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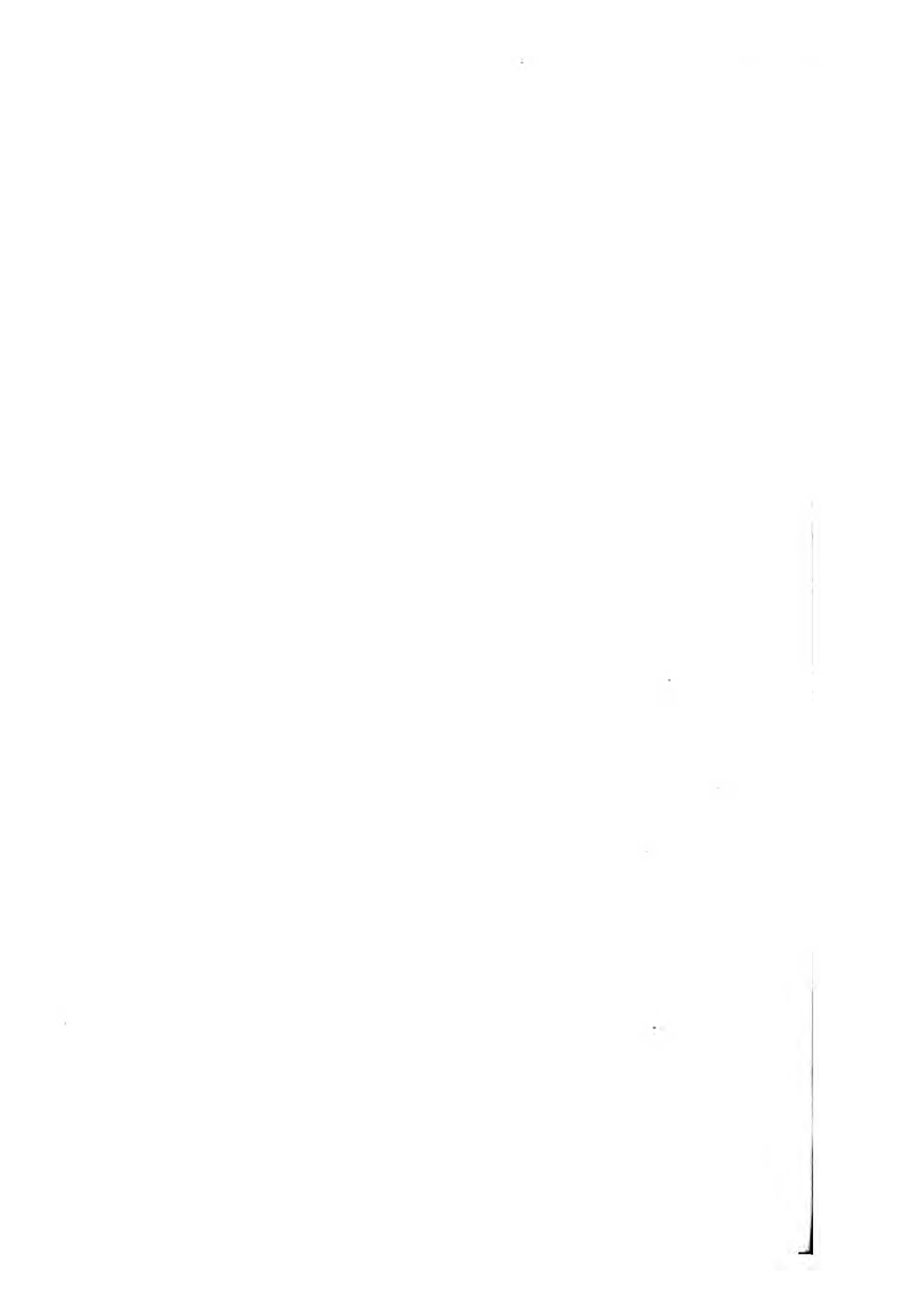
PIERROT

Humbly Born but Noble of Heart

BY S. DE K.

