over the other and stretched forward, rested on a thick bear-skin, which served for a carpet ; in her fair left hand she held a handkerchief, magnificently embroidered, with which, to the extreme astonishment of M. Baleinier, she wiped her eyes, which were suffused with tears.

Yes ; for this young girl then suffered under the reaction of the painful scenes at which she had been present at the Hôtel de Saint-Dizier. To a feverish and nervous excitement had succeeded an extreme depression ; for Adrienne, so bold in her independence, so haughty in her disdain, so implacable in her irony, so resolute in her resistance, to unjust oppression, was endowed with the deepest sensibility, which she always repressed in the presence of her aunt and those of her circle.

In spite of her self-possession, nothing could be less masculine, less *shrewish*, than Mademoiselle de Cardoville. She was essentially the *woman* : but then, as a woman, she knew entirely how to exercise self-command, so that not the slightest symptom of weakness on her part appeared to rejoice and inspirit her enemies.

The carriage had proceeded for some minutes, and Adrienne, silently drying her tears, to the doctor's great astonishment had not uttered a word.

"What, my dear Mademoiselle Adrienne !" said M. Baleinier, really surprised at the young girl's emotion ; "what ! you who were just now so bold—you weeping ?"

"Yes," replied Adrienne, in an altered voice ; "I am weeping before you—a friend ; but before my aunt—oh, never !"

"Yet, really, in our long interview, your sarcasms——"

"Oh ! can you not suppose that I give myself up to saying these bitter things in spite of myself ? Nothing disgusts me more than these sort of struggles with bitter irony, to which I am driven by the necessity of

defending myself against this woman and her friends. You talk of my courage, but I assure you that it does not consist in an ill-natured wit, but in repressing, concealing all I endure, when I find myself so coarsely treated before persons whom I hate and despise. I who, after all, have never done them any harm, and only ask to be allowed to live alone, free, quiet, and see all around me happy!"

"Yes, so it is; they are envious of your happiness, and that of those who owe theirs to you."

"And this is my aunt!" exclaimed Adrienne, indignantly. "My aunt, whose own life has been one lengthened scandal, who accuses me in so revolting a manner! as if she did not know that I am proud enough, loyal enough, to make only such a choice which would do honour to me openly! Oh! whenever I fall in love, I shall proclaim it, and triumph in it; for love, as I understand it, is the most glorious thing in the world." Then Adrienne added, with extreme bitterness, "What avail, then, are honour and frankness, if they do not place you beyond suspicions which are even more stupid than hateful?"

And again Mademoiselle de Cardoville raised her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Come, my dear Mademoiselle Adrienne," said M. Baleinier, with a soothing and insinuating voice, "calm yourself; this is all over now. You have in me a devoted friend."

And as this man spoke he blushed, in spite of his devilish cunning.

"I know full well you are my friend," said Adrienne; "and I shall never forget that you exposed yourself to-day to the resentments of my aunt in taking my part; for I am not ignorant of her power — a power great for evil——"

"As to that," said the doctor, affecting perfect indifference, "we medical men are beyond the reach of any revenges."

"Ah, my dear M. Baleinier, but Madame de Saint-Dizier and her friends never forgive!" And the young girl shuddered. "It has required my unconquerable aversion, my innate horror of all that is cowardly, base, and unprincipled, to enable me to break so openly with her; but, if it were a question of death itself, I should not hesitate: and yet," she added, with one of those captivating smiles which gave so much grace to her lovely countenance, "I like life very much, too, and if I have to reproach myself, it is that I like it too brilliant, too attractive, too harmonious; but, as you know, I make up my mind to its defects."

"Come, come, I am easier now," said the doctor, gaily; "you smile, and that is a good sign."

"And often the wisest. Yet ought I to smile, after the threats of my aunt? Yet what can she do? What was the meaning of this kind of family conference? Seriously, could she think for a moment that I was to be influenced by the opinions of a M. d'Aigrigny or a M. Tripcaud? Then she spoke of rigorous measures! What measures could she take? Do you know?"

"I think, between ourselves, that the princess only meant to frighten you. She relies on being able to influence you by persuasion; she, unfortunately, persuades herself that she is a mother of the church, and dreams of your conversion," said the doctor, significantly, and desirous of giving Adrienne full confidence in him. "But do not let us talk

of this — your eyes must shine with their accustomed lustre, to seduce and fascinate the minister we are going to see.”

“You are right, my dear doctor; we should always drive away one’s own vexation, for one of its least disagreeables is to make you forget the vexations of others: but let me remember that I am making use of your kindness without saying what I wanted from you.”

“We have plenty of time, fortunately, to converse, for our man of state lives a long distance from you.”

“In two words, then, this is it,” replied Adrienne: “I have told you the reasons I had for interesting myself in this worthy artisan, who came this morning in great distress to tell me that he had compromised himself by some songs he had written (for he is a poet), and was threatened with arrest; that he was innocent, and, if they put him in prison, that his family, of whom he was the sole support, would starve. He came, therefore, to me, asking me to become his security, so that he might be let free to work, and I promised him, thinking of your intimacy with the minister; but they were already on the traces of the poor fellow, and I bethought me of hiding him in my house, and you know the interpretation which has been put upon that by my aunt. Now tell me, thanks to your introduction, do you believe that the minister will grant what we are going to ask — the liberty of this workman on the security given?”

“Unquestionably, there will not be a shadow of difficulty, particularly when you tell him all the facts with that eloquence of the heart which you possess so completely.”

“Do you know, dear Doctor Baleinier, why I have taken the resolution — a strange one, perhaps — to request you to take me, young girl as I am, to the minister’s?”

“Why, I imagine, in order to recommend your *protégé* in as urgent a manner as possible.”

“Yes; and also to cut short, by a bold step, the calumnies which my aunt will not be slow to disseminate, and which she has already, as you saw, caused to be inserted in the depositions of the commissary of police. I have, therefore, preferred to address myself freely and openly to a man placed in an eminent position. I shall tell him what is really the case, and he will believe me, because the truth has an air which never deceives.”

“This is all, my dear Mademoiselle Adrienne, wisely and cleverly reasoned. You will, as they say, kill two birds with one stone; or, rather, from one good action you will derive two acts of justice. You will destroy at once dangerous scandals, and set at liberty a worthy fellow.”

“Now, then,” said Adrienne, with a smile, “all my gaiety has returned, thanks to this happy prospect.”

“Oh!” replied the doctor, philosophically, “in this life all depends on the point of sight from which we contemplate it.”

Adrienne was so completely ignorant of matters of constitutional government and administrative arrangements, and had so blind a confidence in the doctor, that she did not for a moment doubt what he told her. She, therefore, said joyfully:

“How delightful! So I shall be able, when I go to see the daughters of Marshal Simon, to assure the artisan’s poor mother, who

is, perhaps, at this moment in cruel agony on his account as he does not return to her."

"Yes, you will have that pleasure," said M. Baleinier, smiling; "for we will beg and bother him in such a manner, that the good mother shall learn through you that her excellent son is at liberty before she knows he has been in custody."

"How kind, how good you are!" said Adrienne. "Really if it were not that the matter was so serious, my dear M. Baleinier, I should be ashamed to make you lose so much precious time: but I know your heart."

"I have but one desire, and that is to prove to you my profound devotion, my sincere attachment," said the doctor, in taking a pinch of snuff.

At the same moment he gave an unquiet glance at the coach window, for the carriage was crossing the Place de l'Odeon, and, in spite of the heavy fall of snow, the façade of the theatre was illuminated, and he feared lest Adrienne, who at this moment turned her head in the same direction, might be astonished at the singular route they had taken.

In order to draw off her attention by a skilful diversion, the doctor suddenly exclaimed: "Alas! I have forgotten ——"

"What is it, M. Baleinier?" said Adrienne, turning quickly towards him.

"I forgot one very important thing towards the success of our petition."

"What is that?" asked the young lady, who was uneasy at the remark.

M. Baleinier smiled significantly: "All men," said he, "have their weaknesses, and a minister more than any other. He whom we are going to solicit has the absurdity to pique himself ridiculously on his title, and his first impression would be far from favourable, if you did not salute him very emphatically as *Monsieur le Ministre!*"

"If that be all, my dear M. Baleinier," said Adrienne, smiling in turn, "I will go as far as '*Your Excellency,*' himself, which is, I believe, one of his adopted titles."

"No, not now, for certain reasons; but if you could let fall one or two '*Monseigneurs,*' our affair would be effected out of hand."

"Make yourself easy; since there are *bourgeois-ministres* as well as *bourgeois-gentilshommes*, I must remember M. Jourdain, and will fully satisfy the gluttonous vanity of your man of state."

"I give him up to you, and he will be in good hands," replied the physician, seeing with satisfaction that the carriage had reached the dark streets which lead from the Place de l'Odeon to the quarter of the Pantheon; "but, under the circumstance, I have not the courage to reproach my friend the minister with being vain, since his vanity comes to my assistanee."

"Besides, the little *ruse* is innocent," added Mademoiselle de Car-doville, "and I have no scruple in having recourse to it, I assure you." Then looking towards the window, she said, "Oh! how dull and dark these streets are! What a wind! and what snow! In which quarter are we now?"

"What! ungrateful and unnatural inhabitant, do you not recog-

nise by the absence of shops your dear quarter, the Faubourg St. Germain?"

"I thought we had left it long since."

"And so did I," said the doctor, looking out of the window as if to reconnoitre the place in which he was; "but we are still here. My stupid coachman, blinded by the snow which dashes in his face, must have mistaken his road, but now we are all right. Yes; I see we are in the Rue St. Guillaume—not a very gay street, by the way, but in ten minutes we shall reach the private entrance of the minister's, for intimates like me have the privilege of escaping the honors of the state entrance.

Mademoiselle de Cardoville, like persons who usually go out in carriages, knew so little of the streets of Paris, and of ministerial habits, that she doubted not for an instant what Dr. Balemier affirmed, having also in him such implicit confidence.

From the moment of quitting the Hôtel de Saint-Dizier, the doctor had on his lips a question he still feared to ask, lest by so doing he should excite the suspicions of Adrienne.

When Mademoiselle de Cardoville had, during her stormy interview with her aunt, vaguely hinted at the immense wealth which must ere long devolve to her, and of such a circumstance having been hitherto concealed from her, the doctor was too keen and acute an observer of the workings of the human countenance, not to perceive the intense agony and embarrassment such an announcement occasioned both to the princess and M. d'Aigrigny. He doubted not that the conspiracy against Adrienne, in which he had taken part from blind obedience to the will of his Order, bore reference to this expected but concealed increase of property, and for that very reason he burned with impatience to learn every particular respecting it; for being compelled, in common with each member of this dark confederacy, to be constantly exercising an inquisitorial survey into everybody's affairs, he felt as a natural consequence the rapid growth within him of the odious vices peculiar to being an *accomplice*, such as envy, mistrust, and jealous curiosity.

It will, therefore, be easily understood that Doctor Balemier, while perfectly resolved to aid M. d'Aigrigny in all his projects, was yet most eager to learn what it was he had been kept ignorant of in the affair; therefore, surmounting his hesitation, and finding the present opportunity not only favourable but urgent, he at length ventured to observe to Adrienne,

"I am about to put to you a somewhat impertinent question, but should you view it in that light do not answer it."

"Proceed, I beg of you!"

"Some time ago, a few minutes before the commissary of police was announced to your aunt, I fancied you spoke of some vast expectancies which had been kept from your knowledge up to the present moment."

"I did so express myself."

"Those words," continued M. Balemier, proceeding slowly and emphatically, "appeared to me to make a lively impression on the princess!"

"In fact," said Adrienne, "the impression was so lively as to change mere suspicions into certainties."

"I need not tell you, my charming young friend," pursued M. de Baleinier, in a tone of paternal kindness, "that, if I revert to this circumstance, it is but to offer my services should they be useful to you in any emergency: otherwise, if you see the shadow of an objection in giving me any further information, just forget that the subject has been named between us."

Adrienne became pensive and serious: after a silence of some moments, she said to M. Baleinier,

"There are some parts of this affair of which I am myself ignorant, others that I am at liberty to tell you. Still, though in return for your kindness of to-day, I am but too glad to afford you another proof of the entire confidence I place in you, you must excuse my concealing several particulars—because those I dare not divulge."

"Then, my dear young lady," said the doctor, with an air of mortified regret, "you shall tell me nothing, since it would have the appearance of a recompence for the trifling service I have rendered; when, in reality, I am paid a thousand times over by the pleasure I experience in serving you."

"Listen!" said Adrienne, without appearing to notice the delicate scruples of M. Baleinier. "I have powerful reasons for believing that an immense inheritance must, either sooner or later, be divided between the various branches of my family, unknown to me at present; for, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the persons from whom they are descended were dispersed through various kingdoms, where they experienced very different fortunes."

"Really!" exclaimed the doctor, with the most intense interest. "Where is this inheritance? Whom does it come from? in whose hands is it at present?"

"I know not!"

"How, then, will you establish your claim?"

"I shall be informed hereafter."

"And who will inform you?"

"I cannot tell you."

"From whom did you learn the existence of this inheritance?"

"Neither can I tell you that," replied Adrienne, in a tone of gentle sadness, which contrasted greatly with the habitual energy of her manner: "it is a secret! a great, a strange secret! And when in those moments of excitement in which you have sometimes surprised me, I have thought of the extraordinary circumstances connected with this mystery, oh! then great and magnificent ideas have awakened within me, and my thoughts have been too mighty to tell."

And as the last words fell from her lips, Adrienne sunk into a reverie so profound, that M. Baleinier made no further effort to withdraw her from it; for one reason—it prevented Mademoiselle de Cardoville from remarking the direction they were taking; then, he himself was not sorry for the leisure to arrange the different ideas awakened by this revelation, incomplete as it had been. With his habitual perspicacity, he had all along suspected that some expected wealth was the secret hinge of D'Aigrigny's movements; he, there-

fore, determined to make the affair the subject of a private memorial. Of two things, one was certain: either D'Aigrigny acted as he was now doing by the directions of his Order, or from his own personal reasons. In the first case, the doctor's secret intimation would but confirm an already known fact; on the other hand, it would bring a most important one to light.

For some time, both Mademoiselle de Cardoville and M. Baleinier maintained a profound silence, unbroken even by the noise of the wheels as they rolled over the thick snow which covered the ground, for the streets were becoming more and more deserted.

Spite of his habitual subtlety, his confident boldness, and the blindness of his dupe, the doctor did not feel quite at his ease as to the result of his scheme as the critical moment approached, for well he knew that, were the slightest suspicion awakened in the mind of Adrienne, utter ruin to his projects must inevitably follow.

Adrienne, fatigued with the events of this painful day, shivered with exhaustion and the biting frost, which became momentarily more intense, and in her haste to accompany M. Baleinier she had forgotten to take either a shawl or a cloak.

For some time past the carriage had kept close to a very high and strongly built wall, which, covered with snow, stood out in bold relief from the thick darkness of the heavens. A deep and gloomy silence pervaded the spot.

The carriage drew up.

The footman got down and went to the entrance gates, where he gave two quick knocks of a peculiar kind; then, after waiting some length of time, he gave a third.

Adrienne had taken no notice of this circumstance, for the knocking had not been loud, and besides the doctor had also skilfully called off her attention by speaking at the very instant, so as to effectually prevent this species of signal from reaching her ear.

"Well, here we are!" said he gaily to Adrienne; "now mind you must be very captivating—that is to say, you must be *yourself!*"

"I will do my best, depend upon it," rejoined Adrienne, smiling. Then, spite of herself, shuddering with the cold, she said, "What a bitter night! I really must own, my good doctor, that, after I have been to fetel my poor little relations from the house of the mother of our honest *protégé*, I shall not be sorry to find myself this evening in my nicely warmed and well-lighted drawing-room, for you know my aversion to cold or darkness."

"That is quite natural," said the doctor, in a gallant tone; "the loveliest flowers can only bloom in light and heat."

While these words passed between the doctor and Mademoiselle de Cardoville, the heavy gates swung back with a grating sound, and the carriage entered the court-yard.

The doctor descended first and offered his arm to Adrienne.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE MINISTER'S RESIDENCE.

THE carriage had drawn up before a small flight of steps covered with snow, and conducting to a vestibule lighted by a single lamp. As Adrienne leaned on the arm of the doctor while ascending the slippery stairs, he exclaimed,

"Good heavens! how you tremble!"

"Yes," answered she, shivering violently; "I never felt the cold so severely. In my haste I forgot even to throw on a shawl."

Then, as they reached the top of the ascent, she added,

"What a gloomy-looking place!"

"It is what the minister styles his private dwelling—the *sanctum sanctorum*, where the great man retires from vulgar gaze," replied M. de Baleinier, smiling. "But pray walk in."

So saying, he pushed open the door of a large and completely deserted hall.

"Well," said M. Baleinier, striving to conceal the uneasiness he felt under the mask of gaiety, "I can't say much for the splendour of our friend's private residence! Not a footman! not an official servant to receive visitors! However, fortunately," continued he, opening the door of a room communicating with the vestibule, "bred up in the seraglio, I know its every turn."

As the doctor uttered these words, he ushered Mademoiselle de Cardoville into a salon hung with green paper, patterned over with velvet flowers, and splendidly furnished with mahogany chairs, arm-chairs, &c. covered with yellow stamped velvet. The flooring was most carefully polished; and a circular lamp, which scarcely afforded more than half the light it was intended to convey, hung from the ceiling at a much greater height than it is usual to place lamps.

Astonished at finding a minister's abode so very modestly furnished, Adrienne, although she entertained no suspicion, could not restrain an exclamation of surprise, and paused an instant on the threshold of the door.

M. Baleinier, whose arm she held, guessing the cause of her hesitation, said to her, smilingly,

"This house strikes you as somewhat mean for the residence of a great man—an *excellency*—does it not? But if you only knew what a thing *constitutional economy* is— In fact, when you see the master, you will find very little difference between the plainness of his appearance and that of his hôtel. But have the goodness to wait for me a little while: I will go and open our business to the minister, and prepare him to receive you. I will be back directly."

And gently disengaging his arm from that of Adrienne, who involuntarily clung to him, the doctor opened a little side-door and disappeared.

Adrienne de Cardoville was now left quite alone.

Although unable to account for it, a strange and undefinable dread

stole over the mind of the poor girl as she surveyed the cold, scantily furnished apartment, with its uncurtained windows; and as she more closely observed the peculiarities in the mode of furnishing it, a vague sense of impending danger quickened the beating of her heart, as she more attentively scrutinised the dull chamber in which the doctor had placed her.

Having instinctively approached the now extinguished fire, she perceived with astonishment that a close iron-work condemned all who sought its proximity to keep at a considerable distance from the power of touching it; while the opening towards the chimney was similarly secured, and the fire-irons chained to the wall by powerful rivets of iron. While wondering at so strange a fancy, she mechanically seated herself in an arm-chair, which she endeavoured to draw to a more agreeable situation than the one it occupied against the wall—but in vain.

Equally struck with this additional *caprice* (as she conceived it to be) on the part of the owner, she examined the various articles of furniture throughout the room, and found that each of them, as well as the arm-chair which had so effectually resisted her desire to move it, was firmly fastened to the wainscot by an iron band. Unable to repress a smile, Adrienne could not help thinking that the great man she had come to visit must have a poor opinion of those who sought his presence, since he found it necessary to chain his furniture so securely; but this endeavour to derive amusement in the midst of a place so calculated to excite opposite feelings was a forced effort on the part of Adrienne, who each instant felt an increase of awe and vague apprehension: for a stillness like that of a house into which death has entered prevailed, and no sound or busy feet proclaimed the bustle and stir usually to be met with in ministerial abodes. The perfect silence continued unbroken, save by the violent gusts of wind which rattled and shook the windows throughout the house.

More than a quarter of an hour passed away; still M. Baleinier did not return. Uneasy, as well as impatient, Adrienne determined to summon some one who should signify to M. Baleinier or the minister her anxiety to complete the affair which had brought her there. As she rose to search for the bell-rope beside the looking-glass, she discovered, if not the bell she sought, that what she had (thanks to the imperfect light of the place) mistaken for glass was, in reality, nothing but a very highly polished sheet of tin. Approaching the strange contrivance somewhat hastily, she feared she had knocked over a bronze candlestick; but her apprehensions were needless: the article in question, with the timepiece, was securely rivetted to the marble mantelpiece.

Under a peculiar state of the mind we are frequently apt to attach an immense importance to matters we should, at other times, pass over as too insignificant to notice. But, at the present moment, these immovable candlesticks—the furniture so firmly secured to the wall—the glass replaced by a sheet of metal—the dulness of the place, with its death-like stillness, and the protracted absence of M. Baleinier,—all combined to affect Adrienne's imagination, until she became seriously alarmed.

Such, however, was her habitual confidence in the doctor, that she

energetically struggled with her terrors, even blaming the allowing herself to be disturbed by trifles which, after all, might mean nothing, and were really not of sufficient importance to occupy her thoughts so long as they had done. As for M. Baleinier, he was, no doubt, waiting till the many occupations of the minister permitted his obtaining the audience he sought.

But, spite of every effort, the poor girl, chilled with the cold, and wearied out by the anxiety of her mind, could not shut out the whisperings of fear, which, at length, gained such complete dominion over her, as to induce her to do what no other circumstances could have effected. She gently approached the little door by which the doctor had disappeared, and listened attentively. Her heart beat, and she held her breath—all her senses seemed concentrated in one; but no sound reached her. All at once a dull, heavy noise, as if something weighty had fallen just overhead, struck on her startled ear—she even fancied she could discern stifled groans.

Quickly glancing towards that part of the ceiling whence the sound had proceeded, she saw several pieces of the plaster which had been detached by the concussion overhead fall to the ground.

Wholly unable any longer to repress her fear, Adrienne flew to the door by which she had entered with the doctor, to call for assistance. But, to her extreme surprise, she found it fastened on the outside. This was, indeed, beyond the power of any reasoning to understand. Still she could not recollect having heard the slightest sound of turning the key in the lock, which was also on the outer side of the door.

Becoming seriously alarmed, the frightened girl flew back to the door at which she had been listening, and by which the doctor had disappeared.

Alas! it was, like the other, too securely fastened from without to admit of her opening it.

Still striving to keep down the terror which momentarily gained more complete dominion over her senses, Adrienne called to her aid all the courage and firmness of her character, and sought to reason herself out of weakly yielding to the circumstances, however alarming, by which she was now surrounded.

“I must have been mistaken,” said she: “something has fallen overhead, and my imagination has supplied the groans. There are a thousand reasons in favour of its being some *thing*, and not some *person*, I heard fall. But then these doors, so strongly fastened! Probably no one knows of my being in the house, and may have closed up the apartment under the idea of no person being in it.”

As she thought thus, Adrienne cast another careful yet anxious survey over the apartment; and then said, with a firm and resolved manner,

“This is weak and silly!—thus to try and deceive myself as to my present position; and to shut my eyes upon the difficulties, perhaps dangers, which surround me, instead of boldly and courageously looking them in the face. One thing is certain: this is the house of no minister—a thousand reasons now prove the contrary to me! M. Baleinier has therefore deceived me: but wherefore can he have done so?—why has he brought me here?—and where am I?”

These questions were more easily asked than answered: one fact

alone remained incontrovertible—that she was the victim of M. Balcenier's treachery.

To a mind so noble, so generous as Adrienne's, there was something so abhorrent in this certainty, that she sought to repel it by recalling the confiding friendship with which she had ever treated the man she now suspected; and feeling within herself how impossible it was for any one to repay her open trustfulness with such black perfidy, she bitterly exclaimed,

“See to what hateful and unjust suspicions we may be led by fear and weakness! No, no! I cannot, I will not, credit deceit so base, so heartless, until it is no longer possible to doubt, and when borne out by the clearest confirmation! This state is too dreadful to endure! Let me summon some one, who shall at once end all these doubts—it is the only means of clearing them up.”

Then, remembering there was no bell, she said,

“Well, never mind!—I will knock. I dare say I can make myself heard; and then a servant will be sure to come and open the door.”

So saying, Adrienne knocked against the door with her delicate knuckles again and again. By the dulness of the sound produced, it was easy to imagine the extreme thickness of the door.

Not the slightest noise announced that her signal of distress had been heard.

She flew to the other door, knocked as she had previously done, and with the same effect—the profound silence of the place being disturbed only by the loud gusts of wind which howled around the building.

“I am not more timid than other people,” said Adrienne, shuddering: “I know not whether it is the deathly chilliness of this place, but I tremble involuntarily; and though I try my utmost to guard against weakly indulging my fears, yet I cannot help fancying that any person would consider what is passing here as strange and alarming as I do.”

All at once the most frightful cries and savage yells resounded from the room situated over the one in which she stood, succeeded by a hurried and violent trampling of feet, as though several persons were engaged in a desperate struggle.

In the first shock of the moment Adrienne screamed loudly; then, becoming pale as death, stood for an instant mute and motionless with terror: but, quickly recovering herself, she rushed to one of the windows and threw open the shutters.

A violent gust of wind, mixed with sleet and snow, rushed into the apartment, and, after filling the place with the smoke and vapour from the flickering lamp, finally extinguished it. Thus, plunged in utter darkness, her hands tightly grasping the iron bars with which the window was barricaded, Mademoiselle de Cardoville, yielding to her long-restrained alarm, was about to call aloud for help, when an unexpected sight froze the blood within her veins, and, for a time, rendered her speechless with terror.

Nearly opposite to where she stood was a similar wing of the building; and, twinkling amid the murkiness of the night, she saw a large window, from which proceeded a clear, strong light. Through this curtainless window Adrienne saw a pale, haggard, emaciated-

looking creature, wrapped in a sort of large white cloth like a sheet, part of which seemed to drag on the ground. This unhappy being kept passing rapidly backwards and forwards before the window, with a hasty and ceaseless motion.

With her eyes fixed on this window, which shone brightly amid the darkness which prevailed, Adrienne stood transfixed with horror at the sight of this fearful spectre. Then, as her agonised fears overpowered her, she shrieked loudly and wildly for help, without, however, quitting her hold of the iron bars she still convulsively grasped.

At the end of a few minutes, and while Adrienne was repeating her cries for assistance, two huge women crept softly into the room, whilst Mademoiselle de Cardoville, still clinging to the window, did not perceive their approach. These persons were from forty to fifty years of age, strong, powerful, and masculine in appearance, shabbily and slovenly dressed, after the style and fashion of servants of the very lowest class. Over their dresses they wore large aprons of coarse blue cloth, reaching up to their very throat, round which they exactly fitted, and falling even to their feet.

One of them, who held a lamp in her hand, had a broad, red, shining face, with a large pimpled and inflamed nose, small greenish eyes, and a quantity of frizzled hair, the colour of flax, sticking out from beneath her dirty cap.

The other was a hard, bony, withered-looking hag, whose thin, forbidding, parchment-like visage was enshrouded beneath a black cap. She was deeply marked with the small-pox, displayed a pair of thick black eyebrows, which nearly met, and had an almost corresponding fringe upon her upper lip. This woman carried over her arm a vestment of thick, strong grey cloth, which, though but partially unfolded, exhibited a garment of singular make as well as texture.

Both these persons had glided stealthily into the room by the little door, at the instant when Adrienne, impelled by her uncontrollable terror, was holding by the bars and calling for help. Making a sign to each other, these women pointed to the poor girl; and while one of them set down her lamp on the mantelpiece, the other (the one in the black cap), approaching the casement, placed her great bony hand on the shoulder of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, who, turning quickly round, screamed with fresh alarm at the sight of so forbidding and repulsive an object.

But the first impulse of terror over, Adrienne felt even relieved and glad at the presence of this woman, who, however unpleasant to behold, was, at least, some one to whom she could speak; and she eagerly inquired, in a more subdued tone,

“Where is M. Baleinier?”

The women looked at each other, exchanged signs of intelligence, but made no reply.

“I ask you,” repeated Adrienne, “where is M. Baleinier, the gentleman who brought me here? I wish to see him directly!”

“He is gone,” said the fat woman.

“Gone!” exclaimed Adrienne; “gone without me! Gracious Heaven! what can this mean?”

Then, after a moment’s reflection, she added,

“Fetch me a coach!”

The women looked at each other, shrugged up their shoulders, but said nothing.

"Will you have the goodness," said Adrienne, still restraining herself, "to fetch me a coach? Since M. Balemier has gone without me, I must return home alone; but I wish to leave this place instantly."

"Come, come, mademoiselle," said the large woman (who was called *Thomas*), pretending not to understand what Adrienne said; "come, it is time now—you must go to bed!"

"Go to bed!" shrieked Mademoiselle de Cardoville, with intense alarm. "For God's sake, do you mean to drive me mad?" Then addressing the other woman, she said, "What house is this? Where am I? tell me, I command you, instantly!"

"Oh! why," answered Thomas, in a rough voice, "you are in a house where you must not stand howling out of window, as you did just now."

"And where folks are not allowed to put lamps out, as you have been doing; because, if you do," added the woman in the black cap, whose name was *Gervase*, why, I shall just quarrel about it, that's all."

Adrienne, unable to utter another word, yet shuddering with fear, continued to gaze on these horrible females with stupified earnestness; in vain did she rack her brain to devise a reason for all she saw and heard. All at once she imagined she had discovered the true cause of all her present sufferings, and in a joyful tone she exclaimed,

"I see! I see! there is some mistake here; what it is I do not know; but, assuredly, a mistake does exist. You take me for some one else. Do you know who I am? I am Adrienne de Cardoville—do you hear? Adrienne de Cardoville! So you see I am at liberty to leave this house whenever I please. No one living has the right to detain me; therefore, I desire you will go this moment and fetch me a coach, and if you cannot obtain one, find me a safe guide who will accompany me and conduct me to the Hôtel de Saint-Dizier, Rue de Babylone. I will liberally reward this person, and you likewise."

"Come," said Thomas, "will you leave off talking such nonsense and come along with us? What is the good of running on in that way? La! we're used to it."

"Take care!" said Adrienne, who was fain to try every method to extricate herself; "if you attempt to detain me here forcibly, you will be sorry for it. You little know the consequences you will draw down upon yourselves!"

"Will you come to bed, or will you not?" repeated Gervase, in an angry, impatient voice.

"Listen to me!" exclaimed Adrienne hastily; "let me out of this house, and I will give each of you two thousand francs. Do you not think it sufficient? Oh, then I will give you ten, twenty—what you please! Am I not rich enough to content you? But let me go hence—for God's sake do not hinder me! Oh, I beseech you, let me go! I will not stay!—it terrifies me to death! I——" cried the poor girl in distracting tones.

"I say, Thomas, she bids high. Twenty thousand francs! not so bad, is it?"

"Oh, let her alone, Gervase; they all sing the same song at first."

"Well, then," cried Adrienne, calling all her energy and determination to her aid in her present desperate position, "since neither

reasons, prayers, nor threats, avail any thing, I tell you, decidedly, go *I will*, and this very instant! We shall see whether you have the audacity to employ force to detain me!"

So saying, Adrienne proceeded resolutely towards the door. But just at this instant the wild harsh screams that had preceded the struggle which had so terrified Adrienne were repeated, only this time there was no trampling of feet.

"Oh, what dreadful cries!" said Adrienne, suddenly stopping, and, in her terror, advancing towards the females. "Do you hear those cries? Where do they come from? What is the meaning of them? What house is this?—what dreadful deeds, oh, God! are going on in it, to call forth such fearful screams! And there, too," added she, almost wildly, pointing to the opposite building with its illuminated window, before which the pallid figure kept up its rapid motion with untiring perseverance; "look there, I say! do you see? Tell me, for Heaven's sake, what does it mean?"

"Why, if you particularly want to know," answered Thomas, "that person over there is, like you, not over-strong in the sense way."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Cardoville, clasping her hands with terror; "for mercy's sake, speak out, and tell me what sort of a house this is, and what they do in it?"

"What they will do to you, if you behave bad, and refuse to come to bed when you are told to," answered Gervase, with a scowl.

"They will just put that on you," said Thomas, holding out the garment she carried under her arm. "Yes, yes! that's the way they serve such as give trouble in this house—they just clap a strait-waistcoat on: do you see?"

"Ah!" shrieked Adrienne, concealing her face between her hands, to escape from so horrible a sight.

A fearful revelation now entered her mind; and one glance at the hideous garment carried by the woman told her all.

After all the varied emotions of so trying a day, this last shock produced a fearful effect on her over-excited frame; a faintness seized her, her hands fell listless by her side, a mortal paleness overspread her countenance, her whole body trembled almost to the extinction of her breath, as, sinking on her knees, and pointing with averted eyes to the fear-inspiring *camisole* (or jacket), she faintly and in almost expiring accents cried,

"No! no! for the love of God! not that—not that! Pardon, pardon. I will do what you desire me——" And then, her strength being utterly exhausted, she fainted, and, but for the two women catching her in their arms, she would have fallen on the floor.

"I declare if she hasn't fainted," said Thomas. "Well, that's lucky: now, then, we can take her nicely to her bed, and undress her without any bother or trouble."

"Well, then, you just carry her," said Gervase, "and I'll take the lamp."

And accordingly the ponderous arms of the gigantic Thomas seized upon poor Adrienne, and carried her off as easily as though she had been only a sleeping infant, into the chamber by which M. Baleinier had disappeared.

This apartment, though extremely clean, was almost destitute of furniture; a green paper covered the walls; a small, low, iron bedstead



THE CAPTIVE

stood in a corner of the room; a stove placed in the chimney was surrounded by an iron-work, which forbade all approach to it; a table affixed to the wall, a chair standing before the table, but likewise riveted firmly to the flooring; a mahogany commode, and a straw arm-chair, completed the scanty fittings-up of this cold, comfortless chamber; the windows, without curtains, were lined on the inside with iron gratings, so as to completely prevent the inmates of the gloomy apartment from doing any mischief either to themselves or the panes of glass.

It was in this miserable chamber, which so painfully contrasted with the almost fairy-like elegance of the pavilion in the Rue de Babylon, that Adrienne was carried by Thomas, who, aided by Gervase, laid the inanimate form of Mademoiselle de Cardoville on the bed, placing the lamp on a little slab at the head of it.

While one of the keepers held her, the other unfastened and took off the poor girl's kerseymer dress, her head hanging helplessly on her bosom. Although she was perfectly insensible, two large tears trickled slowly from her closed eyelids, whose large dark lashes marked the transparent whiteness of her cheek, while her ivory neck and bosom were covered with the silky tresses of her rich golden hair, which had become unfastened when she fell. When unlacing her bodice, of satin less soft, white, and delicate, than the youthful form which rose and fell beneath the lace and cambric which surrounded it, like an alabaster figure slightly tinged with a carnation hue, the horrible touch of the rough, hard, horny hands of the old hags, without completely recalling the wandering senses of the poor victim they grasped, yet produced a sort of spasmodic shudder, as their coarse fingers came in contact with the bare arms and shoulders of the helpless girl they were inflicting their brutal torments on.

"La, what little tiny feet!" said the one who, stooping down, was taking off Adrienne's shoes and stockings. "I declare, I could hold them both in the palm of my hand."

And well enough might the woman break forth into admiration of the small rosy foot, smooth and white as that of a child, divested by their officiousness of its delicate covering, and exhibiting the appearance of an alabaster model, with each azure vein lightly traced over the surface; while the ankle, knee, and leg, might, for fineness of proportion, have vied with the celebrated hunting Diana of antique celebrity.

"And, goodness me! look at her long hair!" said Thomas: "la! how soft and smooth it is, to be sure! I'm certain she'd step upon it if she was only upright. Well, I think it 'oud be quite a pity to cut it off when they comes to put the ice 'top of her head."

And so saying, Thomas, after her rough fashion, grasped the magnificent mass of rich hair which fell down Adrienne's back.

Alas! it was no longer the white and delicate fingers of Georgette, Florine, or Hebe, arranging the beautiful hair of their beloved mistress, with as much affection as pride.

And as the coarse touch of the rough hands of the two keepers offended Adrienne's delicate skin, she experienced a repetition of the same nervous shuddering which had first attacked her, but with this difference, that each attack became stronger and more severe.

Could it have been the effect of a sort of magnetic repulsion, or

was it owing to the severe cold of the night, that Adrienne, after repeated shivering fits, at length, though slowly, recovered her senses ?

Words cannot describe her terror, alarm, and horror, her justly indignant wrath, when, on coming to herself, and pushing back the long floating curls which covered her face, she found herself in a manner half-naked, and in the hands of these diabolical old women.

A cry of shame and offended modesty, mingled with terror, burst from the lips of Adrienne. Then, in order to save herself the insult of being exposed to the gaze of the two hags who surrounded her, she hastily knocked over the lamp, which had been placed on a small slab near the bed ; the lamp fell upon the floor, and, after emitting a few sparks, became utterly extinguished.

Then, wrapped in the miserable covering of the bed, and surrounded by perfect darkness, the unhappy girl gave vent to her wretchedness in hysteric sobs and convulsive moans. The keepers, putting their own construction on the violent action of Adrienne, attributed it to a paroxysm of delirium.

“ Oh ! what, you have got back to your old trick of breaking and putting out lamps, have you ? ” cried Thomas, deeply incensed at having to grope her way about in the dark. “ Well, I warned you of it ! Now to-night you shall wear the strait-waistcoat, like the mad woman over-head ! ”

“ So she shall ! ” returned the other. “ But hold her tight, Thomas, while I go and get a light ; and then, I dare say, between us, we shall manage to make her quiet.”

“ Make haste, then ! for, spite of her seeming gentleness, it is my idea she is as raving mad as she can be, and that we must make up our minds to sit up all night with her.”

* * * * *

What a sad and wretched contrast between the rising and the setting of that day's sun ! In the morning, Adrienne had risen happy, smiling, and free from all oppressive interference with her liberty ; her eyes had opened upon all the rich treasures of art and luxury, and her toilet was waited upon by the tender, delicate, and attached girls she had chosen to be about her person. In her generous and sportive humour she had prepared for her relation, the young Indian princee, a magnificent and fairy-like surprise. She had also taken the most noble resolution as regarded the young orphans Dagobert had brought from so distant a land. During her interview with Madame de Saint-Dizier, she had shewn herself, by turns, proud, yet highly sensitive ; melancholy, yet gay, ironical, and grave ; firm, true to herself, noble, and courageous : and her only reason for entering into this accursed house had been to solicit pardon and indulgence for an honest and industrious artisan.

And night found the same Mademoiselle Cardoville delivered, by base treachery, into the unworthy hands of two keepers of a madhouse, with her delicate limbs imprisoned in one of those horrible accompaniments to a lunatic asylum—a *strait-waistcoat*.

Mademoiselle de Cardoville, guarded by the two hags, passed a night of indescribable wretchedness.

* * * * *

What was the utter astonishment of the poor girl when, about nine





THE VISIT.

o'clock on the following morning, she saw Doctor Baleinier, wearing the same bland, smiling, paternal air, enter her miserable apartment!

"Well, my child," inquired he, in a voice of soft and affectionate inquiry, "how have you passed the night?"

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE VISIT.

THE keepers of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, yielding to her entreaties, and particularly to her promise to be obedient, had only kept the strait-waistcoat upon her for a portion of the night. When daylight came she had arisen and dressed herself, unaided and unhindered.

Adrienne was seated on the edge of her bed: her extreme pallor, the excessive alteration in her features, her eyes sparkling with the deep fire of fear, and the convulsive shudderings of her frame from time to time, already bore testimony to the fearful consequences of this horrible night in a frame so easily, delicately organised, and nervously sensitive.

At the sight of Doctor Baleinier (at whose signal Gervase and Thomas left the room), Mademoiselle de Cardoville was petrified. She experienced a kind of vertigo when she thought of the audacity of this man, who dared to present himself before her.

But when the physician repeated, in his bland tone, and with a voice which conveyed feelings of the deepest interest,

"Well, my poor dear child! how have you passed the night?"

Adrienne lifted her hands suddenly to her burning brow, as if to ascertain whether she was waking or dreaming; then, looking at the physician, her lips half opened, but they shook so fearfully that she could not articulate a syllable.

Anger, indignation, contempt, and, above all, that resentment so severely painful, which confidence basely betrayed excites in noble hearts, so utterly bewildered Adrienne, that, overcome and intensely suffering, she was unable, in spite of every effort, to break silence.

"Come, come, I see what it is!" said the doctor, shaking his head, sorrowfully; "you are very angry with me, aren't you? Well, I expected so, my dear child!"

These words, uttered with unblushing hypocrisy, made Adrienne almost bound from her seat. She rose, her pale cheeks flushed to scarlet, her full black eye glittering, and raising her lovely countenance haughtily; her upper lip was slightly curled by a smile of bitter disdain; and then, silent but indignant, the young girl passed in front of M. Baleinier, who was still sitting, and went towards the door with a quick and firm step. It was the door in which was the small wicket, which was closed externally.

Adrienne turned round towards the doctor, pointed to the door, and with an imperious gesture said to him:

“Open this door!”

“Come, my dear Mademoiselle Adrienne!” said the physician; “calm yourself—let us talk like good friends—for you know I am your friend.” And then calmly took a pinch of snuff.

“What, sir!” said Adrienne, in a voice tremulous with anger, “am I not to leave this place to-day?”

“Alas! no—in such an excited state! If you knew how inflamed your face was—how burning your eyes seem! Why, your pulse must be at eighty a minute! I entreat you, my dear child, not to increase all these very bad symptoms by such extreme agitation!”

After having looked steadfastly at the doctor, Adrienne returned slowly to the bed-side, and again seated herself.

“That’s right!” said M. Baleinier; “be calm—be moderate—and, I say again, let us talk like good friends.”

“You are right, sir,” replied Adrienne, in a brief, restrained, and utterly calm tone; “let us talk like friends. You desire to make me pass for a mad woman—is not that so?”

“I desire, my child, that one day you shall feel for me as much gratitude as to-day you entertain aversion. This aversion I foresaw; but, painful as are certain duties, one must resign one’s self to all the unpleasantness of carrying them out,” said Baleinier, with a sigh, and in a tone so natural and convincing that Adrienne could not repress a gesture of surprise, followed by a smile of bitterness.

“Really! indeed!—all this, then, is for my good?”

“It is really, frankly, my dear young lady! Have I ever had any object in view but that of being useful to you?”

“I hardly know, sir, which is more disgusting, your impudence or your base treachery.”

“Treachery!” said M. Baleinier, shrugging his shoulders with a gesture of pain: “treachery! Reflect, my poor dear! Can you think that, if I were not acting faithfully and conscientiously in your interest, I should return this morning to face your indignation, which, of course, I fully expected? I am the head physician of this *Maison de Santé*, which belongs to me. I have two pupils here, medical men like myself, who act with and for me, and I might have transferred to them the charge and care of you; but no, I would not do so: I knew your disposition, your character, all your former life; and, moreover, putting aside all the interest I bear you, I could, better than any other person, treat you properly.”

Adrienne had listened to M. Baleinier without interrupting him. She now gazed at him steadfastly, and then said,

“Monsieur, how much are you to be paid for making me pass for a lunatic?”

“Mademoiselle!” exclaimed M. Baleinier, wounded in spite of his *sang froid*.

“I am rich, as you know,” replied Adrienne, with supreme disdain: “I will double the sum they are to give you. Now then, sir, in the name of that—*friendship* which you referred to, at least let me be the best bidder!”

“Your keepers, in their report of the night’s proceedings, have informed me that you made them a similar proposition,” said M. Baleinier, resuming his usual presence of mind.

"Your pardon, sir!—I offered to them what may be offered to poor, uneducated women, who are forced by misfortune to accept the painful situations they occupy; but you, sir, a man of the world—a man of profound knowledge—a man of clear understanding—are very differently situated: we must bid very much higher. There is treachery of all prices; therefore I pray you not to found your refusal on the smallness of my offers to these poor creatures. Come, tell me how much must it be?"

"The keepers, in their nightly report, have also referred to your threats," replied M. Balemier, very calmly: "have you none of these for me also? Ah! my dear child, take my advice, and let us at once lose sight and mention of all attempts at bribery and threats of vengeance; let us rather come at once to the reality of our position."

"What! my threats are vain, are they?" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Cardoville, allowing all her indignation, so utterly restrained until that moment, to burst forth in its fullest flow. "What, sir! you believe that when I leave this place (for my confinement must have an end), that I shall not loudly proclaim your perfidious treatment! Ah! you believe that I will not hold up to full exposure, to public infamy, all your infamous complicity with Madame de Saint-Dizier!—you believe that I will be silent as to the horrible treatment I have experienced! But, sir, mad as I may be, I know that there are laws, and I will demand a full and open reparation for all I have endured, and shame, reproach, and chastisement for you and your accomplices! And, mark me, I beg! Henceforth there will be hatred—war to death; and I will use on my part all my strength, understanding, and——"

"My dear Mademoiselle Adrienne, allow me to interrupt you!" said the doctor, who was perfectly calm and affectionate: "nothing can be more calculated to retard your cure than false and foolish hopes; they will keep you in a state of deplorable excitement. It is, therefore, necessary that I should state facts clearly, in order that you may more thoroughly see and appreciate your position. First, it is impossible that you can quit this place; secondly, you cannot have any communication outside these walls; thirdly, no persons enter here but those on whom I can fully rely; fourthly, I am completely protected from your threats and your vengeance, and the more so because all circumstances and all right are in my favour."

"All right! to shut me up here——"

"That would not have been resorted to, if a crowd of the most serious reasons had not rendered it necessary."

"Oh! there are reasons?"

"Unfortunately, but too many."

"Perhaps you will be so indulgent as to enumerate them?"

"Alas! they are but too apparent; and if, one day, you should appeal to law, as you have but just now threatened, then, to our extreme regret, we shall be compelled to adduce them: the more than singular eccentricity of your mode of life—your style of dressing your waiting-women—your unbounded expenditure—the history of the Indian prince, to whom you offer a royal hospitality—your unheard-of resolution, at eighteen years of age, to prefer leading a life like a bachelor—the adventure of the man who was found concealed in your

sleeping apartment — in fact, the *procès verbal* of your yesterday's interrogatory would be produced, as it was faithfully taken down by a person engaged for that especial purpose."

"How!—yesterday!" exclaimed Adrienne, with equal surprise and indignation.

"Oh, yes: in order to be perfectly *en règle*, if, at some future day, you should misinterpret the interest we take in you, we had your replies taken down in short-hand by a man who was placed in an adjoining room behind the falling curtains; and really, when your mind is calmer, and you will one day read over this interrogatory calmly, you will not be astonished at the resolution we were compelled to resort to."

"Continue, sir," said Adrienne, with disdain.

"The facts, as I allude to them, being thus substantiated and recognised, you must see, my dear Mademoiselle Adrienne, that the responsibility of those who love you is perfectly protected: they have tried, as they were bound to, to cure that derangement of mind which, it is true, only betrays itself by singular manias, but which would seriously compromise your future if they were more developed. As far as my opinion goes, a gradual cure may be hoped for, thanks to a system at once moral and physical, the first step of which is to remove you from the fantastic arrangements which were around you, and which excited your fancy so highly; whilst, living here in retreat, in the soothing calm of a simple and solitary life, my constant and anxious, I ought to say paternal care, will, by degrees, accomplish a perfect cure."

"So, then, sir," said Adrienne, with a bitter smile, "the love of a perfect independence, generosity, the cultivation of the beautiful, hatred for all that is odious and base—these are the maladies of which you would cure me! I fear I am incurable, for it is a long while since my aunt began to try this cure."

"It may be that we do not succeed, but at least we will try. You must observe that there are a mass of circumstances sufficiently serious to authorise our determination, which was come to at a family consultation, and that completely protects me from your menaces: it was to this I meant to recur. A man of my age and consideration never acts inconsiderately under these circumstances. So now you will comprehend what I said to you just now: in a word, do not indulge a hope of leaving this house before your perfect cure has been effected, and believe that I am, and shall be always, protected from your threats. This well understood, let us now discourse of the actual state in which you are, with all the interest with which you inspire me."

"I think, sir, that if I am a lunatic, you speak to me very rationally."

"You a lunatic!—thanks be to heaven, my poor dear child, you are not so yet; and I trust, by my care, you never will be. To prevent such a sad consequence, it was necessary to check in time, and, believe me, it was more than time. You look at me with an air of surprise—of doubt. Consider, now, what interest can I have in talking to you thus? Is it to indulge your aunt's hatred? Why should I do that? What did she do for or against me? I do not

think of her at this moment less or more than I did yesterday. Do I use new language to you? Have I not often—yesterday—spoken to you of the excitement so dangerous to your understanding, of your capricious fancies? I have used a stratagem to get you here—that's true! I seized with eagerness the opportunity which you yourself offered to me—that is also true, poor dear child! for I know you never would have come here willingly, and one day or other we must have sought some pretext to bring you hither; and, *ma foi*, I confess I did say, 'Her interest before anything! Do your duty, happen what may.'

As M. Baleinier spoke, Adrienne's countenance, until then alternately expressive of indignation and disdain, assumed a singular mixture of anguish and horror.

Hearing this man express himself in a manner apparently so natural and sincere, so convincing, and really so just and so natural, she felt more fearful than ever. A base treachery, clothed in such a guise, frightened her a hundred times more than the hatred frankly avowed by Madame de Saint-Dizier. She found, indeed, that audacious hypocrisy so monstrous, that she thought it actually impossible.

Adrienne had so little of the art of concealing her resentment, that the physician, who was a skilful and profound physiognomist, perceived the impression he had made.

"Come," thought he, "this is a great step—to disdain and anger, fright has succeeded. Doubt is not far off. I shall not leave her without her saying, 'Return soon, my good M. Baleinier!'"

The physician replied, in a voice so sad and full of emotion, that it appeared to come from the very bottom of his heart,

"I see, I see, you are still distrustful of me—what I tell you is but a lie, cheat, deceit, hypocrisy, hatred, is it not? I hate you! and wherefore? Oh! what have you done to me, or rather—you will, perhaps, receive this as a more forcible reason from a man like me," added M. Baleinier, with bitterness,—“or rather, what interest have I to hate you? What, you! you who are only in your present state in consequence of the exaggeration of your most generous instincts—you, who only have what may be termed the malady of your qualities—you can coolly, resolutely, accuse an honest man, who has never, hitherto, given you anything but proofs of his affection! to accuse him of the most cowardly, black, and abominable crime, with which manhood can be stained! Yes, I say crime; because the atrocious treason of which you accuse me merits no other name. Ah! my poor child, it is bad, very bad, and I see that an independent mind can display as much injustice and intolerance as narrower dispositions; that does not rouse me, but it pains me deeply. Yes, I assure you deeply—deeply.”

And the doctor passed his hands over his moistened eyes.

We cannot pretend to describe the accent, the look, the countenance, the attitude, of M. Baleinier, as he thus expressed himself.

The most skilful and practised advocate, the first comedian in the world, could not have played his part better than the doctor enacted the scene: indeed no person could have performed it so well, for M. Baleinier, carried away by the situation in spite of himself, was himself half-convinced of what he said.

In a word, he felt all the horror of his perfidy, but he knew also that Adrienne could not credit it; for it is those plottings which are so horrible, that sincere hearts can never give their belief to as possible; and, then, if an elevated mind will look into the abyss of evil, beyond a certain depth, it is seized with a vertigo, and can no longer distinguish anything.

And then, too, even the most evil-disposed have a day, an hour, a moment, in which what God has put of good into the heart of every creature will be elevated in spite of themselves.

Adrienne was too interesting, she was in a position too cruel, for the doctor not to feel in his heart some pity for the unfortunate girl: the obligation he had long been under to appear to shew sympathy for her, the full confidence which the young girl had in him, had become for this man pleasant and cherished habits—but sympathy and habits must yield before implacable necessity.

And so did the Marquis d'Aigrigny act by the mother he idolized; unheeding even the dying breath which called him to her bedside, that she might look on his face yet once again—spite of his passionate adoration of this parent, he departed at the bidding of his Order, and the expiring mother was forgotten. How, then, after so stern an example of the trampling under foot of even the most sacred and holy duties, could it be expected that M. Baleinier would hesitate to sacrifice Adrienne? 'Tis true the members of the Order to which he belonged were bound to him, but he was infinitely more their slave than they could ever be his, for a long partnership in crimes creates indissoluble and terrible bonds.

At the moment when M. Baleinier had finished speaking so warmly to Mademoiselle de Cardoville, the outer plank of the wicket of the door glided noiselessly back into its groove, and two eager eyes attentively surveyed both the chamber and all that was passing in it.

M. Baleinier, however, observed not the action, or the opening of the wicket.

Adrienne could not detach her gaze from the eyes of the doctor, which appeared to possess a sort of fascination over her. Silent, oppressed, and under the influence of a vague and indistinct terror, she felt herself incapable of penetrating the dark recesses of such a mind as the doctor's; yet affected, in spite of herself, by the half real, half feigned sincerity of his words, as well as the touching sympathy of the voice in which he spoke, for a moment she doubted his being really the enemy she had fancied.

For the first time the idea suggested itself to her that, although M. Baleinier had committed a fearful error, yet that his motives in acting as he had done were well-intentioned.

Added to this, the sufferings of the past night, the dangers of her present situation, acting upon her feverish and excitable temperament, all conspired to create a degree of uneasy and anxious thought in the mind of the poor girl, who kept watching every turn and expression of the doctor's face with increasing surprise and wonder; then, making a violent effort to hinder herself from yielding to a weakness whose fearful consequences she vaguely perceived, she exclaimed,

“No, no, monsieur! I neither can nor ought to credit what you say;



DAGOBERT AND AGRICOLA.

you have too much skill, too great experience, to be capable of committing such a mistake!"

"A mistake!" said M. Baleinier, in a grave and mournful voice; "a mistake! Allow me, in the name of that skill and experience for which you give me credit, to say a few words. Listen to me, my dear young lady, for a short time, and then I need only appeal to yourself."

"To me!" replied Adrienne, almost speechless with surprise. "Why, would you seek to persuade me that——" Then interrupting herself she added, with a burst of convulsive laughter, "Certainly it needed only that I should pronounce myself mad to complete your triumph; that I should confess my place is in a madhouse, and thank you for having put me there."

"I am certainly entitled to your thanks, as I told you at the commencement of this conversation: listen to me, then! My words may seem cruel, for some wounds cannot be cured without the aid of the knife or the caustic. Let me beseech of you, my dear child, to reflect a little; cast an impartial retrospect over your past life; recall even your thoughts, and you will be afraid to look back upon them. Remember those periods of enthusiastic flightiness, in which you have asserted that you felt as though you did not belong to this earth; and above all, at this moment, while your reason is still equal to the task, compare your life with that of other young females of your age. Can you tell me of one that has lived as you have done? who thinks like you? unless, indeed, you fancied yourself so superior to all others of your sex, that you would fain arrogate to yourself the right of leading a life entirely at variance with the notions, habits, and customs of the world you belong to."

"You know perfectly well," said Adrienne, regarding the doctor with increasing terror, "that I have never been actuated by so silly a pride."

"Then, how, my poor child, are we to account for your strange and inexplicable manner of living? Could you ever, for one instant, persuade even yourself that it was reconcilable with common sense? Ah, my child, beware! you have at present merely indulged in charming originalities, poetical fancies, vague yet delicious dreams—but the bias they give is as fatal as irresistible. Oh, beware! beware! the strong, healthful part of your graceful and imaginative mind, having at present the ascendant over your weaker faculties, merely permits your actions to wear the form of whimsical eccentricities; but you know not—you cannot imagine with what fearful certainty, what overpowering violence, the irrational part of your brain will develop itself, and, at a given moment, stifle the more intellectual portion. Then yours will be no longer mere graceful flights of fancy, or elegant caprices; they will become the wild insane doings of a wandering mind, the hideous calculations of a lunatic!"

"Alas, you fill me with terror!" interrupted the unhappy girl, pressing her trembling hands tightly across her burning forehead.

"Then," continued M. Baleinier, in an agitated tone, "then the last glimmer of sense becomes extinguished, and madness—yes, the dreadful word must be spoken—madness seizes the brain, and bursts

forth in all the wild, furious actions, of a creature from whom the guiding ray of reason has for ever fled."

"Like the unhappy female up there," murmured Adrienne, as, with fixed, feverish eye, she gazed at the ceiling, pointing to it with her finger.

"Occasionally," resumed the doctor, terrified at the too evident effect of his words on the poor victim, yet yielding, in spite of his better feelings, to the inexorable fatality of the situation in which he was placed, "occasionally, madness assumes the form of stupidity and brutality, leaving the unhappy being afflicted by it only the outward resemblance to a human being; with merely the instincts of an animal—eating voraciously, and keeping up the same incessant motion in the cell in which they are necessarily confined, and in that manner to pass the whole of their lives—all of it—for not a shadow of hope remains."

"Like the female out there," cried Adrienne, becoming more and more excited and wild in her looks, as she extended her arm towards that part of the opposite building which could be distinctly seen through the window of her chamber.

"Alas, yes!" replied M. Baleinier. "Like you, unfortunate child, these females were young, beautiful, and clever; but, like you, they had within them the fearful germ of insanity, which, not being destroyed in time, has increased and increased, until, at length, it has entirely overgrown their reason and stifled their intellect."

"In mercy!" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Cardoville, her brain bewildered with intense horror, "oh! in mercy do not tell me such dreadful things! Once again, I tell you, you frighten me—indeed, indeed you do! Oh, take me away! take me away, I say! I cannot—I dare not stay here: for God's sake remove me from the place!" cried she, in tones of heart-wringing agony, "or I shall finish by becoming as mad as others are."

Then, struggling with the intense horror which shook her frame, spite of her every attempt to overcome it, she said,

"But, no! do not hope it—I shall not become mad. I am in full possession of my senses—ay, as much so as you are: can you, then, expect to impose on me with such pictures as you have drawn? True, I have not lived as others have done, neither have I thought with them. True, also, I have felt shocked at that which appeared to give no offence to other persons; but what does all that prove? simply that my tastes, disposition, and character, were dissimilar to theirs. Have I exhibited a cold or wicked heart? have I been selfish or unmindful of others? I am aware that my ideas are full of whim and caprice—I confess it. I know my imagination is full of dreams and fancies; but you know well, M. Baleinier, their aim was ever generous and elevated." And here the voice of Adrienne trembled, and sunk almost into a supplicating tone, while tears coursed rapidly down her pale cheeks. "Never have I, to my knowledge, committed one base or unworthy action; and if I have done wrong, it has ever been from excess of generosity. Surely a wish to heap pleasure and happiness on all around us cannot be construed into madness? Besides, we can feel and know whether we are in our right mind or not; and I am perfectly assured, whatever I may be driven to, I am not *yet* mad.

Still, Heaven help me! I dread—I know not what—the fearful things you tell me of the two females I have seen and heard this night, make me—you ought to understand these dreadful circumstances better than I do; besides," added Mademoiselle de Cardoville, relapsing into the most perfect despair, and elevating her voice into the accents of distracting grief, "something ought to be done to avert these horrible consequences. Why, why, if you really regarded me, have you suffered my malady to remain thus long unobserved? could you not sooner have taken pity on me? Alas, alas! the most cruel part of my misery consists in my not being able to place confidence in your words—you are possibly only laying some snare to entrap me afresh: but, no, no! that cannot be: you weep! Nay, then, it must be true since you attest it with your tears!"

As Adrienne finished her touching appeal, she earnestly watched the countenance of M. Baleinier, who, spite of his cold-hearted selfishness, could not restrain his tears at the sight of the nameless tortures the poor girl underwent.

"Yes, yes, your warm tears fall on my hand; then I dare not disbelieve further. God of mercy, aid and support me! But you can do something for me, can you not? Oh, I will be obedient to all you tell me. I will do every thing you wish—every thing—that I may be preserved from the fate of the women, the unfortunate creatures, I heard and saw last night. What if it should be too late? But, no, no! there is yet time; is there not, my good, my kind M. Baleinier? Oh, pardon, I beseech you, all my ungrateful and unthinking speeches! I knew not, when you first came in—I—you understand—I—was not——"

And as these broken exclamations, mingled with heartbreaking sobs, died away, Adrienne looked for some moments wildly around the room with a sort of feverish eagerness, then sunk perfectly exhausted into a profound silence, which lasted some time, while M. Baleinier's tears unconsciously bore testimony to the sympathy he could not help feeling for the unhappy girl.

Adrienne had sat with her face buried in her hands, all at once she raised her head, her features were calmer, though still exhibiting a degree of nervous tremor.

"M. Baleinier," said she, with touching dignity, "I know not what I may have been saying. My grief, I fear, had temporarily affected my brain, but I am now myself again. Listen to me! I am in your power, I know it; and I am equally aware no human power can deliver me from it. Am I to look upon you as an implacable enemy, or a sincere friend?—I cannot decide. And do you really and truly believe that what is merely flightiness of character in me at present may hereafter degenerate into madness? or are you an accomplice in some diabolical scheme against me? You alone can answer that question. Spite of my resolution and courage, I confess myself conquered. Whatever it is that is required of me—understand me well—*whatever* may be sought for, by those who are thus cruelly treating me, I accede to it, before I even know what I am promising; to that I pledge my word, and you well know how faithfully I always adhere to it. There cannot be, then, any further motive for detaining me here. If, on the contrary, you sincerely believe my reason is in

danger, and I will confess that your words have awakened within me a fearful, though indistinct apprehension of some awful catastrophe, then tell me so, calmly and dispassionately, and I will believe you. I am wholly at your mercy; alone, friendless, and unassisted by any counsel but my own, I promise to trust implicitly, blindly in you. But do I address a friend or foe? am I supplicating my deliverer and preserver, or my destroyer and murderer? I have no power to decide: but I say this much, I offer you my life, my future prospects; take either, or both, I have no longer strength to dispute them with you."

These affecting words, pronounced with the most touching resignation and despairing confidence, gave the last blow to the vacillations of M. Baleinier's mind. Already cruelly moved by this scene, he wished, without reflecting on the consequences which might arise from so doing, to tranquillise Adrienne's mind as to the terrible and unfounded apprehensions he had excited within her; and these sentiments of repentance and benevolence were impressed, in legible characters, on the features of Doctor Baleinier. They were only too legible.

At the instant that he stooped towards Mademoiselle de Cardoville, for the purpose of taking her hand, a sharp, shrill voice was heard behind the wicket, pronouncing merely the words,

"Doctor Baleinier!"

"Rodin!" murmured the doctor, much alarmed;—"then he has been watching me!"

"Who was it called you?" inquired the poor girl of M. Baleinier.

"A person I desired to meet me here this morning, for the purpose of accompanying him to the convent of Sainte Marie, which is close by," said the doctor, in much alarm and uneasiness.

"And what is your reply to my question?" asked Adrienne, in a state of agonising suspense.

After a short interval of most solemn silence, during which the doctor's eyes were fixed on the wicket, he said, in a voice of deep emotion,

"I am—what I have always been—a friend, incapable of deceiving you."

Poor Adrienne's features assumed the paleness of death. Then, extending her hand to M. Baleinier, she said, in a voice she vainly sought to render calm,

"Thanks! I shall have the necessary courage. Will it last very long?"

"Perhaps a month. Solitude—reflection—a suitable regimen—my devoted attention! Make yourself perfectly easy: every thing that is consistent with your condition will be allowed you, and every attention shall be shewn to your wishes. If you disapprove of this chamber, another shall be provided for you."

"No!" replied Adrienne, oppressed by a heavy and profound grief; "no! it matters little where I am: one apartment is as good as another."

"Come, come, take courage! all is not lost yet!"

"Perhaps you flatter me," said Adrienne, with a gloomy smile; and then added;

“Farewell, then, for the present, my dear M. Baleinier ! And now my only hope is in you !”

So saying, her head dropped on her breast, her hands fell listlessly in her lap, and she remained sitting on the side of her bed—pale, motionless, and perfectly crushed.

“Mad !” cried she, as M. Baleinier disappeared ; “perhaps mad !”

* * * * *

We have permitted ourselves to give this episode at some length, because it is in reality more of the *romance of real life* than the reader may imagine. Many a time has conflicting interests, motives of revenge, or perfidious machinations, induced those concerned to avail themselves of the imprudent facility with which the keepers of houses for the reception of insane persons will receive any individual committed to their charge by any friend or relative, however false or treacherous.

We shall hereafter give our opinion as to the necessity of establishing some interference or superintendence, on the part of the civil authorities, who might arrange a method of periodically visiting and examining into the conduct of houses destined for the reception of insane persons, as well as other institutions not less important, though even still more overlooked by judicial watchfulness. We shall revert to this subject again.

CHAPTER XLVII.

PRESENTIMENTS.

WHILE the facts just narrated were passing within the *Maison de Santé* belonging to Doctor Baleinier, other events were going on about the same period of time in the Rue Brise-Miche, under the humble roof of Françoise Baudoin.

Seven o'clock had struck from the church of Saint Merry ; the morning was dark and lowering, and the sleet and hail pattered against the casement of Françoise's gloomy chamber.

Ignorant of the arrest of her son, the poor woman had expected him in the evening, as usual ; then, a prey to a thousand fears, she had kept anxious watch till morning was far advanced, when, worn out with fatigue, weariness, and anxiety, she threw herself on her mattress beside the bed of Rose and Blanche.

With the first dawn of day the unhappy mother arose and ascended to the attic in which Agricola slept, in the vain hope of finding he might have returned during her short slumber.

The sisters also arose, and, having performed their simple toilet, found themselves alone in the cold, cheerless apartment.

Kill-joy, who had been left behind by Dagobert, was stretched before the now cold stove, while, resting his sagacious nose between his two fore-paws, he never took his gaze off the gentle beings he seemed to understand he was exclusively left in charge of.

The orphans, who had slept but little during the night, had been witness to the agitation and wretchedness the wife of Dagobert had endured: sometimes they observed her pacing the little chamber, and talking to herself; then hurrying at the least sound to the staircase to listen; and when returning from her fruitless errand she would place herself on her knees before a crucifix placed in a corner of the room, the orphans doubted not but that, while the tender mother prayed for her son, she likewise besought Heaven in their favour, for the state of their minds terrified the excellent woman.

After Dagobert's precipitate departure for Chartres, Françoise, having assisted Rose and Blanche with their toilet, spoke of their morning prayers, offering to join with them; but, to her unutterable surprise, they innocently assured her they knew no other form of prayer than what consisted in invoking their mother's blessing from the heaven they were told she dwelt in. And when the good woman, recovering from her first shock, questioned them as to their knowledge of the catechism, confirmation, or communion, they opened their large blue eyes with profound astonishment, unable to comprehend the meaning of all she said.

Acting from the dictates of her own simple religious belief, the wife of Dagobert believed the souls of the orphans to be in a more perilous state, as, having to the best of her ability explained to them the meaning of baptism, and described its form of administration, she inquired whether they had ever been admitted into the bosom of the church, and received for answer that, to the best of their knowledge, no such rite could have been performed, inasmuch as neither priest nor church were to be found in the part of Siberia in which they had been born during their mother's exile.

When the strong religious bias of Françoise's mind is borne in view, it will easily be imagined with what intense horror she looked upon these young creatures, whom she already tenderly loved for their sweetness and gentleness of character, and who now appeared in her eyes like poor heathens innocently devoted to eternal damnation. Unable to restrain her tears or conceal her terrors, she clasped them tenderly in her arms, assuring them her first care should be to take the necessary steps to secure them safety from the perdition which awaited them, and bitterly lamenting that it should not have occurred to Dagobert to have them baptized as they travelled through so many different towns; and it must be candidly admitted that so pious a purpose had never once entered the head of the *ci-devant* horse-soldier.

When Françoise had quitted the sisters during the day, in order to perform her sundry duties, she durst not take them with her to church; their complete ignorance of every thing connected with religion rendering their presence in the sacred building, if not improper, at least useless: but in her prayers Françoise most fervently besought the mercy of Heaven in favour of two poor benighted young creatures who knew not the perilous state of their own darkened souls.

Rose and Blanche then were left alone in the chamber, during the absence of Dagobert's wife. They were still in their deep mourning, while their lovely countenances were pensive, if not sad. Although they had, from their cradle, been accustomed to a life of hardships, yet

from the moment of their arrival in the Rue Brise-Miche their young imaginations had been deeply struck with the difference which existed between the humble abode they were in and the marvels their youthful fancies had pictured awaited them in Paris, that golden city of their dreams.

But soon this astonishment, so easily imagined, gave place to thoughts of considerable gravity, for young persons like themselves, and the aspect of poverty so nobly sustained, and toil so industriously pursued, made the young orphans reflect deeply, not merely as children, but as young females endowed with an accurate and observant mind, a just and sympathising spirit, a noble, generous heart, and dispositions at once delicate, yet energetic and courageous. During the last twenty-four hours they had seen and reflected much.

"Sister," said Rose to Blanche, when Françoise had quitted the chamber, "Dagobert's poor wife is very uneasy: did you observe how miserable she was all night? how she wept, and then prayed?"

"I was as much grieved as yourself, dear sister, at the sight of her grief; and I tried even to guess what could have occasioned it. I think I know what gave her such pain. Most likely it is we who are the cause of her distress."

"Do you really think so? You mean, because we do not know any prayers, and have never been baptized?"

"It did, indeed, seem to grieve her sorely to find us so ignorant, and I was much affected by it; because it proved how tenderly she loved us. But do you know, I could not understand the terrible danger she said we were in."

"No more could I, my dear sister. We try to do nothing which could displease our dear mother, since she sees and knows all our actions."

"And we love every one who loves us; we hate nobody, and we submit ourselves to whatever happens to us. How, then, can we be so very wicked?"

"I know not; only, perhaps, we might do wrong things without intending it."

"We, dear sister! How could we?"

"I will tell you; and that is what I was going to say when I remarked, that I feared it was us who occasioned the uneasiness experienced by Dagobert's wife."

"Oh! pray tell me then."

"Listen, dear sister! Yesterday, Madame Françoise wished to work at those coarse cloth bags which are on the table there ——"

"I recollect: and at the end of half-an-hour she told us, sorrowfully, that she must leave off; that she could not see well enough even for that coarse work, and that her eyesight was entirely ruined."

"So you perceive she can no longer work for her own livelihood."

"No: but then it is her son ——"

"M. Agricola, who maintains her. Oh, how good he seems! He looks so cheerful, and frank, and happy to devote himself to his mother! He is indeed worthy of being brother to our angel Gabriel."

"You will see directly why I mentioned to you about M. Agricola's maintaining his mother by his labour. Our good old Dagobert told

me, that when we arrived here he had only a few pieces of money remaining."

" True."

" So that you see, his wife being thus unable to work, what could an old soldier like him do for their subsistence?"

" You are right. Dagobert can do nothing but love us, and watch over us like his own children."

" Thus, then, don't you perceive that M. Agricola must support his father as well as his mother? for Gabriel is a poor priest, who, possessing nothing, has no means of aiding the family which brought him up. The care and burthen of the whole family then falls on M. Agricola."

" To be sure it does! But then, you know, it is his duty to work for, and toil hard to prevent his father and mother from wanting; and he does it with pleasure."

" Yes, sister; but it is not his duty also to support us: he owes us no obligation."

" What do you mean, Blanche?"

" He will, therefore, have us to work for in addition; for you know we have no means in the world of providing for ourselves."

" I never thought of that! You are quite right—so he will! How sorry I am!"

" Look here, sister. It is no use for Dagobert to tell us about our father being a duke and marshal of France; it is also folly to expect great things from this medal, so long as our father is away and our hopes are not realised. We are still nothing but two poor girls, obliged to be a burthen on this worthy family, to whom we are already so much indebted, and who are themselves so much in want ——"

" Why do you pause, dear sister?"

" What I am going to say would make other persons laugh, but you will understand me. Yesterday, Dagobert's wife said, sadly, as she watched Kill-joy eating, ' Poor dog, you eat as much as a grown-up person;' and the tone in which she spoke brought the tears in my eyes, because it shewed how poor they were; and yet we have come to increase their poverty."

And the sisters looked tenderly and sorrowfully on each other's faces, while Kill-joy affected not to understand the recent allusion to his exceeding appetite.

" Now I understand," said Rose, after a short silence. " You mean, dear sister, that we ought not to be a load upon any one's hands. Neither will we: we are young, and I have good courage. Let us, while awaiting the events which are to decide our fate, fancy ourselves merely the daughters of a mere artisan: and is not our grandfather a working person at this very moment? Let us then obtain some work, and so earn our own livelihood. Oh! how happy and proud ought we to be to work for our own support!"

" Dearest sister!" said Blanche, embracing Rose, " how delighted we shall be—shall we not? Ah, you have anticipated my wishes!—kiss me, dear, dear sister—but I knew of your intention before."

" How could you possibly know of it?"

" Ah, your project was mine also! Yes, when I heard poor

Madame Françoise lament so piteously the failure of her sight, I first looked at your large clear eyes, and in them, dear sister, I read your thoughts; then I considered my own eyes, and I said to myself, 'Well, if this poor wife of our good Dagobert has lost her eyesight, Mesdemoiselles Rose and Blanche Simon can see perfectly well, and may be able to make up for it,'” added Blanche, smiling.

“And after all,” replied Rose, smiling in her turn, “these same Mesdemoiselles Simon are not so helpless and awkward but that they can stitch together coarse bags of grey cloth, which may perhaps rub the skin off our fingers a little at starting; but that is nothing.”

“You see we both had the same thoughts, as usual, only I wanted to surprise you, and to wait till we were alone to tell you my idea.”

“Yes; but one thing vexes me.”

“What is it?”

“In the first place, Dagobert and his wife will be sure to say to us, ‘Oh, young ladies, that is not the sort of work for you. Oh, no! you, the daughters of a marshal of France, to spoil your fingers with such coarse stuff as that!’ And then if we insist, they will pretend they have nothing to do; and that if we are resolved to employ ourselves, we must go and seek for work; and then, I fear, the Mesdemoiselles Simon would find themselves somewhat embarrassed to know where or to whom to go to ask for employment.”

“The truth is, that when once Dagobert takes a thing into his head —”

“Oh! but we can always coax him into any thing we desire.”

“Yes, in some things, certainly; but in others it is impossible to persuade him. Only see how determined he was all through the journey, whenever we tried to prevent his taking so much trouble for us.”

“Oh, dear sister,” exclaimed Rose, “I have just thought of something—such an excellent idea!”

“Tell me quickly! what is it? You know that young work-woman they call La Mayeux, who seems so obliging and industrious?”

“Yes; and so timid and fearful of giving offence. She seems as though she was always fearful of inconveniencing you, even if she looked at you. I watched her yesterday, without her being aware I saw her, while she earnestly regarded you with an air so kind, so gentle, and so full of pleasure at being permitted to behold you, that I felt myself moved even to tears.”

“Well, we must ask La Mayeux how she manages to find occupation, for she certainly supports herself by her own hands.”

“You are right: she will tell us, no doubt, where work can be had; and when we know that, Dagobert may seold as much as he likes and try to persuade us not—we shall be as obstinate as himself.”

“To be sure we will! Let us shew our resolution, and prove to him, in his own words, that we have a soldier’s blood in our veins.”

“‘You assert that we shall one day be rich, good Dagobert,’ we will say to him. ‘Well, so much the better; we shall then look back with increased pleasure on what we are now about to do.’”

“Then now it is agreed—is it not, Rose? that the first time we are alone with La Mayeux we shall tell her all our plans, and ask her

advice and assistance. She looks so kind and good, I feel sure she will not refuse us."

"And when our dear father returns, I feel assured he will approve of our courage."

"And applaud us for having depended on our own exertions alone, just as if we had no friend in the world."

As Blanche spoke these words, Rose started, while an expression of sadness, almost amounting to alarm, passed over her sweet face, as she exclaimed,—

"Heavens, sister! what an idea! Don't say that again—you terrify me!"

"And you, too, dear Rose, you frighten me: what do you mean?"

"Just as you said that our father would be pleased with us for acting as though we were alone in the world, a frightful idea entered my mind—I know not why; but feel—feel how my heart beats, as though some terrible misfortune were about to happen to us."

"Yes, indeed, your poor little heart beats as though it would break: but what misfortune were you thinking of that could befall us? Oh, dear Rose, you know not how you alarm me!"

"When we were prisoners, at least we were not separated; and, besides, our prison was a safe asylum."

"A sad one, dear sister, though shared by you."

"But suppose that when we came here, any accident or misfortune had separated us from Dagobert; imagine our being alone, without friends, in this great city!"

"Oh, sister, do not talk of that! You are right—it is a frightful idea. Gracious Heavens! what would become of us?"

At these words the orphans remained for a moment overwhelmed with the contemplation of so fearful a calamity, while their lovely countenances, until animated by the kindling of youthful hope, lost their rich bloom, and were overcast with sadness.

After a silence of several minutes, Rose raised her head—her eyes were filled with tears.

"I know not how it is," said she, at length, in a trembling voice; "I cannot account for this thought having so suddenly darted across my brain, but my heart seems to tell me such a misfortune will one day overtake us."

"I feel equally terrified as yourself. Alas! what should we do if we were lost in this immense city!"

"Come, dear Blanche, don't let us encourage these thoughts. Are we not safe here with our faithful Dagobert and his worthy family?"

"I almost fancy, dear sister," replied Rose, with a pensive air, "that it is probably for our good these ideas have entered our minds."

"How can that be?"

"Because now we shall set a higher value on this humble dwelling, since it serves to shelter us from all such frightful apprehensions; and where besides, thanks to our own exertions, we shall not be a burthen to any one. What more can we desire until the arrival of our father?"

"No, we shall not want for any thing, certainly; but wherefore has the cruel fear stolen into our minds, and why are we so much oppressed by the mere dread of such an evil as it threatens?"

“Why, indeed? After all, are we not here in the midst of friends who love us? How is it for a moment to be supposed that we should ever be left all alone in Paris? It is quite impossible such a misfortune should ever befall us—don't you think so, sister?”

“Oh, no!” said Rose, shuddering; “nothing, however unlikely, is impossible. Suppose the evening that we reached that village in Germany where poor Jovial was killed, any one had said to us, ‘This time to-morrow you will be in a prison,’ we should have replied, ‘Impossible!’ As we now say, was not Dagobert also there to protect and watch over us? What had we then to fear more than now? And yet remember, dear sister, that by the day following we were in a prison at Leipsie.”

“Oh, cease to remind me of such fearful things, dear sister, I implore; the very recollection frightens me.”

And by a sort of sympathetic movement the orphans grasped each other by the hand, and pressing closely together, looked around them with involuntary terror; and the emotion they experienced was indeed profound, strange, and inexplicable, yet vaguely threatening, like those evil presentiments which terrify, even in spite of all our reason can advance—similar to those fatal forebodings which frequently illumine with a lurid gleam the dark abyss of the future.

Wild, incomprehensible predictions, frequently forgotten as soon as heard, sometimes, when in after-life their full accomplishment recalls them to our mind, make us shudder while we wonder at their fearful accuracy.

* * * * *

The daughters of General Simon were still plunged in the mournful reverie occasioned by the thoughts so singularly awakened within their minds, when the wife of Dagobert returned from her unsuccessful errand to her son's chamber, her features expressive of the profoundest grief and wretchedness.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE LETTER.

WHEN Françoise returned to the chamber her countenance wore an appearance of such intense suffering that Rose could not forbear exclaiming,—

“Dear madame, what has happened to you?”

“Alas! my dear young ladies, I can no longer conceal my grief,” and here Françoise's tears impeded her voice. “I expected my son home last night, as usual—he never returned. I did not wish you to see how much I was distressed about it, and I kept counting each minute, fully believing I should see him enter, for never has he gone to his bed without first embracing me and wishing me good-night. Great part of the night I sat by the door listening for his step on the stairs, but I heard nothing. About three o'clock this morning, I threw

myself for a short time on a mattress beside you. I have just been to see whether (though, indeed, I scarcely ventured to hope it) my son had not returned, and, fearful of disturbing me, retired to his room."

"Well, madame!"

"He is not there," said the poor mother, wiping her eyes.

Rose and Blanche looked at each other with emotion, occupied by the same ideas—should Agricola not return, how would this family be maintained? and would not their presence be an additional burthen under so trying a circumstance?"

"Perhaps, madame," said Blanche, "M. Agricola was detained too late over his work to be able to return in the evening?"

"Oh, no, no! he knew too well the uneasiness his absence would occasion me. He would have come home, even had it been the middle of the night. Alas! some accident must have befallen him—perhaps at the forge,—he is so energetic and courageous at his work. Oh, my son!—my dear son! And as though I were not wretched enough on his account, I have the additional misery of being also uneasy for the safety of the poor young sempstress who lives up-stairs."

"What of her, madame?"

"When I left my son's apartment, I thought I would go and tell my trouble to her, for she is the same to me as a daughter. She was absent also. It was scarcely light in the small chamber she occupied, but I could distinguish that the bed had not been slept in; it was just as I saw it yesterday. Where can she have gone at this early hour? she who never goes out!"

Again the looks of Rose and Blanche consulted each other what was to be done in this emergency, which threatened so completely to overturn the hopes they had formed of accomplishing their designs through the medium of La Mayeux. Happily their disquietude, as well as that of Françoise, was quickly dispelled by hearing first two gentle taps at the door, and then the voice of La Mayeux inquiring "May I come in, Madame Françoise?" By a simultaneous impulse the sisters flew to the door, and opened it for the young girl.

The sleet and snow had fallen incessantly during the night, and the old cotton gown of the poor sempstress, her little shawl, and black net cap, which, displaying the thick braids of her chestnut hair, surrounded her pale and interesting countenance, were wet through. The intense cold had rendered her thin white hands livid as those of a corpse. In the bright gleam of her usually timid and downcast eyes might alone be detected the fire and energy which this ordinarily weak and shrinking creature had found to sustain her during circumstances so grave and important as the present.

"My dear Mayeux!" said Françoise, "where have you been? Just now, when I went to look in my son's room whether or not he had returned, I opened your door, and was thunderstruck at perceiving you had gone out. Where could you have to go so early as this?"

"I bring you news of Agricola!"

"Of my son!" exclaimed Françoise, trembling from head to foot. "What has happened to him? Have you seen him?—spoken to him? Where is he?"

La Mayeux, perceiving how deadly pale Françoise looked, hastened to reassure her:

“Do not alarm yourself so much—he is quite well, and in no danger!”

“Blessed be thou, my God!” cried Françoise, throwing herself upon her knees on the floor, and piously crossing herself; “blessed be Thy name for this Thy mercy to an unworthy sinner! The day before yesterday you restored my husband to me; and now, after so cruel an agony of suspense, you deign to remove my fears for the safety of my beloved son!”

During the short silence caused by this devotional burst on the part of Françoise, the orphans approached La Mayeux, and said, in a low tone, with an expression of the most touching interest,

“How wet your clothes are! You must be very cold! Pray take care! Only think if you were to be ill!”

“We did not like to speak to Madame Françoise about lighting the fire; but now we will remind her of it.”

Equally surprised as penetrated with the kindness exhibited towards her by the daughters of General Simon, La Mayeux (the most sensitive creature living of the smallest attention or care bestowed upon her) replied, with a look of the deepest gratitude,

“Many thanks, young ladies, for your kind consideration! But pray do not be uneasy on my account: I am used to the cold; and, besides, I am too uneasy in my thoughts even to feel it.”

“And now, tell me of my son!” cried Françoise, rising, after having remained some minutes in her kneeling position. “Why did he not return home all night? and how came you, my good Mayeux, to know where to find him? Is he coming soon? What detains him?”

“I assure you, Madame Françoise, Agricola is quite well; but, I must also tell you, it will be sometime——”

“Speak! for Heaven’s sake!”

“Nay, dear Madame Françoise, summon your courage while I explain——”

“God of Heaven! what can you mean?—my blood seems to freeze within my veins! Tell me, I implore you, what has happened! What prevents his coming to me?”

“Alas, madame, he is arrested!”

“Arrested!” exclaimed Rose and Blanche, with terror.

“God’s will be done!” said Françoise, meekly; “but this is a sore and a heavy misfortune! Arrested!—he, so good, so honest, and upright! Why has he been arrested? Surely there must be some mistake!”

“The day before yesterday,” replied La Mayeux, “I received an anonymous letter, telling me that Agricola was in hourly danger of being arrested, in consequence of his having written the verses called ‘*The Workman’s Song*.’ We agreed together that the best thing he could do would be to go to the house of that rich young lady in the Rue de Babylone, who promised to serve him in any way he wished: so Agricola went to beg of her to be a sort of security for him, to prevent his being taken to prison; and that was his reason for going out so early yesterday morning.”

“Why did neither you nor Agricola mention this to me before? Why was I kept in ignorance of all that concerned him?”

“That you might be spared the uneasiness it would have caused you, Madame Françoise; for, relying on the generous interference of the good young lady, I expected Agricola back every instant; and when he did not return yesterday evening, I thought perhaps the forms requisite for putting in the security might have detained him so long. But hour after hour passed away, and still he did not appear; and in that manner I watched and waited through the night.”

“My poor Mayeux, you have not been in bed all night!”

“I was much too uneasy; so, unable to bear this state of fearful suspense any longer, directly there was a glimmer of light in the sky I went out. I recollected the address of the young lady in the Rue de Babylone, and thither I hastened as fast as I could run.”

“Quite right—quite right!” said Françoise, anxiously: “you could not have done better; and from what my son told us, the young lady seems to have been most kindly and generously disposed.”

La Mayeux shook her head mournfully; a tear glittered in her eye, as she continued,

“When I reached the Rue de Babylone it was still dark, so I had to wait till it was day.”

“Poor child!” said Françoise, profoundly touched; “you, so timid and fearful, to go all that way! and in such dreadful weather, too! Ah, you are more than a daughter to me!”

“Is not Agricola more than a brother to me?” said La Mayeux, slightly blushing. Then she resumed:

“When it was quite broad daylight, I ventured to ring the bell of the little pavilion: a charming young girl, but whose countenance looked pale and sorrowful, came to open the door. ‘Mademoiselle,’ said I, to interest her in my favour (for I was afraid, seeing me so poorly dressed, she would send me away as a beggar), ‘Mademoiselle, I beg your pardon, but I come from a poor mother, who is in the greatest distress about her son.’ Then, seeing that far from being angry the young girl listened kindly to what I said, I went on to ask whether, on the previous day, a young artisan had not been there to entreat of her mistress to do him a great favour?”

“‘Alas! yes,’ replied the female; ‘and my mistress was going to do what he asked her, when, finding he was being sought after for the purpose of being arrested, she concealed him in the house. Unfortunately his retreat was discovered, and yesterday afternoon, about four o’clock, he was arrested and conducted to prison.’”

Although the orphans took no part in this conversation, it was easy to perceive, by their sorrowful countenances and uneasy looks, how deeply they sympathised with the wife of Dagobert.

“But the young lady!” cried Françoise; “you should have endeavoured, my good Mayeux, to see her herself, and beseech her not to abandon my poor son. She is so rich, and no doubt equally powerful, her interference may yet save us from so heavy a misfortune.”

“Ah, no!” replied La Mayeux, with a bitter grief; “we must renounce all hope of that.”

“And why?” said Françoise; “since this young lady is so good, when she knows that my son is the sole support of his family, she will



THE GRIEF OF FRANCOISE.

take pity on us. She will see why being sent to prison is more dreadful for him than many others, because it will reduce us all to want and misery."

"This young lady," resumed La Mayeux, "as I understood from the young girl, who wept bitterly as she told me, this poor lady was taken yesterday evening to a private madhouse, having gone utterly out of her senses."

"How dreadful for her!—as well as for us, alas! also. Now we have no hope to cling to, nothing to look forward to. What will become of us without my son? My God! my God!"

So saying, the heartbroken mother covered her face with her hands, while bitter sobs burst from her lips.

While Françoise thus yielded to her overwhelming grief, a profound silence reigned among the three spectators of the scene.

Rose and Blanche exchanged looks of deep distress, expressive of their unfeigned commiseration and sorrow, for they well understood how much they must add to the terrible embarrassment of the family; while La Mayeux, worn out with fatigue, torn by so many painful emotions, and shivering from her wet, chill garments, seated herself dejectedly on the chair, reflecting on the desperate condition of the family.

And most frightful, indeed, was the situation in which it was now placed.

During the times of political troubles or agitations, caused in the labouring classes by a compulsory cessation from work, or by the shameful reduction of their pay, which is imposed upon them, without redress, by the powerful coalition of capitalists,—very often, at such periods, whole families of artisans are, thanks to the preventive detention, placed in a position as deplorable as that of Dagobert's by the apprehension of Agricola—an arrest owing, moreover, as we shall find hereafter, to the intrigues of Rodin and his myrmidons.

Apropos of preventive detention, which sometimes occurs to honest, hardworking artificers, almost always driven to the sad extremity of coalitions by the *want of organisation* in their own trades, and the *lowness of their pay*; it is, in our opinion, painful to see the law, which ought to be equal to all, refuse to these what it grants to those, because *those* can dispose of a certain sum of money.

In many cases the rich man, by means of *caution* (deposit of a certain sum), can escape the annoyance and distress of preventive imprisonment. He lays down a certain sum, gives his word to appear on a stated day, and returns instantly to his pleasures, his occupations, or the bosom of his family.

Nothing can be better: every person accused is deemed innocent, and this maxim cannot be too deeply or generally impressed.

So much the better for the rich, since he can avail himself of the benefit of the law.

But the poor man?

Not only has he no *caution* to lay down, for he has no capital but his daily labour, but it is for him particularly, poor as he is, that the rigours of a preventive incarceration are powerful and terrible.

For the rich man the prison is the lack of ease and comfort—it is *ennui*; the pain of being separated from his family or friends, and that

deserves commiseration, for all that is painful is pitiable ; and the tears of the rich man separated from his children are as bitter as those of the poor man similarly removed.

But the absence of the rich man does not condemn his family to fasting and cold, nor to the incurable maladies caused by exhaustion and misery.

On the contrary, for the artisan prison is actual distress, a perfect deprivation, ending sometimes in the death of his family.

Possessing nothing he is unable to furnish any *caution*, and is imprisoned.

What, then, if he have, as generally happens, an infirm father or mother, a sick wife, or infants in the cradle ? What will become of this unfortunate family ? It can hardly live from day to day on this man's earnings, which are almost always insufficient ; and then, in one instant, this sole support is cut off for three or four months. What will become of this family ? To what can they have recourse ? What will become of the infirm old man, the sickly woman, the little children unable to make the slightest exertion to gain their daily bread ? If by chance they have a little linen or clothing in the house, they may take it to the Mont de Piété, and with this resource they may, perhaps, exist for a week : but what then ?

And suppose, moreover, that the winter adds its severities to this trying and inevitable misery !

Then the imprisoned artisan will see in his "mind's eye," during long and sleepless nights, those most dear to him, haggard, withering, and exhausted for want, sleeping almost naked on a sordid couch, and trying, by drawing close to each other, to warm their frozen limbs.

Then, if the workman is acquitted, he is ruined, and finds nothing but distress when, at last, he reaches his miserable home.

And then, too, after so long a cessation from labour the connexions which brought him work are broken off, how many days lost in seeking to find work again ! For a day without labour is a day without bread.

Let us repeat, that if the law did not offer, under certain circumstances, to those who are rich the privilege of *caution*, we might groan over inevitable and severe misfortunes ; but since the law consents to put at liberty, provisionally, those who possess a certain sum of money, why does it deprive of this advantage those to whom particularly liberty is indispensable, since liberty is to them the very life and vitality of their family ?

In this deplorable state of things is there any remedy ? We think so.

The minimum of the *caution* required by the law is five hundred francs. But five hundred francs is about the average amount of six months' labour of an industrious workman.

If he have a wife and two children (which is also about the average amount of his family), it is evident that it is absolutely impossible that he can have saved such a sum.

Therefore to require from him five hundred francs, in order that he may still be capable of maintaining his family, is virtually placing him beyond the pale of the benefit of the law ; he who, more than anybody, ought to have the right to enjoy it in consideration of the

disastrous results which his preventive imprisonment brings upon his family.

Would it not be equitable, humane, and noble, and leave a salutary example, if we accepted, in all cases in which the *caution* is admitted, and when the honesty of the accused had been clearly attested, to accept the *moral guarantees* of those whose poverty did not allow them to deposit *tangible guarantees*, and who have no other capital but that of their labour and probity—to accept their word, as *honest men*, to present themselves at the day appointed for their sentence?

Would it not be moral and great, especially in these our days, to increase thus the value of a sworn promise, and thus to elevate a man in his own eyes, by allowing his oath to be considered as sufficient guarantee?

If we deny the possibility, or exclaim against the Utopianism of this suggestion, do we not depreciate the dignity of mankind? We will ask if many of the prisoners of war on *parole* have ever been known to perjure themselves, and whether or not those soldiers and officers were not ordinarily those who had sprung from the people?

Without at all exaggerating the virtue of an oath amongst the working, honest, and poorer classes, we are certain that the undertaking given by the accused to appear duly on the day appointed would be always fulfilled, not only with fidelity and punctuality, but also with deep gratitude, inasmuch as his family had not suffered by his absence, thanks to the indulgence of the law.

It is, besides, a fact of which France may be justly proud, that its magistracy, as miserably paid as its soldiery, is learned, upright, humane, and independent, with a full knowledge of its useful and imposing functions; and, more than any other body, it can and does know how to appreciate with Charity the ills and vast sufferings of the labouring classes of society, with whom she so often comes in contact.*

Too much license cannot, then, be accorded to the magistrates in cases in which the *moral caution* (the only one which can be offered by a labouring man) can be accepted.

In fine, if those who make the laws and those who govern us had so prejudiced an opinion against the people as to reject disdainfully the idea we throw out, could they not at least require that the *minimum of the caution was so lowered, that it would be within the reach of those who require so urgently to escape from the destructive hardships of the preventive detention?*

Could we not take, as an extreme limit, the average salary of a workman for a month? Say, *eighty francs*.

That would be still exorbitant; but then, by the help of his friends, the help of the pawnbroker, and some advances, perhaps the eighty francs might be raised—perhaps not always; but if sometimes, why many poor families might be snatched from frightful misery.

This said, we will now return to Dagobert's family, who, in conse-

* We have quoted in another work, and one read always with as much respect as deep sympathy, the admirable volume of M. Prosper Tarbé, Procureur du Roi. "*Travail et Salaire*" ("Work and Pay") is one of the most sound and elevated works that a deep love of humanity ever inspired to a generous heart, a lively intelligence, and a clear and practical mind.—E. SUE.

quence of the preventive detention of Agricola, were in a most distressing state.

Reflection served but to increase the wretchedness of Françoise; for, reckoning the daughters of General Simon, she perceived a family of four persons absolutely destitute of all means of support: though, it must be confessed, the tender mother thought much less of herself than she did of the misery her son would experience at the recollection of her destitute and helpless condition.

At this moment some one knocked at the door.

"Who is there?" said Françoise.

"'Tis I, Madame Françoise—Father Lorrain."

"Pray come in," said the wife of Dagobert.

The dyer, who also fulfilled the duties of porter, appeared at the door of the apartment: instead of exhibiting the same bright-green hue upon his hands and arms, he this day displayed a magnificent violet-colour.

"Madame Françoise," said Father Lorrain, "here is a letter, which has just been brought by the person who gives the holy water at Saint-Merry: he says he brings it from the Abbé Dubois, who wished it to be carried up stairs to you directly, for that it was on very particular business."

"A letter from my confessor!" said Françoise, greatly astonished: then taking it, she added, "Thank you, Father Lorrain."

"Is there any thing I can do for you, Madame Françoise?"

"Nothing, I thank you, Father Lorrain."

"Servant, ladies all!" said the dyer, as he backed out of the chamber.

"Will you read me this letter, my good Mayeux?" said Françoise, somewhat uneasy as to its contents.

"Oh, yes! willingly, madame!" returned the girl, reading aloud as follows:

"My dear Madame Baudoin,—Although I am usually in the habit of receiving you on Saturdays and Tuesdays, yet, as I shall be fully engaged both to-morrow and Saturday, I wish you to come to me directly you receive this—unless, indeed, you prefer allowing a whole week to elapse without your approaching the confessional."

"A week!" exclaimed the wife of Dagobert: "Mother of Jesus! no! Alas! I feel too strongly in my present state of trouble and distress the necessity for an immediate opportunity of unburthening my mind." Then addressing herself to the orphans she said, "God has heard my prayers for you, my dear young ladies, since I am this very day afforded the opportunity of consulting a holy and worthy man respecting the fearful danger you are incurring without knowing it. Poor dear children! so innocent, and yet so guilty; although from no fault of yours. Heaven is my witness my heart bleeds for you, even as it does for my own son."

Rose and Blanche looked at each other in speechless amazement, wholly unable to comprehend the fears with which the state of their soul inspired the wife of Dagobert.

Françoise then addressing herself to the young needlewoman, said, "My dear Mayeux, I must ask you to do me another kindness."

"Anything, Madame Françoise; you have only to tell me what you wish."



THE LETTER.

P. 338.

"My husband took Agricola's week's wages to defray his journey to Chartres—that was all the money we had in the house; and I am quite sure my poor boy had not a sou in his possession: perhaps he may want many things now he is in prison. You must take the silver cup, the fork and spoon, the two best pairs of sheets, with the new shawl Agricola gave me on my birthday, and go with them to the pawnbroker's. I will try and find out what prison my son is confined in. Then I will send him half of what you get for the things, and the remainder will suffice for us until the return of my husband. But when he does come back what shall we do? What a blow for him! And still further aggravated by our being reduced to absolute want; for now that my son is in prison, and my eyesight gone — Oh, Lord, my God!" exclaimed the unhappy mother, with an expression of impatient and bitter sorrow, "why afflict me thus? Thou knowest I have endeavoured to deserve pity and merey, if not for myself, at least for those most dear to me." Then reproaching herself for this vehemence, she added, "Pardon! oh, pardon me this unworthy doubt of Thy mercy, O Almighty Father! and bend my will to Thy will. Humbly do I accept every trial Thou pleasest to send, entreating only that I, and I alone, may be deemed worthy to bear the just weight of Thy displeasure."

"Dear Madame Françoise!" said La Mayeux, "take courage, I beg. Agricola is innocent—he cannot be detained in prison long."

"But, now I reflect," resumed Dagobert's wife, "it would be better for me to take the things to the pawnbroker's; it is not right to make you lose your time, my kind Mayeux."

"I will make up for it at night, Madame Françoise: how can I sleep when you are so unhappy? so my work will amuse me."

"But, then, it will cost you a light."

"Never mind, Madame Françoise, I am very well off for money," said the poor girl, blushing at her own falsehood.

"Give me one kiss, then," said Dagobert's wife; "you are certainly the best little creature in the world."

So saying, Françoise hastily quitted the room.

Rose and Blanche, left alone with La Mayeux, at length saw that morning arrived for which they had so impatiently waited: while Dagobert's wife soon reached the church of Saint-Merry, where her confessor awaited her.

"To the Editor,

"SIR,—Will you allow me to make use of the pages of the *Constitutionnel*,* to thank those correspondents who have so kindly forwarded to me statements and attested facts relative to the deplorable abuses practised in certain houses for the treatment of the Insane?

"Other persons, with benevolent sympathy, for which I here offer my grateful thanks, have entered into some details as to the laws and regulations of houses for the insane, and principally as to the law of May last.

"I was not ignorant of the new arrangement, whose strictness but proves all the importance of the question I have ventured to raise; but the law, such as it is, appears to me still insufficient, and, as I have already said, I shall attempt shortly to develop certain views as to an organisation of *special and consequently complete surveillance*. Allow me, sir, &c. &c.

"Paris, Sept. 12th, 1844."

"EUGÈNE SUE."

* The French newspaper in which M. Sue's *Wandering Jew* appears.—ENGLISH TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE CONFESSIONAL.

NOTHING could be more dull than the appearance of the parish-church of Saint-Merry on this lowering and snowy day. For a moment Françoise was delayed at the porch by a saddening spectacle.

Whilst a priest was murmuring some words in a low voice, two or three dirty-looking choristers, in stained surplices, were chanting the prayers for the dead, with an inattentive and careless air, around a miserably bad coffin, beside which an old man and a child, wretchedly clad, stood alone and weeping bitterly.

The door-opener and the beadle, very much scandalised at being disturbed for so paltry a funeral, had disdained putting on their liveries, and were in waiting, yawning with impatience for the conclusion of the ceremony which brought such small fees. At last a few drops of holy water fell on the coffin, the priest returned the holy water sprinkler to the beadle and went away.

Then followed one of those shameful scenes, the necessary consequence of a dishonourable and sacrilegious traffic; one of those disgusting scenes so frequent in cases of funerals for the poor who cannot pay for wax candles, or high mass, nor violins, for now there are violins for the dead.*

The old man extended his hand to the beadle to receive the holy water.

"Take it, and be quick!" said the functionary of the sacristy, blowing his fingers.

The emotion of the old man was great—his weakness extreme. He remained for a moment motionless, holding the brush, which was dipped in the holy water, closed in his trembling hand. In the bier was his daughter,—the mother of the ragged child who was weeping beside him. The heart of the poor creature was bursting at the thoughts of this last adieu. He was motionless, except the convulsive sobs that heaved his breast.

"Come, I say, make haste!" said the beadle brutally: "do you suppose we are going to sleep here?"†

The old man roused himself. He made a sign of the cross on the coffin, and stooping was about to place the brush, saturated with holy water, in the hand of his grandchild, when the sacristan, thinking the affair had lasted long enough, took the sprinkler from the child's hands, and made a signal to the bearers to lift the bier up directly, which they did.

"The old chap was not in a hurry," said the porter, in an undertone to the beadle, as they regained the vestry-room; "he has hardly given us time to breakfast and dress ourselves for the *out-and-out* funeral of this morning. That's a real thing—a dead corpse that deserves every trouble and attention. Heads up, soldiers!"

* At the church of St. Thomas d'Aquinas at Paris.

† Fatt.



THE CONFESSIONAL.

"Yes, and with colonel's epaulettes on our shoulders, that we may look the right thing in the eyes of the pew-opener, you rascal!" said the beadle, with a knowing air.

"Well, Cotillard, it's no fault of mine if I am a good-looking fellow," said the porter, with an air of vanity; "and I cannot put out women's eyes in order to keep their hearts at ease."

And the two worthies entered the sacristy.

The sight of this funeral had added to Françoise's melancholy.

When she entered the church, seven or eight persons, sitting on chairs in different parts, were the only congregation in this damp and chilling edifice.

One of the *givers* of holy water, a curious old man, with a red face bespeaking a love of wine and wassail, seeing Françoise come to the *bénitier*, said to her in a low voice,

"M. the Abbé Dubois is not yet in the confessional (*en boîte*), make haste, and you will be first (*vous aurez l'étréenne de se barbe*).

Françoise, pained at this joke, thanked the irreverend sacristan, crossed herself devoutly, went a few steps forward, and then fell on her knees on a step to say the prayer which she always offered up before she approached the confessional chair.

Having said this prayer she went forward to a dark corner, where there was in the shadow a confessional, with the door half open, and having within a black curtain. The two places right and left were vacant, and Françoise, kneeling down on the right side, remained for some time plunged in the most bitter reflections.

After some minutes, a priest of tall stature, with grey hair, a grave and severe countenance, and wearing a long black cassock, advanced slowly from the end of one of the aisles of the church.

A little old man, who stooped a good deal, was shabbily dressed, and leaned on an umbrella, accompanied him, speaking to him at times in low whispers, and then the priest paused and listened to him with profound and respectful deference.

As they approached the confessional, the little old man, seeing Françoise on her knees, looked inquisitively at the priest.

"'Tis she," said he.

"Then, in two or three hours, we shall expect the two young girls at the convent of Sainte-Marie—on that I rely," said the little old man.

"I hope so, for their salvation's sake," said the priest in a serious tone, and bowing. He then entered the confessional.

The little old man left the church. This little old man was Rodin; and on leaving Saint-Merry he went to the *Maison de Santé*, in order to learn whether Dr. Balcinier had faithfully fulfilled his instructions with regard to Adrienne de Cardoville.

Françoise was still kneeling in the interior of the confessional, when one of the side-windows opened and a voice spake. It was the voice of the priest, who for twenty years had confessed Dagobert's wife, and had an irresistible and all-powerful influence over her.

"You received my letter?" said the voice.

"Yes, holy father."

"Good: I listen to you."

“Bless me, holy father, for I have sinned!” said Françoise.

The voice pronounced the formula of benediction.

Dagobert's wife replied *Amen*, as it was right she should; said her *confiteor* as far as “It is my fault;” gave an account of the way in which she had performed her last penitence; and came then to the enumeration of the fresh sins committed since she had last received absolution.

This excellent woman, this real martyr of labour and maternal love, believed she was always sinning; her conscience was incessantly tormented by the fear of having committed a quantity of indescribable peccadillos. This gentle and courageous creature, who, after a life of entire devotion, ought to have reposed in the calm and serenity of her soul, considered herself as a great sinner, and lived in incessant agony, doubtful of her own salvation.

“Father,” said Françoise, in a tone of emotion, “I accuse myself of not having said my evening prayer the day before yesterday. My husband, from whom I have been separated for many years, arrived, and the emotion, the excitement, the joy of his return, caused me to commit this great sin of which I accuse myself.”

“Well?” said the voice, in a tone of severity, which disquieted Françoise.

“Holy father, I accuse myself of having fallen into the same sin yesterday evening. I was in a most anxious state; my son did not return, and I was expecting him every moment, and the time passed away in this anxiety.”

“Well?” said the voice.

“Holy father, I accuse myself of having lied all the week to my son, by telling him, when replying to his remarks on the weakness of my health, that I had drunk some wine at my repast. I preferred leaving it for him; he has more need of it than I—he works so hard.”

“Go on,” said the voice.

“Holy father, I accuse myself of having wanted resignation this morning, at the moment when I learnt that my poor son had been arrested; instead of submitting, with respect and gratitude, to the new trial which the Lord was pleased to send me, alas! I was rebellious in my grief, and I accuse myself of that.”

“A bad week!” said the voice, in a tone still more severe; “a bad week! You have continually set the creature before the Creator. Go on.”

“Alas, father!” said Françoise, overwhelmed with dismay, “I know I am a great sinner, and I am fearful of being in the way to still greater sins.”

“Speak.”

“My husband has brought from the farthest part of Siberia two young orphan girls, daughters of Marshal Simon. Yesterday morning, when I told them to say their prayers, I learnt with fright and distress that they knew nothing of any of the mysteries of the faith, although they are fifteen years old: they have never received any sacrament, not even that of baptism, holy father—not even baptism!”

“Are they then idolaters?” exclaimed the voice, in accents of anger and astonishment.

"It is that which distresses me, holy father; for I and my husband, supplying the place of parents to these young orphans, should be guilty of the sins they commit,—shall we not, holy father?"

"Certainly! since you are in the place of those who should watch over their souls: the shepherd is answerable for his sheep," said the voice.

"Then, holy father, in case they were in deadly sin, my husband and I should be in deadly sin?"

"Assuredly," answered the voice, "you stand in stead of father and mother; and the father and mother are guilty of all the sins which their children commit, when the children sin because they have not received a Christian education."

"Alas, holy father! what am I to do? I address myself to you, as to God. Every day, every hour, that these poor young girls remain in idolatry, they incur eternal damnation: do they not, holy father?" said Françoise, in tones of deep tribulation.

"Yes," replied the voice; "and this terrible responsibility now weighs heavily on you and your husband: you have the charge of their souls."

"Alas! have mercy on me," said Françoise, weeping.

"Do not distress yourself so heavily," resumed the voice, in a gentler tone; "fortunately for these unfortunate children they have met you in their wanderings; they will have in you and your husband, good and pious examples: for your husband, bad as he was in former times, now, I suppose, performs all the proper religious exercises?"

"We must pray for him, holy father," replied Françoise, sorrowfully; "grace has not yet touched him. He is like a poor child who is not yet touched by it. Ah, holy father!" said Françoise, wiping her eyes, "these thoughts are my heaviest cross."

"Then neither your husband nor your son communicate (*pratiquent*)," said the voice, in a tone of reflection; "this is serious—very serious! The religious education of these two unhappy young girls is still wholly to be done. They will have at your abode, at every instant, deplorable examples under their eyes. Take care, I tell you. You have a charge of souls. Your responsibility is enormous."

"Oh, holy father! it is that which distresses me: I do not know what to do. Come to my aid—give me your advice. For twenty years your voice has been to me the voice of the Lord."

"Well, then, you must come to an understanding with your husband, and place these unhappy girls in some religious house, where they will receive instruction."

"We are too poor, holy father, to pay their board; and, still more unfortunate, my son has just been sent to prison for some songs he has written."

"This is what impiety leads to," said the voice, in a severe tone. "Look at Gabriel, who has followed my counsels, and at this hour he is a model of all Christian virtues!"

"My son Agricola has his good qualities, holy father: he is so kind, so dutiful!"

"Without religion," said the voice, with redoubled severity, "what

you call good qualities are but vain appearances: at the least breath of wind from the devil they disappear, for the wicked one is at the bottom of every soul without religion."

"Alas, my poor boy!" said Françoise, in tears; "I pray every day that he may be enlightened to the true faith!"

"I have always told you," replied the voice, "that you are too weak with respect to him, and now God punishes you for it. You must separate from this irreligious son, and not encourage his impiety as you do by loving him as you do. When you have an offending member, saith the Holy Scripture, cut it off."

"Alas, holy father! you know it is the only time I ever disobeyed you; but I could not bring my mind to separate from my child."

"Then your salvation is uncertain; but God is merciful! Do not fall again into the same fault with respect to these two young girls, whom Providence has sent to you that they may be saved by you from eternal damnation. Take care that they are not plunged into it by your culpable indifference."

"Alas, holy father! I have wept much and prayed much for them!"

"That is not sufficient: these unhappy girls have no notion of good or evil. Their souls must be an abyss of scandal and impurities, brought up, as they have been, by an impious mother and an unbelieving soldier."

"As to that, holy father," said Françoise, ingenuously, "do not be alarmed: they are as gentle as angels; and my husband, who has not quitted them since they were born, says their hearts are beautifully inclined."

"Your husband has spent his life in mortal sin," said the voice, harshly; "his is not the mind to judge of the state of souls; and I repeat to you, since you replace the parents of these unfortunate children, that it is not to-morrow, but to-day—this very hour—that their salvation must be worked out, or else you incur an awful responsibility."

"That is true; I know it fully, holy father; and this fear is as heavy on me as the knowledge of my son's arrest. But what can I do? I cannot, ignorant as I am, instruct these young girls at home. I have nothing but faith; and then my poor husband, in his blindness, jests at holy things, which my son respects in my presence, out of consideration for me. Again, holy father, I conjure you to help me! Tell me, oh, tell me what to do!"

"We must not abandon to all perdition two young souls," said the voice, after a moment's silence; "there are no two roads to salvation—there is but one. They must be placed in a religious house, where they will be surrounded by none but holy and pious examples."

"Ah, holy father! if we were not so poor, or if even I could work, I would endeavour to gain wherewithal to pay for their board, and do as I did for Gabriel. Unfortunately, my sight is quite gone; but I think, holy father, you must know so many charitable souls that you could interest in favour of these two poor orphans."

"But where is their father?"

"He was in India; my husband told me that he expected his arrival in France immediately, but nothing is certain. And then again,

holy father, my heart would bleed to see these poor children share our misery; and that will soon be very great, for we only lived on the labour of my son."

"Then the girls have no relation here?" inquired the voice.

"I think not, father."

"And it was their mother who confided them to your husband, to bring to France?"

"Yes, holy father; and he was compelled to go yesterday to Chartres, on a very urgent affair, as he told me."

It will be remembered that Dagobert had not thought fit to tell his wife of the hopes which Marshal Simon's daughters founded on the medal, and that they themselves had had express instructions from the soldier not to speak of it to Françoise.

"So then," resumed the voice, after some minutes' silence, "your husband is not in Paris?"

"No, holy father; but he will return to-night or to-morrow morning."

"Listen," said the voice, after another pause; "every minute lost in the salvation of these young girls is a new step which they will take towards perdition. At any moment the hand of God may weigh heavily on them, for He only knows the hour of our death! And dying in their present state, they might be damned to all eternity! From this very day, therefore, their eyes must be opened to the Divine light, and they must instantly be taken to some religious house. Such is your duty—such should be your desire!"

"Oh, yes, holy father! but, unfortunately, I am too poor, as I have told you."

"I know that you want neither zeal nor faith; but, even if you were capable of directing these young girls, the impious examples of your husband and son would daily destroy your work. Others, therefore, must do for these orphan girls, in the name of Christian charity, what you cannot do—you, who are answerable for them before God!"

"Ah, holy father! if, thanks to you, this good work could be accomplished, what would be my gratitude!"

"It is not impossible: I am acquainted with the superior of a convent, where the young girls would be educated as they ought to be. The usual pension would be diminished, on account of their poverty; but, however small the sum, *something* must be paid with them. They would also require to be fitted out with suitable clothing: that, also, would be out of your power to provide?"

"Alas, yes, holy father!"

"Well, by drawing upon my charity-box, and applying to certain benevolent persons, who are always ready to assist me in any good work, I feel assured I could make up the requisite sum, and thus procure the admission of these young girls into the convent."

"Oh, reverend father, you are my saviour, as well as that of the poor children!"

"I wish to be so; but from the interest I take in their welfare, and in order to render my exertions still more efficacious, I must impose several conditions to the assistance I offer you."

"Oh, name them, holy father! and be assured they are gratefully accepted beforehand. Your commands are laws to me."

"In the first place, they shall be taken to the convent this very morning; you shall bring them to my housekeeper, for that purpose, directly you return home."

"Impossible, reverend father!" exclaimed Françoise.

"Why impossible?"

"Because of my husband's absence."

"Well!"

"I dare not take such a determination without consulting him."

"You must not only abstain from consulting him, but select the very time of his absence for doing as I command you."

"And wherefore, holy father, may I not await his return?"

"For two good and convincing reasons," replied the voice, in a severe tone; "for two reasons must you carefully avoid letting him know any thing of the matter: and, first, because his hardened impiety would most certainly lead him to oppose your wise and pious resolution; and secondly, because it being indispensable to the good work that these young girls should hold no further communion with your husband, it is essential that he should be kept in utter ignorance of the place of their retreat."

"But, holy father," replied Françoise, a prey to the most cruel and conflicting emotions, "these children were confided to the especial care of my husband: how can I presume to dispose of them without his knowledge? It would be——"

Here the voice interrupted Françoise by asking, angrily,

"Can you or can you not instruct these young people, if they remain with you?"

"Alas, no, reverend father! I have not the power."

"Would they or would they not be exposed to a continued state of ignorance and impenitence if they continued with you?"

"Yes, holy father, they certainly would!"

"And are you or are you not responsible, in the sight of God, for all the sins they may commit, having taken upon yourselves the place of parents towards them?"

"I am, with my husband, accountable to heaven for their sins upon earth, and eternal punishment if we allow them to continue in sin."

"And do you or do you not believe it is to promote their eternal salvation that I enjoin you to place them in a convent this very day?"

"I firmly believe it to be for the preservation of their immortal souls."

"Then it is for you to decide."

"Father, I beseech, I implore you to tell me truly, have I the right to dispose of these poor children without the consent of my husband?"

"The right! this is no question of right: it involves a sacred duty. Would it not be your duty to pluck these unfortunate girls from the midst of a burning fire, even against the express prohibition of your husband, or during his absence? Well, then, you are now

called upon to snatch them from flames, not such as would consume their mortal frame, but from that fire which never dieth, and which cannot be extinguished through all eternity!"

"Pardon, oh pardon me, holy father! I humbly supplicate, I entreat!" cried the unhappy woman, whose mind was like a troubled sea of fearful uncertainty and apprehension of doing wrong. "Oh tell me, can I act thus after having so solemnly vowed obedience to my husband?"

"Your obedience was vowed to all good and just deeds, not evil works; and you yourself admit that, if left to him, the salvation of these orphans would be endangered, if not rendered absolutely impossible."

"But, reverend father," said Françoise, trembling, "when, upon his return, my husband shall ask where I have placed the children, must I answer him with a lie?"

"Silence is not falsehood, and you may tell him you are not at liberty to reply to his question."

"My husband is one of the best of men; but such a reply would enrage him: he has been a soldier, and his anger would be fearful, holy father!" cried Françoise, shuddering at the very idea of the storm she had conjured up.

"And, were his anger a hundred times more terrible, you should not hesitate to dare it, and glorify yourself for suffering in such a cause," exclaimed the voice, indignantly. "Think you that it is so easy to work out our salvation on this earth? Should the repentant sinner, who ardently desires to serve his Lord, complain of the stones which bruise his feet, or the thorns which lacerate his flesh?"

"Pardon, holy father, pardon!" said Françoise, with a subdued spirit; "deign but to answer one question—one only. Alas! if you do not guide me, to whom can I turn?"

"Speak!"

"When Marshal Simon arrives, he will demand his daughters of my husband: what answer can he make to such a natural inquiry?"

"You will let me know directly Marshal Simon arrives, and then I will instruct you how to act; for the rights of a parent are only sacred so long as he employs his power for the salvation of his children. Above the earthly parent, and before his claims, comes the Heavenly Father, who must first be served and obeyed. Reflect well, then, ere you decide; by accepting what I propose, these young girls will be rescued from perdition—you will be freed from all expense in maintaining them—they will not be involved in your present distress—and, above all, they will be educated in a holy mansion becoming their station as the daughters of a *maréchal* *duc de France*: so that, upon their father's arrival in Paris, *if he be worthy of seeing them again*, instead of finding them poor, half-ignorant savages—mere idolaters—he will receive the delight of meeting two modest, pious, well-informed, well-conducted young persons, who, having obtained favour in the sight of God, may invoke His mercy and grace for their father, who stands sorely in need of it, being, as he is, a man of violence, of war, and of battle. Now, then, decide finally: will you, at the peril of your soul, sacrifice the welfare of these young girls, both in this world

and in that which is to come, from a weak and impious dread of the anger of your husband?"

However harsh and marked with intolerance might be the language employed by François's confessor, it was still what the honest and sincerely zealous man believed, according to his view of the case, only reasonable and just. The blind instrument of Rodin, and utterly ignorant of the motives which instigated others, he firmly believed that, while in a manner forcing François to place these poor children in a convent, he was only fulfilling a pious and sacred duty.

Such was, and still is, one of the marvellous resources of the Order to which Rodin belonged—the obtaining men of upright character and sincere integrity as confederates in schemes whose villainy they never suspected, while acting, though unconsciously, the most important part in the dark machinations.

Françoise, for many years accustomed to yield the most implicit obedience to her confessor, knew not what to reply to his last words; but her understanding, though unconvinced, furnished no suitable argument; and she therefore laid aside all further opposition, even while shuddering at the bare anticipation of Dagobert's furious rage at the loss of those children a dying mother had committed to his charge. Now, according to her confessor, the greater her dread of the consequences of Dagobert's violent anger, the greater should be her humility and submission to all that might befall her. She therefore replied only,—

"The will of God be done, holy father! And whatever may happen, I will discharge the duty of a good Christian, according to your directions!"

"And, be assured, the Lord will be pleased to accept of all you may have to endure in the performance of this duty as a humble sacrifice of yourself to His service. You must now solemnly vow, in the presence of God, to answer no question your husband may put to you concerning the daughters of General Simon."

"I solemnly promise!" answered François, with a convulsive shudder.

"And you must also engage to maintain the same silence towards General Simon, in the event of his returning before I shall consider his daughters sufficiently established in the right road to be given up to him."

"I promise, holy father!" replied François, in a voice of increasing feebleness.

"You will come to relate to me every particular of the scene which ensues upon your husband's return?"

"I will, holy father! When shall I take the orphans to your house?"

"In an hour's time. I will now go and write to the superior of the convent I mentioned to you. I will leave the letter with my house-keeper, who is a very trustworthy person, and will conduct the young girls herself to the convent."

* * * * *

After having listened to the exhortations of her confessor as to her past misdoings, received absolution, accompanied by adequate penance

enjoining strict self-denial, &c., the wife of Dagobert quitted the confessional.

The church was no longer deserted. An immense crowd was assembled, attracted by the pomp and magnificence of the funeral of which the porter had been talking to the beadle two hours ago.

It was with much difficulty Françoise managed to reach the doors of the church, sumptuously hung with richly-ornamented draperies.

What a contrast did it present to the humble train that had so timidly crept under the same porch only two short hours ago!

The numerous ministers of the parish assembled together advanced majestically along to receive the coffin, covered with its velvet pall, while the rich silk of their copes and stoles, glittering with silver embroidery, sparkled and shone brightly in the blaze of the numerous wax tapers.

The porter, adorned with his full-dress livery, and the beadle, holding his staff of authority, stood opposite each other, fully impressed with their own important parts in the pageant then being enacted; the choristers, robed in snowy white garments, sang their loudest, sweetest strains in honour of the rich man's obsequies; the full peal of the organ resounded through the building; even the windows vibrated as the burst of funereal harmony floated along the sacred pile. Each person appointed to share in these demonstrations of regard for the good, the *rich* deceased—whose funeral was so *very superior* and *distingué*, seemed elate with satisfaction at making one in an affair where no *expense had been spared*. And this complacency of feeling was still further manifested in the pleased and contented countenances of the heirs, two healthy-looking, robust men, who, while carefully preserving that modest dejection and prescribed composure of feature, were evidently indulging their own bright anticipations of the future; and, beneath their long, sable garments of woe, revelling in many a pleasing scheme for days to come, *now* such wealth would be theirs.

Spite of her pure and simple faith, the wife of Dagobert was painfully struck with the revolting difference observed in the reception of the coffin of the rich man compared with that of the poor, and that at the door of the house of God! For, whatever worldly distinctions may exist, surely death and eternity make all men equal!

The two painful spectacles Françoise had witnessed, and which called forth these reflections, did not tend to lessen the depression of her spirits; and having with some difficulty quitted the church, she quickened her steps towards the Rue Brise-Miche, in order to conduct the orphans to the house of her confessor, whose housekeeper was to convey them to the convent of Sainte-Marie, situated, as the reader is aware, adjoining the madhouse of Dr. Balcinier, where Adrienne de Cardoville was confined.

CHAPTER L.

MONSIEUR AND KILL-JOY.

DAGOBERT'S wife, on leaving the church, had reached the entrance to the Rue Brise-Miche, when she was overtaken by the giver of the holy water; who had ran after her, until out of breath, to beg her to return immediately to Saint-Merry, as the Abbé Dubois had something most important to say to her.

At the moment that Françoise retraced her steps, a hackney-coach stopped at the door of the house which she inhabited.

The coachman descended from his box and opened the coach-door.

"Coachman," said a stout female clothed in black, who was seated in this carriage, and had a pug-dog on her knees, "inquire if Madame Françoise Baudoin lives here."

"Yes, mistress," said the coachman.

Our readers no doubt have recognised Madame Grivois, first lady-in-waiting to the Princess de Saint-Dizier, accompanied by Monsieur, who exercised supreme tyranny over his mistress.

The dyer, whom we have already seen discharging the functions of porter, being asked by the coachman as to Françoise's residence, left his workshop and came politely to the coach-door to reply to Madame Grivois, that Françoise Baudoin lived in the house, but had not returned home.

Father Lorrain's arms, hands, and a part of his face, were of a splendid gold colour. The sight of this personage, all covered with yellow ochre, offended and irritated Monsieur; and, at the moment when the dyer placed his hand on the ridge of the coach-door, the pug gave a snappish bark and bit him in the wrist.

"Ah!" exclaimed Madame Grivois, in an agony, whilst Father Lorrain withdrew his hand hastily. "I trust there is nothing poisonous in the dye you have on your hand—my dog is so very delicate."

And she carefully wiped the flat muzzle of Monsieur, which was in places stained with yellow.

Father Lorrain, who was but ill satisfied with the apologies which he expected from Madame Grivois in consequence of the bad conduct of her pet cur, could hardly repress his anger.

"Madame, if you did not belong to the softer sex, who always have my utmost respect, and which I therefore now extend to this beastly cur, I would, most assuredly, take him by the tail, and in one moment transform him into an orange-coloured pug, by dipping him into my dying vat, which is at this moment ready."

"Dye my dog orange colour!" shrieked out Madame Grivois, who in excessive rage alighted from the coach, hugging Monsieur tenderly to her bosom, and looking at Father Lorrain with an angry glance.

"Madame, I have told you that Madame Françoise was not



THE VISIT TO MADAME BAUDOIN.

within," said the dyer, seeing the mistress of the surly pug about to ascend the dark staircase.

"Very well; then I will wait for her," said Madame Grivois dryly; "on what staircase does she live?"

"On the fourth," said Father Lorrain, returning abruptly to his shop. And he said to himself, smiling complacently at the mischievous idea, "I hope that Father Dagobert's great dog will be in an ill humour, and that he will seize this nasty brute by the scuff of his neck, and rather astonish his delicate feelings."

Madame Grivois went up the rugged staircase with considerable difficulty; stopping at each story to take breath, and looking around her with exceeding disgust. At last she reached the fourth flight, stopped a moment, and then entered the humble chamber in which were the two sisters and La Mayeux.

The young work-girl was occupied in getting together the different things she was to take to the Mont de Piété.

Rose and Blanche seemed very happy, and somewhat re-assured as to the future, for they had learned from La Mayeux that they might, if they worked hard, and they could sew, gain between the two eight francs a week—a small sum, which was at least a resource for a family.

The presence of Madame Grivois at Françoise Baudoin's was caused by a new determination of the Abbé d'Aigrigny and the Princess de Saint-Dizier, who had judged it more prudent to send Madame Grivois, on whom they blindly confided, to go after the young girls at Françoise's; she (Françoise) being informed by her confessor that it was not to his housekeeper, but to a lady who would come with a message from him, that the young girls were to be entrusted and conveyed to a religious house.

After having knocked, the confidential maid of the Princess de Saint-Dizier entered, and inquired for Françoise Baudoin.

"She is not here, madame," said La Mayeux, timidly, much astonished at such a visit, and lowering her eyes before the look of this woman.

"Then I will wait for her, for I wish to speak to her on very particular business," replied Madame Grivois, looking scrutinisingly and with curiosity at the faces of the two orphans; who, much abashed, also cast their eyes on the ground.

Having spoken, Madame Grivois seated herself, not without some repugnance, in the old arm-chair belonging to Dagobert's wife; and thinking she might then let Monsieur be at liberty, she placed him carefully on the floor.

At that moment a sort of low, deep, hollow note was heard behind the arm-chair, which made Madame Grivois start; and the pug uttered a cry of terror, which made his very fat sides shiver, and he ensconced himself near his mistress with every symptom of angry fear.

"What! is there a dog here?" exclaimed Madame Grivois, who stooped and took Monsieur up in her arms as quickly as possible. Kill-joy, as if he was desirous of replying to the question himself, rose slowly from behind the chair where he had been lying down and shewed himself, yawning and stretching his full length.

At the sight of this powerful animal, and his two rows of sharp

and formidable fangs, which he complaisantly shewed by opening his wide throat to the utmost, Madame Grivois could not restrain a cry of affright. The ugly pug had at first trembled in every joint when he found himself confronted by Kill-joy, but, once in safety on his mistress's knees, he began to growl impertinently, and to cast at the Siberian dog most provoking looks: but the worthy companion of the deceased Jovial replied disdainfully by a fresh yawn, after which, sniffing the clothes of Madame Grivois with a kind of uneasy air, he went and stretched himself out at the feet of Rose and Blanche, on whom he fixed his large intelligent eyes as if he anticipated that some danger threatened them.

"Turn the dog out from here!" said Madame Grivois, in an imperative tone; "he frightens mine, and may do him some harm."

"Do not be alarmed, madame," replied Rose, smiling; "Kill-joy is never naughty unless he is attacked."

"No matter," said Madame Grivois; "a misfortune soon happens. To look at that enormous dog with his wolf's head and his horrid teeth, makes one tremble for what may happen. I tell you to turn him out!"

Madame Grivois had pronounced these last words in an angry voice, whose tenor sounded ill in the ears of Kill-joy, who growled, shewed his teeth, and turned his head in the direction of this woman, whom he did not know.

"Be quiet, Kill-joy!" said Blanche, in an angry tone.

A person now entered the room who put an end to this posture of affairs, which were very embarrassing to the two girls. This individual was a messenger, who held a letter in his hand.

"What is your pleasure, sir?" inquired La Mayeux.

"I have a letter in very great haste from a worthy man, the husband of the mistress here; the dyer down stairs desired me to bring it up, although she is not at home."

"A letter from Dagobert!" exclaimed Rose and Blanche, with much joy. "What! has he returned? where is he?"

"I do not know if the worthy gentleman's name is Dagobert," said the messenger; "but he is an old trooper who is decorated with gray moustachios—he is not two steps off, at the office of the coaches for Chartres."

"Yes, that is he!" said Blanche; "give me the letter."

The messenger handed the letter, and the young girl opened it hastily.

Madame Grivois was thunderstruck; she knew that Dagobert had been sent away in order that the Abbé Dubois might the easier influence Françoise: so far all had succeeded, and the latter had agreed to confide the two young girls to religious hands: but at this very moment the soldier arrived, he whom they believed absent from Paris for two or three days; and thus his sudden return would ruin the laborious machination, at the very moment when they believed they were about to reap the fruit of it!

"Ah!" said Rose, after having perused the letter, "what a misfortune!"

"What, sister?" asked Blanche.

"Yesterday, when half way on his road Chartres, Dagobert dis-

covered that he had lost his purse. He could not continue his journey, but obtained credit for a place back again; and he now begs his wife to send him money to the office of the diligence, where he is waiting."

"Yes, that's all about it," said the commissioner; "for the worthy man told me,—'Make haste, my lad, for here you see I am in pawn.'"

"And nothing—nothing in the house!" said Blanche. "Oh! what shall we do?"

At these words Madame Grivois had a moment's hope, but it was soon damped by La Mayeux, who suddenly said, pointing to the bundle she was collecting:

"Make yourselves easy, young ladies; we have a resource in the Mont de Piété, which is not far distant, and where I will carry this. I shall get the money, and I will take it directly to M. Dagobert, and he will be here in half an hour at furthest."

"Ah, dear Mayeux! you are right," said Rose; "how good you are! you think of every thing."

"Here," added Blanche, "the address is on the messenger's letter: take it."

"Thanks, mademoiselle," replied La Mayeux: and then she said to the messenger, "Return to the person who sent you, and tell him that I will be with him at the coach-office in a very short time."

"Infernal humpback!" thought Madame Grivois, with concentrated rage: "she thinks of every thing; but for her we should have avoided the unlooked-for return of this confounded man. What is to be done now? the young girls will not go with me before the soldier's wife returns, and to propose to take them away would be to incur certain refusal and excite certain suspicion. Oh! what is to be done for the best?"

"Do not be uneasy, mademoiselle," said the messenger as he went away. "I will give your message to the worthy man, and inform him that he will not have long to wait at the office."

Whilst La Mayeux was employed in making up her packet, and putting the silver cup, and spoon, and fork, in it, Madame Grivois was lost in reflection. All at once she started; her countenance, which for some time had been overcast, disturbed, and disquieted, became brightened, and she rose, still holding Monsieur in her arms, and said to the young girls,

"Since Madame Françoise does not return, I will pay a visit close by: I shall soon return. You will be so good as to say so to her."

So saying, Madame Grivois went away a few minutes before La Mayeux.

CHAPTER LI.

APPEARANCES.

AFTER having bid the two orphans to take courage, La Mayeux went down the stairs, but with some difficulty, for she had first gone to her own chamber, in order to add to the bundle, already heavy, a woollen counterpane, the only one she possessed, and which protected her a little from the cold in her miserable apartment.

The night before, overcome by her uneasiness on Agricola's behalf, the young girl could not work; the pangs of expectation, hope, and anxiety, had prevented her, and her day was lost. Still she must live.

The overwhelming troubles which break down the poor, even to the deprivation of their power to work, are doubly terrible: they paralyse the strength, and with the relaxation from work which pain imposes come destitution and distress.

But La Mayeux, the perfect and touching type of *holy duty*, had still to devote herself to being useful, and she had strength for that. The most frail and weak creatures are occasionally endued with extraordinary vigour of soul, and it might be said, that with feeble and debilitated constitutions the mind is so far superior to the body as to impose on it factitious energy.

Thus La Mayeux for four-and-twenty hours had neither eaten nor slept, and had suffered all the cold of a freezing night. In the morning she had undergone violent fatigue in traversing Paris twice through snow and sleet, to go to the Rue de Babylone, and yet her strength was not exhausted: so vast is the power of the heart.

La Mayeux had reached the corner of the Rue Saint-Merry.

Since the recent conspiracy in the Rue des Prouvaires there had been a great number of additional agents of police and sergens-de-ville stationed in this district.

The young workwoman, although bending beneath the weight of her bundle, ran quickly along the pathway; and at the instant when she passed close to a sergent-de-ville, two five-franc pieces fell behind her, dropped by a large woman, clothed in black, who followed her.

The stout woman then pointed out to the sergent-de-ville the two pieces of money which had fallen, and said in a quick tone a few words, pointing towards La Mayeux.

This woman then disappeared, at a quick pace, in the direction of the Rue Brise-Miche.

The sergent-de-ville, struck with what Madame Grivois had said to him (for it was she), picked up the money, and running after La Mayeux, exclaimed,

“Holla, holla, you, there! Stop!—stop that woman!”

At these cries several persons turned round quickly, and in these quarters a knot of five or six people soon assemble, and increase in a minute or two to a considerable mob.

Ignorant that the call of the sergent-de-ville was directed to her, La Mayeux hurried onwards, only thinking of reaching the Mont de Piété as quickly as possible, and endeavouring to pass through the throng without jostling anybody, so much did she dread the brutal and cruel jests which her infirmity so often excited.

Suddenly she heard several persons running behind her, and at the same moment a hand was rudely laid on her shoulder.

It was the sergent-de-ville, followed by a police-agent, who came up at the noise.

La Mayeux, equally surprised and alarmed, turned round.

She found herself already in the midst of a crowd, composed of that idle and ragged, wretched, and insolent mob, brutalised by ignorance and misery, which is always tramping the streets. In this assemblage we seldom see working people, for they are usually at their shops and at labour.

"I say, why don't you hear them?—why, you're like Jean d'Urville's dog," said the police-agent, seizing La Mayeux so rudely by the arm that she dropped her bundle.

When the unfortunate girl, looking about her, saw, with horror, all eyes upon her with insolent, brutal, and insulting glances—when she saw the scowl or coarse grin on all these low and ill-cast countenances, she turned deathly pale.

The police-sergeant spoke roughly; but how could he be expected to speak otherwise to a poor, pale, terrified, and deformed object, whose countenance was convulsed with fear and grief, whose attire betokened the most abject poverty, and whose wretched cotton-gown was drenched with wet, and heavy with mud? for long and wearisome had been the poor girl's journeyings during the hours she had toiled to obtain news of Agricola. Thus, therefore, the police-sergeant, in obedience to that universally received law, that rags and misery justly warrant every unworthy suspicion of the unfortunate possessors, added, in a tone of severe authority:

"Holla, my girl! you must be deucedly pressed for time, since you cannot stop even to pick up your money after you have dropped it."

"I suppose she makes her hump her savings' bank," cried a hoarse voice, proceeding from a vendor of lucifer-matches, whose hardened countenance was the very type of precocious depravity. This witticism was received by the shouts and laughter of the assembled mob, whose cries of assent and approbation so completely overwhelmed poor La Mayeux, that it was with infinite difficulty she managed to reply to the police-officer, who presented her with the two pieces of money the sergeant had picked up.

"Indeed, sir, that money does not belong to me!"

"That's a lie!" answered the sergeant, approaching: "a lady saw it fall from your pocket!"

"No, I assure you, sir! Indeed, it is not mine!" answered La Mayeux, trembling from head to foot.

"And I tell you that is a falsehood!" continued the man: "why, the respectable lady who saw it drop from you remarked at the time, says she, 'Sergeant, just look at that humpbacked girl,' says she, 'running off with that great bundle! Why, she is in such a hurry,'

says she, 'that when her money tumbles down she never turns her head to look after it. There is something wrong, depend upon it!'"

"I say, Mister Sergeant," cried the husky voice of the match-seller, "keep your eye open—she's a deep 'un! Just feel her hump—that's her hoarding-place. I'll be bound she's got all manner of things hid there: boots, cloaks, umbrellas, clocks, and watches. Hark! I heard a clock strike just now: I'm hanged if the sound didn't come out of her hunch!"

Fresh laughter, fresh hurrahs, and renewed hallooing issued from the mereiless crowd; for an ignorant and brutal mob rarely shews mercy to those who, whether from their crime or misfortune, stand the most in need of it. Still more and more dense became the assemblage of persons, and one confused mass soon blocked up the street; while hoarse cries, shrill whistlings, and low jests passed from mouth to mouth.

"Let's have a look—there's nothing to pay!" said one.

"I say, don't scrouge—I paid for my place!" cried another.

"Make the woman stand up on something, that we can all see!" shouted a third.

"Ah, do!" chimed in a fourth: "my feet are getting stamped on, and no one will pay me for that, I expect!"

"Shew her up, or return every body their money!"

"Our money or our places!" bawled another.

"Let's have a look at her! Shew her up, alive or dead!" vociferated another wit.

While, at each fresh sound, the trembling object of their mirth seemed ready to sink into the earth.

Let the reader but picture to himself this unfortunate girl, whose disposition and heart were so nobly, yet delicately attuned to every good and gentle impulse—whose nature was at once so timid and sensitive—constrained to hear these coarse jests, and to listen to the uproarious mirth of the rabble by whom she was hemmed in—standing in the midst of the pitiless crowd, alone and unprotected; for the police-sergeant, who stood beside her, was far from seeking to abate her misery by his interposition, and yet entirely ignorant of the cause of her present degradation, and unable to comprehend the nature of the charge which led to it.

She was not, however, allowed long to remain in doubt; for the police-officer, seizing the bundle she had picked up, and was holding in her trembling arms, roughly inquired,

"What have you got there?"

"Sir, it is only—something—I was going——"

And in her extreme terror the words died away on the unfortunate girl's lips, and she found it impossible to utter another sound.

"Is that all the answer you can make?" said the officer. "Well, then, you have not much to say for yourself. Come, look sharp, and open your bundle! Let's see what you have got!"

So saying, the police-officer, aided by the sergeant, took the bundle from her, opened it, and said, while enumerating the objects it contained,

"What the devil have we got here? Sheets—a blanket—spoon—"



THE ARREST.

fork—and silver eup!—a shawl, too! 'Pon my life, you come it strong—you do! A wench like you, a mere rag-picker, to be carrying articles of silver about with you! Well, you must be an old hand at it, to venture in daylight, too!"

"These things are not yours, you say?" said the sergeant.

"No, sir," replied La Mayeux, who felt her strength fast failing her; "but I——"

"Ah, you hardened little humpback! Why, you steal things larger than yourself!"

"Steal!" exclaimed La Mayeux, clasping her hands with horror, and understanding at once the position in which she stood; "steal!—me steal!"

"Here, guard! guard!" cried several voices at once.

"Here, my jack-a-dandies!"

"This way, my tourlourous!"

"Now, my fire-eaters!"

"Room for the twenty-third dromedaries!—that fine regiment, that fight as well in their sleep as when they are awake!"

In the midst of these witticisms and loud-approving laughs, two soldiers and a corporal, with some difficulty, approached. Nothing could be discerned of them, in the midst of the dense mass through which they were obliged to force their way, but the glittering of their bayonets and muskets.

A messenger had been despatched to the nearest guard-house, to report the really formidable obstruction so large an assemblage of persons caused in the public streets.

"Now, then, here is the guard!" said the police-officer, seizing La Mayeux by the arm; "so march on, humpy, to the guard-house!"

"Oh, sir!" cried the poor girl, half-choked by her sobs, clasping her hands in terror, and falling on her knees in the wet and snow, which covered the pavement; "oh, sir! mercy, mercy! Only let me tell you, let me explain to you——"

"You can explain as much as you like at the guard-house. March, I say!"

"Oh, sir, I have not stolen any thing—indeed, indeed, sir, I have not!" cried La Mayeux, in a tone of distraction. "Pray take pity on me! Do not allow me to be led away like a thief, before all these people! Oh, mercy!—for Heaven's sake, spare me!"

"I tell you you can say all you've got to say after you reach the guard-house: the street is quite blocked up. Now, do you choose to move on, or don't you?—which is it to be?"

And, so saying, he took the wretched girl by both her hands, and in a manner forced her from her kneeling attitude, and compelled her to stand up.

At this moment the corporal and his two men, having succeeded in penetrating the crowd, approached the sergeant.

"Corporal," said the latter, "conduct this girl to the guard-house! I am a police-officer."

"Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen—mercy, mercy!" said La Mayeux, clasping her hands, and weeping bitterly; "don't take me away before you have allowed me to explain to you. I am no thief—God knows

I have stolen nothing! Let me tell you how I came by these things: it was to serve another person. Oh, let me tell you how——”

“I say again, that you can enter upon your explanations after you arrive at the guard-house. Come,” added the sergeant, “if you won’t walk, they must drag you—that’s all!”

It is impossible to paint this disgraceful and fearful scene. Weak, exhausted, and overcome by terror, the poor girl was led away by the soldiers, her knees tottering under her; so that it became necessary for the sergeant and police-officer to support her between them; and she, poor sinking creature! finding each step she took too much for her worn-out strength, mechanically accepted the assistance they proffered.

As the procession moved on, fresh yells and cries burst forth from the multitude.

Half-dragged, half-supported by these men, the unfortunate Mayeux was led along; and so, beneath the hazy sky, in the midst of the muddy streets, hemmed in on each side by the dark, ponderous dwellings which formed the boundary, this swarming and revolting mass (recalling, as it did, the wildest images of Callot or Goya) moved on. Children in rags, drunken men and women, with flushed and soiled countenances, pushed eagerly against each other—strove, struggled, even to being trampled under foot, while they followed, hissing, groaning, and deriding the half-dead creature, dragged along—the victim of an infamous error.

An error! Well may one shudder at the recollection of how frequently such scenes have been, and may still again be, enacted from similar mistakes, founded simply on the outward appearance of want and misery exhibited by the party suspected, or indeed from no other cause than an indistinct information!

For ourselves, we shall long remember the fate of the unfortunate girl, who, having been arrested upon a wrong and disreputable charge, contrived to escape from the persons who were leading her to prison, and, rushing to the top of a house, threw herself, while under the influence of despair, from a window, and dashed out her brains on the pavement!

* * * * *

After the abominable fabrications of which the poor Mayeux was the victim, Madame Grivois returned with all haste to the Rue Brise-Miche. She hurried up the stairs till she reached the fourth landing-place, and opened the door of Françoise’s apartment. Then what a sight met her eyes!—Dagobert, surrounded by his wife and the young orphans!

CHAPTER LII.

THE CONVENT.

LET us in two words explain the cause of Dagobert’s presence.

His countenance bore so fully the impress of military frankness, that the director of the coach-office was content with his word to

return and pay his fare, but the soldier had obstinately insisted on staying in *pawn*, as he called it, until his wife had answered his letter; and then, on the return of the messenger, who told him that the money required would be forthcoming shortly, Dagobert, feeling his scruples satisfied, ran hastily home.

We may, therefore, imagine the surprise of Madame Grivois when, on entering the apartment, she saw Dagobert (whom she easily recognised by the description she had heard of him) with his wife and the orphans.

The anxiety of Françoise at the sight of Madame Grivois was equally great.

Rose and Blanche had told Dagobert's wife that a lady had called during her absence, on a very important affair, and, instructed as she had been by her confessor, Françoise could not doubt but that this lady was charged to conduct Rose and Blanche to a religious house.

Her agony was excessive, for, although resolved on following the commands of the Abbé Dubois, she was afraid that a word dropped by Madame Grivois might awaken Dagobert's suspicions, and then all hope was lost—then the orphans would remain for ever in a state of ignorance and mortal sin, for which she felt herself responsible.

Dagobert, who was clasping the hands of Rose and Blanche in his own, rose when Madame de Saint-Dizier's confidential attendant entered, and cast an inquiring look on Françoise.

The moment was critical—decisive; but Madame Grivois had profited much by the examples of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, and so at once making up her mind, she turned to account the haste with which she had ascended the four pairs of stairs, after her scandalous denunciation against La Mayeux; and the annoyance which the sight of Dagobert had caused her giving to her features an expression of great disquietude and chagrin, she exclaimed, in a stifled voice, after a moment's silence, which she seemed to employ in calming her agitation and collecting her thoughts,

“ Ah, madame! I have just seen such a terrible thing—excuse my agitation—but really I was deeply pained!”

“ Oh! what is the matter?” replied Françoise, in a tremulous voice, and fearing the want of tact on the part of Madame Grivois.

“ I came here a short time since,” resumed that lady, “ to speak to you on a very important affair, and whilst I was awaiting for you, a young deformed workwoman was putting up a quantity of things in a bundle.”

“ Yes, no doubt,” said Françoise, “ it was La Mayeux, that excellent, worthy creature!”

“ I should think so, madame; but listen to what happened. Seeing that you did not return, I resolved on taking a turn in the neighbourhood, and going down stairs, I went to the Rue Saint-Merry—ah, madame!——”

“ Well,” said Dagobert, “ what happened?”

“ I saw a mob—I asked the cause, and they told me that a sergent-de-ville had just apprehended a young girl as a thief, because they had surprised her carrying off a bundle containing different objects which appeared not to belong to her. I went up, and what did I see? The young workgirl whom an instant before I had left here.”

"Ah, poor child!" exclaimed Françoise, turning pale, and clasping her hands in alarm; "what a misfortune!"

"What, then," asked Dagobert of his wife, "was in this bundle?"

"Well, I must tell you; being short of money, I had begged poor Mayeux to take, as quickly as possible, to the Mont de Piété, the different objects of which we did not stand in immediate need."

"And they have supposed that she stole them!" exclaimed Dagobert; "she, the honestest girl in the world! What a shame! But, madame, you should have interfered, and said that you knew her!"

"I did attempt to do so, sir; but, unfortunately, they would not listen to me. The crowd increased every moment—the guard came up and took her off."

"It will kill her, gentle and timid thing as she is!" exclaimed Françoise.

"Ah, the good Mayeux! she who was so kind and thoughtful!" said Blanche turning to her sister, with tears starting to her eyes.

"Unable myself to do any thing for her," replied Madame Grivois, "I made all the haste I could to run here and tell you of this mistake, which I hope may soon be rectified; all that is requisite is for some one to go as quickly as possible to bear evidence for the young girl."

At these words Dagobert took up his hat quickly, and turning to Madame Grivois said, in a blunt tone,

"Oh, madame, you should have begun by saying that. Do you know where the poor girl is?"

"I do not know, sir; but there are still in the street so many people, and such a disturbance, that if you have the kindness to go down directly and make inquiries you will easily learn."

"What the devil do you mean by 'have the kindness?' Poor child!" said Dagobert, "apprehended as a thief!—it is horrible! I will go to the commissary of police in the quarter, or to the guard-house, and I will find her—they shall give her up, and I will bring her here."

So saying, Dagobert went out very quickly.

Françoise, assured as to the fate of La Mayeux, returned thanks to the Lord for having, thanks to this event, taken her husband out, as his presence at this moment would have embarrassed her seriously.

Madame Grivois had left Monsieur in the hackney-coach before she came up stairs, for time was precious, and giving Françoise a significant look as she handed the Abbé Dubois' letter to her, she said, laying emphasis on each word,

"You will see in this letter, madame, the object of my visit here, which will, therefore, need no further explanation; and I am delighted at the opportunity it has given me of forming the acquaintance of these two charming young ladies."

Rose and Blanche looked at each other with surprise.

Françoise trembled as she took the letter. It required all the urgent and threatening injunctions of her confessor to subdue the last scruples of the poor woman, who shuddered when she reflected on the fierce anger of Dagobert. In her candour, however, she had not thought of the mode in which she should announce to the two young girls that they were to go away with this lady.

Madame Grivois saw her embarrassment, and giving her an as-

suring look, said to Rose, while Françoise was reading her confessor's letter,

"How delighted your relation will be to see you, my dear young lady!"

"Our relation, madame!" said Rose, still more astonished.

"Yes, certainly; she learnt of your arrival here, but as she has been suffering for a long time under a severe complaint, she could not come herself to-day, and has, therefore, desired me to fetch you to her. Unfortunately," added Madame Grivois, as the two young girls started with surprise, "as she says in the letter to Madame Françoise, you can only see her for a very short time, and in one hour you will be back again here; but to-morrow, or next day, she will be able to stir abroad, and will come and have some talk with madame and her husband, as to your taking up your residence with her: for she would be much distressed to allow you to be any expense to two persons so kind and good to you."

These last words of Madame Grivois made a strong impression on the two sisters, inasmuch as they removed their fears lest they might in future become a serious cost to Dagobert's family. If it had been a question of leaving the house in the Rue Brise-Miche without the consent of their friend, they would doubtless have hesitated; but Madame Grivois spoke only of an hour's visit, and they had no suspicion. Rose said to Françoise,

"We may go and see our relation without awaiting Dagobert's coming back to tell him of it; may we not, madame?"

"Certainly!" said Françoise, in a weak voice; "since you will return here directly."

"Now, madame, I will request these young ladies to accompany me as quickly as possible, for I shall bring them back before noon."

"We are ready, madame," said Rose.

"Well, young ladies, embrace your second mother and come," said Madame Grivois, who could hardly restrain her disquiet, and trembled lest from one moment to another Dagobert might return.

Rose and Blanche embraced Françoise; who, pressing in her arms the two charming and innocent creatures she was surrendering, could hardly subdue her tears, although she had a deep conviction that she was acting for their benefit.

"Come, young ladies," said Madame Grivois, with an affable tone, "make haste: excuse my hurry, but it is in the name of your relation that I speak."

The two sisters, after having tenderly embraced Dagobert's wife, left the room; and holding her by the hand descended the staircase, followed without their knowing it by Kill-joy, who walked cautiously after them, for in Dagobert's absence the intelligent animal never left them.

For the sake of greater precaution, no doubt, the confidential attendant of Madame de Saint-Dizier had ordered her coach to wait a little way off the Rue Brise-Miche, by the little square of the Cloister.

In a few seconds the orphans and their conductress reached the carriage.

"Ah, mistress!" said the coachman, as he opened the door; "I

don't wish to affront you, but you have a beast of a dog who is anything but an agreeable customer, and since he has been in my coach he has howled like a good 'un, and looks as if he'd like to eat every body as comes in his way."

In truth Monsieur, who detested being alone, gave many lengthened howls.

"Silence, Monsieur!—here I am, sir," said Madame Grivois. Then turning to the two girls she desired them to enter the coach.

Rose and Blanche took their seats. Madame Grivois, before she got into the carriage, gave the coachman the address in a low tone to the convent of Sainte-Marie, adding other instructions, when suddenly the pug, who had begun to growl with a savage air when the two sisters took their places in the coach, began to bark furiously.

The cause of his rage was easily explained; Kill-joy, who until then had not been discovered, leaped with a bound into the coach.

The pug enraged at this audacity, and forgetful of his habitual freedom, and excited by his anger and bad temper, jumped at Kill-joy's muzzle, and bit him so severely that the bold Siberian dog, exasperated by the pain, threw himself on Monsieur, seized him by the neck, and with two gripes of his powerful jaw strangled the pug, who was already half-choke in his own fat.

All this passed more quickly than it takes to describe it, and Rose and Blanche had not the time to do more than call out twice,

"Down, Kill-joy!—Have done, sir!"

"God bless me!" exclaimed Madame Grivois, turning round at the noise; "send away this beast of a dog! he will hurt Monsieur! Pray, young ladies, send him back! make him get down—it is quite impossible to take him with us!"

Unconscious of the extent of Kill-joy's misconduct, for Monsieur was lying inanimate beneath the seat, yet feeling that it was not right to pay a first visit accompanied by such a dog, the sisters gently pushed him with their feet, saying, in an angry tone:

"Get down, Kill-joy! go away, sir!"

The faithful animal hesitated at first to obey; sorrowful and beseechingly he looked at the orphans with an air of gentle reproach, as though blaming them for thus sending away their only defender: but at a repetition of the command, pronounced in Blanche's most angry voice, Kill-joy with drooping tail descended from the fiacre, feeling perhaps conscious of having shewn himself pretty strong in the affair with Monsieur.

Madame Grivois, who had her own reasons for wishing to quit that neighbourhood as quickly as possible, hastily ascended the carriage—the coachman closed the door and got on his box—when the fiacre drove rapidly away, Madame Grivois prudently drawing down the blinds for fear of any rencounter with Dagobert.

These indispensable precautions taken, she began to recollect Monsieur, whom she most tenderly loved with all the exaggerated fondness with which persons of warped or vicious minds are often apt to regard animals; frequently exhausting and lavishing on them the cares, the tenderness, and affection which is justly the right of one's own species. In a word, Madame Grivois was passionately fond of

the ill-contrived, snarling, snapping cur; probably from some secret affinity between their natures: however that might be, Madame Grivois and Monsieur had been attached friends for the last six years, and their fondness seemed but to increase as time went on.

We have dwelt longer than was perhaps necessary upon an apparently trifling circumstance, because it is frequently from small causes that the most disastrous results arise; and because we are desirous our readers should fully understand the despair, the rage, the fury, and exasperation of this woman on having her darling thus torn from her—a rage which fell with deadly fury on the heads of the poor devoted orphan girls.

The vehicle had rolled on at a smart pace for some few seconds, when Madame Grivois, who had taken the front seat, called Monsieur.

Very sufficient reasons, however, prevented Monsieur from replying.

“Oh! what you are angry, are you?” said Madame Grivois, caressingly. “And so you have quarrelled! why, it was not my fault that the ugly great dog got into the carriage and frightened my pet—was it young ladies?”

“Come, come, then! give mistress a pretty kiss and let us be friends, there’s a darling!”

Still the same determined silence on the part of Monsieur.

Rose and Blanche looked at each other with some uneasiness; they knew Kill-joy’s manners were not particularly gentle to those who offended him; and yet even they did not anticipate the severity of the punishment he had this time inflicted.

Madame Grivois, more surprised than alarmed at finding her affectionate appeals unanswered, stooped down at last to take him from his hiding-place under the seat. Seizing one of Monsieur’s paws, she drew him out rather impatiently, saying in a tone half-serious, half-playful,

“Come out, you naughty boy! what will these young ladies think of you?”

So saying, she lifted up her dear pug, not a little astonished at the listlessness and indifference manifested by him; but what was her horror, when, upon placing him in her lap, she discovered he was utterly motionless!

“Good heavens!” cried she; “the poor dear is in a fit! I thought he would suffer when he ate so much of that cream yesterday.” Then quickly turning round she hastily exclaimed, without once remembering that the person she addressed could not possibly hear her, “Coachman! coachman! stop, I say.” Then lifting up the head of Monsieur, under the belief of his having only fainted, she perceived with horror the bleeding marks of five or six huge fangs upon the fat throat of her beloved pug—clearly proving the violent death which had torn him from her. Her first ideas were filled with grief and despair. “Dead!” cried she; “dead! he is dead and cold! Gracious heavens! what will become of me without my darling?”

So saying, she burst into tears.

The tears of the wicked are always to be mistrusted. In the first place, it takes much to make them weep; and so far from grief

expanding or softening, it inflames their minds, and inspires them with fresh hatred to all around.

Thus, therefore, when the first burst of her grief and surprise had passed away, Madame Grivois gave way to a feeling of deep, deadly, concentrated hate against the young girls, who had been the involuntary cause of her dog's death; and so plainly was her rage and determination to avenge herself depicted on the harsh countenance of Madame Grivois, that Rose and Blanche were terrified at the purple and inflamed features so sternly fixed on them, while with a voice convulsed with fury she exclaimed:

"'Twas your beast of a dog killed my sweet pet!"

"Pray, pray, madame," cried Rose, "do not be angry with us for it."

"Your dog bit Kill-joy first," uttered Blanche, in a plaintive tone.

The terror impressed on the faces of the two orphans recalled Madame Grivois to herself, and brought to her recollection the serious consequences of indulging her anger at the present juncture. Even for the furtherance of the schemes of vengeance she now meditated it was necessary to restrain her feelings, that she might avoid inspiring the daughters of Marshal Simon with any mistrust of or dislike to her. Unwilling to seem too easily pacified, and fearing a too rapid transition from anger to kindness might excite suspicion, she continued for several instants to contemplate the sisters with looks of dire displeasure, then feigning by degrees to calm down her irritated feelings into a bitter regret. After which, Madame Grivois, covering her face with her hands and sighing heavily, affected to weep with undiminished sorrow.

"Poor lady!" said Rose, in a low tone to Blanche, "how she weeps! I dare say she was as fond of her dog as we are of Kill-joy."

"Oh, yes!" answered Blanche; "and remember, sister, how we cried when our poor old Jovial was killed!"

After some minutes Madame Grivois raised her head, and finally drying her eyes said, in a tone of almost affectionate earnestness,

"Pray excuse me, young ladies, for thus yielding to the first emotions of grief and distress at the loss of my poor, dear dog, to whom I was most tenderly attached, and who, for the last six years, has never quitted me for a single day!"

"We are truly grieved for your misfortune, madame," said Rose; "and the more so as your loss is not to be repaired by any means in our power!"

"I was saying just now to my sister, that we were the more sorry for you, because we lost a dear, faithful old horse, that brought us from Siberia: he was killed by cruel people, and we shed so many tears concerning him."

"Well, my dear young ladies, don't let us say any more about it. It is my fault, I ought not to have brought him with me; but he was always so miserable when I was absent from him—you can understand my weakness in indulging the poor fellow. Ah! you may always know a feeling heart by the conduct shewn towards animals; those who are tender towards dumb things are sure to be full of sympathy and kindness towards their fellow-creatures. I trust, therefore, that your affectionate hearts will pardon the little displeasure I confess I could not help feeling at the first glance of my murdered favourite."

"Oh, pray, madame, do not think of us: indeed, all our regret arose from seeing you so distressed."

"That will soon pass away, my dear young ladies; and the sight of the joy your relation will experience in beholding you will assist in consoling me—she will be so happy, you are such sweet creatures; and, then, the singular resemblance you bear each other increases the interest you cannot fail to inspire."

"You are too good to us, madame," said Rose.

"Not at all; and I feel certain you resemble each other as much in disposition as you do in countenance."

"Oh, yes, madame!" said Rose: "how could it be otherwise, when, from the hour of our birth, we have never been separated for a single instant, night or day? How then could we fail being of similar natures and dispositions?"

"Is it possible, my dear young ladies, that you have never been parted in your lives?"

"Never, madame," cried the two sisters at once, as, grasping each other's hand, they exchanged a fond and affectionate glance.

"Then, I dare say, you would be perfectly miserable if you were taken from each other?"

"Oh, but we never should be separated, madame," said Blanche, smilingly.

"How do you know that?"

"Nay, madame, who would have the heart to do it?"

"Why, certainly, my dear young ladies, none but very wicked people would ever think of such a thing."

"Oh, madame!" replied Blanche, with a look of innocent sweetness, "not even wicked people could be so very cruel as that—no one would ever think of parting us."

"So much the better, my dear mademoiselle; but tell me why you think it would be impossible to separate you."

"Because we should both die of grief."

"Yes, our hearts would break!"

"Poor dears!"

"Three months ago we were thrown into prison: well, when the governor of the prison, who was a very harsh-looking man, saw us, he said, 'It would be the death of these poor girls to separate them;' so he let us be together, and we were as happy there as it is possible to be in prison."

"That speaks much in favour of the goodness of your hearts, as well as of those who so fully entered into your happiness in being together."

The vehicle stopped.

The driver called out "Now, gate, if you please!"

"Ah, here we are, at your dear relation's house!" cried Madame Grivois.

The large entrance-gates were opened, and the fiacre rolled without noise over a large sanded court-yard.

Madame Grivois, having drawn up one of the blinds, displayed to view a large court, intersected by a high wall running completely across, in the midst of which was a sort of porch, forming a small lodge, supported by plaster pillars. At the back of this porch was a

small door. Beyond the wall were visible the roof and pediments of a large stone building, which, in comparison with the houses of the Rue Brise-Miche, appeared a perfect palace; and, in their guileless admiration, Rose and Blanche could not forbear exclaiming,

“Oh, madame, what a beautiful place!”

“Oh, the outside is nothing!” answered Madame Grivois: “only wait till you see the interior—then, indeed, you will be surprised!”

The coachman opened the door: what was the rage of Madame Grivois, and the surprise of the sisters, to perceive Kill-joy, who had carefully tracked the vehicle, and stood at the steps awaiting his young mistresses, looking as though, while wagging his tail and erecting his ears, he expected not only to be pardoned for his late violence, but even praised and commended for his intelligence and fidelity!

“God bless me!” exclaimed Madame Grivois, whose anger blazed brightly again at the sight of the author of all her misery; “I declare this ugly brute has dared to follow us!”

“He is a downright good ’un, though, missus!” said the coachman: “he wouldn’t wag a step from my horses’ heels; he’s been used to it, I’m sure! He’s a out-and-out dog, he is! No two men could tackle him, I’ll answer for ’t. Look here—here’s a chest for you!”

The mistress of the defunct Monsieur, but little pleased with these eulogiums on his destroyer, so very inopportunately uttered by the driver of the fiacre, turned disdainfully away, saying to the orphans,

“I will go and arrange for your immediate introduction to your relative. Sit quietly in the coach till I return.”

And, hastily proceeding towards the little gate, Madame Grivois pulled a bell that hung there. A female wearing a religious dress appeared, and made a respectful inclination of the head to Madame Grivois, who merely said to her,

“I have brought the two young persons you expected. The orders of M. d’Aigrigny and the princess are, that they be instantly and henceforward separated from each other, and placed in different cells—the *severe* cells, you understand, good sister—the *severe cells*, and the *regimen* and treatment bestowed upon the hardened and *impenitent*.”

“I will inform our holy mother, and all shall be done according to your commands,” said the female, bowing a second time to Madame Grivois.

“Will you come now, my dear young ladies?” said Madame Grivois to the poor girls, who were stealthily caressing Kill-joy, and, no longer fearful of offending Madame Grivois, taking this opportunity of expressing their approbation of his zeal and attachment. “Come, mesdemoiselles, and you will be conducted at once to the presence of your relative. I will return in an hour to fetch you. Coachman, keep back the dog!”

Rose and Blanche, who, on alighting from the fiacre, were solely occupied with Kill-joy, had not observed the lay-sister, who stood half-concealed behind the little door. Thus, therefore, the orphans never once perceived the religious dress worn by the person into whose charge they were given, until the sister, taking a hand of each, to assist them over the threshold, closed the door directly behind them.



THE CONVENT.



Immediately Madame Grivois saw the convent-gate securely closed upon the poor girls, she directed the coachman to drive out of the yard and await her at the outside of the gates.

The man obeyed, and the vehicle disappeared.

Kill-joy, who had seen Rose and Blanche enter by the little gate, ran towards it.

Madame Grivois called to the porter of the outer lodge, a tall, robust man :

"Nicolas, I will give you ten francs if you will knock that huge beast on the head in my presence; there, I mean that great ugly brute crouched down before that door."

Nicolas shook his head as he surveyed the gigantic proportions of Kill-joy, adding,

"I tell you what, madame, knocking such an animal as that on the head is sooner talked about than done."

"Well, you shall have twenty francs, then — only kill him! there, just as he lies. Let me see you do it."

"Ah, but I ought to have a gun! I have nothing in-doors but a crow-bar."

"That will do. One good blow, and you will knock his brains out!"

"Well, madame, I'll try, at any rate; but I don't think it's to be done."

So saying, Nicolas went in search of his weapon.

"Oh, if I had but strength enough!" said Madame Grivois.

The porter, armed with his crow-bar, returned, and approached Kill-joy with slow and treacherous steps, while the dog still kept his position before the gate.

"Here, old boy!—here, here, my dog! come to me, my fine fellow!" cried Nicolas, slapping his thigh with his left hand, while with his right he held the bar of iron concealed behind himself.

Kill-joy slowly arose, examined Nicolas with close attention; then, doubtless suspecting that the porter devised some mischief against him, he made one spring, walked coolly round the enemy, and, as though perceiving while despising the intended scheme, he retired to a distance that precluded all danger of an attack.

"Ah, he smells a rat!" said Nicolas: "the beggar suspects something. It is no use trying of him; he won't let any body come anigh."

"You are an awkward fellow—that's all I can say!" cried Madame Grivois, in a rage. "There," said she, throwing a five-franc piece towards the man, "you can drive the beast away, I suppose, if you are afraid of doing more!"

"Perhaps I can," answered the porter; "leastways it won't be so dangerous as trying to kill him."

Kill-joy, therefore, evidently aware of the inutility of an open war on his part, quitted the court and returned into the street; but, once there, and feeling himself in a manner on neutral ground, no attempts of Nicolas could drive him further from the gates than was requisite to keep beyond reach of the crow-bar.

When, therefore, Madame Grivois, pale with baffled rage, ascended the *fiacre*, in which were deposited the inanimate remains of Monsieur,

she beheld, with equal spite and anger, Kill-joy comfortably stretched out on the pavement a few steps from the exterior entrance to the convent.

Nicolas, seeing the utter uselessness of any further attempts to dislodge him, contented himself with retiring and closing the gates.

The Siberian dog, with that intelligence peculiar to his species, confident of finding his way back to the Rue Brise-Miche, quietly awaited the return of the orphans from their visit.

The sisters now found themselves enclosed within the walls of the convent of Sainte-Marie, which, as the reader has been already told, closely adjoined the private madhouse in which Adrienne de Cardoville was confined.

* * * * *

We shall now conduct the reader to the apartment of Dagobert's wife, who sat waiting with painful anxiety for the moment of her husband's return, when the awful question would be put as to what had become of the daughters of General Simon.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF A CONFESSOR.

SCARCELY had the orphans quitted the Rue Brise-Miche, than Françoise, throwing herself on her knees, began praying fervently, while the tears she had hitherto restrained flowed abundantly; for, spite of her entire conviction of her merely discharging a religious duty in thus surrendering the sisters to other hands, she could not divest herself of excessive alarm at the thoughts of her husband's return. However blinded by excessive zeal, the poor woman could not conceal from herself that Dagobert had just reason for complaint, even anger against her; and, with his mind ruffled and disturbed by the grievous blow he would sustain when he discovered the part she had acted, she had to inflict a second wound, by informing him of Agricola's arrest—a circumstance Dagobert was as yet ignorant of.

At each fresh sound on the staircase Françoise listened eagerly, trembling violently as she did so; then resumed her devotions with redoubled fervour, as though supplicating the Almighty to give her strength to endure the fiery ordeal through which, in the discharge of her religious duties, she had to pass.

At length a heavy foot was heard on the landing-place, and recognising this time the step of her husband, she precipitately arose, hastily dried her eyes, and, to give herself an appearance of composure, sat down to her work, feigning to be occupied in making one of the coarse grey bags that lay upon the table: but her trembling fingers were scarcely equal to holding the needle, much less employing it.

In a few minutes the door opened and Dagobert appeared.

The rough features of the old man wore an expression at once severe and sad; he threw his hat down impetuously on the table, as he

threw himself into a chair, and owing to the pre-occupation of his mind, not immediately observing the absence of the two orphans.

"Poor child!" said he at length; "it is really dreadful to think of."

"Have you seen La Mayeux? have you requested she may be given up to you?" asked Françoise, forgetting for a moment her own miseries and apprehensions.

"Yes, yes! I have seen her; but in such a condition as would move a stone to pity. I have claimed her too, and not without speaking a bit of my mind I can tell you. However, they said, before she could be released, the commissary must come here to take your ——" and here Dagobert, casting a troubled look round the room, suddenly broke off in his narrative, by exclaiming,—

"Wife! where are the children?"

A cold shudder passed over Françoise's frame—her tongue seemed frozen to her lips—at length she managed to utter in a feeble voice, "Dear husband! I——" she could get no farther.

"Answer me! where are Rose and Blanche? where are my children? I do not see Kill-joy either."

"Pray do not be angry!"

"Come, come!" said Dagobert, somewhat roughly; "I see how it is: you have permitted them to go out with some friend or neighbour, but why did you not accompany them yourself, or ask them to wait for me if they wished for a little change? Poor dears! it is quite natural they should long to take a walk, for this is but a dull place for young creatures like them that have never been used to be cooped up like you have. Still I wonder they went without waiting to hear further news concerning that poor girl La Mayeux, for their hearts are as tender, and as full of love and pity, as those of angels. But what is the meaning of all this?" continued the soldier, closely examining Françoise's countenance; "why, wife! you are as pale as death. What ails you? are you ill or in pain?" so saying, Dagobert affectionately took the thin feeble hands of Françoise between his own, while Françoise, wounded deeply by his unsuspecting kindness and evident fears for her health, bent her head and gratefully kissed her husband's large horny fingers, while scalding tears plentifully bedewed them.

The old soldier, becoming momentarily more and more uneasy, exclaimed, "What brings these tears to your eyes, my poor wife? Come—why do you not answer me? Tell me what it is that grieves you so; was it because I spoke so abruptly when I found fault with your letting the dear children go out with your neighbour? Why, now, look here; you see their poor mother gave them into my charge as she was dying; and you understand—don't you?—that such a thing as that is as sacred as one's life, or soul either. So, you see, I am always like an old hen fluttering about over my chickens," added he, trying to be facetious, that he might enliven Françoise.

"And you are quite right to love them as you do."

"Come now! cheer up, wife; try to forget what I said; why you know if I have a rough voice, I have not a rough heart; and since, of course, the person they have gone out with is a friend you can trust with confidence, why, there is not so much harm done; but, for

the future, my good Françoise, you must never do these things without first consulting me. I suppose the children asked you to allow them to take a walk with Kill-joy?"

"No! husband, I——"

"No! who is the person to whom you have intrusted them? where has she gone with them? and when will she bring them back?"

"I—know not," murmured Françoise, in a stifled voice.

"You know not?" cried Dagobert, deeply irritated; then, restraining himself, he answered in a tone of friendly reproach, "you do not know? Could you not then have fixed some precise period for their return, or rather not have intrusted them to any hands but your own? The children, no doubt, importuned you, till you, from over-good nature, gave them leave to go out; but when they knew that I should be back in a very few minutes, why did they not wait for me, eh, Françoise? I ask you why did they not wait for me? Answer me, will you? Upon my soul," cried Dagobert, stamping with rage he could no longer restrain, "you are enough to make a saint swear. Will you answer, or no?"

The courage of the unfortunate woman was utterly exhausted; these earnest and reiterated questions, which must end in eliciting the full truth, made her suffer a thousand sharp though slow agonies; she even preferred coming to the worst at once, and determined, like a humble and devoted victim, to bear the full weight of her husband's wrath, in pursuance of the promise she had so blindly sworn to keep before her confessor and her God.

Too feeble to rise, she bent her head; and letting an arm fall at each side of the chair, she said, in a tone of the deepest distress,—

"Do what you will with me, but ask me no further questions respecting the children, because I cannot answer them."

Had a thunder-bolt fallen at the soldier's feet, he could scarcely have received a more violent or severe shock. A deadly paleness succeeded to the angry suffusion his countenance had lately worn; a cold, clammy dew stood upon his bald forehead, and with fixed, stupefied gaze, he remained as though riveted to the spot, petrified, speechless with horror.

Then, as though by some strong mental effort, shaking off this momentary paralysation of his faculties, the soldier, with terrible energy, seized his wife by the shoulders, and lifting her as easily as though she had been an infant, he placed her standing upright before him; and stooping towards her, he vociferated in a voice at once terrifying and desperate,—

"The children! I insist upon knowing what you have done with them!"

"Mercy!—mercy!" uttered Françoise, in an expiring tone.

"Where are the children?" continued Dagobert, violently shaking the poor, weak, half-fainting woman, with his huge powerful hands, repeatedly exclaiming in accents of thunder, "Will you answer me? I demand to know what has become of my children!"

"Either kill me or pardon me; for I can not—I dare not answer!" cried the unhappy creature, with that pertinacious obstinacy peculiar to weak and timid characters, when once they take up what they believe a right and praiseworthy line of action.

“Wretched woman!” cried the soldier, and mad with rage, grief, and despair, he lifted up his wife, as though he intended to dash her on the floor; but the heart of the brave soldier was too good—too noble to be capable of so cowardly an act; and as this burst of fury subsided, he removed his grasp from the terrified being his iron fingers might have annihilated; while Françoise, utterly exhausted, fell upon her knees, clasped her hands, and, by the faint motion of her lips, was evidently engaged in deep and fervent prayer.

A momentary vertigo, a species of confusion and bewilderment, took possession of Dagobert's brain; all that had occurred had been so sudden, so incomprehensible, that it required some time to recover so astounding a blow, and to feel convinced that one so good, so amiable as his wife, she, whose whole life had been one unbroken series of devoted love and care for others, could possibly, knowing, as she did, the important charge he fulfilled in guarding the daughters of General Simon, and how completely his own happiness and honour were involved in their fate, have uttered such fearful words as those he had just heard from her lips, “Question me not concerning them, since I cannot answer you.”

The strongest, the firmest mind would have been shaken by a fact so inexplicable, so overwhelming, so incredible.

But with his usual strong sense, the soldier boldly looked upon the evil, crushing as it was, and, as his self-possession returned, and reason resumed its empire, he reflected thus:

“My wife alone can unravel this fearful affair, this dark mystery. I will not lay my hands on her, therefore, to injure her in any way; my plan will be to employ every means I can adopt to get at the truth, and to induce her to tell me what I want to know; for that purpose, I must carefully avoid giving way to anything like impatience or anger, and, whatever may be my feelings, I must restrain them.”

Thus wisely reflecting, Dagobert took a chair, and shewing another to his wife, who was still kneeling and murmuring low prayers, he said,

“Sit down!”

Exhausted and submissive, Françoise obeyed.

“Listen to me, wife,” pursued Dagobert, in a short, dry, and unsteady voice, interrupted by continued involuntary catchings of the breath, betraying the impatience he strove so hard to conceal. “Now, you cannot for an instant suppose things can go on in this way. You see, I am not going to use any violence towards you; just now I know I gave way to my first angry feelings—but—I shall not do that again, and am very sorry now that I so far forgot myself; so lay aside all fear. But I really must have you tell me where the dear children are; their mother—their dying mother intrusted them to me; and you must needs think, I did not bring them all the way from Siberia hither, for you to say to me, as you are doing now, ‘Don't ask me any questions, I cannot tell you what I have done with them!’ These words are not reasons—there is no sense in them. Suppose, now, Marshal Simon were to arrive in a hurry, and come to me, saying, ‘Well, Dagobert, where are my daughters?’ now what should I say to him in reply? You see I am talking quite friendly with you, not a bit put out, but as calm and as cool as can be. Now

just put yourself in my place. Now what should you say if you were me when the marshal asked you for his children, eh? But speak—answer me—why the devil don't you speak?" cried the poor fellow, whose temper and patience were rapidly failing him.

"Alas!—alas!"

"Oh!" cried the soldier, wiping his forehead, whose veins were swollen and distended almost to bursting. "Oh's and ah's are no answer to my questions; I ask you what am I to say to the marshal when he inquires for his daughters?"

"Tell him I am the guilty person. I will bear all his anger. I will tell all."

"What will you tell?"

"That you confided to me the two dear children, that you went out, and not finding them on your return, questioned me as to what had become of them, and that I refused to answer your questions concerning them."

"And do you for one instant suppose that the marshal will be contented with such an explanation as that?" said Dagobert, convulsively pressing his clenched fists on his knees.

"Unfortunately, they are the only reasons I can give either to him or to you; though I were even stricken by the hand of death, I dare reveal no more."

As these last words, pronounced as they were with desperate resignation, sounded in Dagobert's ear, the old man sprung from his seat, his patience utterly exhausted, but unwilling to break out into fresh acts of violence or threats, which he well knew would be alike powerless, he rose abruptly, threw open one of the windows, and exposed his burning forehead to the cool fresh air from without; then becoming a little calmer, he took one or two turns up and down the chamber and returned to seat himself beside his wife, who, with eyes from which rained plentiful tears, sat attentively gazing on a figure of Christ crucified, thinking that she, too, had a heavy cross laid on her, almost beyond her strength to bear.

Dagobert, with assumed composure, proceeded to say, "It is very clear from your manner of speaking, that at least the disappearance of the children is not the effect of any sickness or accident?"

"No, no! God be praised they are perfectly well; and that is all I can tell you!"

"Did they go from here alone?"

"I cannot answer your question!"

"Were they taken away by any one?"

"Alas, alas! dear husband, why persist in putting questions to me I have already assured you I cannot answer?"

"Will they return here?"

"I know not."

Again Dagobert arose for a second time; he found his patience failing him, and once more he tried to calm himself by pacing the small chamber; after a few turns, he returned and seated himself beside his wife.

"Now," said he, "you cannot possibly have any interest in concealing from me where these children are; why, then, do you refuse to satisfy me as to what has become of them?"

"Because I have no power to act otherwise than I am doing."

“I think you will alter your opinion when you know one thing, which circumstances now compel me to acquaint you with. Attend to me then!” continued Dagobert, in a voice of deep emotion. “If these two young girls are not brought back by the evening before the 13th of February—and you know we are close upon it—you place me in the situation of a man who has actually robbed and plundered the daughters of Marshal Simon. Mark me well! I say, robbed and plundered them; yet,” continued the soldier, in a tone of such heart-felt misery and anguish as struck to the heart of Françoise, “I did all that lay in an honest man’s power to conduct the poor things through their journey, and you little know all I underwent on the road; you cannot imagine the care, the uneasiness I experienced; for, let me tell you, that for an old fellow like me to have the sole charge of two helpless young creatures like them, is such a weight on his mind, that nothing but downright courage and a fixed determination to do his duty can help him through with it; and when all that kept me going, and inspired me with resolution to bear up against whatever might happen, was the idea of being able one day to say to Marshal Simon, ‘There are your daughters!’” the old soldier could proceed no farther; to his first burst of fury succeeded the most affecting grief, and unable to bear the afflicting reverse he had just described to all his proudly cherished hopes of restoring Rose and Blanche to their father’s arms, the old veteran sighed as though his heart would break, while bitter tears coursed rapidly down his weather-beaten cheeks.

At the sight of the large drops, which fell even on the thick grey moustache of Dagobert, Françoise felt her resolution beginning to fail her, but quickly recalling the solemn promise she had made to her confessor, and firmly believing that the more firmness she displayed, the better would it be for the immortal souls of the orphans, she mentally reproached herself for her weakness, for which she knew the Abbé Dubois would also severely reprehend her. She contented herself therefore with asking, in a timid voice,—

“What did you mean by saying just now, that you might be accused of wronging and plundering these poor dear children?”

“Hearken, then!” replied Dagobert, passing his hard hand across his eyes; “the cause of these young girls having travelled so many thousand miles, and endured such hardships on the road, coming all the way hither from the remotest parts of Siberia, is because matters of immense interest to them, perhaps the obtaining a princely fortune, depend on their being in the Rue Saint François, here in Paris, on the 13th of February. If they do not present themselves, all chance is for ever lost to them; and all through me—for I am responsible for whatever mistakes or errors you commit, as well as for all the dreadful consequences that may result from the ill-advised step you have this day taken.”

“The 13th of February! Rue Saint François!” said Françoise, regarding her husband with extreme surprise; “that is just like Gabriel.”

“What do you say? like Gabriel?”

“Yes! when I first received him, the poor deserted infant wore round his neck a bronze medal.”

"A medal of bronze!" cried the old soldier, struck with astonishment; "did it bear these words, '*You shall be in Paris, Rue Saint François, on the 13th of February, 1832?*'"

"Precisely the very words! but how did you know them?"

"Gabriel, also!" said the soldier, speaking to himself. "And does Gabriel know of this medal having been found on him?"

"I mentioned it to him when he grew old enough to understand it. There was also in a pocket of his dress a case containing several papers, all written in a strange language; all of which I carried to my confessor, the Abbé Dubois, thinking he might be able to make them out, and he afterwards told me the whole of the papers were quite unimportant. Some time afterwards, when a charitable person, named Rodin, undertook to educate Gabriel, and to obtain his admission into a seminary, Abbé Dubois delivered all the writings, with the medal, into the hands of M. Rodin, since which time I have never heard any mention of them."

As Françoise spoke of her confessor, a sudden light darted across the mind of the soldier, who, however, was far from suspecting the continual plots and machinations which had for so long a period been working both against the orphans and Gabriel.

Dagobert, however, began to have a vague and undefinable belief that his wife's present conduct arose out of some order issued from the confessional—an interference, the aim and motive of which was beyond his power to understand, but which served to account, in a great measure, for the immovable obstinacy of Françoise in persisting in concealing the retreat of the orphans.

After a short period of reflection, he abruptly rose, and gazing fixedly on his wife, he said, in a severe tone,—

"Some priest is mixed up with all this."

"Husband, for heaven's sake ——"

"You cannot, on your own account, have the least interest in keeping me in ignorance of where the children are hid. You are as good a wife as ever man had. You see what misery I am suffering. Oh, if you acted only by your own advice, you would take pity on me, you could not bear to see my wretchedness."

"Husband! I beseech you, cease."

"I tell you," continued Dagobert, "all this speaks of the confessional. You are sacrificing me, and those poor motherless girls, to the cold-blooded dictates of your confessor; but take care. I will find out where he lives, and, bombs and mortars! I'll go and just ask him whether he expects he or I am to be master in my little home, and if he refuses to answer, why, then," said the soldier, while fire flashed from his eye, and his whole countenance assumed a threatening expression, "I will find a way to make him!"

"God of heaven!" almost shrieked Françoise, clasping her hands with terror, and shuddering at hearing such sacrilegious words; "a priest—think of what you are saying—a priest!"

"A priest who introduces discord, treachery, and wretchedness into a house, is as unworthy and despicable a creature as the veriest scoundrel that walks the earth, and is equally bound to account to me for all the mischief he has occasioned both to me and mine. Therefore, once more, and for the last time, I say, tell me where are the



THE THREAT:

children? and if you still refuse, I give you due warning, I shall go and demand them at the hands of your confessor. There is some piece of devilish design going on,—some plot, in which you, wretched woman! are an accomplice without knowing it. Besides, I would rather have any one to quarrel with than you; therefore, your confessor shall take your place and answer for you."

"Husband!" cried Françoise, in a firm though gentle tone, "you deceive yourself if you expect to terrify, by your violence, a worthy and respectable old man, who, for twenty years, has had the care of my soul."

"No age shall protect him from my just rage and indignation."

"For heaven's sake, where are you going? you terrify me!"

"I am going to your church, you cannot fail being known there. I will inquire for your confessor, and then we shall see."

"For God's sake, husband!" exclaimed Françoise, much alarmed, and interposing herself between Dagobert and the door, towards which he was hurrying, "think of what you are exposing yourself to. Mother of heaven—insult a priest! do you not know that that is a sin for which there is no absolution, a *reserved case*?"

In the simplicity of her heart, Françoise believed these last words almost capable of annihilating the person they were addressed to; but the soldier, neither comprehending nor caring for them, broke away from the feeble grasp of his wife, and would have rushed out bare-headed as he was—so great was his rage and exasperation—when at this instant the door opened.

It was the commissary of police, followed by La Mayeux, and the police-officer, carrying the bundle taken from the poor girl.

"Oh, the commissary!" cried Dagobert, recognising him by his scarf. "Ah! so much the better—he could not have come more opportunely."

CHAPTER LIV.

THE INTERROGATORY.

"MADAME Françoise Baudoin?" said the magistrate.

"I am here, sir," replied Françoise; and then seeing La Mayeux, who, pale and trembling, dared not advance, she stretched out her arms to her, "Ah, my poor girl!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "pardon, pardon—it is for us, again, that you have suffered this humiliation."

After Dagobert's wife had tenderly embraced the young work-girl, La Mayeux, turning towards the commissary, said to him, with an expression of sad but touching dignity:

"You see, sir, I have not stolen."

"Then, madame," said the magistrate, addressing Françoise, "the silver cup, the shawl, and the sheets, contained in this bundle?"

"Were mine, sir! and it was to render me a service that this dear

girl, the best, most honest creature in the world, was so kind as to undertake to carry those things to the *mont de piété*."

"Sir," said the magistrate to the police agent, in a tone of severity, "you have committed a deplorable error. I shall report you, in order that you may be punished. Go!" Then addressing himself to La Mayeux, with an air which shewed how much he was pained, he added, "Unfortunately, *mademoiselle*, I can only express to you my sincere regret for what has occurred, and, believe me, I am sincerely sorry for all the distress which this shameful mistake has caused you."

"I am sure of it, sir," said La Mayeux, "and I thank you very much."

She then sat down, quite overwhelmed, for, after such severe trials, her courage and strength were quite exhausted.

The magistrate was about to withdraw, when Dagobert, who, for some minutes, had been lost in reflection, said, in a firm voice,

"Sir, be so good as listen to me, I have a deposition to make."

"Make it, sir."

"What I am about to say is very important, sir: it is before you, as a magistrate, that I make this declaration, in order that you may take cognizance of it."

"It is as a magistrate, sir, that I listen to you."

"I arrived here two days since, and I brought with me, from Russia, two young ladies, who have been intrusted to my care by their mother, the lady of M. the Marshal Simon."

"Of Marshal the Duc de Ligny?" said the commissary, greatly surprised.

"Yes, sir! Yesterday I left them here, being obliged to go away on very urgent business. This morning, during my absence, they have disappeared, and I am certain that I know the man who has removed them."

"Husband!" exclaimed *Françoise*, alarmed.

"Sir," said the magistrate, "your declaration is of the most serious nature, a disappearance of persons—putting out of the way designedly and forcibly, perhaps; but are you perfectly sure?"

"The young girls were here an hour ago, and I repeat to you, sir, that they were removed, carried off during my absence."

"I cannot doubt the sincerity of your declaration, sir; still so sudden a carrying off is difficult to account for. Besides, who has told you that these young ladies will not return? and whom do you suspect? One word, too, before you depose to so serious an accusation. Remember that it is the magistrate who listens to you, and when I leave here, it is possible that justice may take this affair in hand."

"That is the very thing I wish, sir. I am responsible for these young girls to their father, who may arrive at any moment, and I must justify myself."

"I comprehend, sir, all your reasons; but once more, take care that you do not allow yourself to be carried away by suspicions which are probably without foundation. Your denunciation once made, I may be compelled to act on the preventive instantly against the person whom you accuse. If you are, therefore, guilty of any mistake, the

consequences to yourself may be very distressing, and, not to go farther," said the magistrate with feeling, and looking at La Mayeux, "you see what are the results of a false accusation."

"My dear—you hear!" exclaimed Françoise, still more and more alarmed at Dagobert's resolution with respect to the Abbé Dubois. "I beseech you, do not say another word."

But the soldier, the more he reflected, the more he was convinced that the influence of Françoise's confessor alone had decided her on acting as she had done in keeping silence, and he, therefore, said with firmness,—

"I accuse the confessor of my wife of being the author, or the accomplice, in carrying off the daughters of Marshal Simon."

Françoise gave a deep groan, and hid her face in her hands; whilst La Mayeux, who had drawn near her, endeavoured to comfort her.

The magistrate had listened to Dagobert's statement with deep astonishment, and said to him, with much seriousness,—

"But, sir, do not accuse unjustly a man invested with an irreprouchable character—a priest. It is a priest, sir, who is here charged, and I warn you, that you ought to reflect,—this is the more serious, too, at your age, when any accusation made groundlessly would be inexcusable."

"Well, sir," said Dagobert, impatiently, "at my age one has common sense: the facts are these. My wife is the best, the most conscientious of women. Ask her character in the neighbourhood, and you will hear that. But she is a devotee; and for twenty years has seen through no eyes but those of her confessor. She adores her son, and loves me well too; but above my son and myself has always been placed the confessor."

"Sir," said the commissary, "these family details ——"

"Are indispensable, as you will see. I went, not an hour ago, to rescue poor La Mayeux, and on my return the young girls had disappeared. I ask my wife, with whom I had left them, where they are? She falls on her knees, sobbing, and says, 'Do what you please to me, but do not ask what has become of the children—I cannot tell you.'"

"Is this true, madame?" inquired the commissary, looking at Françoise with great surprise.

"Anger, threats, prayers, were useless," resumed Dagobert; "to all she has replied, with the resignation of a saint, 'I cannot tell you anything.' Well, sir, this is what I assert, my wife has no interest in the disappearance of these children, but she is under the complete domination of her confessor, and acts by his direction. She is but the tool—he is the guilty hand."

As Dagobert spoke, the commissary's countenance became more and more fixed on Françoise, who, supported by La Mayeux, was weeping bitterly.

After having reflected for a moment, the magistrate advanced a step towards Françoise and said,

"Madame, you have heard what your husband has stated?"

"Yes, sir."

“What have you to say in justification?”

“But, sir,” said Dagobert, “it is not my wife that I accuse. I do not mean that. It is her confessor.”

“Sir, you have made your complaint to a magistrate, and it is now for the magistrate to act as he thinks best for the discovery of the truth. Once again, madame,” he resumed, addressing Françoise, “what have you to say in order to justify yourself?”

“Alas, sir, nothing.”

“Is it true that your husband left the young girls under your care when he went out?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Is it true that when he returned they were gone?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Is it true that, when he asked you where they were, you replied, that you could not tell him anything about it?” and the commissary appeared to await Françoise’s reply with anxious curiosity.

“Yes, sir,” she said simply and undisguisedly. “I did reply so to my husband.”

The magistrate almost started with the surprise which this answer excited.

“What, madame! to all the prayers—all the entreaties of your husband, you have only given this reply? What! have you refused to give him any information? That is hardly probable or possible.”

“Yes, it is the truth, sir.”

“But, really, madame, what has become of the young girls who were intrusted to your care?”

“I can say nothing about it, sir. If I have refused to tell my poor husband, I shall certainly not tell any other person.”

“Well, now, sir, was I wrong?” inquired Dagobert. “An upright and excellent wife, always full of good sense, and free from selfishness, how could she speak in such a way! It is not natural! I repeat, sir, it is the confessor who is at the bottom of all this. Let us go to work with him instantly and vigorously. We will discover all, and my poor children will be restored to me.”

The commissary said to Françoise (and he was unable to repress his emotion),

“Madame, I must speak to you with severity—my duty compels me. This affair is so serious and complicated, that I must necessarily make justice cognisant of the facts. You acknowledge that these young girls were intrusted to you, and you cannot bring them before us. Now listen to me attentively: if you refuse to give me any information on this subject, you—and you alone—will be accused with their disappearance; and I, to my extreme regret, shall be obliged to apprehend you on that charge.”

“Me?” exclaimed Françoise, with great terror.

“My wife!” cried Dagobert, “never! Once again, I tell you, it is her confessor, and not her, whom I accuse. Apprehend my poor wife!”

And he ran towards her as if to shield her with his protection.

“Sir, it is too late,” said the commissary: “you have made your deposition, complaining of the carrying off of the two young girls, and

after the statements of your wife herself, she alone, up to this time, is the only party compromised in the affair. I must take her before the Attorney-General, who will give his opinion as to the next steps to be taken."

"I tell you, sir, that my wife shall not leave this house!" said Dagobert, in a threatening tone.

"Sir," replied the commissary, calmly, "I understand your vexation, but, for the sake of truth, I conjure you not to make any opposition to a step which in ten minutes time it will be utterly impossible for you to prevent."

These words, said mildly but firmly, recalled the soldier to himself.

"But, indeed, indeed, sir!" he exclaimed, "it is not my wife that I accuse."

"Oh, do not mind me, my husband!" said the wife—a martyr as she was—with the resignation of a saint, "the Lord will try me sorely: I am His unworthy servant; I must accept His pleasure with gratitude. Let me be arrested, if so it must be, I will not say in prison more than I have said here on the subject of the poor dear children."

"But, sir, you see my poor wife's head wanders," said Dagobert, "you cannot arrest her."

"There is no charge, no proof, no suspicion, against the other person whom you accuse, and his character is his defence; I must take your wife. I regret excessively, sir," added the commissary, in a compassionate tone, "to have such a duty to discharge, and that, too, at the moment when your son has been apprehended, which must ——"

"What!" exclaimed Dagobert, looking in painful amazement at his wife and La Mayeux, "what does he say? my son ——"

"What! did you not know it? Oh, sir, a thousand pardons!" said the magistrate, deeply grieved: "it is most distressing to me to have informed you of this."

"My son!" repeated Dagobert, lifting both his hands to his brow; "my son arrested!"

"For a political offence, of but slight importance," said the commissary.

"Ah! this is too much—all comes upon me at once!" said the soldier, falling on a chair in a state of utter distress, and hiding his face with his hands.

* * * *

After an affecting farewell, during which Françoise remained, in spite of all her misery, firm to the oath she had made to the Abbé Dubois, Dagobert, who had refused to go and make a deposition against his wife, was leaning on a table overwhelmed by his extreme emotion, and said,

"Yesterday I had with me wife, son, my two poor orphans, and now—I am alone—alone!"

At the moment he had uttered these words in a faltering voice, a gentle and saddened tone behind him said timidly,—

"M. Dagobert, I am here; and, if you will permit me, I will wait upon you—I will remain with you."

It was La Mayeux.

PART V.

THE QUEEN-BACCHANAL.

CHAPTER LV.

THE MASQUERADING.

THE morning after the day on which Dagobert's wife had been conducted by the commissary of police before the *Juge d'Instruction*, a noisy and animated scene was passing in the Place du Châtelet, in front of a house of which the first floor and ground-floor were then occupied by the extensive saloons of an eating-house which bore the sign of the *Sucking Calf*.

It was the morning after Shrove-Tuesday.

A considerable number of masks, grotesquely and meanly attired, were coming from the balls of the *cabarets* situated in the quarter of the Hôtel de Ville, and singing as they crossed the Place du Châtelet; but, seeing another body of maskers coming towards the Quay, the first groups stopped to listen to the renewed shouts of mirth and joy, in the hope of witnessing one of those rencontres of the wit which are larded with loose terms and with those fish-fag gesticulations which Vadé has illustrated.

This mob, all of whom were more or less inebriated, soon increased by the arrival of many persons whose occupations compelled them to traverse Paris at a very early hour; and it was suddenly concentrated in one of the angles of the square so compactly, that a young, pale, deformed girl, who was crossing at this moment, was entirely surrounded.

This girl was the poor La Mayeux, who had risen with daybreak to go out and seek for some pieces of linen from the person who employed her. We may imagine the fears of the poor workwoman, who involuntarily stopped in the midst of this crowd of revellers. She recollected the cruel scene of the previous evening; but, in spite of her efforts (alas! but weak ones), she could not advance a step; for the band of maskers who had just arrived, desirous to join those who were there previously, one body came in one direction and the other in another; and La Mayeux, being in the midst of the latter, was literally carried on by the mass of the people, and thrown amongst the group that was nearest to the house of entertainment.

The new masks were better dressed than the others, and belonged

to that noisy class who frequent *la Chaumière, le Prado, le Colysée*, and those other dancing gardens, more or less riotous, generally filled by students, shop-girls, clerks, senipstresses, &c. &c.

This party, who were quite ready to keep up a fire of jokes with the first comer, seemed to be awaiting impatiently the arrival of some person whose presence was greatly desired.

The following conversation, carried on between Pierrots and Pierrettes, *débardeurs* and *débardeuses*, Turks and Sultanas, and other couples, may give some idea of the importance of the personages so anxiously waited for:—

“The breakfast is ordered for seven o’clock, the carriages ought to be here by this time.”

“Yes; but the Queen-Bacchanal would lead off another set in the *Prado*.”

“If I had known that, I could have remained to see my adored queen.”

“Gobinet, if you call her your adored queen, I’ll scratch your eyes out! and there’s a pinch for you, as earnest.”

“Céleste, be quiet! You will make black patches on the white satin skin which my mother was kind enough to adorn me with at my birth.”

“How dare you call this bacchanal your adored queen? What an I, then, I should like to know?”

“You are my adored, but not my queen; for as there is but one moon in the nights of nature, so there is but one bacchanal in the nights of the *Prado*.”

“Oh, that’s all very fine, you good-for-nothing fellow, you!”

“Gobinet’s right—the queen was magnificent last evening.”

“And in tip-top spirits!”

“I never saw her more animated!”

“And what a dress!—marvellous!”

“Splendid!”

“Magnificent!”

“Pulverising!”

“Fulminating!”

“No one but she can invent such costume!”

“And what a dance!”

“Yes: it was at the same time bounding, undulating, and serpentine. Never before was there such a *pas de Bayadère* under the canopy of heaven!”

“Gobinet, give me my shawl immediately: you have quite spoiled it by tying it round your great fat waist. I don’t see why I should have my best things spoiled for nasty fellows who call other women *Bayadères*!”

“Lovely Céleste, calm thy anger! I am disguised as a Turk; and when I mention *Bayadères*, I’m quite in character.”

“Your Céleste is like the rest of the women: Gobinet, she’s jealous of the Queen-Bacchanal.”

“I!—me jealous! Well, really! If I would be as bold as she, perhaps I might be as much talked about. After all, what makes her reputation? Why, because she has a nickname.”

"Well, in that respect you have nothing to envy her for: your name is Céleste—heavenly!"

"You know, Gobinet, that Céleste is my real name."

"Yes; but when one looks at you, it seems as if it were a nickname."

"Sir, I'll give you something to make you remember it! I'll add that to your account."

"And Osear will help you to add it up—won't he?"

"Perhaps, and you shall see the total: I will put down the one and retain the other, and that other shall not be you!"

"Céleste, you pain me. I meant to say that your angelic name is not in unison with your delicious little face, which has that air of sly mischief wholly different from the Queen-Bacchanal."

"Oh, yes—coax me now, will you, you wretch!"

"I swear to you, by the detested head of my landlord, that if you liked you could assume as much front as the Queen-Bacchanal, which is not saying much!"

"The truth is, that the Bacchanal has front enough, and to spare."

"To say nothing of the way in which she fascinates the municipal guard."

"And magnetises the sergens de ville."

"It is in vain they try to be angry: she always ends by making them laugh."

"And they all call her, '*My queen!*'"

"Last night she charmed one of the municipals, a gentleman who was as modest as a new-blown rose, and whose sense of propriety had been *gendarmised* (*gendarmised*—what a nice word that would have been before the glorious days!)—I say that the modesty of the municipal had been *gendarmised* whilst the queen was dancing her famous *pas* of the 'storm-blown tulip'—*la tulipe orangeuse*."

"What a *contre-danse!* Couche-tout-Nu and the Queen-Bacchanal having opposite them Rose-Pompon and Nini-Moulin!"

"And all four displaying tulips, each more 'full-blown' than the other!"

"By the way, is it true what they say of Nini-Moulin?"

"What?"

"That he is a literary man, who writes pamphlets on religion?"

"Yes, quite true; I have often seen him at my employer's, where he deals—a bad paymaster, but a rollicking roysterer."

"And he plays the pious, eh?"

"Yes, when he chooses, and then he is M. Dumoulin, as stiff as your arm: he rolls his eyes, walks with downcast look, and his toes turned in; but, that over, he rushes to the ball-rooms, which he revels in, and then makes up for his lost time. The women at these 'hops' hence called him Nini-Moulin; and when you add to this that he drinks like a fish, you have the full-length portrait of this reveller. This does not prevent him from writing for religious newspapers; and so the hypoerites, whom he manages infinitely better than he manages himself, swear by him. You should only see his articles or pamphlets (I say *see*, you need not *read* them). He talks, in every

page, of the devil and his horns, and the undoubted fryings which await the impious and revolutionary—of the authority of bishops, and the power of the pope—and I don't know what beside. Nini-Moulin the toper, only imagine! But he gives them enough for their money."

"The truth is he is a toper, and a deuced hard-headed chap. How he did 'flare-up' with his *avant-deux* with little Rose-Pompon in the dance of the *tulipe orangeuse*!"

"And what a funny figure he cut with his Roman helmet and top-boots!"

"Rose-Pompon dances splendaeiously too—what a poetic twist she has!"

"The *beau idéal* of a *bal dansante*."

"Yes; but the Queen-Bacchanal is six thousand feet above the level of a *bal dansante*. I can never forget her step last night in the *tulipe*."

"It was adorable."

"Enough to make a man fall down and worship."

"If I were the father of a family, I would intrust her with the education of my sons!"

"It was about that *pas* that the municipal, whose modesty was so shocked, became angry."

"Why, to say the truth, the *pas* is rather out of the strict line of propriety."

"I believe you; and so M. Municipal came up to her and said, 'I say, my queen, is that step going to end for good and all?' 'No, modest warrior,' replied the queen, 'I practise it once every evening, in order that I may dance it perfectly when I'm an old woman. It is in consequence of a vow I made in order that you might be promoted brigadier.'"

"What a droll girl!"

"I cannot believe that her *liaison* with Couche-tout-Nu can last for ever."

"Because he has been a workman?"

"Of course not,—that would be a poor reason for us students and shopboys to be proud. No! I am surprised at her fidelity to him."

"Which has been the ease these three or four months."

"She is really in love with him, and he is mad about her."

"Their conversation must be a thing to hear."

"Sometimes I ask myself where Couche-tout-Nu gets the money he spends. It seems that he pays for all to-day, three carriages and four, and the early breakfast (*réveille-matin*) for twenty persons, at ten francs a-head."

"They say he has come into some property lately. So Nini-Moulin, who has a fine nose for good feeds and fat revels, has formed his acquaintanee to-night—not saying that he has any dishonourable designs on the Queen-Bacchanal."

"He! he! that's a good one! such an ugly brute! The women like him for a partner in a dance because he plays up such antics as make everybody laugh—but that's all. Little Rose-Pompon, who is so nice and pretty, has taken up with him as a cavalier who can in no way compromise her in the absence of her student."

"Here come the coaches! here they are!" said the crowd with one accord.

La Mayeux, compelled to stop in the midst of the maskers, had not lost one word of this conversation, painful as it was to her, for it concerned her sister, whom she had not seen for a long while. Not that the Queen-Bacchanal had a bad heart, but the sight of the utter misery of La Mayeux, misery which she had shared, excited in this joyous-hearted girl a burst of bitter sorrow; and, therefore, she would not any longer expose herself to it, having in vain pressed upon her sister assistance, which La Mayeux constantly refused, knowing as she did the source from which it was derived.

"The carriages! the carriages!"

The mob again and again shouted with enthusiasm, and with such a stir, that La Mayeux, unwilling as she was, found herself thrust into the front rank of the people pushing their way to see the masqueraders' arrival.

It was really a curious spectacle.

A man on horseback, disguised as a postilion, wore a blue coat, embroidered with silver, an enormous tail, from which the powder puffed out in volumes, a hat bedecked with a profusion of ribands, preceded the first carriage, cracking his whip, and calling out in a stunning voice,

"Way there! make way there for the Queen-Bacchanal and her court."

In an open landau, drawn by four lean horses, mounted by two old postilions dressed as devils, was piled a pyramid of men and women, sitting, standing, perched in corners, in all the most whimsical, *outré*, ridiculous, eccentric costumes in the world. They formed an indescribable heap of bright colours, flowers, feathers, tinsel, and spangles. From this mass of forms and odd attires proceeded singular or good-looking, pretty or ugly countenances, each animated by the feverish excitement of tipsy jollity, and all turned with an expression of fanatic admiration towards the second carriage, in which was the Queen-Bacchanal, throned like a sovereign, whilst the surrounding multitude saluted her with cries and shouts of—

"The Queen-Bacchanal for ever!"

The second carriage, a landau like the first, only contained the four coryphées of the famous *pas* of the *tulipe orangeuse*, Nini-Moulin, Rose-Pompon, Couche-tout-Nu, and the Queen-Bacchanal.

Dumoulin, the religious writer who had dared to contend with his patron M. Rodin for Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, surnamed Nini-Moulin, creet on the front cushions, presented a glorious study for Callot or Gavarni—Gavarni, that eminent artist who unites to the biting satire and marvellous imagination of a first-class caricaturist the poetry and depth of Hogarth.

Nini-Moulin, who was about thirty-five years of age, wore at the back of his head a Roman helmet made of silvered paper. A voluminous plume of black feathers, in a butt of red wood, surmounted this casque, whose graceful fall broke the otherwise too classic lines of this head-gear.

Beneath this helm beamed forth as burly and bacchanalian a face



THE MASQUERADING.

as ever was empurpled by the fumes and potency of generous wine. A projecting nose, whose original shape was modestly disguised beneath the luxuriant efflorescence of grog-blossoms, tinted red and violet, gave a droll effect to a face that was absolutely beardless; and to which a large mouth with thick lips, the lower one projecting and curving downwards, produced an expression of surpassing joviality to his eyes, which were large, grey, and flat in his head.

On seeing this reveller, with a paunch like Silenus, one asked how it was that he had not drowned in wine a hundred fathoms deep the gall, bile, venom, which saturated his pamphlet against the enemies of Ultramontanism, and how his Catholic beliefs could float upwards in the midst of his bacchic and choreographic excesses.

This question would have been without solution, if we did not know that actors who play the blackest and most hateful parts are often in private life the best fellows in the world.

The cold was rather severe, and Nini-Moulin wore a cloak, which was half open, and shewed his cuirass of scale, and his pantaloons of flesh colour, which were met just beneath his calf by the tops of his yellow boots.

Bending forwards in the front of the carriage, he uttered wild cries and shouts of rapture, intermingled with these words, "Long live the Bacchanal Queen!" after which he shook and turned an enormous rattle he held in his hand. Couche-tout-Nu, standing beside Nini-Moulin, was waving a banner of white silk, on which was inscribed, "*Love and joy to the Queen-Bacchanal.*"

Couche-tout-Nu was about twenty-five years of age; his gay and intelligent countenance was surrounded by a fringe of chestnut-coloured curls; as yet his features, though worn with late hours and excesses, exhibited no expression of low or depraved habits, but betrayed a singular mixture of carelessness, hardihood, indifference, and folly: he was, in fact, the perfect type of a *Parisian*, according to the general acceptance of the term, whether as applied to the army, to the dweller at home, or to the sailor, whether in king's service or on board a merchantman. The term, though not exactly complimentary, is still far from being used in a reproachful sense; it is, in fact, an epithet combining both praise and blame, censure and admiration; for if the *PARISIAN* is occasionally idle and self-willed, he is also quick and clever in his calling, resolute in danger, and invariably a great lover of mirth and jest.

Couche-tout-Nu, in his dress, "came it," as is vulgarly termed, "pretty strong:" he wore a black velvet vest with silver buttons, a scarlet waistcoat, broad blue-striped pantaloons, and a cachmere shawl tied round his waist, leaving the long ends hanging loose, a hat covered with ribands and flowers completed this costume, which well became his easy, graceful figure.

At the back of the carriage were Rose-Pompon and the Bacchanal Queen, standing up on the cushions.

Rose-Pompon had been a fringe-maker; she was about seventeen years of age, with the prettiest and most mirthful countenance imaginable; she was coquettishly dressed as a *débardeur*; a powdered wig, on the side of which was tastefully placed a smart little green and red cap with a silver band, surmounted her youthful countenance, and

served admirably to set off her bright black eyes and round rosy cheeks. Round her neck she wore a cravat of the same orange-coloured silk as formed the scarf, loosely bound round her waist and hanging down in long floating ends, her close fitting jacket and waist-coat of light green velvet, embroidered in silver, fully displayed the proportions of her youthful figure, whose supple pliancy was well calculated to shine in the mazy evolutions of the dance named *la tulipe orangeuse*. To complete the whole, we shall merely observe, that the large loose trousers she wore, of the same colour and material as the upper part of her dress, were not less liberal in the display they afforded than were the other articles of her attire.

The Queen-Bacchanal, who was at least a head taller than Rose-Pompon, stood carelessly resting her hand on the shoulder of her friend; and well did the sister of La Mayeux deserve to be the deity of the "rabble rout" she thus by her mere presence inspired to the wildest mirth and revelry, as well as by the infatuation of her own joyous, noisy animation.

She was a tall, well-grown girl, of about twenty years of age, slight, yet well proportioned, with regular and handsome features, and a merry, rollicking air. Like her sister, she had magnificent chestnut hair and large blue eyes; but, instead of being gentle and timid, like the young sempstress, they shone with untiring ardour in the pursuit of pleasure; and such was the vivacious energy of this excitable being, that, although she had for the last several days and nights been engaged in a continual round of gaiety, her skin was as fair, her complexion as pure, and the delicate colouring of her cheek as bright and blooming, as though she had but that morning emerged from some quiet, peaceful retreat, where late hours were unknown. Her dress, though singularly whimsical and ridiculous, was well adapted to display the perfect beauty of her form. It consisted of a tight-fitting, long-waisted bodice, of gold-coloured cloth, trimmed with a profusion of bunches of scarlet ribands, which hung half-way down her naked arms; a short petticoat of scarlet velvet, ornamented with tassels and spangles of gold, reached midway down a leg at once delicately yet powerfully formed, displaying a well-turned ankle, covered with an embroidered silk stocking, and feet wearing red morocco slippers with gilt heels.

Not even the most agile Andalusian could have possessed a figure more supple, elastic, yet powerful, than did this wild and buoyant creature, who seemed as though endowed with perpetual motion, for continually were her head, shoulders, and body, moving from side to side, as though still following the movement of some favourite dance, while, with the tip of her right foot placed on the door of the carriage, she seemed as though beating time to some invisible orchestra; and all this was done in the most *insouciant* manner, wholly regardless of the admiration she excited, the Bacchanal Queen, standing on the cushions of the vehicle, continued to display her pretty foot in constant motion upon the carriage-door. A sort of golden diadem, the emblem of her noisy royalty, from which hung a quantity of small silver bells, encircled her forehead; her hair, plaited in two thick braids, was taken off her blooming countenance and twisted round the back of her head; her right hand rested on the shoulder of Rose-

Pompon, while with the other she held an enormous bouquet, occasionally saluting the crowd by bursting out into the most joyous peals of laughter.

It would be difficult to render a perfect description of this noisy, animated, yet half-wild group. A third carriage filled, like the first, with a pyramical mass of the most grotesque and extravagant masques, completed the tableau.

Among the rejoicing crowd, one person alone beheld this pageantry with deep sadness and pain, and that was La Mayeux, still fixed among the most prominent spectators, spite of her earnest efforts to escape from the crowd which pressed her on.

Long while separated from her sister, she saw her again for the first time on the day of this her singular triumph, in the midst of joyous cries and loud plaudits of her companions in pleasure. Yet the eyes of the poor sempstress were dimmed with tears; and, notwithstanding the joy and delight with which the Bacchanal Queen seemed to participate in the noisy mirth of all around her—though she seemed to revel in temporary luxury, and her eyes seemed bright with full enjoyment, yet she, the poor, half-starved workwoman, penniless and almost in rags, who crept forth at break of day to seek the means of earning her daily bread, even by sacrificing her sleep and rest to procure the scanty morsel her exhausted frame required,—yet she pitied and sincerely grieved for the radiant creature on whom so many admiring eyes were turned.

The poor Mayeux had forgotten the crowd while observing the sister she so tenderly loved, perhaps even more so from believing that, spite of appearances, she was more an object for commiseration than herself; and so she stood, her eyes fixed on the beautiful and joyful girl, while her pale and gentle features expressed the most touching pity, mingled with the deepest interest and most unfeigned sorrow.

All at once, as the gay glances of the Bacchanal Queen surveyed the crowd before her, her eye caught the sorrowing, tearful gaze of La Mayeux.

“My sister!” exclaimed Céphyse (the reader is already aware such was the name of the Bacchanal Queen). “My dear sister!” and, light as an opera-dancer, with one spring, the Bacchanal Queen quitted her moving throne, which, fortunately for her, happened to be stationary just at that instant, and throwing herself into her sister’s arms, she embraced her with the most affectionate warmth.

All this had passed so rapidly that the companions of the Bacchanal Queen, astonished at the suddenness of the perilous leap she had taken, were wondering what could have caused it, while the masques who had surrounded La Mayeux drew back in utter amazement, leaving the poor girl to all the delight of embracing her sister, whose caresses she returned with pure affection, wholly forgetful of the singular contrast between them, which could not fail, ere long, to provoke the amusement and jokes of the crowd.

Céphyse was the first to recollect it, and anxious to spare her sister so great a humiliation, she hastily returned to the carriage, saying,

“Rose-Pompon, give me my cloak, and you, Nimi-Moulin, open the coach-door as quick as you can!”

Having received the mantle, the Queen-Bacchanal quickly wrapped

it round La Mayeux before the astonished girl had recovered herself sufficiently to utter a word. Then, taking her by the hand, she said quickly,—

“Come, come, dear sister!”

“I!” exclaimed La Mayeux, greatly alarmed; “you are not in earnest, surely?”

“Indeed, but I am! I *must* speak with you. I will obtain a private room, where we shall be quite alone; therefore make haste, my dearest sister: do not object, before all these people, but come at once—pray do!”

The fear of becoming an object for public curiosity decided La Mayeux, who, besides confused with her adventure, trembling and frightened, followed her sister almost mechanically to the carriage, the door of which had been opened by Nini-Moulin.

Concealed beneath the mantle of the Queen of the Bacchanals, the humble vestments of La Mayeux, as well as her personal deformity, escaped the notice of the crowd, still occupied in wondering what all this could have meant, while the carriages, once more in motion, proceeded at a rapid pace towards the *Traiteurs*, in the Place du Châtelet, before whose door they shortly stopped.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE CONTRAST.

SOME minutes after the meeting of La Mayeux and the Queen-Bacchanal, the two sisters were together in a private room in the tavern.

“Let me kiss you again,” said Céphyse to the young work-girl; “at least, now we are alone, there is nothing to fear.”

As the Queen-Bacchanal clasped La Mayeux in her arms, the mantle which covered her sister fell.

At the sight of the miserable garments, which she had hardly had time to remark in the Place du Châtelet in the throng, Céphyse wrung her hands, and uttered an exclamation of painful surprise. Then approaching her sister, that she might contemplate her more closely, she took between her own plump hands the thin and meagre palms of La Mayeux, and gazed for some minutes with increasing anguish at the unhappy creature, suffering, wan, and attenuated by privation and loss of rest, and scarcely covered by a wretched cotton gown, darned and patched all over.

“Oh, sister, to see you thus!”

And unable to utter another word, the Queen-Bacchanal threw herself on La Mayeux’s neck and burst into tears.

In the the midst of her sobs she added,—

“Pardon! — Pardon!”

“Why? what ails you, dear Céphyse?” said the young needle-woman, deeply moved, and gently disengaging herself from the embraces of her sister.

“Why should you ask pardon of me?”

"Why?" replied Céphyse, lifting up her face suffused with tears, and red with confusion; "is it not shameful of me to be clothed in this tinsel, to waste so much money in follies, whilst you are clothed thus—whilst you are in want of every thing—whilst, perhaps, you are dying with misery and want, for I never saw you looking so pale and worn by fatigue."

"Oh, do not be uneasy, sister, I am not ill—I was up rather late last night, and that accounts for my paleness; but do not cry—pray, don't, it makes me so unhappy."

The Queen-Bacchanal had just arrived, all radiant, in the midst of the intoxicated crowd, and yet it was La Mayeux who was consoling her!

An incident occurred at this moment which made the contrast still more striking.

Joyous cries were suddenly heard in the neighbouring apartment, and these words were heard pronounced with enthusiasm:—

"The Queen-Bacchanal for ever! the Queen-Bacchanal for ever!"

La Mayeux started, and her eyes filled with tears on seeing her sister, who, with her face buried in her hands, seemed overwhelmed with shame.

"Céphyse," she said, "I entreat of you not to distress yourself so. You will make me regret the happiness of seeing you; and it is such a pleasure to me! It is so long since I saw you—but what afflicts you so? Do tell me."

"You despise me, perhaps—and you are right," said the Queen Bacchanal, wiping her eyes.

"Despise you! I?—and for what?"

"Because I lead the life I do, instead of having the courage to support my misery as you have."

The grief of Céphyse was so excessive, that La Mayeux, always kind and tender, desirous of consoling her sister, and raising her in her own estimation, said, soothingly,—

"Why, in bearing up bravely, as you did for a year, my dear Céphyse, you had more merit and courage than I shall ever have in enduring all my life."

"Ah, sister, do not say so."

"Really, now," replied La Mayeux, "let us see to what temptations a creature like me is exposed? Should I not naturally seek solitude and isolation just as much as you seek a life of excitement and amusement? What wants has a poor humble thing like me?—a very little suffices."

"And that little you do not always get."

"No; but weak and ailing as I am, I can endure privations better than you can; for, though hunger produces in me a sort of giddiness, which ends in extreme weakness, yet you, robust and lively, hunger makes you fierce,—almost maddens you! Don't you remember how often I have seen you suffering under these painful attacks when in our miserable attic, after work has stopped for a while, we were unable to get even our four franes a-week, and had nothing—actually nothing to eat, for our pride prevented us from applying to our neighbours?"

"And you at least have maintained this pride."

"And so have you! Did you not struggle as much as it was pos-

sible for human creature to struggle? But strength has its limits; and I know you well, Céphyse,—and it was before hunger that you yielded—yes, before bitter hunger, and the painful compulsion of hard, unutterably hard work, which did not even then supply you with the means of obtaining even indispensable necessaries.”

“But I tell you, you endured these privations, and endure them still.”

“But, am I to be compared to you? Here!” said La Mayeux, taking her sister’s hand, and leading her before a glass placed over a sofa, “look at yourself! Do you think that Providence, who formed you so beautiful, endowed you with lively and ardent blood, a disposition full of mirth and vivacity, expansion, and fond of pleasure, desired that your youth should be spent in the seclusion of a freezing garret, without ever seeing the sun, nailed to your chair, clad in rags, and working incessantly and hopelessly? No! for the Almighty has given us other wants besides those of eating and drinking. Even in our humble condition, does not beauty require some adornment? Does not youth require space, and pleasure, and gaiety? Do not all ages require some relaxation and rest? Had you gained a weekly sum sufficient to supply your hunger and allow you to have a day or two’s amusement in the week, after a daily toil of from twelve to fifteen hours, to enable you to procure the modest and becoming toilette which your handsome face has a right to, you would not, I know, have required more—you have told me so a hundred times. But you have yielded to an irresistible necessity, because your wants were greater than mine.”

“That is true,” replied the Queen-Bacchanal, with a pensive air, “if I could but have gained forty sous a-day, my life would have been wholly different; for, at the beginning, sister, I was deeply humiliated to live at the expense of any one.”

“Thus, therefore, my dear Céphyse, you were irresistibly led on, or else I should blame instead of pitying you. You did not choose your destiny but submitted to it, as I have done to mine.”

“Poor sister,” said Céphyse, embracing La Mayeux tenderly, “you so wretched yet encourage and console me, whilst it ought to be I who pity you.”

“Comfort yourself,” said La Mayeux; “God is just and good, and if He has refused me many advantages, He has given me my joys as well as you yours.”

“Your joys?”

“Yes, and great ones, too; without them life would be too heavy, and I should not have the courage to support it.”

“I understand,” said Céphyse, with emotion, “you find still the way to devote yourself for others, and that soothes your own sorrows.”

“I do all in my power, although that is but very little; but when I succeed,” added La Mayeux, smiling faintly, “I am as happy and proud as a small ant, who, after a great deal of trouble, has brought one single straw to the common nest. But do not let me talk any more of myself.”

“Yes, talk on, I pray of you; and, at the risk of making you angry,” replied the Queen-Bacchanal, timidly, “I will renew a pro-



THE CONTRAST.

P. 300.

posal which you have already refused. Jacques* has, I think, money left—we squander it foolishly—giving some now and then to poor people whom we meet—I beg of you to let me help you—I see your poor face, and it is useless to attempt to conceal from me that you are exhausting yourself with work.”

“Thank you, dear C  physe, I know your kind heart, but I am not in want of any thing—the little I earn is enough for me.”

“You refuse me,” said the Queen-Bacchanal, in a sorrowful voice, “because you know that my claims on this money are not honourable—be it so—I understand your scruple. At least, however, accept a service from Jacques; he has been a workman like ourselves, and comrades should help one another—I beseech you, accept of that, or I shall think you disdain me.”

“And I shall think that you despise me if you persist, my dear C  physe,” said La Mayeux, in a tone at once so firm, though gentle, that the Queen-Bacchanal saw that all further persuasion would be useless.

She bent her head sorrowfully, and a tear again rolled down her cheeks.

“My refusal pains you,” said La Mayeux, taking her hand; “I am very sorry—but reflect for a moment, and you will understand me.”

“You are right,” said the Queen-Bacchanal, with bitterness, after a moment’s silence, “you cannot accept of help from my lover—it was an insult to offer it. There are positions so humiliating that they taint even the very good which one would desire to do.”

“C  physe, I did not mean to wound you, you know that very well.”

“Oh, believe me,” replied the Queen-Bacchanal, “giddy and thoughtless as I am, there are sometimes moments of reflection even in the midst of my most headlong joys—fortunately those moments are rare.”

“And what do you think of then?”

“Of the life I lead—it is scarcely honest; and then I resolve on asking Jacques for a small sum of money, just enough to maintain me for one year; and I resolve, then, on rejoining you, and gradually settling down to work again.”

“The idea is excellent, why do you not adopt it?”

“Because at the moment I am about to resolve on it, I question myself sincerely, and my courage fails me. I feel that I can never resume the habits of labour, and renounce a life sometimes rich, as now, sometimes precarious, but, at least, free, idle, joyous, careless, and a thousand times preferable to that which I should lead in earning four francs a-week. Interest never guided me, and I have often refused to quit a lover who was not well off for one who was rich, but whom I did not like. I have never asked any thing for myself, Jacques has expended, perhaps, 10,000 francs (400*l.*) in the last three or four months, and yet we have only two miserable rooms but half furnished, for we always live out of doors like the birds. Fortunately, when I first loved him he had nothing at all. I sold, for a hundred francs,

* We remind the reader that Couche-tout-Nu is named Jacques Rennepont, and is one of the descendants of the sister of the Wandering Jew.

some trinkets I had given me, and put that sum in the lottery, and as the good-for-nothing have always good luck, I got 4000 francs (160*l.*). Jacques was as gay, and giddy, and fond of amusement as I was, and we said, 'We love each other very much, and, as long as the money lasts, we will enjoy ourselves; when we have no more, one of two things will happen,—either we shall be tired of one another, and will then say 'adieu,' or we shall love each other still. Then, in order to remain with each other, we must try and obtain work, if we cannot, and still resolve not to part, why, a bushel of charcoal will settle the business.'"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed La Mayeux, turning very pale.

"Oh! don't alarm yourself, we have not come to that yet—we have still something left, when a man of business who had paid me some attentions, but was so ugly that I did not for a moment think of his being rich, knowing that I was living with Jacques, tried to induce me——. But why should I tire you with these details? In two words, he lent Jacques some money on some security connected with some very doubtful claims as to succeeding to some property. It is with this money that we are amusing ourselves, and as long as it lasts, why, we shall be merry."

"But, my dear Céphyse, instead of spending this money so foolishly, why not invest it and marry Jacques since you love him?"

"Why, in the first place," replied the Queen-Bacchanal, laughingly, her gay and inconsiderate character resuming its ascendancy, "investing money does not give any pleasure; all the amusement one has is to look at a little scrap of paper which they give you in exchange for those little pieces of gold which will produce a thousand pleasures. As to marrying, I certainly love Jacques better than I ever loved any body; yet I think if I were married to him, all our happiness would leave us, for as my lover he has nothing to reproach me with, but as my husband he might upbraid me hereafter, and if my conduct merits reproaches, I prefer making them myself, because I can put bounds to them."

"Well, well, you are a mad girl; but this money will not last for ever, and when it is gone, what will you do?"

"When it is gone?—ah! that's still to come,—to-morrow always appears to me as if it would not arrive these hundred years. If we were always obliged to be repeating to ourselves that we must die one day, life would not be worth having."

The conversation between Céphyse and La Mayeux was again interrupted by a frightful uproar which overwhelmed even the sharp, shrill noise produced by the rattle of Nini-Moulin. To this tumult succeeded a chorus of human voices, in the midst of which was distinguishable one loud unanimous cry of "Queen-Bacchanal! Queen-Bacchanal!"

La Mayeux started at this sudden noise.

"Oh! I suppose my court are growing impatient," said Céphyse, now laughing heartily.

"What shall I do?" exclaimed La Mayeux terrified; "suppose they come here in search of you?"

"No, no! never fear,—they will not do that."

"Oh, yes, they will!—do you hear those steps? Some one is coming along the passage—they are approaching. Oh, dear sister!

let me beseech you to manage some way for me to go out alone and unobserved, without being seen by all this crowd of persons."

As the door was opened, Céphyse ran towards it. In the corridor she beheld a deputation headed by Nini-Moulin, still brandishing his formidable rattle, Rose-Pompon, and Couche-tout-Nu.

"Come forth, Queen-Baechnal, or I shall poison myself with a glass of water!" cried Nini-Moulin.

"Appear, Queen-Baechnal, or, in despair, I shall publish my banns of marriage with Nini-Moulin!"

"Return to your anxious court, O Queen-Baechnal," cried another voice, "lest it rise in rebellion and come and carry you back by force."

"Yes, yes, let us carry her back by force of arms!" responded a loud chorus of voices.

"Jacques, enter you only though," answered the Queen-Baechnal, in reply to those several pressing summonses; then, addressing her court with a majestic tone, she said,—

"In ten minutes' time I will rejoin you, and then we will have the 'devil's delight!'"

"Bravo!—Long live Queen-Baechnal!" cried Dumoulin, shaking his rattle as he retired, followed by the deputation, with the exception of Couche-tout-Nu, who was admitted into the apartment of the sisters.

"Jacques," said Céphyse, "this is my dear, good sister."

"I am delighted to see you, mademoiselle," said Jacques, kindly, "and the more so as you will be able to give me some news of my comrade Agricola. Since I have become a rich man, we have not seen each other, though I often think of him, for he was a worthy fellow and an excellent companion. You live in the same house with him, do you not? How is he?"

"Unfortunately, sir, he and his family have met with many misfortunes, and he is now in prison."

"In prison!" exclaimed Céphyse.

"Agricola in prison!—and wherefore?" inquired Couche-tout-Nu.

"For a trifling offence of a political nature. We were in hopes of procuring his liberation by means of bail."

"To be sure—bail for 500 francs," said Couche-tout-Nu. "Oh! yes, I am aware you might do that."

"Unhappily, sir, the person on whom we relied for assistance cannot now give us any aid."

Here the Queen-Baechnal interrupted La Mayeux by saying eagerly to Couche-tout-Nu,—

"Do you hear that, Jacques? Agricola is in prison, and all for the want of 500 francs."

"Bless you! I understand all about it without your pretty little winks and nods. Poor fellow! why, he maintained his mother by his labour."

"Alas! yes, sir, and his present situation is the more distressing as his father has just arrived from Russia, and his mother——"

"Here, mademoiselle," said Couche-tout-Nu, interrupting La Mayeux a second time, and giving her a purse, "take this, I have paid all our expenses here in advance; here is all that remains of my

riches. You will find in this bag either twenty or thirty Napoleons, which I cannot better employ than in serving a comrade in distress. Carry this money to Agricola's father, he will take the necessary steps, and to-morrow Agricola will be at work again by his forge, where I had much rather he should be than myself."

"Jacques, you are a darling!—give me a kiss directly!" exclaimed the Queen-Bacchanal, impetuously.

"That I will, both now, directly after, and whenever you please," cried Jacques, joyfully embracing the queen.

La Mayeux hesitated for an instant, but afterwards reflecting that the same offer would, if not accepted, be spent in idle follies, while it afforded the means of restoring a whole family to peace and happiness, and, further considering, that these 500 francs, when returned hereafter to Jacques, might, probably, be most useful and beneficial, determined upon availing herself of the unexpected offer; and, taking the money, she said, with tearful eyes,—

"Oh, Monsieur Jacques! how good and generous you are! Most thankfully do I accept your friendly assistance. Agricola's father will, at least, through your means, have one great consolation in the midst of the severe troubles by which he is surrounded. Thanks!—a thousand times thanks!"

"There is no occasion to thank me, mademoiselle; those who have money should always consider it as given them as much to serve and aid others as to promote their own pleasure and enjoyment."

Here the tumultuous cries of the mutinous court became loud and uproarious, while the rattle of Nini-Moulin was swung with an energy which produced the most discordant sounds and deafening din.

"Come, Céphyse," said Couche-tout-Nu, "you must return to them, or they will break every thing before them; and remember," added he, smiling, "I have left myself nothing to pay the damage with. Excuse our leaving you, mademoiselle, but you see royalty has its duties."

Céphyse, deeply affected, extended her arms to La Mayeux, who threw herself in them, sobbing with happiness.

"And when," said she to her sister,—"when shall I see you again?"

"Very shortly, though nothing is more painful to me than to see you in want which you will not suffer me to relieve."

"You will come and see me?—mind, you promise me!"

"I promise for her,—she shall," said Jacques; "we will both come and pay a visit to you and our old acquaintance Agricola."

"Then go to your friends, and amuse yourself with a light heart, my dear Céphyse; for, through your kind recommendation, M. Jacques has rendered a whole family happy."

So saying, and after being assured by Couche-tout-Nu that she might safely descend the stairs without being seen by any of his noisy, merry-making companions, La Mayeux quickly slipped away, eager to solace the heart of Dagobert with one piece of good news, but desirous, first of all, to repair to the pavilion formerly occupied by Adrienne de Cardoville in the Rue de Babylone.

The reader will be informed hereafter of the cause of this determination.

Just as the young girl was quitting the *Traiteurs*, three men, plainly but respectably dressed, were talking together in a low tone, while they were attentively watching the *Traiteurs* house, at the same time consulting among themselves as to some object they had in view. A fourth individual rapidly descended the stairs from the *Traiteurs*, and joined the party.

"Well?" said the three others, with anxiety.

"He is there."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Why, are there two *Couche-tout-Nus* in the world?" replied the other. "I tell you I have just seen him: he is coming it pretty strong too. They are all safe for at least three hours, I'll answer for it."

"Well, then, wait for me here, all of you. Don't shew yourselves more than you can help. I'll go and fetch our leader, and the job is done."

Saying these words, one of the men disappeared at a quick pace in one of the streets leading from the square.

* * * * *

At this instant the Queen-Bacchanal entered the banquetting-chamber, accompanied by *Couche-tout-Nu*, where she was received with the loudest plaudits and deafening acclamations.

"Now, then," cried Céphyse, with a feverish excitement, and as though striving to escape from her own thoughts,—“now, my friends, I am for any thing you like—noise, bustle, whim, slap-dash—real desperate fun!” Then extending her glass to Nini-Moulin, she exclaimed, vehemently, “Wine! wine!—fill to the brim!”

“Long live our queen!” shouted the whole party, while loud and prolonged huzzas burst forth in one unanimous cheer.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE RÉVEILLE-MATIN.

THE Queen-Bacchanal, having in front of her *Couche-tout-Nu* and *Rose-Pompon*, and Nini-Moulin on her right hand, presided at the repast, which was called *réveille-matin* (early breakfast, literally wake-morning), and generously offered by Jacques to his companions in revelry.

The young men and young girls seemed to have forgotten the fatigues of a ball beginning at eleven o'clock at night and ending at six o'clock in the morning, and all these couples, as joyous as they were amorous and untiring, laughed, ate, and drank, with a juvenile ardour worthy of *Pantagruel*, and thus, during the early part of the repast, they talked but little, and nothing was heard but the noise of plates rattling and glasses jingling.

The countenance of the Queen-Bacchanal was less joyous, but much more animated than usual: her cheeks were flushed, her eyes

sparkled with feverish excitement. She seemed determined to drown all reflection at any cost. Her conversation with her sister occasionally recurred to her, and she sought to escape from such sad recollections.

Jacques looked at Céphyse from time to time with passionate adoration, for, owing to the singular conformity of character, mind, and tastes, which existed between him and the Queen-Bacchanal, their attachment had much deeper and more substantial root than are generally found in connexion with such ephemeral associations usually based in mere pleasure. Céphyse and Jacques did not themselves comprehend all the strength of a love which, up to this time, had been surrounded by enjoyments and festivities which no events had as yet crossed.

Little Rose-Pompon, the *widow* for the several last days of a student who, in order to end the carnival in a befitting manner, had gone into the country to endeavour to obtain some money from his family, under one or other of those fabulous excuses which tradition preserves and carefully encourages in the schools of law and medicine, — Rose-Pompon, an example of rare fidelity, unwilling to compromise herself, had selected for her *chaperon* the harmless Nini-Moulin.

This worthy having taken off his casque, shewed a bald head, surrounded by a border of black hair, which hung in curls some way down the back of his neck. Through a bacchic and very remarkable phenomenon, in proportion as his intoxication gained upon him, a sort of zone, as purple as his expansive face, gradually appeared on his brow, and tinted the shining whiteness of his head. Rose-Pompon, knowing the meaning of this symptom, pointed it out to the company, and exclaimed, whilst she burst into a loud fit of laughter,—

“Nini-Moulin, take care, the tide of wine is rising rapidly!”

“When it reaches the top of his head he will be drowned,” added the Queen-Bacchanal.

“Oh, queen, seek not to distract my attention—I am meditating!”

“Let us drink to the success of your Philemon,” said the Queen-Bacchanal, turning to Rose-Pompon.

“And to the ‘lump of tin’ which he hopes to draw from his scaly brutes of relations to finish the carnival with,” added Rose-Pompon. “Luckily he is regularly on his mettle.”

“Rose-Pompon!” exclaimed Nini-Moulin, “whether you made that pun purposely or not, come, my love, and kiss me.”

“Many thanks; but what would my husband say?”

“Philemon is not your espoused husband! It only remains, therefore, for me the more decidedly to extend my arms to you, oh, Rose-Pompon!”

“I can’t say any thing about that, but you are too ugly!”

“That’s good reasoning; so I will drink to the health of Philemon’s endeavours. Let us offer up our vows for the success of his ‘tin’ adventure.”

“Willingly,” said Rose-Pompon. “To the health of that important article in the items of a student’s existence!”

“And also to the means by which they consume it,” added Dumoulin.

The toast was drunk in bumpers, and with unanimous applause.

“With the permission of her majesty and her court,” said Dumoulin, “I propose a toast, the success of which interests me, and has some analogous resemblance to the ‘tin’ quest of Philemon. I have an idea that the toast will bring me good luck.”

“Let us have it.”

“Well, then, success to my marriage!” said Dumoulin, rising.

These words produced one universal shout, bursts of laughter, and great applause, and stamping with the feet. Nini-Moulin shouted and stamped louder than any body else, opening wide his enormous mouth, and adding to the astounding din the harsh sound of his rattle, which he took from under the chair where he had placed it.

When the storm had somewhat abated, the Queen-Bacchanal rose and said,—

“I drink to the health of the bride, Madame Nini-Moulin!”

“Oh, queen! your kindness touches me so sensibly, that I must ask you to read, in the inmost depths of my heart, the name of my future spouse,” cried Dumoulin. “She is called Madame the Widow, Honoree-Modeste-Messalina-Angèle de la Sainte Colombe!”

“Bravo! bravo!”

“She is sixty years of age, and has more thousands of francs a-year than she has hairs in her grey moustaches and wrinkles in her visage; her plumpness is of such an extent that one of her gowns would serve as a tent for the honourable company here assembled. I hope, then, to present to you my future wife on Shrove Tuesday, in the costume of a shepherdess who means to devour her own flock. They are desirous of converting her; but I will undertake the charge of diverting her, and she will prefer that, and you must aid me in plunging her into the most bacchanalian and rollicking enjoyments.”

“We will plunge her into any thing you please.”

“She is a reveller with grey locks,” sung Rose-Pompon, to a well-known tune.

“That would have its effect with the sergens-de-ville.”

“We should say respect the lady; perhaps your own mother may be as old some day.”

Suddenly the Queen Bacchanal rose. Her countenance had a singular expression of bitter and sarcastic delight; she held a glass brim full in her hand,—

“They say,” she exclaimed, “that the cholera is approaching with its seven-leagued boots—I drink to the cholera!”

And she drank.

In spite of the general gaiety these words made a sinister impression: a sort of electric shudder ran through the assembly, and every face became suddenly serious.

“Ah, Céphyse!” said Jacques, in a tone of reproach.

“To the cholera!” replied the Queen-Bacchanal, fearlessly; “may it spare those who desire to live, and kill those in company who do not desire to live separate!”

Jacques and Céphyse exchanged a rapid look, which escaped their joyous companions, and for some time the Queen-Bacchanal remained silent and thoughtful.

“Ah, in that way it is different,” replied Rose-Pompon, with a

heedless air ; "here's the cholera ! and may there be none but good fellows left on earth !"

In spite of this variation the impression was still oppressively painful. Dumoulin desirous of cutting short this saddening subject, exclaimed,—

"Let the dead go to the devil !—may the living live long ! And, *à-propos* of living and good livers, I will ask you to pledge a bumper to a health dear to our most gracious queen, the health of our worthy Amphitryon. Unfortunately, I do not know the respectable name of our dear host, inasmuch as this night has been the first of my acquaintance with him ; he will, therefore, pardon me if I confine myself to proposing the health of Couehe-tout-Nu,—a name which in no wise shocks my modesty, for Adam slept in no other guise. Now, then, for Couehe-tout-Nu !"

"Thanks, my stout friend," said Jaques, gaily. "If I forget your name, I will call you *Qui-veut-boire* (who'll drink ?) and, sure I am, that you would answer, '*I will !*'"

"I will, I will, most readily !" said Dumoulin, making a military salute with one hand, and holding his punchbowl in the other.

"When we have pledged together," replied Couehe-tout-Nu, cordially, "we ought to know one another thoroughly ; my name is Jaques Rennepont !"

"Rennepont !" exclaimed Dumoulin, who was struck by the name, in spite of his half-drunkenness ; "your name is Rennepont ?"

"Rennepont, and no mistake !—Does that astonish you ?"

"There is a very ancient family of that name, the Counts de Rennepont ?"

"Oh, indeed !" said Couehe-tout-Nu, laughing.

"The Counts de Rennepont are also Dukes de Cardoville," added Dumoulin.

"Well, really, my stout gentleman, do I seem to you like one sprung from such a family ? I, a workman, at my fun and frolic ?"

"You a workman ! why we are falling into the thousand and one nights," exclaimed Dumoulin more and more surprised. "You give us a Belshazzar's feast with the accompaniment of carriages with four horses, and you a workman ?"

"Come, come, don't think that I am a workman in bank-notes and false coin !" said Jaques, laughing.

"What a supposition, comrade !"

"It is excusable when you see the pacc I go ; but I will disabuse your mind, I am spending an inheritance."

"Eating and drinking some respectable old uncle defunct, no doubt," said Dumoulin, smiling.

"I really do not know."

"What ! do not know who or what you are eating and drinking ?"

"Well, then, you must know that my father was a ragman (*chiffonier*)."

"Indeed !" said Dumoulin, the more out of countenance as he was generally scrupulous in the choice of his bottle companions ; but, his first surprise over, he added, with great amenity, "there are ragmen of great merit."

“*Pardieu!* you think to laugh at me,” said Jacques; “and you are right, my father was a man of great merit, certainly. He spoke Greek and Latin like a professor, and always told me that he had not his equal for mathematics, and besides he had travelled a great deal.”

“Well, then,” said Dumoulin, whom his surprise sobered very much, “you may still belong to the family of these Counts de Rennepont.”

“If so,” said Rose-Pompon, with a laugh, “your father *chif-fonerit* as an amateur, and just for the honour of the thing.”

“No, no, *misère de Dieu!* it was for his living,” replied Jacques; “but in his youth he was in easy circumstances. By what it appeared, or rather by what did not appear, he had addressed himself to a rich relation he had, but the rich relation replied, ‘Can’t, really!’ Then he wished to turn his Greek, Latin, and mathematics to account—that was impossible. It seems that then Paris was choke full of learned men, so, rather than starve, he looked for his bread at the end of his crooked stick, and he found it there, too, for I ate of it for two years, when I came to live with him, after the death of an aunt with whom I had dwelt in the country.”

“Your respectable father, then, was a sort of philosopher,” said Dumoulin; “but, unless he found an inheritance on some dunghill, I see nothing of the inheritance you spoke of.”

“Hear the song out. At the age of twelve I was apprenticed at the factory of M. Tripeaud; two years afterwards my father died of an accident, leaving me the furniture of our garret, a bed, a chair, a table, and besides, in a broken Eau de Cologne box, some papers, written, it appears, in English, and a bronze medal, which, with its chain, was worth about ten sous. He had never spoken to me about these papers, and, not knowing that they were good for any thing, I had kept them at the bottom of an old trunk instead of burning them; and it was well I did so, for on these papers I have had some money left me.”

“What a mercy from Heaven!” said Dumoulin. “But, then, somebody knew that you had them?”

“Yes; one of the men who are always on the look-out for old debts, came to Céphyse, who told me of it, and, after he had read the papers, the man told me that the affair was doubtful, but he would lend me ten thousand francs on them, if I liked. Ten thousand francs (400*l.*), that was a treasure, and I accepted it directly.”

“But you must have supposed that these old debts must have been of great value?”

“No, really, since my father, who ought to have known their value, did not make any use of them; and then, ten thousand francs, in good and handsome crowns, which fell from one does not know where—that was a temptation, and I took them; only the agent made me sign a bill of guarantee—yes, that’s it, guarantee.”

“And did you sign it?”

“Of course, yes! it was a mere matter of form, as the man of business assured me, and he spoke truly, since it has been due more than a fortnight without my having heard a syllable about it. I have still about a thousand francs remaining in the hands of the agent, whom I took as my banker, because he furnished the cash. So now, my boys,

you see how and why it is I sing all day blithe as a lark, since, thanks to my ten thousand francs, I have been enabled to quit my beggarly master, M. Tripeaud !”

As Jacques pronounced this name, his hitherto merry, joyous countenance became suddenly overcast, while Céphyse, no longer under the influence of the painful ideas which had lately occupied her mind, beheld with considerable uneasiness the change in Jacques' manner, well knowing the irritation any allusion to M. Tripeaud always produced throughout his whole nature.

“M. Tripeaud,” resumed Couche-tout-Nu, “is just the man to render the good bad, and the bad worse. People say a good master makes a good horse. They ought to say a kind master makes a faithful servant. By Heaven's mercy, when I think of that fellow !” cried Couche-tout-Nu, striking his hand violently on the table.

“Never mind him, Jacques !” interrupted the Bacchanal Queen ; “let us talk of something else. Come, Rose-Pompon, try and say something to make him laugh.”

“I am not in the humour to laugh,” replied Jacques, in an abrupt tone, and somewhat excited by the wine he had taken ; “it gets the better of me whenever I think of that man ! it regularly works me up when I recollect how he used to treat his poor devils of workpeople. I think I hear him bawling at them, ‘Here, you beggars !—you rascals of workmen ! *they pretend they have no food in their insides,*’ he would say, ‘*Well, then, fill their bellies with bayonet-thrusts,** that will put an end to their hungry eravings !’ And then the poor children in his manufactory—you should see them—poor little creatures—working as many hours as grown-up men, and so wasting and dying by dozens ; but what does that signify ? let them die as fast as they may, there are always plenty of others to take their place. Not like horses, which must be bought and paid for before *they* can be replaced.”

“It is pretty clear you are not over-partial to your late master,” said Dumoulin, more and more surprised at the gloomy, thoughtful air of his Amphitryon, and, greatly regretting the serious tone the conversation had assumed, he whispered a few words in the ear of the Queen-Bacchanal, who returned a corresponding sign of intelligence.

“Partial !” exclaimed Couche-tout-Nu. “Not I. I hate him, and do you know why ? Because is it as much his fault as mine, that I have become the careless fellow I now am. I don't say that to excuse myself, but it is the truth. When I was a lively, rollicking young chap, and first apprenticed to him, I was all heart, ardour, and energy, and so bent upon working hard, that I used to take my shirt off while engaged at my daily task ; and this, by the by, it was that procured me the nickname of Couche-tout-Nu. Well, there I toiled, sweated, taxed my strength even beyond my then powers. Not one encouraging word or look did I ever receive. I was always the first to commence work, and the last to leave off ; but no one seemed even to notice it. Not a word of commendation did my industry and diligence obtain. One day I received a severe hurt from the machine we employed in our business ; I was carried to an hospital : as soon as it was

* This revolting expression was actually made use of during the deplorable events which occurred at Lyons.

possible for me to quit it, I left, still weak and unfit to work; but, anxious to resume my labours, I was not discouraged even by the other workmen, who knew their master better than I did, and were well aware how small would be the advantage resulting from such energy as mine; in vain did they argue with me on the folly of over-exerting myself as I was doing. 'What is the lad thinking,' cried they, 'to be wearing the very flesh off his bones thus? What good do you expect to get by it? Don't be a simpleton! but do your precise task of work, neither more nor less; you will be just as well off.' This was all very well; but it did not deter me from working like a dragon, till, one day, a worthy old fellow, named Arsène, who had been employed in the manufactory a number of years, and was always considered a model for all the other men on the premises, as regarded his skill and excellent character as a workman—one day poor old Arsène was turned off, because his strength failed him too rapidly; this was a death-blow to the honest fellow, who, besides having an infirm wife, was well aware that, from his advanced age, he could not hope to obtain employment elsewhere. When the clerk of the works brought him his discharge, he could scarcely believe what he heard, but burst into a violent fit of weeping; at this instant M. Tripeaud chanced to pass by; and old Arsène, clasping his hands, besought, with affecting earnestness, that he might be kept on at *half* his usual wages.

"'Why, my good man,' answered M. Tripeaud, shrugging his shoulders, 'do you suppose I am going to turn my manufactory into an hospital for worn-out workmen? You cannot serve me further, therefore out you must go!'

"'But, good sir, think of the forty years I have faithfully worked in your employ. What will become of me, if you discharge me? No one will give me work at my age. My poor wife and I must starve!'

"'Well, what have I to do with that?' asked M. Tripeaud, roughly. Then, calling one of his clerks, he said, 'Make out what is owing to this man, and send him about his business!'

"Poor old Arsène was sent about his business; but what was that business? Why, to purchase sufficient charcoal to end the existence and miseries of himself and bed-ridden partner. Both were found next day suffocated in their bed. Now I was a lad at this time, a mere rattling, rollicking chap as you would be likely to see; but the history of old Arsène taught me the folly of toiling on, to the injury of one's own health, merely to benefit a master who did not value you a jot the more, and when your only prospect in old age was to find some means of shaking off the life which was merely a useless incumbrance. These reflections for ever extinguished my ardour for work; for, said I, how much better off shall I be for doing more than I am obliged? Suppose by the fruits of my labour M. Tripeaud were to amass heaps of gold, should I be one farthing the richer? Thus, then, having no motive, either of interest or personal pride, in working, I took a regular disgust to doing more than was absolutely necessary to obtain my wages, and became a noisy, careless, pleasure-seeking fellow, comforting myself with the idea that, when I was tired with working at all, I could just escape by the same means which had delivered old Arsène and his wife."

While Jacques was thus allowing himself to be carried away by these

painful recollections, the guests, instructed by the pantomimic gestures of Dumoulin and the Queen-Bacehanal, had tacitly arranged their plans; thus, therefore, at a signal from the Queen-Bacehanal, who sprang on the table, knocking over the bottles and glasses she encountered, the whole party rose, uttering loud cries, to the accompaniment of Nini-Moulin's rattle, for the "TULIPE ORAGEUSE! the quadrille of the tulipe orageuse!"

At the sudden burst of these joyous demands for a renewal of their uproarious mirth, Jacques started, gazed round for an instant with a bewildered and astonished look, then pressing his hand to his forehead, as though to collect his ideas and banish the gloomy feelings which possessed him, he exclaimed,—

"You are right, you are right! Now, then, *en avant deux!* let's be merry, and a fig for care!"

In the twinkling of an eye, a number of powerful arms had conveyed the table to the other end of the large saloon in which the banquet was given; the spectators placed themselves on chairs, benches, and even on the window-ledges, and commenced the duties of an orchestra, by singing, in loud chorus, the well-known air necessary for the dance about to be executed by Couche-tout-Nu, the Queen-Bacehanal, Nini-Moulin, and Rose-Pompon.

Dumoulin, confiding his rattle to one of the guests, resumed his enormous-plumed Roman helmet; he had taken off his cloak at the commencement of the banquet, so that he now appeared in all the splendour of his disguise—his cuirass of shining scales of steel terminated oddly enough in a petticoat of feathers, similar to those worn by the savages who escorted the principal party during the procession of the *Bœuf Gras*. Nini-Moulin possessed a large stomach, and very thin legs, which very inadequately filled the opening afforded by his large turned-down boots.

The sweet little Rose-Pompon, her military cap stuck jantily at the side of her head, her two hands thrust into the pockets of her trousers, and bending her pliant little body gracefully from side to side, advanced in the *avant deux*, with Nini-Moulin, who, drawing himself all of a heap, advanced by sudden springs, his left leg bent under him, the right leg extended, the toe in the air, and the heel sliding on the floor; then he struck the nape of his neck with his left hand, while by a simultaneous movement he briskly extended his right arm, as though he wished to *sprinkle powder in the eyes* of his opposite neighbour.

This opening whim was loudly and noisily applauded, though it formed only the innocent prelude to the admired dance of the *tulipe orageuse*, when all at once a door opened, and one of the waiters, having for a minute or two gazed about in search of Couche-tout-Nu, ran up to him, and whispered a few words in his ear.

"Me!" exclaimed Jacques, bursting into loud laughter; "what a joke!"

The waiter having added some further words, a visible uncasiness took possession of the features of Couche-tout-Nu, who replied to the waiter's information by saying,—

"Very well, I will come!" And with these words he was proceeding towards the door.

“What is the matter, Jacques?” inquired the Queen-Bacchanal, with surprise.

“Go on dancing!” replied Couche-tout-Nu, “let some one take my place for a few minutes—I shall be back directly!” So saying, he hastily quitted the apartment.

“I dare say there is something they have omitted to mention in the bill of fare,” observed Dumoulin; “our friend will soon return when he has ordered it!”

“No doubt,” said Céphyse. “Now then, *cavalier seul!*” said she to the person who had advanced and taken Jacques’s place; and the dancing continued with unabated animation.

Nini-Moulin had just taken Rose-Pompon by the right hand, and the Queen-Bacchanal by the left, in order to balance between the two; in doing which he introduced the most absurd and ridiculous buffoonery, when again the door opened, and the waiter who had called Jacques out hastily approached Céphyse with an air of unfeigned alarm, and spoke in her ear as he had whispered in that of Couche-tout-Nu.

At the words he uttered, the Queen-Bacchanal became pale as death, she uttered a piercing cry, and rushed out of the room without uttering a word, leaving her guests in speechless amazement.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE ADIEUX.

THE Queen-Bacchanal following the waiter, reached the bottom of the staircase.

A hackney-coach was at the door. In this coach she saw Couche-tout-Nu, with one of the men who, two hours before, had been stationed in the Place-du-Châtelet.

On the arrival of Céphyse the man descended, and said to Jacques, drawing out his watch,—

“I give you a quarter of an hour, and that is all I can do for you, my good fellow; after that we must go. Do not attempt to escape, for we shall keep guard at the doors whilst the coach remains here.” With one bound Céphyse was in the vehicle.

Too much agitated to speak before, she exclaimed, as she seated herself beside Jacques and saw how ghastly he looked,—

“What ails you? What do they want of you?”

“They have arrested me for debt,” said Jacques, in a hollow voice.

“You?” cried Céphyse, in an agonised accent.

“Yes, for the bill of guarantee which the agent made me sign: he said it was but a mere form—the scoundrel!”

“But you have money still in his hands, let him have that on account.”

"I have not a sous left—he sends word by the bailiff that he would not hand me the last thousand francs, as I had not paid the bill of exchange."

"Let us go and entreat him—supplicate him, to set you at liberty! He came to you to offer this money, I know that; because it was to me that he first came. He will surely take pity."

"Pity! What, an agent have pity? You know nothing of those men——"

"Then, there is no hope—none," exclaimed Céphyse, clasping her hands with anguish. Then she added, "But surely he will do something; he promised you ——"

"His promises! You see how he fulfils them," said Jacques, with bitterness. "I signed without knowing what I signed; the time for payment is overdue, and it is all regular. It is of no use for me to resist, they have explained all that to me."

"But they cannot detain you long in prison, that's impossible!"

"Five years, if I do not pay; and, as I never can pay, why, my fate is settled."

"Oh, what a misfortune, what a misery, and we can do nothing!" said Céphyse, hiding her head in her hands.

"Listen, Céphyse," replied Jacques, in a voice full of deep emotion. "Since this has befallen me, I have only thought of one thing—what is to become of you?"

"Oh, do not be uneasy about me!"

"Not be uneasy about you! why, you are out of your senses. What can you do? The furniture of our two apartments is not worth 200 francs. (8*l.*) We have wasted our money so foolishly, that we have not even paid for our lodging—we owe three quarters: therefore we must not rely on the sale of the furniture. I leave you without a sous. As for me, they must at least feed me in the prison—but how are you to live?"

"Why annoy yourself about that in anticipation?"

"I want to know how you are to live over to-morrow," said Jacques.

"I will sell my dress, some small things I have, and send you half the money. I will keep the rest, which will last me several days!"

"And then, afterwards?"

"Afterwards—why, then I don't know what I shall do — what can I say?—afterwards we shall see."

"Listen, Céphyse," resumed Jacques, with bitter emotion; "now I feel how much I love you—my heart seems as if it were squeezed in a vice, when I think of quitting you—I am in an agony to think what will become of you!" Then, passing his hand over his forehead, Jacques added: "You see now what has undone us,—ever saying always, 'Oh, to-morrow will never come!' yet, you see it does come. Now that I shall not be near you, and that you will have expended the last farthing of the things you are going to sell—unable to work as you are—what will you do? Shall I tell you what you will do? You will forget me, and ——"

Then, as if he recoiled from his own thoughts, Jacques cried, with rage and despair,—

"*Misère de Dieu!* if that happened to me, I would dash out my brains on the paving-stones!"

Céphyse guessed the thoughts of Jacques, and, throwing her arms round his neck, said touchingly,—

“I? another lover? Never! for, like yourself, I feel now how entirely I love you.”

“But to exist, my poor Céphyse—to exist?”

“Well, I shall take courage, and go and live with my sister, as I did before. I will work with her, and that will always give me bread. I shall only go out to see you. In a few days, perhaps, the agent, on reflection, will think that you cannot pay him the ten thousand francs, and he will set you at liberty. I shall have resumed the habit of labour—you’ll see, you’ll see! You will also return to work. We shall live poor, but quiet; and, after all, we shall have had a great deal of amusement for six months, whilst how many are there who in all their lives have never known pleasure! Believe what I say, my dear Jacques, for it is true. I shall profit by this lesson; so, if you love me, do not be in the least uneasy: I tell you this, I would rather die a hundred times than have another lover!”

“Embrace me,” said Jacques, with tears in his eyes; “I believe you—I believe you. You know my courage now; and for the future—you are right—we must try and return to work; if not, the bushel of charecoal, like father Arsène! For,” added Jacques, in a low and tremulous voice—“for six months I was as it were always intoxicated; now I have suddenly become sobered, and I see whither we were hurrying. Once at the end of our resources, I might have turned thief, and you ——”

“Oh, Jacques, you frighten me! Do not say that!” exclaimed Céphyse, interrupting Couche-tout-Nu: “I swear to you that I will return to my sister; I will work, and shall bear up my courage.”

The Queen-Bacchanal, at this moment, was quite sincere: she was anxious to keep her word resolutely. Her heart was not, as yet, wholly perverted: misery and need had been to her, as they have been for so many others, the cause and even the excuse of her going astray; and up to this time she had at least followed the inclination of her heart, without any base and venal considerations. The cruel position in which she saw Jacques placed increased her love, and she believed that she was quite sure of herself when she swore to him that she would return to La Mayeux and resume her life of barren and incessant labour—that life of painful deprivation which she had been unable to support before, and which must of necessity be still more painful to return to, as she had since led a life of idleness and dissipation. But the assurances which she gave Jacques somewhat calmed the distress and disquietude which he experienced. He had sufficient good sense and good feeling to perceive the headlong and fatal course he had been pursuing, and which was blindly leading himself and Céphyse in the high and rapid road to infamy.

One of the bailiffs, having rapped at the door, said to Jacques,—

“My fine fellow, make haste—you have only five minutes more!”

“Well, then, my dear girl, courage!” said Jacques.

“Make yourself easy—I will have courage, rely on it!”

“You will not return up stairs?”

“Oh, no,” said Céphyse, “I have a horror of this fête now!”

“I paid for all in advance, and I will desire the waiter to inform them that they need not expect us again,” added Jacques. “They will be somewhat astonished, but that is of no consequence.”

“If you could only go to our lodgings with me,” said Céphyse; “and perhaps this man will let you, for you cannot go to Sainte-Pélagie dressed in this way.”

“That’s true, and he will not refuse to let you accompany me; but, as he will be with us in the coach, we cannot say any thing before him: so let me, for the first time in my life, talk sense. Recollect well, my Céphyse, what I say to you—and it is as suitable to myself as to yourself,” said Jacques, in a serious and earnest tone,—“begin this very day your habits of industry. It will be painful, difficult: no matter, do not hesitate, or you will soon begin this lesson; or, as you say yourself, later it will not be time; and then you will end like so many other unfortunate—You understand me?”

“I do,” said Céphyse, blushing; “but I would a hundred times prefer death to such a life.”

“And you are right; for in this case,” added Jacques, in a low and concentrated voice, “I would aid you to die.”

“I rely on you, Jacques,” replied Céphyse, embracing her lover with fervour, and then adding, sorrowfully, “I believe it was a presentiment when, just now, I felt myself suddenly melancholy, without knowing why, in the midst of our mirth, and drank to the cholera, and that it would kill us together.”

“Well, who knows that it will not come—the cholera?” replied Jacques, with a saddened air; “that will save the charcoal, and perhaps we should not have money left to buy it!”

“I can only say one thing, Jacques; and that is, you will always find me ready to live and die with you!”

“Come, come, dry your eyes!” he muttered, with deep emotion: “do not let us play the fool before these men!”

* * * * *

A few minutes afterwards the coach moved on towards Jacques’s lodgings, where he was to change his clothes before he went to prison for debt.

* * * * *

Let us repeat, *à propos* of the sister of La Mayeux (it is a subject which we cannot too often repeat), one of the most injurious consequences of the want of *organisation* in labour is the insufficiency of wages.

The insufficiency of wages inevitably forces the greater number of young girls, thus badly remunerated, to seek for a means of existence by forming depraved connexions.

Sometimes they receive a moderate sum from their lover, which, joined to the produce of their own labour, helps them to a livelihood; sometimes, like the sister of La Mayeux, they completely abandon labour, and live with the man they select, when he is able to support both: then, during this time of pleasure and entire cessation from labour, the incurable leprosy of idleness for ever takes hold of these unhappy creatures.

This is the first phase of degradation in which the culpable carelessness of society involves an immense number of females of the

working classes, born with the instincts of modesty, propriety, and good conduct.

At the end of a certain time, these lovers grow tired, and forsake them, and perhaps when they have become mothers.

Occasionally a wild prodigality conducts some inconsiderate wretch to prison; and then the young girl is alone, abandoned, and without means of existence.

Those who have preserved their courage and good feeling return to labour; but their number is very few. Others, impelled by misery or the habits of an idle and easy life, then fall into the lowest depths of degradation.

They ought to be more blamed than pitied for this degradation, for the first and virtual cause of their fall was *the insufficient amount of their pay or failure of employ.**

Another deplorable circumstance of the want of *organisation* of labour is for men, beside the insufficiency of wages, the deep disgust with which they fulfil the task imposed upon them.

That may be conceived.

Is there any attempt to make work agreeable, either by its variety, or honourable recompense, or kindness, or a remuneration proportionate to the results of their handiwork, or by the hope of an annuity assured to them after long years of labour?

No; the country neither knows nor cares for their wants or their rights.

And yet, to refer to one branch of trade: the mechanics and workmen in factories, who, exposed to the explosion of steam and contact with innumerable wheels, every day run greater dangers than soldiers incur in a war, display a great deal of practical skill, render to their business, and, consequently, the country, undeniable services, during a long and honourable career, unless they are killed by the bursting of a boiler or have some limb maimed by the iron teeth of a machine.

In this latter case does the workman receive a reward equal to that of the soldier as the price of this courage, laudable but unproductive—a berth in a house for invalids?

No.

What is it to his country? and, if the master of the workman is ungrateful, the maimed man incapable of service, dies of hunger in some hole or corner.

In these pompous *fêtes* of industry, do they ever call for any of those skilful workmen who alone have produced those splendid tissues and stuffs, have forged and damasked those brilliant weapons, chased those cups of gold or silver, engraved those pieces of ebony or ivory, mounted those brilliant stones with such exquisite art?

No.

* We read in an excellent pamphlet, filled with practical views and dictated by a charitable and elevated mind (*National League against the Misery of Workpeople; or, a Memorandum explanatory of a Petition to be presented to the Chamber of Deputies, by J. Terson, — Paulin Editeur*), these lines, unfortunately but too true:—“We do not speak of workwomen placed in the same alternative,—what we should have to say would be too painful; we only assert, that it is during the periods when work ceases for the longest time that the emissaries of prostitution recruit their proselytes from among the handsomest females in the humbler classes.”

Obscured in the depths of the garret, in the midst of a miserable and furnished family, they hardly exist on a miserable salary—those very individuals who, it will be confessed, have contributed at least *half* to enrich the country with those marvels which make its wealth, its boast, and its pride.

A minister of commerce, who had the least comprehension of his high functions and his DUTIES, should demand that each production exhibited *should be represented by a certain number of the most meritorious candidates, among whom the producer should point out the person who seemed to him most worthy to represent the working class in those grand industrial solemnities.*

Would it not be a noble and encouraging example to see the master propose for rewards or public distinctions the workman deputed by his fellows as one of the most honest, hard-working, and intelligent in his profession?

Then a fearful injustice would disappear; then the virtues of the workman would be stimulated by a generous and lofty aim; then he would have *an interest in being well conducted.*

No doubt the producer, by reason of the intelligence which he displays, the capital he ventures, the establishment he founds, and the good which he sometimes effects, has a legitimate right to the distinctions with which he is honoured; but wherefore is the workman so pitilessly excluded from those rewards whose operation on the masses is so powerful?

Are generals and officers the only individuals who are rewarded in our army?

After having justly remunerated the chiefs of this powerful and productive array of industry, why are not its soldiers thought of?

Why is there never exhibited the sign of a brilliant reward for them?—some consoling and kind word from an august lip? Why do we see in France *not one workman decorated*, as the reward of his skill, his industrial courage, his long and laborious career? The cross, and the modest pension which accompanies it, would have for him a double and justly merited recompense. But no. For the humble toil—the toil that really produces, there is but forgetfulness, injustice, indifference, and disdain.

And this public neglect, often aggravated by the selfishness and severity of the ungrateful employer, produces the deplorable state of the workmen.

Some, in spite of incessant labour, live on in privation and die prematurely, cursing the society which forsakes them. Others seek a temporary oblivion of their woes in excessive and ruinous intoxication.

A great number, having no interest, no advantage, no moral or material motive for doing more or better, confine themselves to doing just so much and no more than will gain their pay. Nothing attaches them to their toil, because, in their eyes, nothing elevates, honours, or glorifies their exertions—nothing protects them from the temptation of indolence, and, if by chance they find the means of living occasionally in idleness, by degrees they yield to the habits of indolence and debauchery; and sometimes the worst passions gain supreme control over dispositions originally well disposed, honourable, and ductile, for want

of some just and protecting superintendance, which should have sustained, encouraged, and recompensed their early, honest, and laborious inclinations.

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We will now follow La Mayeux, who, after having gone to seek for work from the person who usually employed her, went to the Rue de Babylone, to the pavilion occupied by Adrienne de Cardoville.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE CHARITY OF SAINTE-MARIE—FLORINE.

WHILST the Queen-Bacchanal and Conche-tout-Nu terminated the most joyous period of their existence so sorrowfully, La Mayeux reached the door of the pavilion in the Rue de Babylone.

Before she rang, the young work-girl wiped her eyes—a fresh trouble had befallen her. On leaving the tavern she had gone to the person who usually employed her; but she refused her, being able, as she told her, to get her work made up in the prisons where women were confined at a saving of a third of the expense. La Mayeux, rather than lose this last resource, offered to submit to this diminution; but the pieces of linen had been already given out, and the young workwoman could not hope for employment before at least a fortnight, even though she had assented to this reduction of pay. We may imagine the poor creature's anguish, for, when a compulsory cessation of work comes, there is only left the choice of begging, dying of hunger, or robbing.

Her visit to the pavilion in the Rue de Babylone will be explained as we proceed.

La Mayeux rang timidly at the small gate, and a few moments afterwards Florine opened the door.

The waiting-maid was no longer attired according to the charming taste of Adrienne, but, on the contrary, was dressed with an affectation of austere simplicity. She wore a high gown of dark colour, sufficiently full to conceal the graceful elegance of her form, her *bandeaux* of jet black hair were hardly visible under the flat border of a small white and stiffly starched cap, resembling that worn by nuns: but, in spite of this plain costume, the brown and pale countenance of Florine still looked extremely handsome.

We have already said that Florine, placed by a criminal act to absolute dependence on Rodin and M. d'Aigrigny, had up to this time served as a spy on Adrienne, in spite of the marks of confidence and kindness with which her young mistress treated her. Florine was not utterly perverted, and consequently often experienced painful, but vain feelings of remorse, when she reflected upon the shameful system on which she was acting towards Adrienne de Cardoville.

At the sight of La Mayeux, whom she recognised, Florine, who had told her the night before of Agricola's arrest, and the sudden fit of

madness which had come over Mademoiselle de Cardoville, receded a step, so much was she struck with interest and pity on seeing the countenance of the poor work-girl. The information of the forced cessation of work, in the midst of such painful circumstances, was a terrible blow for the poor needle-woman; the traces of recent tears left their furrows in her cheeks, her features expressed unwittingly a deep anguish, and she appeared so exhausted, so weak, so overcome, that Florine went up to her hastily, offered her arm, and said to her kindly, whilst she was supporting her,—

“Come in, mademoiselle, come in. Rest yourself for awhile, for you are very pale, and appear to be suffering greatly from fatigue.”

Saying this, Florine led La Mayeux into a small room with a fire-place, and seated her before a blazing fire in a carpeted chair.

Georgette and Hebe had been dismissed, and Florine alone was left in charge of the pavilion.

When La Mayeux was seated, Florine said to her, with interest,—

“Mademoiselle, may I offer you any thing?—a little sugared water, warm, with some orange-flower water in it?”

“Thank you very much, mademoiselle,” said La Mayeux with emotion; for the least token of kindness filled her with gratitude, and she saw with some surprise that her poor garments did not occasion either constraint or disgust in Florine.

“I only want a little rest, for I have walked a long way,” she replied, “if you will allow me?”

“Rest as long as you please, mademoiselle; I am alone in the pavilion since the departure of my poor mistress.” (Here Florine blushed and sighed.) “So do not hurry yourself at all, but come near the fire, I beg of you. Stay—place yourself there, you will be warmer. Dear me, how wet your feet are! Put them on this stool.”

The kind reception of Florine, her handsome face, and her complaisant manner, which were not those of an ordinary waiting-maid, struck La Mayeux greatly, who was more sensible than any one else, in spite of her humble station, of all that was kind, gracious, delicate, and *distingué*; and, yielding to this attraction, the young work-girl, usually so retiring, sensitive, and timid, felt herself almost inclined to treat Florine with confidence.

“How very kind you are, mademoiselle,” she said in a tone of gratitude; “I am quite ashamed of your kind attentions to me!”

“I assure you, mademoiselle, I should be delighted to do more than mere words, and offering you a place by the fire—you are so gentle, and interest me so much!”

“Ah, mademoiselle, how nice it is to warm one’s self at a good fire!” said La Mayeux, in the simplicity of her heart. Then, fearing (such was her delicacy) that she should be thought guilty of an abuse of hospitality in lengthening her visit, she added,—

“I will tell you, mademoiselle, why I return here: yesterday you told me that a young smith, M. Agricola Baudoin, had been arrested in this pavilion.”

“Alas, mademoiselle, yes; and at the very moment, too, when my poor mistress was about to give him the assistance he required!”

“M. Agricola—I am his adopted sister,” resumed La Mayeux, slightly blushing—“wrote to me last night from his prison, and begged



FLORINE AND LA MAYEUX.

me to tell his father to come here as quickly as he could, and inform Mademoiselle de Cardoville that he, Agricola, had some very important particulars to communicate to the young lady, or to such person as she might please to send; but that he did not dare to trust them in a letter, not knowing if the correspondence of the prisoners was read by the director of the prison."

"What! and M. Agricola wished to make an important disclosure to my mistress?" said Florine, much surprised.

"Yes, mademoiselle; for up to this time Agricola is ignorant of the frightful malady of Mademoiselle de Cardoville."

"True; and this attack of insanity came on so suddenly," said Florine, lowering her eyes, "that it was impossible to have anticipated it."

"It must have been so, indeed," said La Mayeux; "for, when Agricola saw Mademoiselle de Cardoville for the first time, he returned struck with her grace, kindness, and delicacy."

"Like every body else who approached my mistress," said Florine, sorrowfully.

"This morning," resumed La Mayeux, "after having had the letter of Agricola, I went to his father: he had already left home, for he is full of the deepest anxiety; but the letter of my adopted brother appeared to me so pressing, and of such vast importance to Mademoiselle de Cardoville, who had acted so generously towards him, that I came myself."

"Unfortunately, my young lady is no longer here, as you know."

"But are there none of her family, to whom, if I cannot speak, I can at least make known through you, mademoiselle, that Agricola is anxious to communicate something of the utmost importance to this young lady?"

"It is strange!" replied Florine, reflecting, and without making any answer to La Mayeux; and then, turning towards her, she said,—

"And you are completely ignorant of the subject of this disclosure?"

"Perfectly, mademoiselle; but I know Agricola, and he is honour and honesty itself: he has a mind just and upright, and he might be believed in all and any thing he said. Besides, what interest can he have in——"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Florine, hastily, as if struck by a sudden light, and interrupting La Mayeux, "I remember now: when he was apprehended in a concealed place, in which mademoiselle had had him placed, I chanced to be present, and M. Agricola said to me, in a quick and low voice,—

"Pray say to your generous mistress that her kindness to me will have its reward, and my concealment in this secret closet may perhaps not have been without its utility."

"That was all he could say, for they took him off instantly. I confess that in these words I had but remarked the expression of his gratitude, and the hope of proving it one day to mademoiselle; but when I unite those words to the letter which he has written to you," said Florine, in a reflecting tone——

"Why, then," interposed La Mayeux, "there is certainly some connexion between his concealment in the secret closet and the im-

portant revelations which he desires to make to your lady or some one of her family."

"The secret place had not been inhabited or entered for a long time," said Florine, with a thoughtful air: "perhaps M. Agricola found or saw something there which might be of importance to my young lady."

"If Agricola's letter had not seemed to me so pressing," said La Mayeux, "I should not have come, and he would have presented himself here on quitting his prison, which now, thanks to the generosity of one of his old companions, will not be long; but not knowing if, even after the *caution* is deposited, they would set him at liberty to-day, I was very anxious to fulfil his request, as far as was in my power. The generous kindness of your mistress made it a duty in me to do so."

Like all persons in whom good instincts develop themselves at times, Florine experienced a sort of consolation in doing good, when she could do so with impunity, that is to say, without exposing herself to the inexorable resentment of those on whom she depended.

Thanks to La Mayeux, an occasion offered on which she might probably render her mistress an important service; and, knowing sufficient of the hatred of the Princess de Saint-Dizier for her niece to be certain of the danger which Agricola's disclosure might produce, important as it was, if made to any one but Mademoiselle de Cardoville herself, Florine said to La Mayeux, in a serious and emphatic tone,—

"Listen, mademoiselle, whilst I give you what I believe to be most serviceable advice, with respect to my poor lady; but this step, on my part, may have very serious consequences for me, if you do not attend to my recommendation."

"How, mademoiselle?" said La Mayeux, looking at Florine with extreme surprise.

"Looking to my mistress's interest, M. Agricola ought not to tell any one but herself the important matters which he is desirous of communicating."

"But, unable to see Mademoiselle Adrienne, why should he not address himself to her family?"

"Above all things, he must be silent to my mistress's family on the subject. Mademoiselle Adrienne may recover, and then M. Agricola can speak to herself; and, if she never gets better, tell your adopted brother that it is still better that he should preserve the secret than see it serve the enemies of my young lady, which, be assured, would most certainly happen."

"I understand you, mademoiselle," said La Mayeux, sorrowfully; "the family of your generous mistress do not love her—persecute her, perhaps?"

"I cannot answer you a word on that subject; but now, as far as I am concerned, I entreat you to promise me that you will exact from M. Agricola that he will not say one word to any person of the step you have taken in coming to me on this subject, and the advice I have given you; the happiness—no, not the happiness," said Florine, with bitterness, as if she had long since renounced all hope of being happy—"not the happiness, but the repose of my life depends on your discretion!"

“ Oh, make yourself perfectly easy,” said La Mayeux, as much affected as astonished at the painful expression of Florine’s features, “ I will never be ungrateful ; no one but Agricola shall ever know that I have seen you.”

“ Thanks, oh, thanks, mademoiselle ! ” said Florine with warmth.

“ You thank me ? ” said La Mayeux, astonished at seeing the big tears coursing down Florine’s face.

“ Yes, I owe you a moment of happiness, pure and unmixed ; for, perhaps, I may render my dear mistress a service without the risk of increasing the troubles which already overwhelm me ! ”

“ You unhappy ? ”

“ Does that surprise you ? Oh, believe me, whatever may be your destiny, I would exchange it with mine ! ” exclaimed Florine, almost involuntarily.

“ Alas, mademoiselle,” said La Mayeux, “ you appear to have too kind a heart for me to allow you to form such a wish, particularly to-day —— ”

“ What do you mean ? ”

“ Ah, I sincerely hope, for your sake, mademoiselle,” replied La Mayeux, with bitterness, “ that you may never know how frightful it is to see yourself deprived of work, when work is your only resource ! ”

“ And are you reduced to that ? ” exclaimed Florine, looking anxiously at La Mayeux.

The young work-girl bowed down her head and made no reply. Her extreme pride almost reproached her for this confidence, which seemed like a complaint, and which had escaped her when thinking of the horror of her position.

“ If this be so,” said Florine, “ I pity you from the bottom of my heart ; and yet I do not know if my misfortune is not still greater than yours.” Then, after a moment’s reflection, Florine suddenly exclaimed, “ But, now I think of it, you want work ; if you are at your wits’ end, I think I can procure you work.”

“ Is it possible, mademoiselle ? ” exclaimed La Mayeux. “ I never should have dared to ask you for such a service, which could, however, save me ; but now your generous offer almost commands my full confidence, and I will confess to you, that this very morning they have taken from me my very humble work, though it only brought me in four francs a-week.”

“ Four francs a-week ! ” cried Florine, who could scarcely credit what she heard.

“ It is certainly very little,” said La Mayeux ; “ but it was enough for me. Unfortunately, the person who employed me found a way to have the work done for a still less price.”

“ Four francs a-week ! ” repeated Florine, deeply moved at so much misery and so much resignation. “ Well, well, I will introduce you to some persons who will assure you the earning of at least two francs a-day.”

“ Is it possible I could earn two francs a-day ? ”

“ You could indeed,—only you would be obliged to go and work by the day, unless, indeed, you preferred living entirely in the house.”

“ In my situation,” said La Mayeux, with a timid pride, “ I know one has no right to be guided by what we like or dislike ; still I

should greatly prefer working by the day, even though I gained less, if I might be allowed to take the work home with me."

"Unfortunately," answered Florine, "the performing your work at the place itself is indispensable."

"Then," replied La Mayeux, timidly, "I must abandon the idea of profiting by your goodness. Not that I refuse to work daily at the house of my employer, for one must live; but workwomen are expected to be dressed creditably, if not smartly; and I confess to you without any shame—for mine is an honest poverty—that it is entirely out of my power to be at all better dressed than I am at present."

"Do not let that be any objection," cried Florine, eagerly; "means will be found to provide you with suitable attire."

La Mayeux regarded Florine with increasing surprise, such offers were so entirely above her utmost hopes, and the pay proposed so greatly exceeding the earnings of any needle-woman she had ever heard of, that she could scarcely credit her senses.

"But," replied she, after some hesitation, "may I venture to ask how I can ever have deserved such generosity? What motive can any one have for bestowing such favours on a poor girl like me?"

Florine started suddenly, the impulse of a naturally good and feeling heart, conjoined with a sincere desire to serve La Mayeux, whose gentleness and resignation to her hard lot deeply affected Florine, had led her on to make a somewhat thoughtless proposal. She well knew the price the poor La Mayeux must pay for the services so freely promised her; and now, for the first time, she asked herself, whether it was probable the young sempstress would accept them upon the terms which would be affixed to them? Unfortunately, Florine had gone too far to recede: yet she could not bring herself to confess to La Mayeux all that yet remained to be told touching this tempting offer: she, therefore, determined to leave its further developement to others, and to permit the scruples of La Mayeux to interfere or not, as it might happen, with her undertaking the conditions imposed, believing, like many who have yielded to temptation, that others might be as vulnerable as herself. Florine could not help fancying that, in La Mayeux's distressed situation, it was more than possible neither her delicacy nor scruples would stand in the way of her acceding to all required of her. She therefore resumed: "I can well understand your being surprised at offers of pay so much beyond what you have hitherto gained; but I ought to explain to you, that what I have been saying refers to a charitable institution, established for the purpose of finding work or occupation for deserving though distressed females, and undertakes to place them, either as servants in families, or to supply them with daily needlework at the institution, which is called Sainte-Marie's Charity. Now this charity is conducted by persons so truly benevolent, that they even provide a sort of outfit for the females they take under their protection, when it happens, that they themselves do not possess the means of appearing respectable at their work, or taking a suitable supply of clothes with them when they enter a service."

This plausible explanation of the very *magnificent* offers Florine had made abundantly satisfied La Mayeux, who, indeed, saw nothing uncommon in a species of benevolent charity her own gentle mind fully responded to.

“Ah, now, indeed, I can quite comprehend why these kind persons give so high a price as that you were speaking of!” cried La Mayeux; “there is one difficulty, I fear, in the way of obtaining the kind assistance of these charitable individuals, and that is, my being wholly unprovided with any recommendations to their notice or patronage.”

“Nay,” said Florine, “your being honest, industrious, and distressed, will be all the recommendations you will require. There is only one thing I must prepare you for: you will be questioned as to the strictness with which you perform all your religious duties.”

“Ah, mademoiselle, no one in the world loves or worships God more truly than myself,” replied La Mayeux, with gentle firmness; “but the practice of certain religious duties is a matter of conscience; and, though I should deeply regret losing the opportunity you have held out to me, yet I certainly could not avail myself of it, if any thing of this kind were required.”

“Not the slightest, I assure you; but, as the charity in question is directed by extremely pious persons, I only meant to say, you must not feel astonished at their questioning you on this head:—besides, try it. You need only try, you can incur no risk: if the conditions they propose to you suit, you can accept them; if, on the contrary, they offend your liberty of conscience, why it will be at your pleasure to refuse them. Your position cannot be rendered worse by having an opportunity of judging, and it may be made much better.”

It was impossible to make any objection to reasoning so clear and convincing, and, with the consciousness of having full powers to choose or reject, La Mayeux dismissed all mistrust and doubt; she, therefore added,—

“Indeed, mademoiselle, I most gratefully accept your offer, and thank you for it from the bottom of my heart. But who will introduce me?”

“I will. To-morrow, if you like.”

“But, then, these charitable persons will, I suppose, wish to make some inquiries respecting me?”

“I think not. The holy mother Sainte-Perpétue, superior of the convent of Sainte-Marie, where the charity is established, will, in all probability, be satisfied with seeing you and hearing your own account of the difficulty you are placed in, and will not wish for any further recommendation; but, even if otherwise, she will but have to say so, and you can very easily satisfy her. So now, then, it is agreed, is it not? To-morrow, then.”

“Shall I call here for you, mademoiselle?”

“No; because, as I told you, we must not let any one know of your having been here from M. Agricola; and, were you to repeat your visit, it would excite suspicion, and, perhaps, bring the whole affair to light. I will come with a coach and fetch you. Where do you live?”

“In the Rue Brise-Miche, No. 13; and, since you are kind enough to take so much trouble, mademoiselle, all you need do on arriving will be to ask the dyer, who acts as porter to the house, to come and call me, to let La Mayeux know you are there.”

“La Mayeux!” exclaimed Florine, with unfeigned surprise.

"Yes, *mademoiselle*," said the poor girl, with a mournful smile, "that is a nickname every body calls me by; and it was because of my unfortunate figure and infirmity," continued La Mayeux, unable to prevent a large tear trickling slowly down her pale cheek, "which obtained for me this name, that I wished to avoid doing my work any where but at home. There are many who can bear to joke at such things as bodily deformity without recollecting how cruelly it wounds the object of their mirth; but," added La Mayeux, wiping away the tears with which her eyes were filled with her long thin fingers, "it is not for me to choose what I will do; and, therefore, I submit."

Deeply affected at this unpretending forgetfulness of self and unfeigned humility, Florine took La Mayeux's hand, saying,—

"Do not distress yourself by thinking of such things; there are some misfortunes far more calculated to inspire compassion and tenderness than derision. Then you do not wish me to ask for you by your real name?"

"Oh, yes, if you please. I am called *Madeleine Soliveau*; but I must again remind you, *mademoiselle*, that I am but very little known by any other name than La Mayeux."

"Well, then, to-morrow, about twelve o'clock, I will be in the *Rue Brise-Miche*."

"Oh, *mademoiselle*, how can I ever repay your kindness?"

"Do not mention repaying me. Be assured my greatest desire is, that what I am proposing may prove serviceable to you, of which you alone can judge after to-morrow's interview. As for M. Agricola, do not reply to his letter; but wait till he gets out of prison, and then, let me repeat, tell him he must on no account divulge one syllable of what he knows until he can see my dear mistress."

"Where is this poor young lady at present?"

"I do not know! I am ignorant where she was taken to when her madness first declared itself. Then expect me to-morrow without fail."

"Thank you a thousand times," said La Mayeux.

The reader has not forgotten, in all probability, that the convent of *Sainte-Marie*, whither Florine had promised to conduct La Mayeux, was also the spot where the daughters of General Simon were confined, and closely adjoined the madhouse of Doctor *Baleinier*, to which *Adrienne de Cardoville* had been taken, and was then kept prisoner.

CHAPTER LX.

THE ABBESS *SAINTE-PERPÉTUE*.

THE convent of *Sainte-Marie*, whither the daughters of Marshal Simon had been conducted, was an ancient and vast hôtel, the extensive gardens of which abutted on the *Boulevard de l'Hôpital*, at this time one of the most deserted parts of Paris.

The scenes which now follow took place on the 12th of February, the eve of the fatal day on which the members of the Rennepont family, the last descendants of the sister of the Wandering Jew were to assemble in the Rue Saint-Françoise.

The convent of Sainte-Marie was governed with the strictest regularity. A superior council, composed of influential ecclesiastics, presided over by the Father d'Aigrigny, and females of deep piety, at the head of which was the Princess de Saint-Dizier, frequently assembled for the purpose of consulting as to the best means of extending and confirming the occult and vast influence of this establishment, which was making remarkable advances.

Skilful combination, very sagaciously planned, had presided over the institution of the Charity of Sainte-Marie, which, aided by numerous donations, possessed very large estates, and other riches, which were daily accumulating.

The religious community was but a pretext; but, thanks to numberless ramifications with the provinces, and the intervention of the highest members of the ultramontane party, a considerable number of richly endowed orphans were sent to this establishment, who were there to receive a solid, serious, pious education; much preferable, as they asserted, to the frivolous bringing up which they would have in fashionable boarding-schools infected with the corruptions of the age. To widows and lone females, who were wealthy, the Charity of Sainte-Marie offered a secure asylum against the dangers and temptations of the world. In this peaceable retreat they would enjoy a heavenly calm, and, whilst they consulted their eternal salvation, they were surrounded by the tenderest and most affectionate care.

This was not all; the Mother Sainte-Perpétue, the superior of the convent, undertook also in the name of the charity to procure for the truly faithful, who were desirous of preserving the interior of their houses from the corruptions of the age, either companions for solitary or aged females, or servants for households, or workwomen by the day, all being persons whose pious morality was guaranteed by the charity.

Nothing could appear more worthy of interest, sympathy, and encouragement, than such an establishment; but we shall anon unveil the capacious and dangerous net of intrigues of all sorts that covered these charitable and holy appearances.

The superior of the convent, Mother Sainte-Perpétue, was a tall woman, about forty years of age, dressed in a woollen gown of carmelite colour, and having a long rosary at her girdle; a white cap, tied under the chin, and a black veil, confined her lean and pale countenance; a vast quantity of deep and intersecting wrinkles furrowed her forehead, of the colour of yellow ivory; her sharp and projecting nose was curved slightly like the beak of a bird of prey; her black eye, sagacious and piercing, combined to complete a physiognomy intelligent, calm, and firm.

As regarded her ability and management of the tangible interests of the community, Mother Sainte-Perpétue was equal to the most skilful and wily lawyer. When women are gifted with what is called *a mind for business*, and will apply their depth of penetration, indefatigable perseverance, prudent dissimulation, and, above all, that correctness

and quickness of perception so natural to them, they attain prodigious results.

As to Mother Sainte-Perpétue, to her strong and powerful brain the vast responsibility of the community was but child's play. No one knew better than she how to purchase depreciated properties, restore them to their worth, and sell them again advantageously: the variations of the funds, exchange, the current value of shares in different undertakings, were perfectly familiar to her. She had never instructed her agents to meddle in a doubtful affair, when investment was required for the sums which pious souls daily bestowed in alms on the Charity of Sainte-Marie. She had established in the house order, discipline, and above all, an extreme economy; the constant end and aim of her efforts being to enrich, not herself, but the community which she ruled; for the spirit of association, when directed to the purposes of *collective egotism*, gives to bodies the faults and vices of an individual.

Thus a body will love power and money, as an ambitious man loves power for the sake of power, as the avaricious man loves money for the sake of money. But it is always on the subject of real property that congregations act like individuals. Real property is their dream, their fixed idea, their fructifying monomania, and they pursue their object with most earnest, tender, and indefatigable zeal.

The first acquisition of real property is to a poor and small rising community what her wedding presents are to a young bride—his first horse to a young man—his first success to a poet—her first Caclunere shawl to a dressmaker's girl: and after all, in this material age, a fixed piece of property makes a community known and appreciated as substantial to a certain extent in the religious Exchange, and gives it the more influence over the simple-minded, inasmuch as all these associations for assumed charitable purposes, which end by acquiring immense possessions, commence invariably with an air of modest poverty as its social introduction, and charity to its neighbour as its guarantee and ostensible object.

Thus it is hardly to be credited how much fierce and bitter rivalry these arises between different congregations of men and women, on the subject of the actual property which each can acquire, and with what ineffable complacency an opulent congregation will crush, under the inventory of its own houses, farms, investments, a poorer congregation.

Envy, jealous hatred, rendered still more fierce by the indolence of the cloister, produce these comparisons; and yet nothing can be less Christian, in the heavenly acceptation of this Divine word, nothing can be less in unison with the real spirit of the Gospel, a spirit so essentially and religiously inculcating *community*, than this violent and insatiable ardour for acquiring and monopolising by every possible mode: a dangerous passion, and far from excusable in the eyes of public opinion, through the miserable almsgiving, which is presided over by an inexorable spirit of exclusion and intolerance.

Mother Sainte-Perpétue was seated before a large bureau, with falling flap, placed in the centre of a small apartment, plainly, but very comfortably furnished. An excellent fire burnt in the marble-fronted fireplace, and a soft carpet covered the floor.

The superior, who every day had brought to her all letters,

addressed either to the sisters or the boarders of the convent, was occupied in opening the letters of the sisters, according to right, and in unsealing very skilfully the letters of the boarders, according to a right which she assumed to herself, and without their privity, but, be it understood, always for the sole benefit of the dear girls' salvation, and a little that she might be always well informed of their correspondence, for the superior took upon herself also the duty of taking cognisance of all the letters, which were written from the convent, before they were despatched to the post-office.

The traces of this pious and innocent investigation easily disappeared, for the holy and good mother possessed a complete arsenal of charming little steel tools, some of which, very pointed, served to cut imperceptibly the paper round the seal, and then the letter opened: read, and replaced in its envelope, she took another pretty little rounded tool, which, being lightly warmed, was quickly applied about the circumference of the wax of the seal, and which thereby slowly melted, expanded a little, and covered the first incision. Then, by a sentiment of justice and benevolence highly praiseworthy, there was in the arsenal of the good mother a small and most ingenious fumigatory, to the moist and dissolving vapour of which were submitted the letters modestly and humbly closed with wafers, which, thus moistened, yielded to the slightest effort, and without the smallest tear.

According to the importance of the *indiscretions* in which the writers of these letters were occasionally detected, the superior made notes, more or less special. She was at this moment in her interesting investigation, when two knocks gently rapped on her bolted door.

Mother Sainte-Perpétue instantly lowered the large semicircular flap of her *escritoire*, and covered her arsenal, and, rising, opened the door with a grave and solemn air.

A lay sister came in and announced that the Princess de Saint-Dizier was waiting in the saloon, and that Mademoiselle Florine, accompanied by a young deformed and ill-clad girl, had arrived a short time after the princess, and were waiting at the door of the little corridor.

"Introduce the princess first," said Mother Sainte-Perpétue.

And with delightful care she moved an arm-chair towards the fire. Madame de Saint-Dizier entered.

Although free from coquettish or juvenile pretensions, the princess was dressed with taste and elegance. She wore a black velvet hat of fashionable make, a large blue Cachmere shawl, a black satin gown, trimmed with sable, and a muff of the same fur.

"To what good fortune am I, to-day, to attribute the honour of your visit, my dear daughter?" said the superior, graciously.

"On a most important matter, my dear mother; and I am in great haste, for his eminence is waiting for me, and unfortunately I have but a few minutes to spare. My business concerns the two orphan girls, about whom we had so long a conversation yesterday."

"They are still separated, as you desired; and the separation has affected them so much, that this morning I have been obliged to send for Doctor Baleinier at his *Maison de Santé*. He found them suffering from fever and extreme depression; and, remarkable to say, the same symptoms precisely developed themselves at the same time in

both sisters. I have again questioned the two unhappy creatures, and I have been amazed, thunder-struck : they are idolaters !”

“The greater the necessity of entrusting them to you. But to the subject of my visit, my dear mother : we have learnt the unexpected return of the soldier who brought these young girls into France, and whom we believed absent for several days. He is, however, in Paris, and, in spite of his age, is a bold and daring man, with uncommon energy of purpose. If he should discover that the young girls are here (which, fortunately, is all but impossible), in his intense anxiety to have them under the protection of his own impious influence, he would go to any and every extremity. Therefore, from this moment, my dear mother, redouble your vigilance, that no one be admitted during the night : this quarter is so lonely !”

“Make yourself easy, my dear daughter, we are sufficiently protected. Our porter and gardeners, well armed, take their rounds every night on the side of the Boulevard de l’Hôpital ; the walls are high, and thickly studded with points of iron in the parts most easy of access. But still I thank you, my dear daughter, for having thus warned me : we will redouble our precautions.”

“Especially to-night, my dear mother !”

“And why to-night ?”

“Because, if this infernal soldier had the unheard-of audacity to attempt any thing, he would do so this night.”

“And how do you know that, my dear daughter ?”

“Our information assures us of it,” replied the princess, with a slight embarrassment, which did not escape the superior, who was, however, too self-possessed and cautious to appear to observe it. She had her suspicions, however, that there were certain things concealed from her.

“To-night, then,” replied Mother Sainte-Perpétue, “we will redouble our vigilance. But since I have the pleasure of seeing you, my dear daughter, I will avail myself of the occasion to say two words as to the marriage in question.”

“Yes, pray do, my dear mother !” said the princess, eagerly, “for it is very important. The young Baron de Brisville is a man full of ardent devotion in this time of revolutionary impiety : he takes the sacrament openly, and may be of great service to us ; he is a member of the chamber, and has the ear of the house, and is not deficient in a kind of aggressive and provoking eloquence ; and I know of no one who gives to his assertions a more dashing air, or to his faith a more uncommon attraction. He is a correct calculator, for his cavalier and off-hand manner of talking of religious affairs piques and excites the curiosity of the indifferent. Fortunately, circumstances are such, that he may shew a bold violence against our opponents, without the least danger ; and that redoubles his zeal as a would-be martyr. In a word, he is with us ; and, in return, this marriage is his due, and must take place. Besides, you know, dear mother, that he intends to offer a hundred thousand francs to the Charity of Sainte-Marie the day when he comes into possession of Mademoiselle Baudricourt’s fortune.”

“I never had the slightest doubt of M. de Brisville’s excellent intentions on the subject of a charity which claims the sympathy of all

pious persons," replied the superior, discreetly; "but I did not anticipate so many obstacles on the part of the young lady."

"What do you mean?"

"This young lady, whom I had hitherto believed timidly, submission, subjection—let me use the full phrase—idiotism itself, instead of being, as I expected, overjoyed at this proposition of marriage, asks time for reflection."

"That's annoying!"

"She opposes a passive resistance. I told her (but in vain) with much severity, that, being destitute of parents, friends, and confided absolutely to my care, she ought to see with my eyes, hear with my ears, and, when I assure her that this union is suitable to her in every respect, that she ought to comply without the slightest objection or reflection."

"Of course! It is impossible to think in a manner more proper and sensible."

"She replied that she should like to see M. de Brisville, and know his disposition before she entered into any engagement."

"How very ridiculous, after you had been responsible for his morality, and thought the match eligible!"

"Well, this morning, I observed to Mademoiselle Baudricourt that up to this time I had not used towards her any thing but mildness and persuasion; but that, if she drove me to it, I should be compelled, in spite of myself, and for her sake, to act with severity, in order to overcome her obstinacy; and that I should separate her from her companions, put her in a cell, and on the most compulsory system, until she resolved, after all, to be happy, and marry an honourable man."

"Well, after these threats, my dear mother?"

"Well, I hope they will have a good effect. She had in her country a friend with whom she corresponded: I suppressed the correspondence, as I thought it dangerous; and now she is under my sole influence, and I hope we shall arrive at our wished-for end. But you see, my dear daughter, that it is not without trouble and crosses that we can attain the good we desire."

"I am sure of M. de Brisville, and will answer for it, if he marries Mademoiselle Baudricourt, that——"

"You know, my dear daughter," said the superior, interrupting the princess, "that if it concerned me individually, I should refuse; but to give to the charity is to give to God, and I cannot prevent M. de Brisville from increasing the sum of his own good works. But something most distressing has occurred!"

"What is that, my dear mother?"

"The *Sacre Cœur* disputes with us and overbids us in the purchase of an estate every way advantageous and desirable for its possessor. Some persons are never satisfied! However, I did not scruple to speak my mind very sharply and severely to the abbess herself."

"She told me so," replied Madame de Saint-Dizier, "but attributed her conduct to the stern necessity of practising a rigid economy."

"What! you visit her, then, do you, my dear daughter?" demanded the superior, with the most undisguised astonishment.

"I met her lately at the house of a friend," replied Madame de Saint-Dizier, with a slight hesitation in her manner, which the holy Mother Sainte-Perpétue appeared not to notice, but merely resumed the subject by saying,—

"I really cannot account for our establishment having incurred the jealousy and dislike of the *Sacre Cœur*, as it appears to have done. There is no end to the ill-natured reports it has spread respecting the 'Charity of Sainte-Marie;' but some persons are always chagrined and annoyed at the success of their neighbours."

"Well, then, dear mother," said the princess, in a conciliating tone, "let us hope that the splendid donation you will receive from M. de Brisville may serve to atone for the vexations you have experienced from the superior of the *Sacre Cœur*. This marriage would then be doubly advantageous, my dear mother; for it would place a large fortune in the hands of one of our own party, who would employ it as it ought to be spent. With an income of one hundred thousand francs per annum the power of our new ally would be of immense importance; and we should then possess an organ worthy of our cause, and be no longer under the necessity of leaving our defence in the hands of such men as this M. Dumoulin."

"There is, nevertheless, much force and power in his writing: he always reminds me of Saint-Bernard, when angrily reproving the impiety of the age."

"Ah, my dear mother, if you only knew what a very strange description of *saint* M. Dumoulin would make! I could tell you—but no, I will not sully my lips or offend your ears: all I can say is, that such defenders as he is would peril any cause, however holy. Adieu, then, dear and holy mother, till I see you again! and pray attend to my request touching the increase of every precaution against any attempt during the night on the part of the old soldier I spoke of. His return just now is most perplexing."

"Nay, my daughter, be under no alarm—I will carefully attend to your wishes. Oh, I forgot! Mademoiselle Florine has been here to beseech a favour at my hands: it is to request you will take her into your service. You know the fidelity with which she obeyed your orders respecting her attendance upon your unfortunate niece. Now it seems to me you owe her some little recompense, and by taking her to be about yourself you would for ever bind her to your interests, as well as very greatly oblige and serve me, who feel a lively interest in the young person's welfare."

"My dear mother, since you are interested for the girl, the thing is settled at once, and I will take her into my service with pleasure; and indeed, now I think of it, it is probable she may be of more utility to me than I at first thought of."

"A thousand thanks, dear daughter, for your ready compliance with my wishes! I shall soon see you again, I trust. We shall have a long conference, at two o'clock the day after to-morrow, with his eminence and my lord-marquis. Do not forget it!"

"Never fear, dear mother: rely on my punctuality. But pray excuse my again begging you to redouble every ordinary precaution to-night, lest a great scandal arise to the holy establishment over which you preside!"

After respectfully kissing the superior's hand, Madame de Saint-Dizier went out by a large door leading from the abbess's small private apartment to a saloon which opened upon the principal staircase. A few seconds had elapsed after the departure of the princess, when a side-door opened, and Florine stood before the abbess of Sainte-Marie. The superior was sitting, and Florine approached with an air of timid humility.

"Did you not meet the Princess de Saint-Dizier?" inquired Sainte-Perpétue.

"No, holy mother, I was waiting in the gallery whose windows look into the gardens."

"The princess takes you into her service from this very day," said the superior.

Involuntarily a movement of vexation and surprise escaped Florine as she hastily said, "Me! holy mother? Nay, I——"

"I requested her to do so in your name; and you, of course, accept the permission," replied the superior, in an imperious tone.

"But, holy mother, I begged of you not to ——"

"I have said that you accept the situation offered you without a word," persisted the superior, in a voice so firm and positive, that Florine, incapable of any further resistance, cast down her eyes, and said, in a low and broken voice,—

"I accept it, if it must be so."

"I order you to do so, in the name of M. Rodin."

"Alas, I thought so, holy mother!" replied Florine, mournfully. "And what are the conditions attached to my entering the princess's service?"

"Precisely the same as those which accompanied your employment with her niece."

Florine shuddered, yet, rallying her self-possession, she said,—

"Then I shall be required to make frequent secret reports concerning the princess?"

"You will observe all, remember all, and repeat all you see or hear."

"I will obey, holy mother."

"Your first care will be to take particular heed of every visit the princess may henceforward receive from the superior of the *Sacre Cœur*; you must carefully note down every thing you observe during such visits, and endeavour to glean as much of the conversation that passes as you possibly can: this is necessary to preserve Madame de Saint-Dizier from dangerous influences."

"Depend upon my obedience, holy mother."

"Your next object will be to endeavour to find out the reason why two young orphan girls were brought hither by Madame Grivois, the princess's confidential attendant, with orders to treat them with the utmost severity."

"I will endeavour to do so, holy mother."

"Added to which, you will also keep a close and accurate account of all that passes on every subject that may appear to you to be of the slightest importance. That will suffice for to-day; to-morrow I shall have some very particular instructions to give you relative to another affair."

"I understand you, holy mother, and shall attend to what you have said."

"If I find you faithfully discharge the duties appointed you, and conduct yourself satisfactorily and according to the instructions you have received, you will, ere long, quit the princess's service, to become head-woman to a young and newly married lady, which would ensure you an excellent and permanent situation, upon the same conditions as those now required—you understand? And now, then, it is understood—by every one, if you please—that you enter the household of Madame de Saint-Dizier in consequence of having solicited me to procure that favour for you."

"I will remember, holy mother, and speak of it as you desire me."

"Who is the deformed young person by whom you are accompanied?"

"A poor, destitute creature, but very intelligent, and evidently above the condition in which she is placed. She is a plain needle-woman; but, work having failed her, she is reduced to the utmost indigence. I made the strictest inquiries respecting her this morning, when I went to fetch her, and every one spoke in the highest terms of her."

"She is plain in countenance, and deformed in figure, I understand?"

"Her features, though plain, are very interesting and expressive, but she is much deformed."

It appeared to fall in with the wishes, or views, of the superior, that the person thus brought before her notice was gentle, unassuming, and of unprepossessing exterior. After pausing a few minutes, as though reflecting on the matter, she added,—

"Intelligent, you say?"

"Very much so."

"And absolutely destitute?"

"Perfectly unprovided—without a resource, save in her own industry."

"Is she pious?"

"She does not attend to outward forms."

"That matters but little," said the superior, mentally, "if she be but intelligent and clever; that will answer my purpose." Then, speaking aloud, she said, "Can you answer for her being an expert needle-woman?"

"I think I can, holy mother."

The superior rose, went to a book-ease, and took out a sort of register, or list of various names and departments of service, and appeared for some time to be attentively examining its contents; then, replacing the book, she said,—

"Let the young person come in, and do you await me in the work-room."

"Deformed, intelligent, and a skilful needle-woman," said the superior, thoughtfully, "she would excite no suspicions—we must see —"

At this instant Florine returned with La Mayeux, whom she at once introduced to the superior, and then withdrew, in obedience to the commands she had received.

The poor sempstress was agitated—trembling, and evidently affected by some recent occurrence; in truth, she could scarcely preserve her composure, or credit her senses, while thinking of the singular discovery she had just made while awaiting the return of Florine in the vestibule overlooking the garden. It was not without a degree of terror, mixed with vague apprehensions of ill, that La Mayeux found herself alone with the abbess of the convent of Sainte-Marie.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE TEMPTATION.

THE origin of La Mayeux's uneasiness and agitation was as follows:—

Florine, when summoned to the presence of the superior, had left the young girl in a long vestibule, furnished with benches, and forming a sort of antechamber to the apartments on the first floor of the building.

Finding herself alone, La Mayeux had mechanically approached a window opening on the garden of the convent, bounded on this side by a half-demolished wall, and terminated at one end by a wooden palisading, the upper part of which was merely latticed: this wall, which served as a boundary and divisionary line between the convent garden, and that of an adjacent house, led also to a chapel now in progress of erection.

While observing the singular form of the adjoining house, with its dome-shaped roof, its closely grated windows, and sombre, gloomy air, the attention of La Mayeux was suddenly attracted by the appearance of a young female at one of the windows of the ground-floor, who, earnestly gazing on the opposite building of the convent, kept making repeated gestures, at once affectionate and encouraging.

From the situation in which she stood, La Mayeux could not discern to whom these signals of intelligence were addressed; but she could well observe the extreme loveliness of the person from whom they proceeded, the exquisite brilliancy of her complexion, the lustre of her full, dark eye, and the gentle, benevolent smile which played on her lips; yet she doubted not but these pantomimic demonstrations of regard were fully understood and reciprocated by the party to whom they were intended, and who evidently responded to them in corresponding assurances of affection; for almost immediately after, the fair stranger, placing her left hand on her heart, with a gesture at once graceful and expressive, intimated, by a motion of her right hand, that her heart would fain take her to the spot on which her eyes so earnestly gazed, might she but follow its impulse.

The sun, darting forth its subdued rays from the wintry clouds which obscured it, cast a gleam of brightness on the rich hair of the pale and delicate creature who stood closely pressed against the iron bars of her window, and surrounded with a halo of rich light the masses of golden-tinted hair which streamed over her neck and shoulders.

At the sight of this beauteous countenance, shaded by the thick veil of rich auburn curls which hung adown her cheeks, La Mayeux started, and involuntarily the idea of its being Mademoiselle de Cardoville recurred to her, and she felt assured (and with justice too) that the proteetress of Agricola was before her.

Her finding this young and lovely being the wretched occupant of a madhouse, recollecting as she did the kindness and delicacy with which she had received Agricola, shot a keen pang through the kind and feeling heart of La Mayeux, who, while fully believing the report of her madness, could not help fancying she had never seen features apparently more illumined with graceful intelligence than were those of Mademoiselle Cardoville at that very minute.

All at once the fair creature, on whom La Mayeux's eyes were fixed, seemed to start—made an expressive gesture of haste—placed her finger on her lips—blew two kisses in the same direction to which all her signals had been directed, and quickly disappeared.

Remembering the important revelations which Agricola had to make to Mademoiselle de Cardoville, La Mayeux regretted so much the more severely the impossibility of gaining access to her, as she felt convinced that, if she were *really* out of her senses, at least she had her lucid intervals.

The young sempstress remained plunged in these uneasy reflections, when she was aroused by the return of Florine, accompanied by one of the sisters of the convent.

La Mayeux was, therefore, constrained to preserve silence as to the interesting discovery she had just made, and, quickly following her conductor, found herself in the presence of the superior, who, after casting a rapid and scrutinising glance over the physiognomy of the young needle-woman, was so entirely satisfied with the gentle goodness and timid amiability of its expression, that she hesitated not to give entire credence to all Florine had advanced in her favour.

“Approach, my dear daughter,” said Mother Perpétue, in an affectionate tone, “I have heard from Florine the painful circumstances in which you are placed. Is it really the case that you are destitute of employment at present?”

“Yes, indeed, madame, I am sorry to say it is too true.”

“Call me mother, my dear child; that name sounds more pleasantly, and is, besides, according to the rules of our holy house. I need scarcely ask you what are your principles?”

“I have always maintained myself honestly by my labour, holy mother,” replied La Mayeux, with a touching simplicity, and an air at once dignified and modest.

“I doubt it not, my child; indeed, I have many reasons for thinking you have acted wisely and well; and you should bless the Lord, who has placed you out of reach of many temptations with which others are assailed. Tell me, are you skilful at your business?”

“I have always done my best, holy mother, to please and satisfy those who have employed me, and have generally succeeded in so doing. But, if you would please to set me to work, you could then judge of my abilities better than I can.”

“Nay, nay, my child, what you say respecting them is quite sufficient. You prefer, I think, working by the day?”

“Mademoiselle Florine told me, holy mother, that I must not hope to be allowed to take the work home with me.”

“Not at present, my child; but hereafter, perhaps, should an opportunity occur, I may be enabled to manage this for you. I can offer you this for the present. I have been applied to, by a most respectable old lady, to recommend to her a daily workwoman; introduced by me, you will instantly be engaged, *the charity* will take upon itself to provide you with suitable attire, and you will pay back the sum advanced by little and little from what you earn, for you will receive your pay through our hands; your remuneration will be two francs a-day, does that appear enough to satisfy you?”

“Enough! oh, holy mother, it exceeds my utmost hopes!”

“You will only be occupied from nine in the morning till six in the evening, so that you will still have several hours at your own disposal. You see the conditions are very easy, are they not?”

“Oh, very, very easy, holy mother!”

“I ought, in the first place, to explain to you where it is the charity proposes to place you; it is in the family of a widow-lady named Madame de Bremont, a person of extreme piety, and in whose house I believe and hope you would have only the best examples in every respect—or, if indeed it turned out otherwise, why, you would let me know?”

“I do not quite understand, holy mother,” said La Mayeux, with a sort of bewildered surprise.

“Then just listen to me, my dear daughter,” said Mother Sainte-Perpétue, with an increasingly bland and affectionate manner: “Sainte-Marie’s Charity has a holy and a double aim in view; you can understand, can you not, that if it is our duty to afford the heads of families every requisite guarantee for the morality of those persons who are placed through our recommendation in the midst of their household, so it is equally an obligation upon us to satisfy those whom we introduce into an establishment as to the correctness and propriety of those to whom we send them.”

“Nothing can be more fair and prudent on both sides, holy mother.”

“Certainly, daughter, it is, as you observe, fair on both sides; for, as an ill-conducted servant might cause serious annoyance in a family of respectability, so, by the same rule, a mother or mistress of improper conduct or principles might exercise a very dangerous influence over the minds of their domestics, or those who merely serve them in a daily capacity. Now it is to offer a mutual guarantee to virtuous servants and employers that our charity has been instituted.”

“Ah, madame,” said La Mayeux, innocently, “those who could devise such a scheme deserve the thanks and blessings of every one!”

“No doubt, my child; and our charity may justly claim these thanks, since it performs all it undertakes to do. Now, for example: a young and interesting person—like yourself, for instance—is placed with persons whom we believe to be of irreproachable morals; but should she perceive, either in her employers or in those who habitually frequent the house, any irregularity of manners, the slightest tendency towards an irreligious mode of opinion, or, in fact, any thing calculated to offend decency, modesty, or good sense, why then she would come

to us her protectors, and give us a detailed and confidential account of all that has alarmed her notions of propriety. Nothing can be more just than that, can it?"

"No, holy mother," answered La Mayeux, timidly, while she began to think these precautions and provisions were somewhat singular.

"Then," continued the superior, "should the case appear serious, we advise our *protégées* to observe more closely still, in order to be well convinced whether their alarms be well founded or not. Fresh matter for confidential communication is brought to us; and should our apprehensions be confirmed, then, faithful to our pious charge, we immediately withdraw our *protégée* from the risk of moral contamination: but, as a great number of persons in humble life, spite of their virtuous, well-intentioned minds, are not always gifted with sufficient discrimination of that which is hurtful to their souls, we prefer, for their own good, that every eighth day they should relate to us (as a child would to its parent), either verbally or in writing, every thing that has passed during the week in the houses in which they are placed, so that we can decide for them—whether to allow them to continue residents in such households or to withdraw them. We have at this present time nearly a hundred individuals companions to ladies, shopwomen, servants, and daily workwomen, placed according to these conditions in a vast number of families, and, for the interest of all concerned, we have daily reason to rejoice in the good effects of the plan adopted. You fully comprehend, my dear daughter, do you not?"

"Quite—quite, holy mother," answered La Mayeux, becoming more and more embarrassed. She possessed too much uprightness of mind as well as sagacity not to perceive that this system of mutually assuring the morality of masters and servants resembled a species of familiar *espionage*—a kind of betrayal of the freedom and liberty of the domestic hearth, organised upon a vast scale, and executed, by the objects of the *charity's* patronage, almost unknown to themselves; for it was scarcely possible to disguise more skilfully or speciously the habit of repeating all they heard, or to conceal more artfully the base and treacherous part assigned to those who unconsciously fulfilled the nefarious purposes of the sinister spirits, whose puppets they unknowingly were.

"If I have entered into these long details, my dear daughter," said the superior, taking the silence of La Mayeux for consent, "it is in order to shew you that you would not be obliged to remain against your inclination in a house where, I repeat, contrary to our expectations, you would not at all times be surrounded with good and pious examples. Now the family of Madame de Brémont, where I propose to establish you, is indeed a holy and godly one. Certainly I have been told (though I am far from giving credit to it) that the daughter of Madame Brémont, Madame de Noisy, who has recently come to live with her, is not altogether exemplary in her conduct—that she does not perform her religious duties with befitting regularity, and that, during the absence of her husband, who is now in America, she receives the unfortunately too assiduous visits of a rich manufacturer, named M. Hardy."

At this mention of Agricola's patron, La Mayeux could not restrain a movement of surprise, while a faint blush coloured her pale cheek.

The superior, however, construing both the start and the blush into a proof of the sensitive modesty of the young sempstress, proceeded to say,—

“I thought it right, my daughter, to tell you all this, in order that you might be completely on your guard, and, for the same reason, I have reverted to the rumours afloat concerning Madame de Noisy. At the same time, I must repeat, that I entirely disbelieve them, because the daughter of Madame de Brémont has been too well brought up, and had too holy examples constantly before her, ever to be capable of so far forgetting herself; besides, being in the house from morning till evening, no one could have a better opportunity than yourself of judging how far these reports are true or false. If, unhappily, you should suppose the former to be the case, why, then, my child, you would be sure to come and lay before me all your most minute reasons for coming to that conclusion; and, if I concurred in your opinion, I should instantly withdraw you from that house, because the sanctity of the mother would not sufficiently compensate for the deplorable example the improper conduct of the daughter would afford; for, from the instant you become a member of our *charity*, I hold myself responsible for your safety, and even in the event of your tenderness of conscience or religious scruples obliging you to quit Madame de Brémont, should you remain any length of time unemployed, the *charity*, if perfectly satisfied with your zeal and conduct, will allow you a franc a-day until another situation can be procured for you. Thus, you perceive, my dear daughter, you have every thing to gain and nothing to lose by the transaction. Now, I believe, I have named every thing; it is, therefore, a settled thing that you go to Madame de Brémont the day after to-morrow?”

La Mayeux found herself most terribly perplexed. Sometimes she believed her first suspicions were correct; and, spite of her natural timidity, her pride revolted at the idea that, because she was poor and destitute, she should be supposed capable of selling herself as a spy, through the temptation of a liberal salary. Then her mind refused to admit the belief that a woman of the age and calling of the superior would descend to address to her a proposition alike disgraceful to the proposer or the acceptor. At last, while blaming herself for the injurious suspicions she had entertained, she came to the conclusion, that, before employing her, the superior was desirous of testing the integrity of her principles by subjecting her to a hard and trying proof through the offer of pay, to her so great and dazzling.

With that natural desire to think well of every one, which formed part of La Mayeux's character, she determined to adopt this last idea, in which she was further strengthened by reflecting, that even if wrong, it would be the least offensive way of refusing the unworthy offers of the superior.

With a movement wholly devoid of pride, but which spoke the full sense she entertained of what was due to herself, the young workwoman, raising her head, which she had hitherto kept modestly bent downwards, looked the superior full in the face, in order that the

sincerity of her words might be seen in her countenance, and said in a slightly tremulous voice, forgetting in her agitation the form of address dictated,—

“Madame, it is not for me to blame you for having thus subjected me to such a proof as this. You see in me a poor, distressed creature, who as yet has had no means of proving myself deserving of your confidence; but, poor as I am, be assured that no temptation in the world should ever induce me to disgrace myself by the performance of such an action as that you were, no doubt, obliged to propose to me, in order that my refusal might convince you I am worthy of your kind assistance. No, no, madame, not all the wealth in the world should ever induce me to become a spy, or reveal the actions of those who gave me the means of subsistence, and permitted me to enter their house.”

La Mayeux pronounced these last words with so much animation, that a bright crimson suffused her whole countenance.

The superior had too much tact and experience not to feel and know that La Mayeux spoke from the sincerity of her heart; and, glad to see the light in which the young girl placed her motives for making the proposition she had done, she smiled blandly on her, and, extending her arms, said, in a tone of affectionate approbation,—

“Excellent, my child—most excellent! Let me embrace you!”

“Holy mother, so much goodness on your part quite confuses me! I ——”

“Nay, my daughter, rather let me thank you for the happiness it gives me to hear such words of upright and determined honesty from one so young, and so exposed to temptation; but dismiss from your mind the idea that I have been merely putting your principles to any test, because nothing can be less like treachery or *espionage* than those marks of filial confidence, which we require of our *protégées*, solely with a view to preserve their morality sound and uninjured. Yet some there are, and I perceive you, my dear daughter, are amongst the number, whose principles are so thoroughly established, and their intelligence so great, that they can dispense with our superintendance and counsels, and judge for themselves as to what is inimical to their welfare of soul or body; thus, then, I leave the whole responsibility to you, requiring no further confidence from you than such as you yourself shall consider it your duty to place, voluntarily and unsolicited, in me.”

“Ah, madame, how kind—how good you are!” exclaimed poor La Mayeux, ignorant of the thousand turnings and windings, the countless resources, of the monkish school, and now believing all obstacles to her gaining an easy and honourable subsistence were all surmounted.

“Nay, talk not of kindness, my daughter, I am but performing an act of justice,” interrupted Mother Sainte-Perpétue, while her accent and manner became more and more affectionate. “Too much tenderness and confidence can scarcely be manifested towards heavenly-minded children such as you, who have been purified by worldly trials, and found favour in this world, as they will do in the next, because they have faithfully and steadfastly walked in His ways, and practised His blessed ordinances.”

"Holy mother, indeed I do not deserve this praise!"

"One other and last question, my dear daughter: how often do you approach the sacred table during a month?"

"Madame," replied La Mayeux, "I have never done so since my first communion, at the age of eight years. Scarcely, by working every day, and all day long, could I earn sufficient to procure the humblest food and raiment; thus then I have not found time for——"

"Mother of God!" exclaimed the superior, interrupting La Mayeux, and clasping her hands with every appearance of the painful astonishment, "can this be true? Then you do not go to confession?"

"Alas, madame, I told you but now that I had no leisure for such duties!" replied La Mayeux, looking at Mother Sainte-Perpétue with an alarmed gaze.

A short silence prevailed, when the superior said, in a voice of mingled disappointment and grief,—

"You distress me greatly, my daughter. As I told you before, for the same reasons that we scrupulously avoid placing our *protégées* in any bad pious establishment, so also do we require persons of pious habits, and regular communicants, to recommend to our friends; indeed, to attend the confessional regularly and unfailingly is one of the indispensable conditions of the charity. Thus, to my great regret, will it be quite out of my power to give you the employment I proposed doing: still, should you hereafter amend this inexcusable indifference to your religious duties, then, perhaps, I may be able to do something."

"Madame," said La Mayeux, her heart swelling almost to bursting, at being thus obliged to renounce the flattering prospect held out to her, "I beg you to pardon me for having detained you so long—for nothing."

"Be assured, my dear daughter, I greatly regret being unable to take you upon the books of the charity; still I do not altogether resign the hope, especially because I would fain see one, already so worthy of interest, merit the further assistance and regard of pious persons, and earnestly hope ere long that by the regular observance of your religious duties you may obtain the valuable and substantial patronage of good and holy persons. Adieu, my dear daughter, go in peace; and may God be merciful to you, and bring you wholly back to Him!"

So saying, the superior rose, and conducted La Mayeux to the door, still wearing the kindest and most maternal air; then, just as La Mayeux was passing the threshold, she said,—

"Proceed along the corridor, descend a few steps; knock at the second door on the right, it is the work-room: you will find Florine there, she will take you back to your home. Adieu, my daughter."

As soon as La Mayeux was out of sight of the superior, her tears, which she had restrained till then, flowed rapidly; and, not liking to appear in this condition before Florine and any of the nuns who might be assembled in the work-room, she stopped for a few minutes near one of the windows of the corridor to dry her eyes, from which the tears kept falling fast. Mechanically she looked towards the window of the opposite house, at which she saw the female she conjectured to

be Adrienne de Cardoville, when she perceived the same individual issue forth from a side-door, and proceed rapidly towards the palisades which divided the two gardens.

At the same instant, to the unutterable amazement of La Mayeux, she saw one of the two sisters whose disappearance had so distressed Dagobert, Rose Simon, pale, exhausted, and scarcely able to support herself, approach with timid caution to the lattice-work which separated her from Mademoiselle de Cardoville, looking around with trembling apprehension, as though fearful of being perceived.

CHAPTER LXII.

LA MAYEUX AND MADEMOISELLE DE CARDOVILLE.

LA MAYEUX agitated, watchful, and excited, leaned against the window at which she was standing, and followed with her eyes the movements of Mademoiselle de Cardoville and Rose Simon, whom she so little expected to see together in this place.

The orphan, approaching close to the opening of the gate which separated the garden of the community from that of the house of Doctor Baleinier, said a few words to Adrienne, whose countenance expressed at once astonishment, indignation, and pity.

At this moment, a nun approached, looking about her as if she were anxiously seeking for some one; then, perceiving Rose, who, timid and alarmed, was standing close against the open work of the gate, she took her by the arm, seemed to speak angrily to her, and, in spite of some words which mademoiselle appeared to address to her with much emphasis, the sister led the orphan quickly away, who, deeply distressed, turned two or three times towards Adrienne, who, after having evinced her interest and sympathy by most expressive gestures, turned suddenly away as if to conceal her tears.

The corridor in which La Mayeux was during this affecting scene was on the first floor; and the thought instantly struck the workwoman that she would descend to the ground-floor and endeavour to introduce herself into the garden in order to speak with this lovely girl with the golden hair, and make sure that she was Mademoiselle de Cardoville, and then, if she had a lucid interval, to tell her that Agricola had matters of the deepest importance to relate to her, but had no means of conveying them to her.

The day was advancing and the sun was nearly setting, and La Mayeux, fearful that Florine would be tired of waiting for her, hastened her course of action. Walking with a light step, and listening each moment with intense anxiety, she reached the extremity of the corridor, where a small flight of two or three steps led to the landing-place of the work-room, and then found a circular flight, which led to the lower floor.

The work-girl, hearing voices, then descended quickly, and found herself in a long corridor of the ground-floor, in the middle of which



LA MAYERX DISCOVERING ADRIENNE.

was a glazed door which led out to that part of the garden reserved for the superior.

An alley, bordered by a high hedge of box, concealed La Mayeux from all eyes as she glided along it and reached the door with the opening in it, which, at this spot, separated the convent garden from that of Dr. Baleinier's house.

A few steps from her the work-girl saw Mademoiselle de Cardoville seated and leaning on a rustic bench.

The firmness of Adrienne's character had been momentarily shaken by the fatigue, the surprise, the fright, and horror, that had combined to overwhelm her on that fearful night when she had been inveigled into the mad-house of Dr. Baleinier, who, profiting with fiendish cunning by the state of weakness and prostration to which that young lady was reduced, had induced her for a moment to entertain doubts of herself.

But the calm which succeeds to the most painful and violent emotions, reflection, and the reasoning of a just and penetrating mind, soon reassured Adrienne, and dissipated the fears which Dr. Baleinier had for the moment excited. She did not even give the learned doctor credit for a *mistake*, but read plainly the man's conduct—conduct in which detestable hypocrisy and a singular boldness of action were aided by a no less remarkable skill and *finesse*, and, though too late, yet she detected in M. Baleinier a blind instrument of Madame de Saint-Dizier.

Henceforward she preserved entire silence and exhibited a composure replete with dignity. Not a complaint, not a reproach, escaped her lips;—she bided her time. Notwithstanding, she was allowed a large extent of liberty in her walks and conduct (always excepting the permission of communicating with any person without the walls), the present position of Adrienne was irksome and most painful, especially to her so fond of all that was cheering and harmonious about her. Still she felt that this endurance could not last long. She was unacquainted with the operation and watchfulness of the laws, but her plain good sense told her that a compulsory confinement of some days, skilfully attributed to certain symptoms of derangement of mind, more or less plausible, might, in all conformity with rules, be attempted, and even effected, with impunity, but with the condition of not being protracted beyond certain limits; because, after all, a young lady of her rank could not disappear from the world all at once without, after a certain time, being inquired after, and then an implied or asserted attack of lunacy would give rise to very serious investigations. True or false, this conviction had sufficed to restore to Adrienne's mind its usual tone and energy.

Yet from time to time she vainly tried to fathom the motive of her sequestration. She knew Madame de Saint-Dizier too well to believe that she was acting without some precise purpose, and not merely for the sake of giving her some momentary annoyance; and in this Mademoiselle de Cardoville was not mistaken. Father d'Aigrigny and the princess were persuaded that Adrienne, better informed than she chose to let them know, knew full well how important it was for her to be on the 13th of February in the Rue Saint François, and that she was resolved on maintaining her just rights. By immuring Adrienne

as a lunatic, they inflicted a heavy blow on her future prospects. But we may say here, that this latter precaution was useless, for Adrienne, although on the road to the family secret, which they had desired to conceal from her, and of which they believed her fully cognisant, had not, in fact, entirely developed it for want of certain documents which had not been discovered or had been removed.

Whatever was the motive of the abominable conduct of the enemies of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, she was not the less disgusted at it.

No one could be more free from hate, less thirsty for revenge, than this noble-minded girl; but when she reflected on all that Madame de Saint-Dizier, the Abbé d'Aigrigny, and Dr. Baleinier, had made her suffer, she made up her mind not to reprisals, but to obtain by every possible means an overwhelming reparation. If that were denied her, she resolved on pursuing, contending against, without rest or truce, so much craft, so much hypocrisy, so much cruelty, not from resentment for her sufferings, but to spare other victims from undergoing similar miseries, who might not be able, as she was, to struggle and defend themselves.

Adrienne, still under the painful emotion caused by her interview with Rose Simon, was leaning languidly on one of the arms of the rustic bench on which she was seated, and kept her eyes covered with her left hand. Her bonnet lay beside her, and the inclined position of her head caused her long tresses of auburn hair to fall on her fresh and polished cheeks, which were thus almost entirely concealed. In this reclining position, full of grace and ease, the beautiful and full contour of her figure was defined beneath a gown of dark green watered silk; a wide collar, fastened by knots of pink satin, and flat cuffs of point lace, prevented the colour of her gown from contrasting too abruptly with the dazzling whiteness of her swan-like neck and hands that Raphael would have delighted to paint. On her instep, high and exquisitely defined, were sandalled thin slippers of black satin; for Dr. Baleinier had allowed her to attire herself with her usual taste, and, as we have already said, elegance and exquisite style were not coquetries on the part of Adrienne, but a duty to herself whom God had been pleased to create so lovely.

At the sight of this young lady, whose appearance and extreme attractions La Mayeux, in the simplicity of her heart, so greatly admired, without a thought as to the squalid rags she wore herself and her personal deformity, the poor work-girl thought to herself with much good sense and sagacity, that it was extraordinary that a lunatic should dress herself so *sensibly* and becomingly; and it was therefore with as much surprise as emotion that she approached very softly to the grating which separated her from Adrienne, reflecting that, perchance, this unfortunate lady was really out of her senses, but had a lucid interval.

Then with a timid voice, but loud enough to be heard, La Mayeux, in order to assure herself of Adrienne's identity, said, with a beating heart, "Mademoiselle de Cardoville!"

"Who calls me?" said Adrienne; then, lifting her head quickly, and perceiving La Mayeux, she could not restrain a slight cry of surprise and almost alarm. In truth, this poor, pale, deformed, wretchedly clad creature, appearing before her so suddenly, inspired Made-

moiselle de Cardoville, so devotedly attached to grace and beauty, with a sort of repugnance and affright. And those two feelings were displayed in her expressive countenance.

La Mayeux did not perceive the impression she had caused, as motionless, with her eyes fixed, her hands clasped, with a sort of admiration, or almost adoration, she gazed on the dazzling beauty of Adrienne, whom she had only seen through the grating of her window; and what Agricola had told her of the charms of his protectress appeared to her a thousand times less than the reality. La Mayeux never even in her secret aspirations as a poetess had dreamed of such rare perfection.

By a singular coincidence, the appearance of the *beau-idéal* threw into a sort of divine ecstasy these two young girls so wholly dissimilar—these two extreme types of ugliness and beauty, wealth and misery.

After this involuntary homage rendered to Adrienne, La Mayeux advanced a step closer to the iron grating.

“What is it you seek?” exclaimed Mademoiselle de Cardoville, rising with a feeling of repulsion which did not escape La Mayeux, who, lowering her eyes timidly, said, in a gentle voice,—

“Your, pardon, mademoiselle, for thus presenting myself before you; but the moments are precious,—I come from Agricola.”

Saying these words, the young work-girl raised her eyes uneasily, fearing that Mademoiselle de Cardoville had forgotten the name of the smith; but to her great surprise, and still greater joy, Adrienne’s alarm seemed to decrease at the sound of Agricola’s name.

She approached the grating and looked at La Mayeux with benevolent curiosity.

“You come from M. Agricola Baudoin?” she inquired; “and who are you?”

“His adopted sister, mademoiselle, a poor work-girl, who lives in the same house as he does.”

Adrienne seemed to call up her recollection, and suddenly reassured, said, smiling with kindness, and after a moment’s pause,—

“It was you who persuaded M. Agricola to apply to me for his *caution*, was it not?”

“What, mademoiselle! do you recollect that?”

“I never forget any thing that is generous and noble. M. Agricola told me with affection of your devotion to him, and I remember it most perfectly. But how is it that you are here in this convent?”

“I was told that, perhaps, I might obtain employment here, for I am out of work; unfortunately I have been refused by the superior.”

“And how did you recognise me?”

“By your great beauty, mademoiselle, of which Agricola told me.”

“Did you not rather recognise me by this?” said Adrienne, smiling, and passing through her taper fingers the end of one of her long and silken tresses of golden hair.

“You must forgive Agricola, mademoiselle,” said La Mayeux, with one of those half smiles which so seldom appeared on her lips; “he is a poet, and when with respectful admiration he drew the portrait of his protectress, he did not omit one of her rare perfections.”

"And who gave you the idea of coming and speaking to me?"

"The hope of being able to serve you, mademoiselle. You received Agricola with so much kindness that I have ventured to share his gratitude towards you."

"Dared! dared! my dear child," said Adrienne, with indefinable grace, "my recompense will be redoubled, although till now I have only been useful to your worthy adopted brother in intention alone."

During the interchange of these words Adrienne and La Mayeux had each, in their turn, looked at each other with increasing surprise.

For her part La Mayeux could not comprehend how a woman who was declared a lunatic could express herself as Adrienne did, and then she was astonished at herself for the freedom, or, rather, the want of embarrassment, with which she was able to reply to Mademoiselle de Cardoville, not knowing that that lady possessed that precious privilege of elevated and benevolent natures, to place at their case all those who approached them with sympathy.

On her side Mademoiselle de Cardoville was at the same time deeply moved and astonished to hear this young girl, one of the lower orders, clothed like a beggar, express herself in such excellent and appropriate language.

The longer she looked at La Mayeux, the more the unpleasant sensation which she had at first experienced changed into a sentiment of the precisely opposite nature. With that tact of quick and penetrating observation so natural to women, she remarked beneath the wretched black crape cap which La Mayeux wore a beautiful head of hair, soft, lustrous, and of deep chestnut. She also observed that her white, long, and thin hands, though appearing from underneath the sleeves of a tattered gown, were singularly clean, a proof that care, cleanliness, and self-respect, struggled against dire distress. Adrienne detected in the wan hue of her saddened countenance, in the expression of her blue eyes, at once sensible, gentle, and timid, a charm at once touching and affecting, and a modest dignity, that caused an observer to forget the deformity of the poor needlewoman.

Adrienne was passionately fond of physical beauty, but she had a mind too elevated, a soul too noble, a heart too sensitive, not to appreciate the moral beauty which so often beams forth in a humble and suffering countenance; only that until now this appreciation was quite new to Mademoiselle Adrienne, whose high fortune and aristocratic habits had hitherto kept her from contact with persons of La Mayeux's class.

After a moment's silence, during which the lovely patrician and the lowly needlewoman were mutually examining each other with increasing surprise, Adrienne said to La Mayeux,—

"The cause of our mutual astonishment is, I think, easily explained. You find, no doubt, that I speak rationally enough for a mad woman, if you have been told I am one; and I," added Mademoiselle de Cardoville, with a tone of commiseration which might be termed respectful, "I find that the delicacy of your language and manner contrast so strangely with the position in which you seem to be, that my surprise must be even greater than your own."

"Ah, mademoiselle!" exclaimed La Mayeux, with so much expression of happiness that the tears of joy stood in her eyes, "can this

be true? I have been deceived, and in seeing you just now so lovely, so kind, and hearing your sweet voice, I could not credit that such a misfortune had befallen you. But, alas! how is it, then, mademoiselle, that you are here?"

"Poor child!" said Adrienne, deeply moved at the sympathy which the worthy creature testified for her; "and how is it that with so much heart, with a mind so elevated, you, too, are unhappy? But take comfort, I shall not be here for ever; you and I will both soon assume the position to which we are entitled. Believe me, I will never forget that, in spite of the painful distress in which you must be at finding yourself deprived of work, which is your only resource, you have still thought of coming to me to try and serve me; and, indeed, you may serve me most importantly, and that gives me an additional pleasure, because I shall owe you so much, and you shall see what advantages I will take of my gratitude!" said Adrienne, with a smile like an angel. "But," she added, "before you think of me, let us think a little of others. Is not your adopted brother in prison?"

"Not at this moment, mademoiselle, I think; for, thanks to the generosity of a comrade, his father went yesterday to deposit the *caution*, and they promised that he should be at liberty to-day; but he wrote from his prison to say that he had most important disclosures to reveal to you."

"To me?"

"Yes, mademoiselle. Agricola will, I hope, be free to-day. How can he convey this information to you?"

"He has important disclosures to reveal to me!" repeated Mademoiselle de Cardoville, with an astonished and reflecting air. "I cannot imagine what they can be; but, whilst I am shut up in this house, and precluded from any communication out of it, M. Agricola must not address me here, directly or indirectly; he must wait until I get out. And that is not all; he must also remove from this convent two poor children, much more to be pitied than I am, the daughters of Marshal Simon, who are confined here against their will."

"Do you, then, know their names, mademoiselle?"

"M. Agricola told me, at the same time he acquainted me with their being in Paris, of their surprising resemblance to each other, so that, when, during my accustomed walk the day before yesterday, I remarked two young creatures, evidently weeping bitterly, presenting themselves from time to time against the bars of their separate cells, situated the one on the ground-floor, the other on the story above, a secret presentiment whispered to me that I beheld the orphans of whom M. Agricola had spoken, and in whose fate (as my own relations) I take so lively an interest."

"Is it possible, mademoiselle, they are related to you?"

"Yes, indeed, they are; but, unable to do more, I endeavoured by signs to express how deeply I felt for them: their tears, and the distress so evidently depicted on their countenances, perfectly convinced me that they were as completely imprisoned in the convent as I was in the house adjoining."

"Ah, mademoiselle, I perceive now you are possibly a victim to the animosity of your family!"

"Whatever may be the evils of my lot, I am certainly less to be

pitied than these two poor girls whose grief and despair are really heart-rending to behold; their separation from each other is evidently their greatest affliction, and, from a few words I managed to exchange with one of them just now, I perceive that they, like myself, are the victims of a vile conspiracy; however, thanks to you, we may still manage to save them. Since my being placed here, as I told you, I have found it utterly impossible to hold any communication with persons beyond its walls. I am allowed neither pens nor paper, thus writing was effectually denied me. But now listen to me attentively, and we may be able to overthrow this odious system of persecution."

"Oh, speak, mademoiselle—speak, I beseech you!"

"Is the father of M. Agricola, the old soldier who brought these orphans to France, nigh at hand?"

"Yes, mademoiselle. Ah, if you only knew what a state of rage and despair he was in, when, upon his return home, he missed the children an expiring mother had bequeathed to his care!"

"You must enjoin him above all things to proceed coolly and quietly, the least violence would destroy every chance of aiding the poor girls. Here," said Adrienne, drawing a ring from her finger, "give him this—he will go instantly—but, tell me, are you quite sure you can recollect a name and address?"

"Oh, yes—yes, mademoiselle, indeed I can; Agricola only told me your name and residence once, but I never forgot it—oh, no, the heart never forgets!"

"Enough, my good girl; then remember the name of Count de Montbron."

"Count de Montbron; I shall easily recollect it."

"He is one of my best and oldest friends, and lives in the Place Vendôme, No. 7."

"No. 7 Place Vendôme; I shall be quite sure to recollect the address as well as the name."

"Let M. Agricola's father go there this evening, and if the count be not at home he will await his return; then, let him request to see M. de Montbron in my name, sending him this ring as a warranty for the truth of what he advances; once in the presence of the count, bid him relate all he knows—the carrying of the orphans, with the name of the convent where they are now confined. He may likewise state the fact of my being kept under restraint, under a false charge of madness, in one of the asylums for lunatics belonging to Doctor Baileinier. M. de Montbron will not refuse credence to this account, for truth has a powerful voice; he is besides a man of infinite talent and much experience, besides which he possesses powerful influence, and, I feel assured, will lose not an instant in taking the necessary steps in the affair, so that, I doubt not, but that by to-morrow or the following day, both myself and the poor girls will be liberated; that effected, thanks to you—but the moments are precious, we may be surprised—hasten then, my dear child, to commence the work which shall restore three unhappy captives to liberty and happiness."

Then, as she was about to withdraw from the gate, Adrienne said, with a smile so winning, and an accent so filled with affectionate sincerity, that it thrilled to the sensitive heart of the poor sempstress,—

"M. Agricola told me that the goodness of my heart equalled



THE INTERVIEW.

yours. Now I can fully appreciate the full value of the comparison, and the flattering compliment it implied. I pray you give me your hand, but quickly," continued Mademoiselle de Cardoville, while tears of deep feeling suffused her eyes. Then passing her beautiful hand through the rails of the gate, she extended it to La Mayeux.

Both the words and actions of the lovely patrician were impressed with so sincere and genuine a warmth, that the poor sempstress hesitated not to place her long thin fingers in the delicate rosy palm of Mademoiselle de Cardoville, who, with a sudden burst of pious respect, lifted the meagre hand to her lips, saying,—

"Since I cannot embrace you as the sister who has saved and preserved me, let me at least kiss this hand ennobled by honest labour."

At this instant steps were heard in the garden belonging to Doctor Balcinier, Adrienne started suddenly, and, gliding behind the thick shrubs, said as she disappeared,—

"Courage, Memory, and Hope!"

All this had passed so rapidly that the young workwoman had neither spoken nor moved while tears, tears of the purest joy flowed abundantly down her pale cheeks.

That a creature so superior as Adrienne de Cardoville should call her by the endearing name of sister, should deign to touch her hand, nay more, press it to her lips, and even style herself flattered by a comparison with one dwelling in the very abyss of misery and wretchedness, bespoke a divine feeling of equality almost resembling the words of Holy Writ.

There are certain words and impressions capable of atoning to some minds for years of past sufferings, and with a passing glance, rapid as the lightning's flash, reveal to the soul the depth of its own greatness. So was it with La Mayeux, who, thanks to the condescending and generous expression addressed to her, for the first time in her life seemed aware of her own real worth; and, although this consciousness was as fleeting as delightful, yet it induced the poor girl to raise her eyes and hands to heaven with an expression of unutterable gratitude and happiness; for, if the young sempstress did not regularly practise (*pratiquer*) to adopt the language of religious cant, no one was more deeply imbued than La Mayeux with that feeling of deep and reverential religion, which is to the mere formalist and lip-deep professor, as the immensity of the blue vault of heaven to the curved ceiling of a church.

* * * * *

Five minutes after her interview with Mademoiselle de Cardoville, La Mayeux had quitted the garden unperceived by any one, and, returning by the road she had come, remounted the stairs to the first-floor where was situated the workroom, and gently knocked at the door, which was opened by one of the sisters of Sainte-Marie.

"Is not Mademoiselle Florine, with whom I came, here, good sister?" asked she.

"No; she could not possibly wait any longer. You come, doubtless, from our holy mother the superior, do you not?"

"Yes—yes, good sister," replied the sempstress, casting down her eyes. "Will you have the kindness to tell me by which way I can go hence?"

"Come with me, I will shew you."

La Mayeux followed the sister in trembling apprehension of meeting the superior, who might with reason be surprised at her being still within the convent, and inquire the reason of it. At length, to her great joy the nun, having conducted her to the first entrance, opened the door, through which La Mayeux hastily passed, and with considerable delight heard it closed behind her.

Rapidly crossing the large court, she was hurrying on towards the porter's lodge, with the intention of asking him to open the outer gate, when she heard a rough voice say,—

"It seems we are to keep a double watch to-night—eh, Jerome? For my part, I mean to double-load my gun. The holy Mother Sainte-Perpétue has given orders to go twice round the premises to-night instead of once."

"I tell you what, Nicolas," replied a second voice, "I mean to do; I have sharpened my scythe on purpose—it would cut through a stone wall—and I have turned the sharp edge outside, so that will be better than any gun; besides that is a gardener's weapon, he knows better how to use it than any other, and I'll be bound there's ne'er a thief would venture to come a-nigh it."

Feeling an involuntary terror at words she had not sought to hear, La Mayeux approached the porter's lodge and asked to be let out.

"Hollo! where do you come from?" said the porter, putting his head out of the lodge, and busily employed loading a double-barrelled gun, while he surveyed the young sempstress with a suspicious glance.

"I have been speaking with the superior," replied La Mayeux, timidly.

"Are you sure of that?" said Nicolas, roughly; "because you look to me very like a rum customer; however, that'll do, now be off with you, and be quick about it."

The gate was opened, and La Mayeux darted into the street; but scarcely had she entered than she saw Kill-joy running towards her, while a little way off was Dagobert, also hurrying to meet her.

Delighted at this opportune rencontre, La Mayeux was hastening to him, when a full clear voice exclaimed from a distance, "Ah, my good Mayeux!"

The young needlewoman turned hastily round and beheld Agricola running with all speed, in the opposite direction to that in which his father was advancing.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE RENCONTERS.

AT the unexpected appearance of Dagobert and Agricola, the very persons she most wished to see, La Mayeux remained standing a few steps from the gate of the convent in utter amazement.

The soldier had not yet perceived the young workwoman; he was hurrying along after Kill-joy, who, although thin, gaunt-looking,

rough, and dirty, seemed to bound with delight as turning his intelligent head from time to time to see whether his master was in sight, he returned to meet him, after having sufficiently caressed La Mayeux.

"Yes, yes! my old fellow!" cried the soldier, with emotion, "I understand you; you have been more faithful to your trust than I have, you have not abandoned the poor things,—no, not for an instant have you quitted the door by which you saw them enter; you have followed them, kept watch here night and day, without food or shelter, and, wearied at last with expecting their return, have come to me to fetch me to their aid! Yes, while I was furious with rage and despair, you were doing what I ought to have done,—you discovered their hiding-place! and that proves over and over again, what every one knows, that beasts are better and wiser than men. Ah! my old Kill-joy—my noble dog! we shall soon see the dear children again, thanks to you! And when I remember, too, that to-morrow will be the great day, the important 13th of February, and that without you, my fine fellow, all would have been lost, I tremble from head to foot at the bare idea! Now, then, my beauty, are we almost there? What a lonely, deserted spot! and night coming on, too!"

Dagobert had continued to hold this *discourse* with Kill-joy whilst attentively observing every motion of the animal, who kept trotting on at a rapid pace, followed by the soldier; when, seeing the faithful beast bound away from him as if joyfully recognising some person, he raised his head, and perceived Kill-joy loading with caresses both La Mayeux and Agricola, who had just met at a short distance from the gate of the convent.

"La Mayeux!" exclaimed both father and son, at the sight of the young girl, and gazing at her with inexpressible surprise, "why what brings you here?"

"Oh! M. Dagobert," replied she, with a glow of indescribable happiness, "I have such good news for you—Rose and Blanche are found!" Then turning to the young smith, she added, "Ah! and happy tidings for you, too, Agricola; Mademoiselle de Cardoville is no more mad than either you or I are, I have just seen her!"

"Not mad!" cried the smith; "thank Heaven! oh! how delighted I am to hear it!"

"But the dear children?" interrupted Dagobert, eagerly, and pressing in his large hands the thin fingers of La Mayeux; "have you seen them?"

"Oh, yes! a little while ago they seemed very sad and disconsolate, but I was not able to speak to them."

"Ah!" murmured Dagobert, as though choking with the conflicting emotions called up by this intelligence, and pressing both his hands on his breast, as though to still the throbbing pain he experienced. "I did not think my old heart could beat so hard. Still, thanks to my good faithful dog here, I felt almost assured the dear girls were not far off; but, for all that, the joy—the delight—seems too much for me."

"My dear, worthy father, you see every thing promises well," said Agricola, looking with a grateful smile at the young sempstress.

"Come to my arms! my dear, my excellent child!" cried the

soldier, embracing La Mayeux, with vehement fondness; then, as though quite unable longer to restrain his impatience, he added, "but come, let us go for the poor dear children without further delay."

"My dear Mayeux!" exclaimed Agricola, much excited; "you have, possibly, restored not only the peace of my father's mind, but preserved his very life. And about Mademoiselle de Cardoville? how did you find her out?"

"Oh! by the merest chance!—And how did it happen that you arrived here just as I did?"

"Look!" said Dagobert, who had precipitately advanced a few steps, "Kill-joy stops and barks!"

And, in effect, the dog, equally anxious as his master to see the orphans again, but better informed as to the place of their retreat, had stationed himself at the gate of the convent, and commenced a series of loud significant barkings to attract the notice of Dagobert, who, perfectly comprehending the dog's meaning, made a significant sign to La Mayeux, saying,—

"The children are there!"

"I know it, M. Dagobert,—they are!"

"I was sure of it!—good dog!—capital fellow! Oh, yes, animals are wiser than men, and more to be depended on; always excepting you, my dear excellent little Mayeux, who are worth more than all the men and beasts in the world. But now my troubles will soon be ended, my darlings. I shall soon see you again—soon have you in these old arms—nobody shall ever persuade me to leave you again! Come! come!—I am on thorns till I reach the spot where the dear girls are!"

So saying, spite of his age, Dagobert hastened towards Kill-joy.

"Agricola!" cried La Mayeux, "for Heaven's sake prevent your father from knocking at this gate; all is lost if he does."

At two bounds the active young man was beside his father, at the very instant he had extended his hand to grasp the knocker.

"Father! father!" exclaimed the young smith, powerfully seizing his arm, "let go that knocker, if you wish to recover your lost charges, beware of making the least noise."

"In the devil's name, what do you mean?"

"La Mayeux has just begged me to assure you that if once you knock at that door, all is lost."

"But how?"

"She will explain it."

And at this moment, the poor girl, who, less agile than Agricola, could not, with all her efforts, reach Dagobert sooner, advanced and said,—

"M. Dagobert, I beseech you not to remain standing by this gate, some one might open it, and then we should be seen; and most certainly our being here would excite great suspicions; let us rather go along by this wall."

"Suspicions!" said the veteran, much surprised, but without moving an inch from the gate; "what suspicions?"

"I pray—I implore you, not to remain there!" persisted La Mayeux, with so much earnestness, that Agricola, convinced she

must have some powerful reasons for urging their removal, joined in the request, saying,—

“My dear father, be assured La Mayeux has good motives for what she says, let us do as she wishes us. The Boulevard de l’Hôpital is not two steps from hence, no one is likely to be there, and we can converse without fear of interruption.”

“May the devil take me if I understand one word of all this!” cried Dagobert, still obstinately maintaining his post by the gate. “The two girls are there—well, I only want to fetch them out, and take them away, that is not a five minutes’ affair.”

“Indeed, M. Dagobert, you are mistaken!” returned La Mayeux, “it is a much more difficult business than you expect. But come away—oh, pray do! There, do you hear? some one is speaking in the court-yard!” And, sure enough, the sound of a voice, considerably elevated above a natural pitch, was distinctly audible.

“Come, father, come away at once!” exclaimed Agricola, almost dragging the old man away.

Meanwhile Kill-joy, as though surprised at such continued hesitation, began, by loudly barking, to protest against so cowardly and humiliating a retreat, all the time resolutely keeping possession of his post by the gate; however, upon a signal from Dagobert, he reluctantly abandoned his position and gained the main body.

It was now five o’clock in the afternoon, the wind blew violently, while thick, dark clouds, betokening rain, were rapidly drifting across the firmament. As we have before stated, the Boulevard de l’Hôpital, which bounded this side of the convent-garden, was generally deserted. Dagobert, Agricola, and La Mayeux, were therefore in perfect liberty to pursue their council of war in undisturbed tranquillity in this lone spot.

The soldier, who could ill brook all these cautious, temporising measures, the reason of which he was far from understanding, had scarcely turned the corner of the street, than he impatiently addressed La Mayeux, saying,—

“Now, then, my good girl, do not keep me longer on the rack, but tell me at once what is the reason of your bringing me away from the place where my poor children are grieving and pining for liberty? Speak at once, for I seem as though treading on live coals.”

“In the first place, M. Dagobert, remember that the place where the daughters of Marshal Simon are confined is a convent.”

“A convent!” exclaimed the soldier, as though bursting with rage at this piece of information; “I might have expected as much. Then,” added the old man, with a calmer voice, “suppose it is, what then? I can take them out of a convent as well as any other place, can’t I? I shall only go once, you know—and once is nothing.”

“But, M. Dagobert, they are confined there against their will, and against yours also; therefore they will not be given up to you.”

“Not given up to me! ah! we shall see about that though!” and, sniting the action to his tone of impatience, the soldier turned as though going back to the convent.

“Father!” cried Agricola, detaining him; “one moment’s

patience. Pray hear what La Mayeux has to say before you act so rashly."

"I will hear nothing when the dear children are only a few steps from me; I am aware of it, and yet you think that, either by fair means or foul, I will not have them away. *Pardieu!* that is somewhat too much for one's patience!—Let me go, I say!

"M. Dagobert, I beseech of you to listen to me!" cried La Mayeux, gently holding Dagobert by the hand, "there is another and a better way of releasing these dear young ladies, and that, too, without employing any violence; for Mademoiselle Cardoville told me that violence would ruin every thing, and destroy all chance of success."

"Well, if there is any other way, with all my heart; only make haste and tell us what that way is."

"Here is a ring that Mademoiselle de Cardoville——"

"Who is Mademoiselle de Cardoville?"

"Father, it is that kind and generous young lady who was to have been my guarantee, and to whom I have such important things to reveal."

"That'll do, that'll do!" interrupted Dagobert, impatiently, "we can talk about that by and by. But now, my dear Mayeux, go on—what about this ring?"

"You are to take it, M. Dagobert, and go directly with it, to the Count de Montbron, who lives at No. 7 Place Vendôme; it seems he is a man of great power and influence, and the particular friend of Mademoiselle de Cardoville; by shewing him this ring, the count will be satisfied you come from her. You will tell him that she is confined under a false accusation of madness in a private madhouse adjoining this convent, in which are also imprisoned the daughters of Marshal Simon, who are suffering severely from being thus shut up against their wills."

"Well, and then?—and then?"

"Why then, M. de Montbron will immediately lay the matter before high and influential people, who will assist him in taking the necessary steps to restore Mademoiselle de Cardoville and the daughters of General Simon to liberty, and most probably either to-morrow or the day after they will be free."

"To-morrow, or the day after! and only perhaps!" cried Dagobert. "But I tell you that I must have them out this very day,—aye, this very instant. The day after to-morrow, indeed! and then only a *perhaps!* Yes, that would be a nice time truly! Much obliged to you, my dear Mayeux; but here, take back your ring. I prefer managing matters myself, and in my own way. Just wait there for me, my lad, will you?"

"Father!" exclaimed Agricola, still restraining the old man, "are you mad? It is a convent. Only consider what you are about."

"Pshaw! you are a mere raw recruit, boy, and don't understand these things. Now I do, and have got the whole system of convent tactics at the end of my fingers. Bless you! why in Spain I have practised the whole thing a hundred times and more. This is what would happen if I went to this convent you are so alarmed about.—I knock at the door, a man opens it, asks me what I want. I make

no answer, he tries to stop me, but can't, and on I go. Well, once inside the convent, I should call my children as loud as I could, and run all over the building till they answered me."

"But then the nuns, M. Dagobert; think of them," said La Mayeux, still striving to detain Dagobert with her weak grasp.

"Oh, the nuns! why, of course, they would pursue me, screaming and fluttering about like so many old magpies roused out of their nests. I know all about it. At Seville I went through just that sort of thing when I was fishing out a young Andalusian girl those hideous old *béguines* had got into their clutches and refused to part with. I shall let the good sisters scream till they are hoarse, and continue to hunt in every hole and corner, calling Rose and Blanche as loud as I can bawl. They will be sure to hear me and answer me; and then, if they are locked up, I shall take the first thing I can find and break open the door."

"But, think of the nuns, M. Dagobert. What would they do, do you think?"

"Why, if they scream till they burst their throats, they will not hinder me from bursting open the door, taking my children up in my arms, and making off with them as fast as I can. If they refuse to let me out, why I shall have to break a second door open; that's all. So now," continued Dagobert, hastily disengaging his hands from those of La Mayeux, "just wait for me here, and in ten minutes you will see me back again with my dear girls. And you, my lad, go meanwhile and fetch a coach ready for us all to jump into."

More calm than Dagobert, and infinitely better informed as to the nature of the penal laws, Agricola could not, without alarm, contemplate the consequences which would infallibly arise from this strange and unusual mode of proceeding on the part of the veteran; throwing himself before him, he again remonstrated, saying,—

"One more word, I beseech you!"

"Why, there's no end to last words. But do make sharp work of it; be quick, or I cannot stay to listen."

"If you attempt to penetrate into the convent, you will ruin every thing!"

"How shall I?"

"Because, M. Dagobert, for one reason, there are men in the convent. I saw the porter when I came out just now loading a gun, and the gardener was talking of having sharpened his scythe expressly to use it against any intruders, and of the rounds they were to take during the night to guard the premises."

"Bless you! what do you think I care for a porter's gun or a gardener's scythe?"

"Never mind whether you care for them or not, father; but, listen to me. You mean to knock at the gate, you say. Well, and when the porter opens it he asks you what you want?"

"Well, and I make answer that I wish to speak to the superior, and away I go into the convent."

"But, dear me, M. Dagobert," said La Mayeux, "you are not aware that after you have crossed the outer court you approach a second door with a sort of wicket to it, and when any person rings, a

nun always examines the stranger through the wicket, which is never opened until after the business has been disclosed."

"Well, then, I should pretend I came to speak to the superior."

"Then, father, as you are a stranger, they would go and apprise the superior of your being there and desire to see her."

"And then?"

"Of course she would come."

"And then?"

"She would ask you what you wanted, M. Dagobert."

"Why, of course, I should tell it at once,—I wanted my children."

"Just one minute's patience, father. You cannot doubt, after all the precautions taken to prevent their recovery that it is the intention of those concerned to keep Mesdemoiselles Simon in their power, in spite of any thing either they or you can do."

"I don't doubt it. I am quite sure of it; and it was for that purpose they made such a tool of your poor mother!"

"Then, of course, father, the superior will affect not to understand what you mean, and she will say that there are no such persons as you inquire for in the convent."

"And I shall insist that they are, and bring forwards La Mayeux and my dog."

"The superior will then cut short the conversation by ordering the wicket to be shut in your face, and retire."

"Oh! will she? Then I tell you what I should do,—very coolly kick the door in. You see there is no doing without that; that is sure to be required. But now let me go. Agricola! I say, take off your hands; you will drive me mad if you go on this way."

"And then the porter, hearing all this noise and violence, would go and fetch the guard, which would not be long arriving, and all your schemes would end in your being conducted to prison!"

"And what would become of your poor children then, M. Dagobert?" said La Mayeux.

The father of Agricola had too much good sense not to see the full force of the reasons adduced both by his son and La Mayeux, but he equally well knew that at all risks, and at any price, the orphans must be set free before the following day. This alternative was so fearful, so overwhelming, that, pressing both hands on his burning temples, Dagobert sunk upon one of the stone benches as though utterly paralysed by the inexorable fatality of his situation.

Agricola and La Mayeux, profoundly touched at this mute demonstration of despair, looked at each other in mournful sorrow. The young smith, seating himself beside the soldier, said,—

"Come, come, father, take courage. Remember what La Mayeux has just told us. Don't you see, by going with this ring to the influential gentleman she directed you to, these young ladies may be set at liberty to-morrow; or even supposing the very worst, by the day after to-morrow."

"Blood and thunder!" exclaimed Dagobert, springing up from the bench and beholding his son and La Mayeux with a look so wild, so desperate, as to make them both unconsciously draw back and

regard him with equal surprise and uneasiness, "do you mean to drive me mad?" Then, recovering himself a little, the old man said, after a long silence, "Forgive me, my children. I know how wrong it is for me to give way so; but then you don't know how I am situated. What you say is right and reasonable; still I am justified in speaking as warmly as I do. Hearken, Agricola, you are a good and an honest lad; and you, too, my dear Mayeux, may safely be trusted. What I am about to say must never be breathed to any one. Why, do you suppose I brought these poor girls all the way hither from the very wilds of Siberia but that they might be early to-morrow morning in the Rue Saint François? If they be not there, then have I broken my promise,—nay, my oath made to a dying mother."

"No. 3 Rue Saint François?" cried Agricola, interrupting his father.

"Yes," answered Dagobert; "but how did you know the number?"

"Was it not marked on a bronze medal?"

"It was," replied Dagobert, more and more astonished; "but who told *you* so?"

"Father!" exclaimed Agricola, "one instant more. Let me reflect a little. I think I can guess now. Yes; and you told me, my dear Mayeux, did you not, that Mademoiselle de Cardoville was not mad?"

"No, indeed, she is not; but she is kept in close confinement without being allowed to communicate with any one, and she told me that she believed she was, equally with the daughters of General Simon, the victim of a vile conspiracy."

"No doubt of it," exclaimed the smith. "Now I understand it all. Mademoiselle de Cardoville has an equal interest with the Mesdemoiselles Simon in being to-morrow in the Rue Saint François, and is, in all probability, ignorant of it herself."

"What mean you?"

"One more word, my dear Mayeux, did Mademoiselle de Cardoville say that she had a powerful motive for wishing to be at liberty to-morrow?"

"No; for when she gave me the ring for the Count de Montbron she said, 'Thanks to him, to-morrow or next day I and General Simon's daughters will be free.'"

"But, pray explain to me," said Dagobert to his son with impatience.

"Presently," replied the smith. "When you came to release me from the prison, father, I told you that I had a sacred duty to perform and would afterwards rejoin you at home. Well, I went to do something, which I will tell you of directly. I instantly ran to the pavilion in the Rue de Babylone, not knowing that Mademoiselle de Cardoville was mad, or, at least, said to be so. A servant opened the door and told me that this young lady had been attacked with a sudden fit of lunacy. You may suppose, father, what a blow that was to me. I asked where she was, and was told they did not know; I inquired if I could speak to any of her relations. As my blouse did not inspire much confidence, I was informed that none of the family were in the house. I was much

disconcerted when an idea came across me, and I said to myself, 'She is mad, and her medical man is sure to know where they have taken her; if she is in a condition to understand me, he will take me to her; if not, in the absence of her relatives, I will speak to her doctor, a doctor is often a friend.' So I asked the servant if he could tell me who was Mademoiselle de Cardoville's medical attendant, and he gave me the address without the slightest objection, 'Dr. Balcinier, No. 12 Rue Taranne.' I went there, but he had gone out, and they told me I should meet with him about five o'clock at his *maison de santé*, which is close to the convent. This will account for me meeting you here."

"But this medal—this medal," said M. Dagobert, impatiently; "did you see it?"

"It was in consequence of this, and other things besides, that I wrote to La Mayeux that I was anxious to make some important disclosures to Mademoiselle de Cardoville."

"And these disclosures?"

"Listen, father. I was going to her abode the day you left us to ask her to furnish me with security. I was followed, and she learned the fact from one of her waiting-women, and to save me from arrest she had me taken to a secret place in her pavilion, a sort of small vaulted chamber, which was only lighted by a sort of pipe made like a chimney. After a few moments I began to see clearer. Having nothing better to do, I began to look about me, and I saw the walls were covered with wainscoting. The entrance was made of a sliding panel of iron grooves, which by means of counter-weights and complicated wheels worked admirably. This is my business and interested me greatly, and I began to examine the springs with curiosity in spite of my uneasiness. I soon discovered their contrivance and mode of working, but there was a brass knob whose use I could not detect. I pulled it towards me, then tried to push it right and left in vain; it had no effect on any of the springs. I said to myself, this knob, no doubt, belongs to some other piece of mechanism, and then the idea struck me that, perhaps, instead of drawing it out I ought to push it inwards forcibly. I did so, and in an instant I heard a sort of grinding noise, and I saw suddenly above the entrance to the hiding-place a panel of about two feet square, which dropped forward from the wainscot like the flap of a writing-table. This panel was made something like a box, and as I pushed the spring very sharply, the shake caused a small bronze medal with a chain affixed fall to the ground."

"Did you see the address on it—Rue Saint François?" inquired Dagobert.

"Yes, father, and with the medal also fell a large sealed packet; when I took it up, I read, for I could not help doing so, in large characters, '*For Mademoiselle de Cardoville. She must attend to these papers the instant they are placed in her hands.*' Then under these words I saw the initials R. and C., with a postscript and this date, '*Paris, 12th November, 1830.*' I turned the envelope and saw it was sealed with two seals with the same initials R. and C., surrounded by a coronet."

"And were the seals unbroken?" asked La Mayeux.

"They were untouched."

"Then there is no doubt but that Mademoiselle de Cardoville is ignorant of the existence of these papers," said the workwoman.

"That was my first idea, for although it was directed that this envelope should be opened without delay, yet, in spite of that command, which was dated nearly two years ago, the seals were unbroken."

"That is quite evident," said Dagobert; "and what did you do then?"

"I replaced them in their place of concealment, promising myself to inform Mademoiselle de Cardoville; but a few minutes afterwards they entered the hiding-place, which had been discovered. As I did not see Mademoiselle de Cardoville again, I only had time to say to one of her waiting-women some words of ambiguous meaning with respect to my discovery, hoping that they would excite the curiosity of their mistress. Then as soon as I was able to write to you, my dear Mayeux, I did so, begging you to go and find Mademoiselle de Cardoville."

"But this medal," said Dagobert, "is like that which General Simon's daughters possess; how can that be?"

"Nothing is more simple, father, for I remember now that Mademoiselle de Cardoville is their relation; she told me so."

"She the relation of Rose and Blanche?"

"Yes, certainly," added La Mayeux; "she told me so just now."

"Well, then, now," said Dagobert, looking at his son with anguish, "cannot you comprehend that I must have my children with me this very day? Do you not see, as their poor mother said to me with her dying breath, that a day's delay will ruin all? Do you not see, in fact, that I cannot quiet myself with a '*perhaps to-morrow*,' when I have come from the extremity of Siberia with these children in order to take them to-morrow to the Rue Saint François? Do you not see, indeed, that I must have them to-day, even if I should set the convent in flames?"

"But, father, I must again say that any violence——"

"But, do you know the commissary of police told me this morning when I went to him to repeat my complaint against your poor mother's confessor, that there was no proof, and they could do nothing farther?"

"But now there are proofs, father, or at least we know where the young girls are with certainty, we are so much the stronger. Be easy, the law is more powerful than all the superiors of all the convents in the world."

"And the Count de Montbron, to whom Mademoiselle de Cardoville begs you to apply," said La Mayeux, "must be a powerful man. You will tell him how important the reasons are why these young ladies should be at liberty this very night, as well as Mademoiselle de Cardoville, who, you see, has as great an interest in being at liberty to-morrow; and then, certainly, the Count de Montbron will hasten the measure of justice, and this evening your children will be restored to you."

"La Mayeux is right, my dear father. Go to the Count, whilst I will run to the commissary and inform him that we now know where

the two girls are detained : will you not, father ? and we will meet at home, eh ? ”

Dagobert was lost in reflection, at length he said to Agricola,—

“ Agreed, I will follow your advice ; but suppose the commissary says, ‘ We can do nothing before to-morrow ; ’ suppose the Count de Montbron says the same thing to me ; do you think that I will remain with my arms folded until to-morrow morning ? ”

“ Father —— ”

“ Enough,” replied the soldier, in an abrupt tone, “ I understand. You, my boy, go to the commissary,—you, Mayeux, my dear, wait for us at home. I will go to the Count—give me the ring—what’s the address ? ”

“ Place Vendôme, No. 7, Count de Montbron. You come from Mademoiselle de Cardoville,” said La Mayeux.

“ I have a good memory,” said the soldier ; “ and, now go as quickly as you can to Rue Brise-Miche.”

“ Yes, father, and take courage. You will see that the law defends and protects honest people.”

“ So much the better,” said the soldier ; “ because without that honest people would be obliged to defend and protect themselves. So now, my dears, away, and we meet as soon as possible in the Rue Brise-Miche.”

When Dagobert, Agricola, and La Mayeux, separated, the night had entirely arrived.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

It was eight o’clock in the evening, the rain was driving heavily against the casements in the chamber of Françoise Baudoin, Rue Brise-Miche, while violent gusts of wind shook the door and ill-fitting window-frames. The disorder and neglect apparent in a place once so neatly and carefully kept abundantly proved the grave and painful nature of those occurrences which had thus brought confusion and ruin to a household hitherto so peaceful and contented, even amidst its poverty and obscurity.

Patches of mud were trampled into the floor, while a thick coat of dust covered the furniture, once shining in all the pride of housewifery and womanly care. The bed had not been made since Françoise had been taken away by the commissary. Dagobert had merely thrown himself on it without undressing, when returning, exhausted with fatigue and weariness of spirit, from his ineffectual attempts to discover the hiding-place of Rose and Blanche. A bottle and glass, with some morsels of hard dry bread, standing on the small table, bore testimony to the frugality and abstemiousness of the poor soldier, which, indeed, were indispensable in his present impoverished condi-

tion,—the only resource now left the old man being the money raised by carrying different articles to the Mont de Pieté, whither, at his desire, La Mayeux had, since Françoise's arrest, carried most of the things she had before so unsuccessfully attempted to convey there. Beside the iron stove, now cold as marble, for the little stock of wood had been long since exhausted, sat La Mayeux, with a pale flickering candle placed near her, a feeling of utter weariness seemed to have induced a temporary slumber; for there she sat, her head drooping on her breast, her feet resting on the lower rail of the chair, and her hands wrapped in her little cotton apron, while, ever and anon, the frame of the poor girl seemed to shiver beneath her drenched garments. Throughout the whole of this day so fatiguing and harassing both to body and mind, La Mayeux had not tasted food; had she even thought of it, or wished to do so, she had not the smallest morsel of bread belonging to her; and it was while anxiously awaiting the return of Dagobert and Agricola, that tired nature sunk into that troubled sleep, so different to the peaceful, refreshing slumber of the light-hearted and happy. Still too powerfully affected by the depth of her sympathy with the distresses of those she loved to be able long to forget them, poor La Mayeux kept half opening her eyes from time to time, and sending an earnest, scrutinising gaze round the room, and then again yielding to an irresistible desire for repose, letting her head fall again to its drooping position.

At the end of some minutes' silence, broken only by the noise of the wind and rain, a slow, heavy tread was heard on the landing-place, the door opened, and Dagobert entered, followed by Kill-joy.

Awakening with a start, La Mayeux suddenly sprang up, and hurrying towards the parent of Agricola said,—

“Well! M. Dagobert? have you brought good news? have you —”

The kind-hearted girl paused in her inquiries; for, lifting her eyes towards the countenance of the old soldier, as though preparing to read there the joyful tidings of success in his mission, she became painfully struck with the deep gloom impressed on the weatherbeaten features of the soldier, who, as though too much preoccupied with his own sad thoughts to be aware of the presence of the young workwoman, threw himself with an air of wretchedness and despondency into a chair, and covered his face with both his hands. After a long continuance in this meditative attitude, he rose and said,—

“It must be so!—it must be so!” then walking with hasty strides about the room, he seemed busily seeking something important to his purpose. After attentively examining each article in the room, his eye caught sight of a bar of iron of about two feet in length, used to prop open the top of the stove when the heat became too great, he eagerly seized it, carefully and minutely examined it, weighed it, and then, as if perfectly satisfied with the result of his scrutiny, laid it down on the table.

La Mayeux perplexed at the prolonged silence of Dagobert, had followed his movements with intense yet timid curiosity, mingled with uneasiness, which quickly gave place to terror, when she saw the soldier take up his haversack from a chair on which it was lying, open it,

and draw forth a pair of pocket pistols, whose triggers he carefully examined.

Unable any longer to control her fears, the sempstress exclaimed,—

“Oh, M. Dagobert! what are you going to do?”

The soldier looked at the frightened girl as though he only then became aware of her presence, and said to her in a voice at once kind and abrupt,—

“Good evening, my child! what is the time?”

“St. Merry’s clock has just struck eight, M. Dagobert.”

“Eight o’clock!” murmured the soldier, as though speaking to himself, “only eight o’clock!” then placing his pistols beside the bar of iron, he seemed again lost in reflection, still gazing round and round the room in anxious search for something he still seemed to require.

At length La Mayeux ventured to interrupt him by saying,—

“I am afraid, M. Dagobert, you have not very good news for us!”

“No!” answered the soldier; and the monosyllable was uttered in a tone so dry, so harsh, and so indicative of a desire to be questioned no further, that the poor, timid La Mayeux did not dare proceed with her inquiries, but gently and silently resumed her seat, while Kill-joy leaning his head on the young girl’s lap, seemed to participate in her desire to know what was going on, and watched as closely and curiously as she did every movement of Dagobert, who, after another period of deep and earnest meditation, approached the bed, took off one of the sheets, and appeared anxiously to calculate its length and strength, then turning towards the astonished La Mayeux, he said,—

“Some scissors.”

“Oh, but, M. Dagobert ——”

“Come, my good girl—no talking—but do as I bid you. Where are the scissors?” persisted Dagobert, in a tone which, although perfectly kind, implied one used to prompt and perfect obedience.

The sempstress took a pair of scissors from the work-basket of Françoise, and presented them to the soldier.

“Now, then, my good girl, hold the other end of this sheet, and be sure to hold it quite tight.”

In the course of a few minutes Dagobert had divided the linen into four strips, which he afterwards twisted very tightly so as to form a kind of rope, tying them at intervals with some tape supplied him by the workwoman, so as to preserve the tension he desired; then, by fastening these four pieces securely together, Dagobert constructed a rope of at least twenty feet in length, but this did not appear to suffice him, for he said, as though talking to himself,—

“Now, I must have a hook!” and again he commenced a rigid search in every part of the room.

Becoming more terrified as the object of Dagobert’s labours became apparent to La Mayeux, she said,—

“But, M. Dagobert, Agricola has not returned yet; and I doubt not by his delay he will bring us good tidings. I dare say he has waited to bring you some good news!”

“Yes,” replied the soldier, with bitterness, “no doubt—much

after the fashion of mine; but," continued he, still pursuing his search for the thing he was desirous of obtaining, "I want a stout grappling-hook!" and rummaging about in all directions he found one of the coarse grey cloth bags Françoise was usually employed in making, hastily taking it up, he opened it, saying to La Mayeux,—

"Now, my girl, put the piece of iron and the rope in here, it will be more convenient to carry out then."

"Surely, M. Dagobert," cried La Mayeux, as she mechanically obeyed the orders given, "you will not go before Agricola returns? In all probability he will have good news for you when he does come."

"Make yourself quite easy, my child, I shall certainly wait for my boy's coming back—I cannot leave here before ten o'clock, so there will be plenty of time."

"Ah! M. Dagobert, I fear you have lost all hope!"

"On the contrary, I am full of hope of success; but it is in myself only!" So saying, the soldier twisted the neck of the bag so as to close it securely, and then laid it down beside his pistols.

"Then, M. Dagobert, you will at least await the arrival of Agricola?"

"Yes—I shall wait for him—till ten o'clock."

"Alas! then, you are quite resolved—quite determined?"

"Quite so—still if I were simple enough to believe in presages——"

"Sometimes, M. Dagobert, warnings are not to be disregarded—they are often sent by Heaven itself to turn us from certain danger, if not destruction," answered La Mayeux, anxious by any means to divert the old man from his dangerous undertaking.

"Yes," replied Dagobert, "so say the old women; and though I am not one likely to mind their gossiping nonsense, I have seen that tonight which has cut me to the heart, and, most likely, I took the agitation occasioned by anger for a presentiment."

"What did you see, M. Dagobert?"

"I will tell you, my girl, what it was; it will serve to pass the time away." Then, suddenly breaking off, he said, "Was not that the half-hour struck just now?"

"Yes, M. Dagobert; it is now half-past eight o'clock."

"Still another wearisome hour and a half, then!" inquired the soldier, in a gloomy tone. Then added, "Well, I saw while passing down some street, I forget which, an enormous red placard; at first, I glanced at it without feeling any desire to know its contents, but, looking at it more closely, I perceived it represented a black panther devouring a white horse. At this sight my blood boiled in my veins; for you must know, my dear Mayeux, that it was a black panther that destroyed a poor old white horse I had, the companion of Kill-joy there, whose name was Jovial."

At this once familiar name, Kill-joy, who was lying extended at the feet of La Mayeux, hastily lifted up his sagacious head, and gazed inquiringly at Dagobert.

"There!" said the soldier, sighing at the recollection of his faithful old steed,— "there, you see what good memories poor, dumb brutes have! *they* never forget." Then addressing his dog, he said, "You remember Jovial, then?"

As the name of his old comrade again reached the ear of Kill-joy, pronounced by his master in so mournful a tone, Kill-joy uttered a low whining moan, then by a faint bark intimated that he had by no means forgotten his old friend and companion.

"Indeed, M. Dagobert," said La Mayeux, "it was a very sad and singular similarity to find at the head of the placard you speak of—a black panther devouring a horse."

"Oh, that is nothing to what follows! I approached this placard, and read in it that a person named Morok, just arrived from Germany, would exhibit in a theatre several animals he had tamed, and amongst others a superb lion, a tiger, and a black panther from Java, called La Mort."

"Oh, what a dreadful name!" said La Mayeux.

"And it will appear still more dreadful to you, my child, when I tell you that this was the very panther who strangled my horse near Leipsic, now four months ago."

"Oh, how very shocking!" said La Mayeux; "then, indeed, you had cause to shudder at the sight of the placard."

"Wait a little," exclaimed Dagobert, whose features became still more overcast, "that is not all! It was through this Morok, the owner of this very panther, that myself and my poor children were thrown into prison at Leipsic."

"Oh, heavens, M. Dagobert! and this very man, who evidently bears you such ill-will, is now in Paris!" cried La Mayeux. "Oh, you were quite right—you must be very careful—it is, indeed, a bad omen!"

"And so it will prove to that miserable wretch if he falls in my way, he may depend upon it," replied Dagobert, in a threatening tone, "for we have some old scores to settle together the first opportunity."

"Monsieur Dagobert," cried La Mayeux, listening attentively, "some one is hastening upstairs; it is Agricola's step, I am certain, and he brings good news, I am sure of it."

"That will do my business nicely," rejoined the soldier, quickly, without making any direct reply to La Mayeux's consoling observations. "Agricola being a smith can soon make me the iron hook I want."

A few moments after, Agricola entered; but, alas! the poor work-woman discovered, at the first glance of the dejected countenance of the young man, the utter ruin of all the fond hopes with which she had been flattering herself.

"Well," said Dagobert to his son, in a tone which clearly proved how little faith he had in the success of the measures pursued by Agricola,— "well, what news do you bring?"

"Oh, father!" exclaimed the smith, impetuously, "it is enough to drive a man out of his senses—to induce him to knock his brains out against a wall!"

Turning towards La Mayeux, Dagobert said, calmly,—

"There, my girl, you see; I told you so."

"But you, father," cried Agricola, "have, doubtless, been more successful—you have seen the Count de Montbron? What says he?"

"The Count de Montbron quitted Paris three days ago for Lorraine; so there are my good news," replied the soldier, with bitter

irony. "Now, let us hear yours; tell me all that has happened. I want to be well assured that the justice which you but a little while ago said protected and defended honest men, as frequently as not leaves the poor wretch who trusts to it in the clutches of the rascally oppressors—yes, first, I want to be well convinced of that fact; and then I want an iron hook, and I depend on you for both those things."

"I hardly understand you, father!"

"Tell me all you have been saying and doing since we parted; I have plenty of time to listen to you, it only struck half-past eight just now. Now, then, when you left me where did you go?"

"To the commissary who took down your deposition."

"And what said he?"

"After having listened very politely to all that I had to say, he replied, 'Why, then, after all, these young persons are placed in a holy house of first-rate respectability—a convent, in fact; there is, therefore, no immediate hurry as to removing them, and, if there were, I cannot take upon myself to violate the sanctity of a religious establishment merely upon your statement; to-morrow I will make the necessary report in the proper quarter, and the affair will be taken into consideration.'"

"There you see!" remarked the soldier, bitterly; "more puttings off—all in the same tale—must wait for justice!"

"'But, sir,' replied I, 'this case admits not of an hour's delay; measures must be taken this very evening to remove the young ladies from the confinement they are now kept in; for, if they are not in the Rue Saint François by to-morrow morning, the most incalculable and irremediable mischief to themselves and family will arise.' 'I regret much it should so happen,' answered the commissary, 'but I repeat that it is wholly out of my power, on your simple declaration, any more than on that of your father, who, no more than yourself, stands in any degree of relationship to these young persons, to commit any breach of the established laws relative to such matters, no infraction on them would be permitted even upon the application of the nearest relative the young ladies may possess. Justice has its delays, as well as its formalities, and to these you must submit.'"

"To be sure," said Dagobert; "submission is the word, at the risk of being a traitor, a coward, and a perfidious, ungrateful wretch!"

"Did you also mention Mademoiselle de Cardoville to the commissary?" inquired La Mayeux.

"Yes; but his answer was nearly similar to the one I have just related. 'It was a very serious affair,' he remarked; 'true, I deposed upon oath to what I advanced, but, then, I brought no fact or proof to substantiate what I alleged. You see,' said he, 'a third person has assured you Mademoiselle de Cardoville is not mad, that is very insufficient testimony, because all insane persons invariably assert that they are in their right minds and senses; certainly I cannot venture upon such very slight grounds to invade the privacy of an establishment conducted by so highly respectable a medical gentleman, nevertheless I will, of course, receive your deposition, and lay it before the persons qualified to take cognisance of it, but, as I before said, the law must take its course.'"

"And when just now I wished to go to work at once," said Dago-

bert, in a deep, sullen voice, "do you suppose I was not aware of all this?—and yet to think I was fool enough to be dissuaded from my purpose!"

"Father, I repeat again that what you meant to do was as impossible to achieve as dangerous to attempt, and would have exposed you to the most dangerous consequences; you admitted that yourself."

"So then," resumed the soldier, without replying to his son, "he formally and positively told you that it was impossible in a legal way to obtain the release of Rose and Blanche either to-night or to-morrow morning?"

"He assured me that the law could not be hurried, and that the point would not be decided for several days."

"That is all I wanted to know!" cried Dagobert, rising from his chair, and pacing the chamber with hasty strides.

"Still," continued the son, "I would not admit myself conquered. Almost in despair, yet believing that justice could not be deaf to such reasonable and equitable claims, I hastened to the Palais de Justice, hoping that, perhaps, I might find there some judge or magistrate who would listen to my complaint, and attend to it forthwith."

"Well——" said the soldier, stopping short.

"There I was told that the court closed every day at five o'clock, and opened at ten next morning. Again I was thrown out; but, remembering the cruel anxiety both yourself and Mademoiselle de Car-doville were enduring, I resolved to make a third attempt, and entered into a guardhouse, where were a quantity of soldiers, commanded by an officer, to whom I related the whole story. He saw how much I was excited, and the warmth with which I expressed myself seemed to touch his feelings and rouse his sympathy. I perceived he held lieutenant's rank, so I addressed him at once.

"'Lieutenant,' said I, 'grant me one favour, I beseech of you. Permit a subaltern officer and two of your men to accompany me to the convent, in order to obtain legal admittance there. Let them demand to see the daughters of General Simon, and give them their choice whether to remain there or return to my father, who brought them from Russia. It will soon be seen then whether they are in the convent by their own free-will or not.'"

"And what answer did he make, Agricola?" asked La Mayeux, while Dagobert, with a shrug of the shoulders, resumed his strides up and down the chamber.

"'My lad,' said he, 'you ask an impossibility. I can enter into your feelings, and see all the urgency of the case; but to enter by force into a convent, bless you, I should be cashiered for permitting such a thing!'

"'But what is to be done?' asked I; 'it is enough to drive one mad.'

"'Upon my life, I don't know. I cannot assist you; and perhaps the best and safest way will be to wait.'

"So, finding no hopes of obtaining any thing from the lieutenant, and believing that I had now done all that human means could effect, I thought I had better return home, hoping that you might have been more successful than myself. Unhappily, I was mistaken!" And with these words the smith, overcome with fatigue, threw himself into a chair.

Profound silence lasted for some minutes. Agricola's last words seemed to have effectually to have put an end to even the faintest glimmer of hope, and the three persons assembled in the humble apartment appeared bowed down by the inexorable fatality of their situation.

* * * * *

This gloomy silence was broken by a fresh incident, calculated to increase the gloom and despondency of the scene.

CHAPTER LXV.

DISCOVERIES.

THE door which Agricola had not thought of fastening was timidly opened, and Françoise Baudoin, Dagobert's wife, pale, and almost fainting, tottered into the room.

The soldier, Agricola, and La Mayeux, were plunged in so deep a reverie, that the entrance of Françoise was not perceived by either; but scarcely had the poor, half-fainting woman crossed the threshold of the door than she threw herself on her knees, clasped her hands, and said, in a supplicating voice, trembling with weakness, "Husband! dear husband! pardon—oh pardon!"

At these words Agricola and La Mayeux, whose backs were towards the door, suddenly turned round, while Dagobert hastily looked up.

"Mother!" cried Agricola, running towards Françoise.

"My wife!" exclaimed Dagobert, also rising, and taking a few steps towards the poor woman.

"Dearest mother!" said Agricola, stooping down towards Françoise, and tenderly embracing her; "you on your knees! Oh rise, rise, I pray."

"No, my child!" replied Françoise, in a tone firm, though gentle, "I will not rise from my knees till your father has pardoned me. My conduct towards him has been very bad; I am now, when too late, aware of it."

"Forgive you, my poor dear wife," said the soldier, much affected, and approaching Françoise; "did I ever lay any thing to your charge, except during my first burst of despair? No, no; it was those bad priests I accused, and I was right. But now that you are once again here," added he, assisting his son to raise Françoise, "why there is one grief the less. And so they have set you at liberty? Yesterday I could not learn where you were taken to. No one could inform me of the name of your prison; and, indeed, I was so beset with one heavy care and the other, that I had not the leisure to do more than to inquire where you were to be found. But come now, my dear wife, and sit down here."

"My dearest mother! how weak and trembling you are, and how

very cold and pale you seem!" said Agricola, while tears of anguish filled his eyes. "Why did you not let us know," added he, "that we might have come and fetched you home? But how you shiver! My dear mother, your hands are cold as death!" pursued the young man, kneeling down before Françoise; then, turning to La Mayeux, he said, "Light the fire, and make it burn up as quickly as you can!"

"I was thinking of doing so when your father came home, Agricola; but there is neither charcoal nor wood."

"Then run down, there's a dear Mayeux, run to old Lorient, and ask him to lend us some: he is too good to refuse us. My poor mother may be taken ill: only see how she shivers!"

Ere the words were well uttered, La Mayeux had disappeared; the smith rose from his kneeling attitude, fetched one of the blankets from the bed, and, returning, wrapped it carefully round the feet and knees of his mother; then, again kneeling, he said, "Place your hands in mine, dearest mother!" and, taking the thin, weak hands in his own, Agricola tried to warm them with his breath.

A more affecting picture could scarcely have been presented than was thus exhibited in the person of the powerful and athletic form of the son, the very personification of health and youthful vigour, gazing with intense love on his feeble, pale, and trembling parent, and striving by every delicate attention to bring back the warmth to her pulse and heart.

While Dagobert, kind and forgiving as his son, fetched a pillow, and offered it to his wife, saying,—

"Just lean forward a little, and I will place this pillow behind you; it will give you ease, and warm you at the same time."

"How you are both spoiling me!" said Françoise, trying to reward their exertions with a smile. "And you, especially," said she to Dagobert,— "you to whom I have caused such misery, how kind, how good you are!"

And, disengaging one of her hands from between those of her son, she took the hand of the soldier, on which she pressed her eyes, brimming with tears; then murmured, in a low, feeble voice,—

"Ah! in my prison I deeply repented what I had done, believe me!"

The heart of Agricola was wrung with pain at the idea of his mother having been even temporarily made the companion of such unfortunate and degraded beings as are to be found within the walls of a prison. She, so good, so free from sinful thoughts, so pure and single-minded! He was about to attempt some consolatory words in reference to it, when he remembered that any thing he might say would have the effect of paining and distressing his father; he therefore contented himself with trying to change the subject, by saying,—

"And how is my dear brother Gabriel, mother? You can tell us all about him, since you have just seen him."

"Ever since his return," said Françoise, drying her eyes, "he has been quite in retirement, his superiors having peremptorily forbidden his going out. Fortunately they had not denied him seeing me, for his words and counsels have opened my eyes, and taught me how ill I have behaved, though without knowing it, to you, my poor, dear husband!"



THE FAMILY MEETING.



“What do you mean?” asked Dagobert.

“Nay, you never could have believed me capable of acting as I did for the sake of giving you pain. Oh, no! When I witnessed your grief and despair I suffered equally with yourself, but I feared to own it, lest I should break my oath by so doing; and Heaven knows how truly I believed it to be a matter of duty and conscience to adhere to the rash promise I had made, under a mistaken idea of consulting the welfare of those dear children! Still something within me whispered that it could never be my duty to grieve and distress you as I was doing. ‘Alas!’ cried I, weeping and praying in my prison, spite of the gibes and jests of the unfortunate beings who were my companions, ‘teach me, my God, to discern the right path of duty! How comes it that the commission of an act, dictated to me by a man so justly esteemed as my confessor, and pronounced by him to be a deed of holy and virtuous necessity, has brought so much misery on myself and all belonging to me? Oh, then, pity and guide me, God of mercy! Teach me to distinguish truth from error, and enable me to repair my fault if I have unknowingly done wrong!’ For some time this wish formed the only subject of my constant supplications, till, at length, the cry of the sinner was heard, and the whispering of Divine mercy suggested the idea of consulting Gabriel. ‘Thanks, my God!’ I exclaimed; ‘the blessed suggestion shall not be thrown away. Gabriel is to me as a second son; he is, moreover, a priest, a holy martyr, as I *now* know. If there be on earth a creature worthy of our imitation, by the practice of universal love and charity, it is Gabriel; and the instant I am liberated from prison my first act shall be to go and consult him, for he will clear up all my doubts!’”

“My dearest mother,” cried Agricola, “you are quite right; that blessed idea must have come to you from on high. Gabriel is, indeed, an angel of goodness,—the purest, noblest creature in the world, and withal the most courageous and firm. He is, indeed, a model of what a priest should be.”

“Ah! my poor Françoise,” said Dagobert, with bitter emphasis, “happy would it have been for us all now had you never had any other spiritual director than Gabriel.”

“Indeed,” replied she, with much simplicity, “I often thought of intrusting my conscience to his care before he went off upon his missions. I should have felt it such a comfort to unburden my soul to one I loved as a second son; but then, on the one hand, I knew not how to break off with Father Dubois; and, on the other, I feared that Gabriel might be too lenient to my sins.”

“Your sins, my poor, dear mother!” exclaimed Agricola; “why you never committed one in the course of your life!”

“And what did Gabriel say to you?” inquired the soldier.

“Ah! my dear husband, why did I not sooner open my mind to him? What I told him respecting the Abbé Dubois roused his suspicions. He questioned me, the dear child did, on many points he had never named to me before. We exchanged confidences with each other. He told me every thought he had, and I laid bare my innermost heart. This led to some most cruel discoveries as to the treachery of persons we had hitherto held in high esteem and respect, but

whom we now found had most wickedly deceived us, unknown to each other."

"In what manner?"

"My poor Gabriel, under the seal of secrecy, was told many things stated to have come from me; while I, also, under the seal of strict secrecy, was also informed of various things purporting to proceed from him. And now he confessed that originally he never had felt any desire to be a priest, but that he had been informed that I considered my peace, both in this world and the next, depended on his taking the vows, because I felt certain that the Lord would recompense me for having given Him so excellent a servant, although I could never bring myself to ask such a proof of attachment and regard, notwithstanding the claims I had on his gratitude for having rescued him, when a helpless infant, from perishing in the streets of cold and hunger, and maintaining him as my own child by means of many privations and incessant labour, as you might suppose. The poor, dear lad, thinking to gratify my fervent wishes, sacrificed himself, and entered the seminary he now belongs to."

"Horrible, indeed!" cried Agricola, almost shuddering; "what an infamous scheme! and for priests to practise it, adds even the double guilt of sacrilege to falsehood!"

"During the time all these arts were being practised on Gabriel, a widely different language was held to me," continued Françoise. "I was given to understand that Gabriel had a decided vocation for a holy life, but feared to confess it to me for fear of rendering me jealous on Agricola's account, who, being destined to earn his living as a mere workman, could not hope to share the advantages the priesthood would ensure Gabriel. Thus when the dear boy, stifling his own regrets and thinking only of affording me happiness, asked my permission to enter the seminary, instead of trying to dissuade him from it, I, on the contrary, commended his choice, and did all in my power to persuade him to persevere in his intentions, assuring him that he was acting most wisely, and that he made me truly happy by the selection of a priest's life; nay, I even exaggerated the delight, the gratification he afforded me, so fearful was I of his believing me actuated by any jealousy on Agricola's account."

"What a most infamous machination!" exclaimed Agricola, when the stupified horror with which he had listened to his mother's recital permitted him to give vent to his feelings in words. "Thus, then, your mutual love for, and devotion to, each other were turned against yourselves, and thus in the constrained encouragement you bestowed on his choice of a life, poor Gabriel saw but your delight at the realising of a cherished wish."

"Still, however, by degrees Gabriel began really to love the profession he had embraced. To a heart so good, so filled with the purest benevolence, what office could have been more congenial than to comfort the afflicted and pour balm on the wounded spirit? He seemed as though nature had destined him for the task by the tender zeal with which he performed it; nor would his lips ever have referred to the past but for the conversation of this morning; but, as the truth came out, and he perceived how cruelly we had both been made the

innocent cause of pain to the other, than he, hitherto so gentle, so calm and timid, burst forth into the most angry reproaches and bitter invectives against a M. Rodin and some other person he accused as base and unworthy. He had already, he told me, serious causes of complaint against these two individuals, but that the discovery of the deception practised upon us both completed the measure of their offences against him !”

As Françoise uttered these last words, Dagobert started and pressed his hand to his forehead, as though trying to collect his ideas ; for several minutes he had been listening with profound attention to this disclosure of black treason and underhanded machinations, conducted with so skilful yet deep a villany.

Françoise continued,—

“ When at length I confessed to Gabriel that, acting by the advice of the Abbé Dubois, my confessor, I had given to a stranger’s keeping the children intrusted to me by my husband, the daughters of General Simon, the poor boy most unwillingly was obliged severely to blame me, not for seeking to make these interesting orphans acquainted with our holy religion, but for not having previously consulted my husband, who was alone answerable both before God and men for the charge intrusted to him. Gabriel spoke in terms of deep censure of the conduct of M. Dubois in giving me, as he said, such improper and perfidious advice ; after which the dear child, with all the sweetness of an angel, tried to console and comfort me, and urged me to return home without delay and relate every thing to you, my dear husband. Seeing how much I dreaded venturing in your presence, and how greatly I suffered from distress of mind at the recollection of my bad conduct towards you, Gabriel deeply lamented being unable to accompany me ; but, unhappily, he was under very positive orders from his superiors not to quit the seminary for a single hour, so it was utterly out of his power to ——”

Here Dagobert, who was evidently suffering under painful emotion, abruptly interrupted his wife, saying,—

“ Tell me one thing, Françoise, for, in truth, I lose both my memory and reason in the midst of all these black infamous plots and heavy cares, did you not tell me that day the children were taken away, that when you first found Gabriel he had about his neck a bronze medal, and in a pocket a quantity of papers written in foreign language ?”

“ I told you truly, he had !”

“ And that you afterwards gave this medal and papers into the hands of your confessor ?”

“ Yes, husband, I said so.”

“ And has Gabriel never spoken to you respecting either the medal or papers since ?”

“ Never !”

As Agricola listened to his mother’s replies to the questions put to her, a feeling of surprise induced him to exclaim,—

“ Then Gabriel has the same interest as the daughters of General Simon and Mademoiselle de Cardoville have in being in the Rue Saint François to-morrow ?”

“ Most certainly he has,” said Dagobert ; “ and now I remember,

he told me upon my first arrival here that he should, in a very few days, require our aid and support in a matter of infinite consequence."

"So he did, father."

"And now, you see, he is kept a prisoner in the seminary, and he told your mother he had deep cause of complaint against his superiors; and then when he spoke to us of requiring our support, he said it in so grave and sad a tone, that I remarked he could not appear more sorrowful and serious if it related to some mortal combat he was about to engage in."

"Ah, father!" replied Agricola, "you who know so well that the courage and resolution of Gabriel are equal to your own, must suppose then that the danger is great indeed if it inspires him with so great dread of his superiors."

"Now then," said Dagobert, "that I have heard your mother's statement, I understand all about it. Gabriel is evidently, like Rose and Blanche, Mademoiselle de Cardoville, your mother, and possibly ourselves, the victim of a dark conspiracy among these priests to rob him of his rights; and now that I see the fearful power they possess, the unprincipled means they employ, and their infernal perseverance in bringing them to bear, I own," said the soldier, lowering his voice, "that I feel it requires no ordinary strength to attempt to struggle against them. No, I never had an idea of such power and wicked will to work it as these black-robed hypocrites possess."

"You are right, father; and there can be no doubt those wicked and hypoeritical men may effect as much harm and mischief as good faithful servants of the church like Gabriel may do good. And I believe there is no enemy so implacably dangerous as a false, designing, and wicked priest."

"No doubt, no doubt; and it is that very conviction that terrifies me, for are not my poor dear children helpless in their hands? and shall I abandon them without a struggle? Are all the chances so completely against me? is there no hope? Oh, no, no! let me shake off this weakness. Yet since your mother has laid open their diabolical schemes and contrivances, I know not how it is, but I feel less bold, less resolute; all this going on seems insensibly to strike terror into my mind. The carrying off of these orphans is not a solitary act of wickedness, but a ramification of some vast plot which surrounds and threatens us all. It seems as though we were all walking in the dark in the midst of venomous serpents; or as if blindfolded and making our way through enemies and surrounded by snares and pitfalls—dangers we could neither combat nor perceive. I cannot tell you why, but I, who never feared death, am no coward, am now afraid—yes, to my shame I confess it—afraid of the almost supernatural power of these black-robed villains. Yes, pity me, despise me, but I fear them, and dare not oppose them further."

These words, which Dagobert seemed to pronounce almost involuntarily, were uttered with so mournful, yet conveining a tone, that Agricola shuddered, for he felt that his own heart responded but too faithfully to them.

And nothing could be more natural than for natures as open, energetic, and resolute as were those of Dagobert and his son, who would unhesitatingly have faced the greatest dangers that had pre-

sented themselves openly, to shrink with reluctance from encountering invisible foes, whose blows were aimed behind the veil of darkness and mystery. Many a time had Dagobert boldly faced death in the battle-field without the slightest alarm, yet when he heard his wife simply, yet unaffectedly, developing the system of falsehood, deceit, and treachery, which seemed to involve the happiness of all he loved, a vague apprehension seized upon the old soldier, and a sense of impending and unavoidable danger seemed to paralyse his efforts and chill the current of his blood. Not that he meditated any change in his nocturnal enterprise against the convent, but that he now beheld it under a more gloomy and dispiriting point of view.

The silence which ensued was interrupted by the return of La Mayeux, who, aware that the conversation going on between Dagobert and his family was not intended for other ears than their own, tapped gently at the door, thereby preventing the entrance of old Lorient, the dyer, by whom she was accompanied.

"May I come in, Madame Françoise?" said the young girl, pushing her head in. "Here is M. Lorient with some wood for you."

"Yes, yes; come in," said Agricola, while his father wiped the cold sweat from his forehead.

The door opened and admitted old Lorient with hands and arms dyed a rich amaranth colour, carrying in one hand a shovel-full of lighted charcoal, and in the other a basket of wood.

"Good evening, company all!" said Lorient; "I am obliged to you, Madame Françoise, for thinking of sending to me. You know quite well that my shop, with all that is in it, is most heartily at your service; neighbours should always help each other, and I have not forgotten your goodness to my wife when she was alive."

Then giving the hot coals to Agricola, and placing the wood in a corner of the room, the worthy dyer, imagining from the sorrowful and preoccupied countenances of the persons in the room that his presence could be dispensed with, said, in a kind and friendly manner,—

"Is there any thing else I can do for you, Madame Françoise?"

"No, thank you, my good friend."

"Then I will say good night, company all." Then addressing La Mayeux, he said, "Do not forget to give M. Dagobert his letter. I did not dare touch it myself for fear I should have left the mark of four fingers and a thumb in amaranth colour. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen." And the dyer bowed himself with all the respect he knew how to practise.

"Here, M. Dagobert," said La Mayeux, "here is the letter." Then, having delivered it into the old soldier's hands, she began to occupy herself with the fire, while Agricola brought the old arm-chair of his mother and placed it before the stove.

"See what it is about, my lad," said Dagobert to his son. "My head aches so I can scarcely see clearly enough to read it for myself."

Agricola took the letter, which merely contained a few lines, and read it through without even looking at the signature. It began:—

"At Sea, December 25, 1834.

"I avail myself of our having fallen in with and communicated

with a vessel going direct to Europe to write you, my worthy old friend, a few hasty lines, which I trust may reach you from Havre probably even before the arrival of my last letters from India. You are now, I hope and believe, in Paris with my wife and child. Tell them—— I cannot say what I had intended, the boat is leaving. One word—I am in France. Forget not the 13th of February; the future welfare of my wife and child depends upon it. Adieu, my excellent friend; rely upon the unfading gratitude of yours ever,

“SIMON.”

“Agricola! Agricola!” exclaimed La Mayeux, “quick! look to your father!”

At the first words of this letter, rendered by circumstances so cruelly *à propos*, Dagobert turned deadly pale, and, overcome by emotion, fatigue, and utter exhaustion of body and mind, tottered, and was about to fall to the ground, when his son ran to him, caught him in his arms, and supported him tenderly for a few instants, until the sudden vertigo which had seized the old man passing away, he raised his hand to his head, pressed the throbbing veins of his temples, then, drawing himself up to his full height, his eyes sparkled and his weather-beaten countenance assumed an expression of unalterable resolution, while he exclaimed in a voice of fierce defiance,—

“No! I will be neither a coward nor a traitor. All the black villains together shall not affright me, and this night Rose and Blanche Simon shall be set free!”

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE PENAL CODE.

DAGOBERT, for a moment intimidated by the dark and sinister machinations so dangerously prosecuted by the *black gowns*, as he called them, against the persons he so dearly loved, had, for an instant, hesitated as to his attempt to deliver Rose and Blanche; but his indecision ended as soon as he had read the letter of Marshal Simon, which had come unexpectedly to remind him of his sacred duties.

The momentary depression of the soldier had been succeeded by the resolution of a calm and collected energy.

“Agricola, what is the hour?” he inquired of his son.

“Nine o’clock has just struck, father.”

“Make me as quickly as you can a strong iron hook, sufficiently strong to bear my weight, and bent so as to fit the coping of a wall. This stove will serve for forge and anvil, and you will find a hammer in the house. As to the iron,” said the soldier, hesitating, and looking about him,—“as to the iron—here, this will do.”

So saying, the soldier took a pair of stout tongs from the hearth, and handed them to his son, adding,—

“Come, my lad, blow the fire, heat the iron, and forge me this hook.”

At these words Françoise and Agricola looked at each other with surprise. The smith remained silent and astonished, not knowing his father's intentions, or the preparations which he had already commenced by La Mayeux's assistance.

“Don't you hear what I say, Agricola?” repeated Dagobert, holding the tongs still in his hand; “you must make me a hook out of these.”

“A hook, father! and for what?”

“To fasten to the end of a rope which I have there. You must finish it at one end with an eye large enough for me to fasten it to the cord securely.”

“But what are the cord and hook for?”

“For scaling the walls of this convent, if I cannot get in by the door.”

“What convent?” asked Françoise of her son.

“What, father!” said Agricola, rising hastily, “do you still think of that?”

“What else can I think of?”

“But, father, it is impossible; you will not surely undertake such an enterprise?”

“What is it, my dear?” inquired Françoise, anxiously. “Where does your father want to go?”

“He wants to-night to get into the convent in which the daughters of General Simon are shut up, and to carry them off.”

“Oh! my poor husband!—why, it is sacrilege!” said Françoise, still clinging to her pious belief; and, clasping her hands, she made an effort to rise, and draw near Dagobert.

The soldier, perceiving that he should have to submit to remarks, prayers of all sorts, and resolved not to give way to them, resolved at once to cut short these useless supplications, which would only make him lose precious time; and, therefore, assuming a grave, severe, and almost solemn air, which proved the inflexibility of his determination,—

“Listen, wife, and you, also, my son! When, at my time of life, a man resolves on a thing, he knows what he is about; and, once having decided, neither wife nor son can turn him, do what they can. I thus am resolved, so spare yourselves useless words. It is your duty to speak to me as you do, and, having fulfilled that duty, do not say any more about it. This evening I will be master.”

Françoise, fearful and oppressed, dared not hazard a word; but she turned her supplicating looks towards her son.

“Father,” he said, “one word only, but one.”

“Say that one, then,” said Dagobert, impatiently.

“I will not attempt to overcome your resolution, but I will prove to you that you are ignorant of how far you are exposing yourself.”

“I am not ignorant of any thing,” said the soldier, with an abrupt tone. “What I am going to attempt is a serious matter, but it shall never be said that I have neglected any means by which it was possible to accomplish what I promised to effect.”

“Take care, father; I tell you once more you do not know the

danger to which you expose yourself," said the smith, with an air of alarm.

"Ah! let us talk of danger—let us talk of the porter's gun and the gardener's scythe!" said Dagobert, shrugging his shoulders disdainfully, "and to end that matter. Well! What next? Suppose I leave my skin in this convent, are not you left to take care of your mother? For twenty years you have done without me, and so you will have the less to grieve for."

"And it is I—oh! Heaven!—it is I who am the cause of all these misfortunes!" exclaimed the poor mother. "Oh! Gabriel was right to blame me."

"Madame Françoise, take comfort," said La Mayeux, in a low tone, going close up to Dagobert's wife, "Agricola will not allow his father to expose himself in this manner."

The smith, after a moment's pause, said, in an agitated voice,—

"I know you too well, father, to suppose that I shall stop you by any fear of the danger of risking your life."

"What danger is there?"

"Another danger before which you will recoil,—yes, brave as you are, you will recoil!" said the young man, in a tone of emotion which had its effect on his father.

"Agricola," said the soldier, severely and sternly, "you speak offensively—you insult me!"

"Father!"

"It is offensive," resumed the angry soldier, "for it is base to seek to turn a man from his duty by frightening him; an insult, because you think me capable of being intimidated."

"Ah, M. Dagobert," said La Mayeux, "you do not understand Agricola."

"I understand him but too well," replied the soldier, sternly.

Painfully moved by the severity of his father, but firm in his resolution, which was the dictate of love and respect, Agricola replied not without a beating heart.

"Pardon me if I disobey you, father; but if you should hate me for it, still you shall know to what you expose yourself by escalading the walls of a convent in the night."

"Son, dare you?" said Dagobert, his face flashing with anger.

"Agricola!" exclaimed Françoise, in an agony. "My husband!"

"Monsieur Dagobert, pray hear Agricola, who is only speaking what he says for your good," exclaimed La Mayeux.

"Not another word!" replied the soldier, striking his foot with anger.

"I tell you, father, that you are running an almost certain risk of the galleys!" exclaimed the smith, turning frightfully pale.

"Unhappy boy!" said Dagobert, seizing his son by the arm. "Could you not have concealed that from me, rather than expose me by this to be a traitor and a coward!" Then the soldier muttered to himself and trembled, "The galleys!" And he lowered his head and became mute and thoughtful, as though crushed by these appalling words.

"Yes, to enter an inhabited dwelling in the night by escalade and

forcible entry—and the law is precise—is punishable by the galleys!” cried Agricola, at the same time rejoiced and pained at the distress of his father. “Yes, father, the galleys if you are taken in the fact; and there are ten chances to one but that you will be, for Mayeux has told you the convent is guarded. This morning, had you tried to have carried off the two young ladies in open day, you must have been apprehended, but then the attempt made so openly would have had the character of frank boldness, which might have been made an excuse for your pardon; but to introduce yourself at night by escalade, I repeat, is punished by the galleys. Now then, father, decide; what you will do I will do, for you shall not go alone. Say one word, and I will make your hook. I have a hammer in the closet and pincers, and in an hour we will go.”

A profound silence followed the words of the smith, a silence only interrupted by the stifled sobs of Françoise, who murmured with despair,—

“Alas! all this has happened because I listened to the Abbé Dubois.”

In vain did La Mayeux attempt to console Françoise, for she herself felt alarmed, knowing that the old soldier was incapable of facing infamy, and that then Agricola would partake of his father's dangers.

Dagobert, in spite of his energetic and determined character, remained deeply overcome. According to his military habits, he had only seen in his nocturnal enterprise a sort of a *ruse de guerre*, authorised, in the first instance, by his rights, and, in the next, by the unyielding fatality of his position. But the fearful statement of his son had revealed the truth to him, the terrible alternative; and he must either betray the confidence of Marshal Simon and the last wishes of the mother of the orphan girls, or else expose himself, and more particularly his son, to the chance of frightful disgrace. His son! and even then without the certainty of freeing the two girls.

Suddenly Françoise, drying her eyes, which were overflowing with tears, exclaimed, as though struck with sudden inspiration,—

“But, now I reflect, there is a mode by which we may get the children out of the convent without violence.”

“How, mother?” asked Agricola, quickly.

“It was the Abbé Dubois who took them there, but after what Gabriel told me, it is probable that my confessor only acted by the instruction of M. Rodin.”

“And if it were so, my dear mother, it would be useless to address M. Rodin; you could get nothing from him.”

“No, not from him; but, perhaps, from that powerful abbé who is Gabriel's superior, and has always protected him since he entered the seminary.”

“What abbé, mother?”

“The Abbé d'Aigrigny.”

“Who, before he was a priest, my dear mother, was a soldier, and might, therefore, be more accessible. But yet——”

“D'Aigrigny!” exclaimed Dagobert, with an expression of horror and detestation. “Is there mixed up in all this treachery a man who, before he was a priest, was a soldier, and whose name is d'Aigrigny?”

“Yes, father, the Marquis d’Aigrigny who, before the Restoration, served in Russia, and in 1815 the Bourbons gave him a regiment.”

“’Tis he!” said Dagobert, in a repressed tone. “Still he! always he! like an evil demon, whether it concerns the mother, the father, or the children!”

“What do you mean, father?”

“The Marquis d’Aigrigny!” exclaimed Dagobert. “Do you know who the man is? Before he was a priest he was the persecutor of the mother of Rose and Blanche, who despised his love. Before he was a priest he fought against his country, and twice he met General Simon face to face in battle. Yes, whilst the general was a prisoner at Leipsic and severely wounded at Waterloo, the other, the renegade marquis, was triumphing with the Russians and English. Under the Bourbons, the renegade, covered with honours, again found himself confronted by the persecuted soldier of the empire. Then there was a deadly duel between them, and the marquis was wounded; but General Simon, proscribed and sentenced to death, was exiled. Now the renegade has turned priest, you tell me. Well, then, now I am certain that it is he who has carried off Rose and Blanche, that he may vent on them the hatred which he has always entertained against their mother and father. This wretch, d’Aigrigny, holds them in his power; and it is not only the fortune, but the lives, of these children that I have to defend. Their lives, I tell you—their very lives!”

“Father, do you think this man capable of ——”

“A traitor to his country, who becomes a base priest, is capable of any thing! I tell you, that, perhaps, at this very hour they are killing these children by inches!” said the soldier, in agonised tones; “for the separation of one from the other is the first step towards killing them!” Then Dagobert added, with a tone of exasperation impossible to describe, “The daughters of Marshal Simon are in the power of the Marquis d’Aigrigny and his hand, and shall I hesitate to save them for fear of the galleys—the galleys?” he added, with a burst of convulsive laughter. “What is that to me? what care I for the galleys? do they put your dead body there? And if I fail in this last attempt, shall I not have a right to blow out my brains? Put the iron in the fire, my lad. Quick, time presses! forge—forge the iron!”

“But your son will go with you!” exclaimed Françoise, with a cry of maternal despair. Then rising, she threw herself at Dagobert’s feet, saying, “If you are apprehended, so will he be also ——”

“To save himself from the galleys, he will do as I do. I have two pistols!”

“But I,” exclaimed the unhappy mother, clasping her hands in an attitude of entreaty, “without you, without him, what shall I do? what will become of me?”

“You are right—I am selfish—I will go alone!” said Dagobert.

“You shall not go alone, father!” replied Agricola.

“But your mother?”

“La Mayeux knows what is going on, and will go and seek M. Hardy, my employer, and tell him all; he is the most generous of men, and will give my mother bread and a shelter for the rest of her days!”

“And it is I—I who am the cause of all this!” she exclaimed,

wringing her hands in despair. "Punish me, *mon Dieu!* punish me! it is my fault; I gave up the children, and shall be punished by the death of my own son!"

"Agricola, you shall not follow me! I forbid it!" said Dagobert, pressing his son to his heart with fervour.

"What I, after pointing out the danger to you, shall I recoil myself? Do not think of it, father! Have I not also some one to free? Mademoiselle de Cardoville, so good, so generous, who sought to save me from prison, is she not now a prisoner? I will follow you, father! it is my right, my duty, my determination!"

So saying, Agricola put into the burning coals in the stove the tongs to be forged into a hook.

"Alas! Heaven have pity on us!" said the unhappy mother, sobbing, and still kneeling, whilst the soldier seemed contending against a violent internal struggle.

"Do not weep so, dear mother, pray do not!" said Agricola, raising Françoise, with the help of La Mayeux; "you break my heart to see you grieve so much. Come, take courage, I have no doubt exaggerated the dangers of the enterprise; but if we both work well together, I really think we may succeed with very little risk—eh, father?" continued Agricola, making a significant gesture to Dagobert. "But only look up and be of good heart, and I will promise you all will end well, and both Mademoiselle de Cardoville and the daughters of General Simon be restored to liberty. Here, La Mayeux, give me the hammer and pincers out of that closet."

The poor girl, hastily drying her tears, obeyed the orders of Agricola without a word, while he, taking the bellows, began to increase the heat of the fire in which he had placed the tongs.

"Here they are, Agricola," said La Mayeux, in a voice trembling with emotion, while she gave, with unsteady hands, the different objects demanded to the young smith, who, by the aid of the pincers, drew from the fire the tongs, brought to a *white heat*, which he began forming into a species of hook by the help of his hammer, using the top of his stove for an anvil, Dagobert looking on in solemn silence. All at once he took the hands of Françoise, saying,—

"Wife, you know too well the disposition of our son to hope to turn him from his purpose of accompanying me; but be comforted, I hope and believe we shall succeed; but if not, if we fail, should Agricola and myself be arrested, why then—But, no, we will be no cowardly suicides, the father and son will walk arm-in-arm to prison, with calm aspect and all the pride of men who have done their duty even to the very last effort they could make; and when the day of our trial arrives, we will boldly and fearlessly tell the whole truth; we will state the fearful emergency which impelled us to obtain that by violence we had vainly supplicated from the assistance of the law. Work, work, my boy!" continued Dagobert to his son, who was busily engaged welding the hot iron; "work on without fear or dread, we shall have honest men for our judges, and, therefore, need we fear nothing!"

"You are right, my dear brave father! so comfort yourself, dearest mother, good and enlightened judges will readily discern the difference there is between robbers who scale walls during the night for the sake of plunder, and an old soldier and his son who, at the

peril of their lives, their liberty, and reputation, seek only to deliver the innocent victims of treachery and oppression !”

“ And should they not see the justice of our defence,” resumed Dagobert, “ so much the worse for them. In the eyes of all honourable men, at least, your husband and child will be held blameless ; or, should we be sentenced to the galleys, why then, if we have courage to live, why the old and the young convict will wear their chains with proud satisfaction, while the renegade marquis—the base priest, will have more to blush for than ourselves. On with your work, then, my good lad, fear not to strike your hammer hard on the iron ; remember that neither chains nor galley-slavery can deprive us of the consciousness of having done our duty faithfully, or attach dishonour to our names.—A word or two with you, my dear Mayeux, for time is hastening on, and we must be quick. When you were in the convent garden, did you remark if the different stories of the building were very high from the ground ?”

“ Oh, no, M. Dagobert, they were not, especially on that side of the convent which faced the madhouse, where Mademoiselle de Cardoville was confined.”

“ In what manner did you contrive to speak to the young lady ?”

“ She was on the other side of a gate with open iron work half-way up it, which seemed to divide the two gardens.”

“ Excellent !” said Agricola, continuing to weld the iron. “ Nothing can be easier than to pass from one garden to the other ; and, perhaps, we shall find it both safer and more practicable to return by the garden belonging to the madhouse, unfortunately, though, you cannot tell us which is Mademoiselle de Cardoville’s chamber.”

“ Oh, yes, I can,” exclaimed La Mayeux, trying to collect her ideas. “ She is in a small square pavilion, and there is over the window where I first saw her a sort of verandah, painted slate colour and white.”

“ That will do ; I shall be sure to recollect it.”

“ And you cannot give me any notion where the rooms in which my poor children are confined are situated, I suppose ?” said Dagobert, anxiously.

After a moment’s consideration, La Mayeux said, “ They are opposite the apartment of Mademoiselle de Cardoville ; for she has been able during the last two days to converse with them by signs from the windows ; and now I remember, she told me that their rooms were placed on different stories,—the one being on the ground-floor, the other just over it on the first floor.”

“ And were there bars to their windows ?” inquired Agricola.

“ That I cannot tell you.”

“ It matters not, my good girl. Many thanks for what you *have* told us with such clear directions ; we shall be able to make them out,” answered Dagobert ; “ and that once ascertained, I have my own plans for the rest.”

“ Give me some water, dear Mayeux,” said Agricola, “ that I may cool my iron ;” and then addressing his father, he said, “ Will this hook do ?”

“ Yes, my boy, capitally ! and as soon as it is cold enough we will fix it to the rope.”

All this time Françoise Baudoin was kneeling, and fervently

implored Heaven to pardon the terrible sin her husband and son, in the blindness and ignorance of their hearts, were about to commit; and earnestly did she beseech the Almighty to visit on her alone the inevitable consequences of their crime, since she only was the cause of their fatal and sinful enterprise.

The rest of the necessary preparations were completed by Dagobert and his son in solemn silence. They were calm and self-possessed, spite of the paleness of their cheeks, which, while it indicated no fear, at least proved that they thoroughly understood the perilous nature of the undertaking they were about to embark in.

In a few minutes ten o'clock sounded from the church of Saint Merry; but the sounds were deadened, and almost lost, amid the violent gusts of wind and the pattering of the heavy rain, as it drove against the casements with unceasing fury.

"Ten o'clock!" said Dagobert, starting; "then there is not an instant to be lost. Now, Agricola, take up the bag."

"I will, father."

As the smith moved towards the table where the bag was placed, he said, in a low, hurried manner to La Mayeux, who, faint and trembling, could scarcely support herself, "Should we not return by to-morrow morning, I commit my mother to your care. Go to M. Hardy; he has probably returned home by this time. Come, dear sister, take courage, and give me one kiss. Remember, to your kindness and consolation I leave my dear mother."

So saying, the young man, deeply affected, tenderly embraced La Mayeux, whose strength and senses seemed all but to forsake her.

"Come, old Kill-joy," said Dagobert, "you must go with us; you will serve us as a sentinel to apprise us of the approach of an enemy;—so, *en route!*" Then, approaching his wife, who had risen from her chair, and was pressing her son to her bosom, while she almost frantically kissed his hair, his forehead, and bedewed him with her fast-falling tears, the old soldier, feigning a calmness and serenity he was far from feeling, said,—

"Now then, good wife, dry up your tears; make a good fire, and put every thing in order; in two or three hours we shall be back, and bring you not only our own two dear girls, but a beautiful young lady also. Come, give me a kiss, and wish me good luck!"

Françoise threw herself on her husband's neck without uttering a word. This mute despair, interrupted only by deep and convulsive sobs, was dreadful to witness. Dagobert was obliged to tear himself from her grasp; and, endeavouring to conceal his emotion, said to his son, in an unsteady voice,—

"We had better be gone; this is too much for me. Come, Agricola, let us go. Watch over my poor wife, dearest Mayeux. Come, my son,—come!"

With these words, the soldier, having slipped his pistols in the pocket of his great-coat, was proceeding to the door, followed by Kill-joy.

"My son—my son!" shrieked the wretched mother, "let me embrace him once more, probably for the last time! Come to me, my child," cried Françoise, wholly incapable of quitting her chair,

“and tell me you forgive me for bringing this upon you. Oh, merciful Heaven! this is my doing!”

The smith turned back again, and, affectionately embracing his mother while his tears mingled with hers, he whispered, “Adieu, my beloved mother. Comfort yourself with the certainty of seeing us again ere long.” Then, tearing himself from the weak arms that held him, he hastened to rejoin his father on the staircase.

Françoise Baudoin gazed vacantly around her as the door closed on Agricola; then, heaving a deep groan, fell almost lifeless in the arms of La Mayeux.

Meanwhile, Dagobert and Agricola, a prey to the most cruel torments, quitted the Rue Brise-Miche, and proceeded with rapid steps towards the Boulevard de l’Hôpital, followed by Kill-joy.

CHAPTER LXVII.

ESCALADE AND FORCIBLE ENTRY.

IT struck half-past eleven o’clock as Dagobert and his son reached the Boulevard de l’Hôpital.

The wind was very high, and the rain fell heavily, but in spite of the thickness of the watery clouds the night was light, owing to the late rising of the moon. The tall dark trees and the white walls of the convent garden were plainly distinguishable. At a distance was a lamp, swayed to and fro by the wind, whose dim light was hardly visible in the midst of the rain and fog, as it hung over the muddy thoroughfare of the solitary boulevard. From time to time was heard in the distance the heavy roll of some belated vehicle, and then a dead silence followed.

Dagobert and his son had scarcely exchanged a syllable since their departure from the Rue Brise-Miche. The intentions of these two fine-hearted fellows were noble, generous, and determined, but yet they were thoughtful, as they glided along in the shadow, like robbers when projecting nocturnal crimes.

Agricola bore on his shoulders the sack containing the cord, the hook, and the crowbar; and Dagobert leaned on his son’s arm, and Kill-joy followed his master.

“The bench on which we sat down cannot be far off from here,” said Dagobert, stopping.

“Here it is, father,” said Agricola, as he saw it.

“It is only half-past eleven, and we had better wait till midnight,” replied Dagobert. “Let us sit down a little while to rest and arrange our plans.”

After a moment’s silence, the soldier said in a tone of deep emotion, and pressing his son’s hands between his own,—

“Agricola, my boy, there is yet time, and I beseech you let me go alone. I shall manage the business very well; and the closer the

time draws on, the more I fear to compromise you in this dangerous enterprise."

"And I, my dear father, the closer the time approaches, the more do I believe that I shall be useful to you—good or bad I will share your fate. Our intention is praiseworthy. It is a debt of honour which you owe, and I should like to pay the half of it, so I will not now recede. So now, my father, let us arrange our plan of proceeding."

"Well, then, you will accompany me," said Dagobert, stifling a sigh.

"I must, my dear father," replied Agricola, "and you will see that we shall be successful. You saw the little door in the garden wall as we passed, that is in our favour."

"Yes, by that we shall get into the garden, and then we must find out the buildings which divide the wall which terminates by a grated door."

"Yes, and on one side of that grated door is the pavilion in which Mademoiselle de Cardoville is, and on the other that side of the convent in which the marshal's daughters are confined."

At this moment Kill-joy, who was crouched at Dagobert's feet, rose suddenly, pointing his ears, and listening attentively.

"It appears as if Kill-joy heard something," said Agricola. "Listen!" Nothing was heard but the noise of the wind howling in the tall trees of the boulevard.

"But, father, when we have once got the garden-gate open, shall we take Kill-joy with us?"

"Yes, yes! if they have a watch-dog he'll settle his business, and then he'll warn us if the watchmen come; and, who knows? he is so sagacious, and so fond of Rose and Blanche, that he may help us, perhaps, to discover the place where they are. I have seen him scores of times find them out in the woods with extraordinary instinct."

A slow, heavy, and clear sound heard amidst the whistling of the night wind began the chime of midnight.

This noise echoed painfully in the minds of Agricola and his father, and silent and startled they sprang suddenly on their feet, and by a spontaneous movement took and energetically squeezed each other's hands. In spite of themselves, each throb of their hearts answered to each of the strokes of the clock, whose vibration was prolonged in the midst of the solemn silence of the night.

At the last stroke Dagobert said to his son with a firm voice,—

"It is midnight! embrace me, my dear boy; and, now to work."

The father and son embraced. The moment was decisive and serious.

"Now, father," said Agricola, "let us act with all the boldness and cunning of robbers going to plunder a strong box."

So saying, the smith took from the sack the cord and the hook. Dagobert had the crowbar, and both of them going along the wall cautiously, reached the small door, which was close to the angle formed by the street and the boulevard, pausing from time to time to listen attentively, and endeavouring to ascertain, the noises caused only by the high wind and rain.

The night continued still sufficiently light for them to distinguish

objects, the smith and the soldier reached the little gate, the planks of which appeared weak and worm-eaten.

"All right," said Agricola to his father, "one blow and it will give way."

And so saying, the smith was about to apply his shoulder vigorously to the door, bending his back and legs for that purpose, when, at that instant, Kill-joy growled as if to stop him.

Dagobert silenced the animal, and taking his son by the arm, said to him in a whisper,—

"Do not stir—Kill-joy smells some one in the garden."

Agricola and his father remained motionless for some minutes, listening attentively, and holding their breath. The dog, obedient to his master, ceased his growl, but his uneasiness and restlessness were still more apparent. Still nothing was heard.

"The dog was mistaken, father," said Agricola, in a low voice.

"No, I am sure he was not. Do not move."

After again waiting for a few seconds, Kill-joy laid down suddenly and stretched his muzzle as far as he could under the lowest part of the door, sniffing very eagerly.

"Some one comes," said Dagobert quickly to his son.

"Let us retreat," replied Agricola.

"No," said his father; "let us listen,—it will be time to flee if they open the door. Here, Kill-joy, here!" The obedient brute left the door, and came crouching to the feet of his master.

Some moments afterwards they heard a sort of trampling noise on the ground, soaked by the rain, caused by heavy footsteps dragging through the wet pools, and then a noise of talking, which, drowned by the wind, did not reach the soldier and his son.

"They are the people on the watch that Mayeux spoke about," said Agricola to his father,

"So much the better; they will not now go on their next round for some time, and that will give us two hours to ourselves at least; and now we shall effect our purpose the more securely."

Then the noise became gradually the less distinct, and was soon lost entirely.

"Come, quick, do not let us lose any time," said Dagobert to his son, after ten minutes had elapsed, "they have gone; and now let us try and open this door."

Agricola, applying his powerful shoulders, thrust vigorously; but the door, in spite of its decay, did not yield.

"Confound it!" said Agricola, "it is barred on the inside, I am sure, or else these rotten planks would not have resisted my strength."

"What's to be done?"

"I will get on the wall by the help of the cord and hook, and then open it in the inside."

So saying, Agricola took the cord and cramp-iron, and after several attempts the hook caught on the coping of the wall.

"Now, father, make me a short ladder, and I will pull myself up by the cord, once astride of the wall I can turn the hook, and easily drop down into the garden."

The soldier placed his back against the wall, and joining his hands together, his son put his foot in the hollow they formed, then



ESCALADE AND FORCIBLE ENTRY.

mounting on the stout shoulders of his father, which he made his *point d'appui*, and by the aid of the cord and some inequalities in the wall, he reached the top. Unfortunately the smith had not observed that the coping of the wall was guarded by broken glass-bottles, which cut his hands and knees, but, for fear of alarming Dagobert, he repressed a cry of pain, turned the cramp-iron as he required it, and sliding down the ropes, reached the ground. The door was close, and he found then that it was fastened by a strong bar of wood. The lock was in so bad a condition that it gave way to a violent blow from Agricola, and then, the door opening, Dagobert entered the garden with Kill-joy.

"Now," said the old soldier to his son, "thanks to you, the worst is got over. Here is a means of escape open for my poor children and Mademoiselle de Cardoville. All we have to do now is to find them, without any unfortunate rencontre with any other person. Kill-joy, go first, as a pioneer;—go, go, good dog; and mind, be very quiet,—mind," added Dagobert.

The sagacious animal then advanced, sniffing, and listening, and searching, with all the care and close attention of a bloodhound on the quest.

By the dim moonlight straggling through the clouds, Dagobert and his son perceived about them a thicket of very large trees, whence diverged various paths. Undecided which to choose, Agricola said to his father,—

"Let us take the path which runs close to the wall, and that must lead us to the building."

"Right—let us do so; and let us walk on the turf instead of on these muddy paths,—we shall make less noise."

The father and son, preceded by Kill-joy, traversed for some time a winding path which ran not far from the wall. They stopped, from time to time, to listen and look carefully about them before they went on, in order to make out the various appearances presented by the agitated trees and shrubs which, shaken by the wind, and lighted by the pale moonlight, assumed fantastic shapes.

Half-past twelve o'clock struck as Agricola and his father reached a large iron gate, which shut upon the private garden of the superior, into which Mayeux had obtained access in the morning, after having seen Rose Simon conversing with Adrienne de Cardoville.

Through the bars of this iron gate, Agricola and his father saw, at a short distance, an open-work railing, which inclosed a chapel that was ereeting beyond the small square pavilion.

"No doubt that is the pavilion belonging to the mad-house in which Mademoiselle de Cardoville is confined," said Agricola.

"And the building in which are the chambers of Rose and Blanche; but which we cannot see from here, no doubt faces it," said Dagobert. "Poor dear children, they are there, no doubt, in tears and despair," he added, in a tone of deep feeling.

"This gate should be open," said Agricola.

"It most probably is, as it is inside the walls."

"Let us advance gently."

A few paces, and they reached the gate, which was only closed by a latch.

Dagobert was about to open it, when Agricola said,—

"Take care that the hinges do not make a noise."

"Must I push it slowly or quickly?"

"Let me do it," said Agricola.

And he opened the gate so quickly that it made but a very slight noise, but still, it was so audible that it was plainly heard in the silence of the night, during one of the quieter intervals of the storm.

Agricola and his father remained for a moment motionless, uneasy and listening, not daring to cross the threshold of the gate, lest they should not have the means of retreat.

Nothing stirred—all remained calm and silent. Agricola and his father, taking heart, went into the private garden.

Scarcely had the dog entered this place than he gave every sign of remarkable joy, pricked up his ears, wagging his tail, and bounding, rather than running, he soon reached the open-work door, where, in the morning, Rose Simon had for an instant spoken to Mademoiselle de Cardoville; then he paused a moment at that spot, uneasy and anxious, turning and moving like a dog who seeks and discovers a scent. Dagobert and his son, leaving Kill-joy to follow his instinct, followed his every movement with indescribable interest and suspense, hoping the best from his sagacity and attachment to the orphans.

"It was, no doubt, close to this grating that Rose was when Mayeux saw her," said Dagobert. "Kill-joy is on the track—let him alone."

At the end of a few seconds, the dog turned his head towards Dagobert, and then darted off towards a door on the ground-floor of the building in front of the pavilion occupied by Adrienne; then, having reached that door, the animal laid down as though to wait for Dagobert.

"There can be no more doubt! This is the building in which the children are confined," said Dagobert, going towards Kill-joy; "it was there that they shut Rose up lately."

"We must see if the windows have bars or not," said Agricola, following his father.

They both reached the spot where Kill-joy was.

"Well, old fellow," said the soldier, in a low voice, pointing to the building, "are Rose and Blanche there?"

The dog lifted up his head, and replied by a low howl and two or three low barks.

Dagobert had only time to seize the dog by the throat between his hands.

"He will ruin all!" exclaimed the smith. "He has been heard, perhaps——"

"No!" replied Dagobert. "But, doubtless, the children are there."

At this moment the iron gate, by which the soldier and his son had entered the private garden, and had left open, closed violently.

"We are shut in," said Agricola, quickly; "and there is no other way to get out."

For a moment the father and son looked at each other in dismay, but Agricola said, suddenly,—

"Perhaps the half-door of the iron gate has closed by its own weight. I will run and see,—and open it, if I can."

"Go, as quickly as possible, whilst I look at the windows."

Agricola ran towards the iron gate, whilst Dagobert, going cautiously along the walk, reached the windows of the ground-floor, which were four in number, two of which had no iron bars. He looked at the first floor, and found it rather high, but none of the windows were barred, so that the young girl who was in that story could, when warned, fasten a sheet to the single bar outside the sill, and slide down, as the orphans did when they escaped from the inn of the White Falcon; but it was a necessary, though difficult point to ascertain which was the chamber which Rose or Blanche occupied. Dagobert thought that the sister who was in the ground-floor would inform him, but then there was also the difficulty of knowing at which of these four windows he ought to knock.

Agricola returned with speed.

"It was the wind, no doubt," said he, "that closed the iron gate. I have opened it again, and fastened it back with a stone; but we must be quick."

"How can we discover which are the windows of the rooms in which the poor children are?" said Dagobert, with a tone of anguish.

"True," said Agricola. "What shall we do?"

"To call out, and take all chance," said Dagobert, "could but give the alarm, if we mistake the room."

"Oh, dear!—oh, dear!" replied Agricola, with extreme uneasiness; "to come under the very window, and yet not know which——"

"Time presses," said Dagobert, quickly, and interrupting his son, "we must risk all, for the sake of all."

"What do you mean, father?"

"Why, I will call with a loud voice, 'Rose!' 'Blanche!' In despair, as they are, I am sure, they are not asleep, but will jump up at the first sound. By means of her sheet, fastened to the outside bar, in less than five minutes the one who is on the first-floor will be in our arms. As to her on the ground-floor, if her window is not barred, she will be with us in a second; if not, we will very soon wrench out one of those iron bars."

"But, my dear father, pray consider—if you call to them in a loud voice——"

"I may not, perhaps, be heard."

"But should you be, all is lost."

"I don't know that. * Before they could call their watching-men and open the different doors they must pass through before reaching us, we shall be off; and if once we can regain the Boulevard, the dear children may be free, and ourselves beyond pursuit. It is a dangerous expedient, but I see no other way. If there be only two men, Kill-joy and I will take good care of them should they arrive before we have got the dear girls out; and that once effected, you must hurry away with them as quickly as you can."

"Father!" cried Agricola, suddenly, "there is one safe and certain mode of learning what we want to know. According to what La Mayeux told us, Mademoiselle de Cardoville has been in the habit of communicating by signs with Rose and Blanche."

"True."

"She must know, then, exactly where the chambers of the poor

girls are situated, since they answered her signals from their different windows."

"You are right; there is nothing else to be done. Let us go at once to the pavilion; but there again, how are we to distinguish it from the rest of the building?"

"La Mayeux explained all that very clearly. She told me I should be sure to recognise the apartment occupied by Mademoiselle de Cardoville by its having a painted projection like a sort of awning over the window."

"Then hasten with all speed. You will have little difficulty in breaking through the gate of separation between the two gardens. Have you got the iron bar?"

"Yes, here it is."

"Let us be off then—there is not a minute to lose."

Proceeding with rapid pace towards the slight division between the gardens already alluded to, Agricola tore out two or three planks from the lower part of the gate, leaving an opening through which a person might easily pass.

"Do you stay there, father, and keep close watch," said Agricola, entering into the garden of Dr. Baleinier.

The window indicated by La Mayeux was easily recognised. It was both high and large, surrounded by a sort of projection, or awning, for it had once been a door, walled up at an after period to nearly a third of its height, and was well defended from all chance of ingress or egress by thick bars of iron. The rain had now quite ceased, and the moon, breaking from the dense clouds which had previously obscured it, shone clearly and resplendently on the whole of the pavilion. As Agricola approached the window, he found the whole of the chamber which it belonged to plunged in darkness, but a bright light was visible through a half-closed door at the extremity of the apartment.

Trusting that Mademoiselle de Cardoville had not yet retired to rest, the smith ventured to tap lightly against the window-panes. In an instant the door from within was thrown open its full width, and Mademoiselle de Cardoville, who had not thought of preparing for the night, entered the apartment, dressed precisely as she had been during her conversation with La Mayeux. The light which Adrienne carried in her hand revealed at once the enchanting sweetness of her countenance, as well as the surprise and alarm depicted on them. Placing her candle on the table, Adrienne appeared to listen attentively while she slowly and cautiously advanced towards the window, when suddenly perceiving the indistinct outline of a man looking through the bars, she involuntarily started and stood still.

Fearing lest, in her first terror, Mademoiselle de Cardoville might return to seek refuge in the inner chamber, Agricola again tapped on the glass, and at the risk of being heard from without, he exclaimed,—

"Be not alarmed, mademoiselle. 'Tis I—Agricola Baudoin!"

As Adrienne caught these sounds, she at once recollected her late conversation with La Mayeux, and concluded that Agricola and his father had made their way into the convent for the purpose of carrying off Rose and Blanche. Hastening to the window, she easily recognised

the features of Agricola by the bright moonbeams, and opened the casement with as little noise as possible.

"Mademoiselle," said the smith, precipitately, "there is not an instant to lose; the Count de Montbron is not in Paris, and my father and myself are here to deliver you from your unjust confinement."

"Thanks, thanks! M. Agricola," said Mademoiselle de Cardoville, in a voice of the most touching gratitude, "but first think of the daughters of General Simon."

"Be assured, mademoiselle, we are here purposely to effect their release, but we are unable to determine which is their window, and I am come to beg you will kindly assist us to find it."

"The chamber of one of them is on the ground-floor, the last on the side of the garden; and the other is situated on the first floor, directly over it."

"Then we shall be able to save them!" exclaimed the smith.

"But now, I remember," said Adrienne, "the first floor is very high from the ground, you will find, among the building materials for the construction of the chapel now in progress of erection there, some very long poles provided for scaffoldings, which may be serviceable to you."

"That will answer as well as a ladder to enable me to reach the first floor; but now to provide the means for your escape, mademoiselle."

"Oh, do not mind me! Think only of these poor orphans, for time presses. So that they can but be liberated to-night, it matters little to me whether I remain a day longer or shorter in this house."

"Not so, mademoiselle; it is, on the contrary, of the utmost importance for you to be freed this night. Matters of the utmost importance, of which I doubt not you have hitherto been kept ignorant, absolutely demand it."

"What do you mean?"

"I have not time to explain myself more fully at this moment; but I beseech you, mademoiselle, come away this instant. I can easily wrench away a couple of bars from this window. I will fetch my crowbar."

"There is no need; the door of this pavilion is merely locked and bolted on the outside. You can easily knock off the locks and undo the bolt."

"And in ten minutes after we shall be on the Boulevard," said the smith. "Hasten, then, mademoiselle, I implore you. Wrap yourself up as well as you can, for the night is very cold, and I will return directly to convey you hence."

"M. Agricola," said Adrienne, with tears in her eyes, "I well know all the risk you are running to save and serve me; and I trust to be able to prove to you that my memory is as good as yours. Ah! you and your adopted sister are noble, excellent creatures; and I feel pleasure in owing you both so vast a debt. But do not think of returning hither till you have effected the release of the daughters of General Simon."

"Thanks to the clear directions you have given me, mademoiselle,

you may safely reckon upon our success in freeing the young ladies. I will now hasten back to my father, and return to you immediately."

In pursuance of the excellent advice given by Mademoiselle de Cardoville, Agricola proceeded to the pile of materials prepared for the erection of the chapel, and taking up one of those long and stout poles employed in building, threw it easily over his powerful shoulders, and with a light and agile step proceeded to rejoin his father.

Scarcely had Agricola passed the garden-gate, in his way to the chapel, which was quite hid in the shadow, than Adrienne fancied she saw the outline of a human form issue from a clump of trees in the convent garden, rapidly dart across the walk, and then disappear behind a high hedge of box. Much alarmed for Agricola's safety, Mademoiselle de Cardoville ventured to call to him several times in a subdued tone of voice, in order to put him on his guard; but the smith was far out of hearing; he had already rejoined his father, who, a prey to the most cruel anxiety, kept listening first at one window, then at another, in a state almost amounting to frenzy.

"All is right," said Agricola, in a low voice; "here are the windows we want, the one on the ground-floor, the other just over it on the first story."

"Now, then!" exclaimed Dagobert, with a burst of rapture impossible to describe, as with eager joy he ran to examine the casements indicated as being those of his beloved orphans.

"They are not grated," said he, exultingly.

"Let us first ascertain that one of the children is there," said Agricola; "then by placing this pole against the wall I can easily climb up to the window on the first-floor, which is not very high."

"Right, my boy! and once up, you will knock against the glass, and call either Rose or Blanche. When you are answered, come down, and we will place the pole against the window-bar, and the poor girl will slide down—they are both light and active as young birds. Come, come!—quick!—to work at once!"

"And then, father, we will hasten to the deliverance of Mademoiselle de Cardoville."

Whilst Agricola, raising the pole and placing it securely against the window-frame, was preparing to ascend, Dagobert, tapping against the window of the apartment on the ground-floor, said, in a loud voice,—

"'Tis I!—'tis Dagobert!"

The chamber was, in fact, the one occupied by Rose Simon; but the poor girl, distracted by her separation from her beloved sister and consumed by a burning fever, the consequences of her mental distress, was far from being able to sleep, and was tossing on an uneasy couch, while her bitter tears bedewed her pillow. At the first sound made by Dagobert, as he knocked against the glass, the poor girl started with a sudden dread, but when she recognised the dear and well-known voice of the old soldier calling her by name, she sprang to her feet, passed her hands over her forehead, as though to assure herself she was not under the influence of some delusive dream, then, wrapped in her long white dressing-gown, rushed to the window, uttering cries of joy.

But all at once, and ere she could open the window, two reports of a gun were heard, accompanied with loud and repeated cries of—

“Guard!—guard!—thieves!—robbers!”

Petrified with horror, the orphan stood motionless,—her eyes mechanically fixed on the window, through which, by the moonlight, she saw a confused mass of men struggling in deadly combat, while the furious barking of Kill-joy almost drowned the repeated cries of “Guard!—guard!—thieves!—murder!!!”

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE EVE OF AN IMPORTANT DAY.

ABOUT two hours before the facts we have just detailed had passed in the convent of Sainte-Marie, Rodin and the Père d'Aigrigny were together in the little room in which we have before found them, in the Rue Milieu des Ursins. Since the revolution of July, Père d'Aigrigny had thought it fit to remove suddenly into this temporary abode the secret archives and correspondence of his Order,—a prudent precaution, for he had to fear that the reverend fathers would be expelled by the state from the magnificent establishments with which the restoration had liberally gratified them.*

Rodin, still clad meanly, and always shabby and dirty, was writing quietly at his desk, faithful to his humble character of secretary, which

* This fear was vain: for we find in the “Constitutionnel” of the 1st of February, 1832 (twelve years ago), this:—

“When, in 1822, M. de Corbière unhesitatingly destroyed the brilliant normal school which, after a few years existence, has created, or developed, so many and various talents, it was decided that, in order to make compensation, the Hôtel de la Rue des Postes, in which it was situated, should be purchased, and given to the congregation of the Sainte-Esprit. The minister of the marine provided the funds for this purchase, and the residence was placed at the disposal of the society which then reigned in France. Since that period it has occupied this abode peaceably, which had become a sort of hotel in which Jesuitism vegetated, and petted its numerous allies, who came from all parts of the country to be refreshed by Père Ronsin. Things were so when the revolution of July arrived, which appeared as if it would disturb the congregation of this locality. Who would believe it? It was not so: the allowance was stopped, but the Jesuits were left in possession of the Hôtel de la Rue des Postes; and on the 31st of January, 1832, the men of the *Sacré-Cœur* are fed at the expense of the state, and during this time the normal school has no place of shelter, but, unorganised, occupies a dirty hole in a narrow corner of the college of Louis le Grand.”

We read this in the “Constitutionnel” of 1832 concerning the Hôtel des Postes. We are not aware what sort of transactions have been going on since this period;

concealed, as we have seen, a much more important function, that of *socius*; a function which, according to the constitutions of the Order, consists in never leaving the superior, in watching and spying over

between the reverend pères and the government, but we find in a public article, recently published by a journal in the organisation of the Society of Jesus, that the Hôtel de la Rue des Postes forms part of the landed property of the congregation.

Let us quote a few fragments of the article in question :—

“This is a list of the property which is known as belonging to the Society of Jesus,—

	Francs.
The house in the Rue de la Postes worth, perhaps,	500,000
That in the Rue de Sevre	300,000
An estate two leagues from Paris.....	150,000
House and church at Bourges	100,000
Nôtre Dame de Vesse, a gift made in 1813	60,000
Saint Acheul, a novitiate house	400,000
Nantes, about.....	100,000
Quimper, about	40,000
Laval house and church	150,000
Rennes House	20,000
Vannes House	40,000
Metz House	40,000
Strasbourg House	60,000
Rouen House	15,000

“These various properties amount to nearly 2,000,000 francs (80,000*l.*). Teaching is, besides, a very important source of revenue to the Jesuits. The college of Brugelette alone produces 200,000 francs (8000*l.*). The two provinces of France (the general of the Jesuits at Rome has divided France into two conscriptions, that of Lyons and that of Paris) possess, besides, a funded property and in shares in the mines of Austria, more than 200,000 francs a-year (8000*l.*). Every year the propagation of the faith supplies, at least, from 40,000 to 50,000 francs (2000*l.*); the preachers collect after their sermons 150,000 francs (6000*l.*); alms for the “good work” bring in an equal amount; and thus they have a revenue of, at least, 540,000 francs (21,000*l.*), and to this income we must add the produce of the sale of works of the society, and the profit which is made by a trade in engravings.

“Each plate brings in, drawing and engraving included, 600 francs (24*l.*), and they may be made to print 10,000 copies; which cost, for paper and working, 40 francs per 1000. They pay the responsible editor 250 francs, and thus on each 1000 is a net profit of 210 francs. Is not this a profitable labour? and we may suppose how it extends. The fathers themselves travel for the business, and they could not have more zealous and indefatigable agents. They are always well requited, and will not take a refusal. The editor, of course, is one of them. The first they selected for this post of intermediary was the *socius* of the procureur, N. V. J—; this *socius* had some property of his own, but they were obliged to make him advances for the outlay at starting. When they saw the prosperity of the undertaking assured, they suddenly called in their advances. The editor was unable at the moment to make them good, as they well knew, so they put a rich successor in his place, with whom they could treat on more advantageous conditions, and without remorse they ruined their *socius* by destroying the position for whose permanence they had given him a moral guarantee.”

his least movements, his lightest impressions, and to send a full account of all to Rome.

In spite of his habitual passiveness, Rodin appeared considerably disturbed and preoccupied, and replied in a manner much more curt than usual to the orders or questions of Père d'Aigrigny, who came in at this moment.

"Has anything new occurred since I was away?" he inquired of Rodin. "Have the reports been favourable as they arrived?"

"Very favourable."

"Read them to me."

"Before I do so I must inform your reverence," said Rodin, "that Morok has been here these two days."

"Morok!" said the Abbé d'Aigrigny, with surprise; "I thought that when he left Germany and Switzerland, he received his orders from Fribourg to go towards the south. At Nismes, or Avignon, he might have been an useful auxiliary at this moment, for the Protestants are busy, and there is fear of a reaction against the Catholics."

"I do not know," said Rodin, "if Morok has any particular motives for changing his route, but his apparent reasons, he has told me, are that he is going to give some representations here."

"In what way?"

"A dramatic agent has engaged him and his menagerie, whilst he was at Lyons, for the theatre of the Porte-Saint-Martin, on very high terms, and, he added, that he could not reject such an offer."

"Well, be it so!" said D'Aigrigny, shrugging his shoulders; "but by the spreading of his little books, the sale of chaplets and engravings, as well as by the influence which, to a certain extent, he might have exercised over the religious and ill-informed population, like those in the south and in Brittany, he might have rendered services which he cannot do in Paris."

"He is downstairs, with a sort of giant who accompanies him; for, as an old servant of your reverence, Morok was in hopes of having the honour to kiss your hand this evening."

"Impossible—impossible! You know how this evening is occupied. Has any one been to the Rue Saint François?"

"Yes; and the old Jew guardian has had notice from the notary. To-morrow, at six o'clock in the morning, the masons will pull down the walled-up door, and, for the first time for 150 years, the house will be opened."

Father d'Aigrigny was for a moment lost in thought. He then said to Rodin,—

"On the eve of so decisive a moment, nothing must be neglected—every thing remembered. Read to me again the copy of the note inserted in the Archives of the Society, a century and a half ago, on the subject of M. de Rennepont."

The secretary took a memorandum from a packet of documents, and read as follows:—

"This day, 19th February, 1682, the R. P. Provincial Alexander Bourdon sent the following information with these words in the margin,—

“*Extremely important for the future.*”

“ We have learned from the confession of a dying man, whom one of our Order has shived, a very secret matter.

“ M. Mareus de Rennepont, one of the most active and turbulent leaders of the reformed religion, and one of the bitterest enemies to our holy society, had apparently returned to the bosom of our maternal church, with the sole and entire purpose of saving his property, threatened with confiscation, in consequence of his irreligious and damnable behaviour. Proofs having been furnished by different persons of our society, that the conversion of the Sieur de Rennepont was not sincere, but only a mask for a sacrilegious design, the property of the said sieur, henceforward considered as *lapsed*, has, on this account, been confiscated by H. M. our King Louis XIV., and the said Sieur de Rennepont condemned to the galleys for life,* whence he only escaped by a voluntary death, after which abominable crime, he was drawn on a hurdle, and his body given to the dogs of the highways.

“ This premised, we come to the secret disclosed, so excessively important to the interests of our society.

“ H. M. Louis XIV., in his paternal and Catholic bounty for the church, and especially for our Order, had awarded to us the profit of this confiscation, in gratitude for our having exposed the Sieur de Rennepont as a relapsed Protestant, infamous and sacrilegious.

“ We have learned CERTAINLY, that from this confiscation, and consequently from our society, have been excluded a house, situated in Paris, No. 3 Rue Saint François, and a sum of 50,000 crowns in gold. The house was made over before the confiscation, by means of a pretended sale to a friend of the Sieur de Rennepont, who, being a very good Catholic, we cannot, most unfortunately, punish him.

“ This house, through the guilty commission of this fraud, which it is impossible to expose, has been walled up, and is not to be opened for a century and a half, according to the will and last wishes of the Sieur de Rennepont. As to the 50,000 crowns in gold, they were placed in hands unfortunately unknown up to this period, in order to be invested and to accumulate for 150 years, then to be divided at the expiration of 150 years amongst the then existing descendants of the Sieur de Rennepont, a sum which, through such accumulations, must become enormous, and will necessarily attain an amount of from 40,000,000 to 50,000,000 of *livres tournois* (2,000,000*l.* sterling).

“ From motives as yet unknown, but which he has detailed in a will, the Sieur de Rennepont has concealed from his family—whom the edicts against the Protestants have drawn from France and exiled to Europe—where he has placed the 50,000 crowns, impressing only on the parents to perpetuate in their line, from generation to generation, the recommendation to the last survivor to be in Paris 150 years hence, at the Rue Saint François, ON THE 13TH FEBRUARY, 1832; and that this request might not be forgotten, he has charged a man, whose condition is unknown, but whose description is given, to have made certain

* Louis XIV., the great king, punished with the galleys for life those Protestants who, after having often been forcibly converted, returned to their original creed. As to the Protestants who remained in France, in spite of the rigour of the edicts, they were deprived of sepulture, drawn on a hurdle, and then thrown to the dogs.

bronze medals, on which this desire and this date are engraven, and to transmit one to each person of his family; a precaution the more necessary as from another reason, equally unknown, but which it is presumed the Will also explains, the heirs are commanded to present themselves on the day fixed, before noon, in *person*, and not by deputy, in which case they will be excluded from any participation.

“The unknown man who went to distribute these medals to the members of the Rennepont family is from thirty to thirty-six years of age, of a bold, but sorrowful demeanour, and tall; he has black eyebrows, thick, and singularly marked. He is called *Joseph*; and it is suspected very strongly that he is an active and dangerous emissary of those reformed and republican madmen of the *Seven United Provinces*.

“It appears from the foregoing, that this sum, confided by this heretic to an unknown hand in a surreptitious manner, has escaped the confiscation which was awarded to us by our well-beloved king, and it is an immense injury, a monstrous loss, which we must seek to recover, if not at this time, yet in a time to come.

“Our society being (to the greater glory of God and our *Holy Father*) imperishable, it will be easy—thanks to the relations we have established all over the earth by means of missions and other foundations—to follow, from the present time, the filiation of this family Rennepont, from generation to generation, never to lose sight of it, so that in 150 years, at the moment when the division of this immense accumulated fortune takes place, our company may enter into the property which has been so treacherously abstracted from them, and resume it *per fas aut nefas*, by any means whatsoever, even by stratagem or by violence, our company not being compelled to act otherwise against the future withholders of our rights, so maliciously taken from us by this infamous and sacrilegious heretic, for which end it is lawful to defend, preserve, and recover our property by all means which the law has placed in our hands.

“Until this restitution be completed, this Rennepont family shall be denounced and outcast, like the accursed race of the Cain-like heretic, and it shall be good to keep rigid and unrelenting watch over it.

“For this end it will be requisite every year, from this day forth, that there be established a sort of inquiry in the successive positions of the members of this family.”

Rodin stopped here, and said to Père d’Aigrigny,—

“Here follow the accounts sent in, year by year, of the position of this family from 1682 until this time. It is useless to read this to your reverence.”

“Quite so,” said the Abbé d’Aigrigny. “This note quite clearly states the main facts.” Then, after a moment’s silence, he added, with an expression of triumphant pride, “How great is the power of the association founded on tradition and on perpetuity! Thanks to this note inserted in our Archives for a century and a half, this family has been watched from generation to generation; our Order has always had its eyes fixed on them, following over every part of the globe whither-soever exile had spread them. At length, to-morrow we enter into this vast receipt, so small at first, but which 150 years have transformed

into a vast fortune. Yes, we shall succeed ; for I have foreseen every contingency. Something, however, occupies my mind."

"What?" inquired Rodin.

"I was thinking of the investigations which have hitherto been made in vain to obtain further particulars from the guardian of the house in the Rue Saint François. Has the attempt been once more made according to my orders?"

"Yes, it has!"

"Well?"

"This time, as well as all the others, the old Jew has been impenetrable, he is, moreover, almost in his dotage, and his wife is very little better."

"When I reflect," pursued Père d'Aigrigny, "that for a century and a half this house in the Rue Saint François has been walled and shut up, its ward kept up from generation to generation in this family of Samuels, I cannot believe they are as ignorant as they profess as to who are the successive depositaries of the funds whose accumulation has become so immense!"

"You have seen," said Rodin, "by the notes in the ledger on this matter, that the order has been most carefully kept up since 1682. At different periods attempts have been made to obtain some information on this subject, which the note of Père Bourdon does not clear up. But this race of guardian Jews has remained mute, whence, we may presume, that they know nothing."

"Which has always appeared to me impossible, for the grandfather of all these Samuels was present at the closing of the house a hundred and fifty years since. 'He was,' says the ledger, 'the man of business or domestie of M. de Rennepont;' and it is impossible but that he was instructed in many points which tradition has, doubtless, perpetuated in his family."

"If I were allowed to hazard a slight remark," said Rodin, humbly.

"Speak!"

"It is but a few years that we acquired the certain knowledge of a confidence of the confessional, declaring that these funds existed, and that they had attained such an enormous figure."

"True! and that called the attention of the R. F. General to the affair."

"We know that, probably, all the descendants of the Rennepont family are ignorant of the immense value of this inheritance."

"Yes," replied Father d'Aigrigny, "the person who has certified this part to the confessor is worthy of all belief. Lately, he received the declaration, but in spite of all the persuasions of his director, he refused to confess in whose hands the funds were placed, always affirming, that they could not be placed in more trustworthy persons."

"Then, it seems to me," said Rodin, "that we are certain of that which is most important to know."

"And who knows if the holder of this enormous sum will present himself to-morrow in spite of the honesty attributed to him? In spite of myself, the nearer the moment arrives, the more my anxiety increases. Ah!" resumed Père d'Aigrigny, after a moment's silence,

“what immense interests are at stake, and how incalculable are the the consequences of success! At least all has been done that could be done.”

At these words, which Père d'Aigrigny addressed to Rodin, as if he had expected his acquiescence, the *socius* did not reply.

The abbé, looking at him with surprise, said to him,—

“Are you not of this opinion? Could more have been done? Have we not gone to the very extremity of every possible limit?”

Rodin bowed respectfully, but remained mute.

“If you think that any precaution has been omitted,” exclaimed D'Aigrigny, with a sort of unquiet impatience, “say so,—there is still time! Once more, do you think that all it was possible to do has been done? All the descendants are put out of the way, and when Gabriel presents himself to-morrow at the Rue Saint François, will he not be the sole representative of the family, and, consequently, the sole possessor of this immense fortune? But after his renunciation of our statutes, it is not he, but our Order, who will acquire this wealth. Could one act better, or otherwise? say frankly.”

“I will not allow myself to utter an opinion on the subject,” replied Rodin, humbly; and again bowing, “The good or bad success will reply to your reverence.”

The Père d'Aigrigny shrugged his shoulders, and reproached himself for having asked any opinion of this writing machine, who served him as secretary, and who had, as he declared, but three qualities, of memory, discretion, and punctuality.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE STRANGLER.

AFTER a moment's silence, D'Aigrigny said,—

“Read me this day's reports touching the present situation of each of the persons concerned in the affair of to-morrow.”

“Here is the account up to this evening which has just been brought.”

“Proceed.”

Rodin at once read as follows:—

“Jacques Rennepont, called Couche-tout-Nu, has been SEEN confined in the debtor's prison at eight o'clock this evening.”

“Then he will give us no trouble to-morrow; after which—but go on.”

“The superior of the Convent de Sainte-Marie, instructed by the Princess de Saint-Dizier, has placed the Mesdemoiselles Rose and Blanche Simon, under still closer confinement; this evening, at nine o'clock, they were carefully locked in their separate cells, and armed guards will keep watch during the night in the convent garden.”

"Then there is nothing to apprehend in that quarter, thanks to the precautions taken," said D'Aigrigny. "Continuc."

"Doctor Balcinier, acting also by the instructions of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, still observes the most rigorous surveillance over Mademoiselle de Cardoville; at a quarter to nine o'clock the door of the pavilion she occupies was securely locked and bolted."

"No need of inquietude there, at least."

"As for M. Hardy," resumed Rodin, "I have to-day received a note from M. de Bressac, his intimate friend, to whose valuable services we are indebted for getting M. Hardy out of the way at this particular juncture. The letter contains a note addressed by M. Hardy to some person in whom he places great confidence. M. de Bressac has, however, thought it best to intercept this letter, and to send it to us as another proof of the successful exertions he has made to serve us, and which, he hopes, we shall bear in mind, for he adds, that in order to serve us he has treacherously betrayed his earliest and best friend, by playing on his feelings, and inventing a false and fictitious case of distress. M. de Bressac doubts not but that in consideration of his valuable services, you will give him up the papers which place him so absolutely in our power, since their contents are calculated to bring irreparable ruin on the woman he passionately adores with an adulterous love. He still further urges that we should pity the fearful predicament in which he was placed when he had to choose between betraying his bosom friend, or seeing the object of his fondest affections disgraced and ruined for ever."

"These adulterous wailings deserve no pity," answered D'Aigrigny, disdainfully; "however, we will think it over: M. de Bressac may still be useful to us. Now, then, let me see the letter of M. Hardy, this impious and republican manufacturer, the right worthy descendant of the accursed race from which he is descended, this troublesome individual it cost us so much trouble to get rid of."

"Here is the letter in question," said Rodin. "To-morrow, we will send it on to the person for whom it is intended." He then read as follows:—

"Toulouse, Feb. 10.

"At length, my dear sir, I find a few minutes leisure to address you, and to explain the cause of my abrupt departure, which, if it did not excite your apprehensions that something unfortunate had happened to me, must, at least, have greatly surprised you. I have, also, to ask a favour at your hands; and the facts are briefly these:—I have often spoken to you of Felix de Bressac, my earliest friend, although a much younger person than myself, yet, spite of this difference in our years, our friendship has ever been warm and sincere; and we have mutually received sufficient proofs of regard to warrant the most unlimited confidence in each other. He was to me *as a brother*; and you well know all the signification I attach to those words. A few days ago he wrote me from Toulouse, where he had gone to pass some time, in the following terms:—

"If you love me, hasten to me with all speed. I have deep and urgent need of you. Set out instantly. Your sympathy and consoling

words may perhaps inspire me with courage to live. Should you arrive too late, then pardon me, and think sometimes of one who was and ever will be your faithful and attached friend.'

“ You can imagine the grief and alarm with which I perused this epistle. I sent instantly for post-horses. My managing overseer in my manufactory, an old and worthy man, whom I both esteem and respect, and who is moreover the father of General Simon, finding I was about to go to the south, begged of me to take him with me. It was, therefore, arranged he should accompany me, and remain for a few days in the department of La Creuse, as he was desirous of inspecting some improvements recently introduced in manufactures similar to our own. I agreed the more willingly to allow him to depart with me, as I could then relieve my overcharged heart by discoursing with him on the mysterious and painful intelligence contained in the letter of de Bressac.

“ On my arrival at Toulouse, I found that he had quitted that city the evening previously, taking his weapons with him, and evidently suffering from the most violent despair. At first I could not obtain the least indication of the route he had taken, but at length, after infinite trouble, I found traces of him, and, after the utmost difficulty, succeeded in discovering him in a wretched village. Never did I see such fearful despair as that which possessed him. There was nothing in it of a violent character, on the contrary, it was an utter rejection of all hope, a perfect despondency joined to a gloomy, sullen silence; at first, instead of welcoming me, he almost repulsed me, and inquired wherefore I had come. Then by degrees, as I soothed and calmed his agitated mind, he seemed to recover himself, and at length threw himself into my arms, weeping bitterly as he did so. By his side were placed loaded pistols. Had I been one day later, who can tell what might have happened? I cannot tell you the cause of all this overwhelming grief, the secret is not mine to divulge; suffice it, that I no longer wondered at his deep anguish, his hopeless misery. All I can now say is, that his cure will be long and difficult. He must be tenderly watched, comforted, and consoled. The hand of friendship must pour oil into the wounds of his poor lacerated mind, and whisper peace to his half-distracted brain. None but a faithful and attached friend can perform this delicate and difficult task. Yet I am not without hopes of restoring my friend to health, both of body and mind. I have persuaded him to undertake a journey of some length, and to seek diversion and recreation from travelling. To-morrow we start for Nice. Should he find benefit from the excursion, we can easily prolong it, for I have nothing to call me to Paris imperatively before the end of March.

“ As for the favour I have to ask of you, it is quite optional with yourself as to whether you comply or not; but this is it:—

“ It appears, by some papers in the possession of my mother's family, that I have a powerful interest in being in Paris on the 13th February, and to present myself at No. 3 Rue Saint François. I made some inquiries about this; but all I could learn was, that the house indicated, and which was of most antique appearance, had been shut up for the last 150 years by some unaccountable whim of one of

my maternal ancestors, and that it was to be opened on the 13th of this month in the presence of all the co-heirs or heiresses, if indeed there be any. Being unable myself to be on the spot, I have written to my overseer, a man on whom I can safely rely, and who, I repeat, is father to General Simon, begging of him to leave La Creuse where he was staying, and depart instantly for Paris, in order to be present at the old house. Not as my representative, as that would be useless, but merely for the curiosity of the thing, and that he might be enabled to give me a full account of all that transpired. In short, to gratify my childish desire to know what this romantic scheme of my old progenitor would end in.

"As it is just probable my overseer may not arrive in time, I should esteem it a great favour if you would inquire at Plessy, whether he has returned or not; and in the event of the latter being the case, may I ask you to go instead of him to the Rue Saint François, and watch the curious scene the opening of a house so long shut up must necessarily give rise to?"

"Although I am far from thinking I have given up much in abstaining from being in Paris on the day indicated for developing this strange mystery; yet had I even known the sacrifice to be ever so great, I should unhesitatingly have made it, from a feeling of how necessary were my constant cares and attentions to restore to happiness the man I love and value as a brother.

"Let me, then, again express a hope that you will be present in the Rue Saint François, and that you add to the favour that of writing to me (Poste Restante) at Nice, the result of your curious visit thither.

"Yours, &c.

"FRANCIS HARDY."

"Although the presence of this father of General Simon's could not in any way interfere with our plans," observed D'Aigrigny, "I think it would be desirable he should not be present. However, it is immaterial, since M. Hardy himself is safely at a distance."

"We have now only to get rid of the young Indian. And as for him," continued the marquis, with a thoughtful air, "it was wisely done to allow M. Norval to depart bearing the presents of Mademoiselle de Cardoville to the prince, in that manner, the surgeon, who accompanied him, and who was judiciously selected by Dr. Balaïnier, will escape all suspicion of being in our interests."

"Entirely so," replied Rodin; "nothing could be more satisfactory than his letter of yesterday."

"Thus, then, there is nothing to dread from the appearance of this Indian prince," said D'Aigrigny, "every thing works as we would have it."

"As regards Gabriel," continued Rodin, "he has written again this morning, urgently pressing for the interview with your reverence he has been trying to obtain for the last three days. He seems to suffer deeply from the punishment imposed on him, of confining him to the house for the last five days."

"To-morrow, then, when he is conducted to the Rue Saint François he shall be heard."

“ Now, then,” added D’Aigrigny, with an air of triumphant exultation, “ we have placed all the descendants of the family, whose presence would ruin our projects, in such circumstances as to render it perfectly impossible for them to be present before twelve o’clock to-morrow in the Rue Saint François, whilst Gabriel alone will be there. Now, then, we hold success within our grasp.”

D’Aigrigny was prevented from proceeding farther by some one tapping twice gently against the door.

“ Come in,” cried he.

An old servant, dressed in black, appeared, saying,—

“ There is a person below, desiring to speak with M. Rodin upon urgent business.”

“ What is his name ?” inquired D’Aigrigny.

“ He refused to tell me ; but he bade me say, he came from M. Josué, a merchant in the island of Java.”

D’Aigrigny and Rodin exchanged a look of extreme surprise not unmingled with fear.

“ See who this man can be,” said D’Aigrigny to Rodin, unable any longer to conceal or endure his uneasiness, “ and come and let me know.”

Then speaking to the servant, who immediately quitted the room, he said,—

“ Shew him in.”

And with these words D’Aigrigny disappeared by a side-door, after exchanging significant signs with Rodin. The next minute after, Faringhae, ex-chief of the sect of Stranglers, appeared before Rodin, who instantly recollected having seen him in the Château de Cardoville. The wily *socius* started, but affected to have no knowledge of the speaker who stood before him.

Still bending over his desk and feigning not to perceive Faringhae, he hastily wrote a few lines on a sheet of paper lying before him.

“ Sir,” said the servant, astonished at the continued silence of Rodin, “ this is the person I mentioned as desirous of seeing you.”

Rodin folded the paper he had so hastily written, and said to the servant,—

“ Carry this to its address, and they will send the answer.”

The servant bowed and retired. Then Rodin, without rising, fixed his small reptile eyes on Faringhae, and said to him, in a courteous tone,—

“ May I inquire to whom I have the honour of speaking ?”

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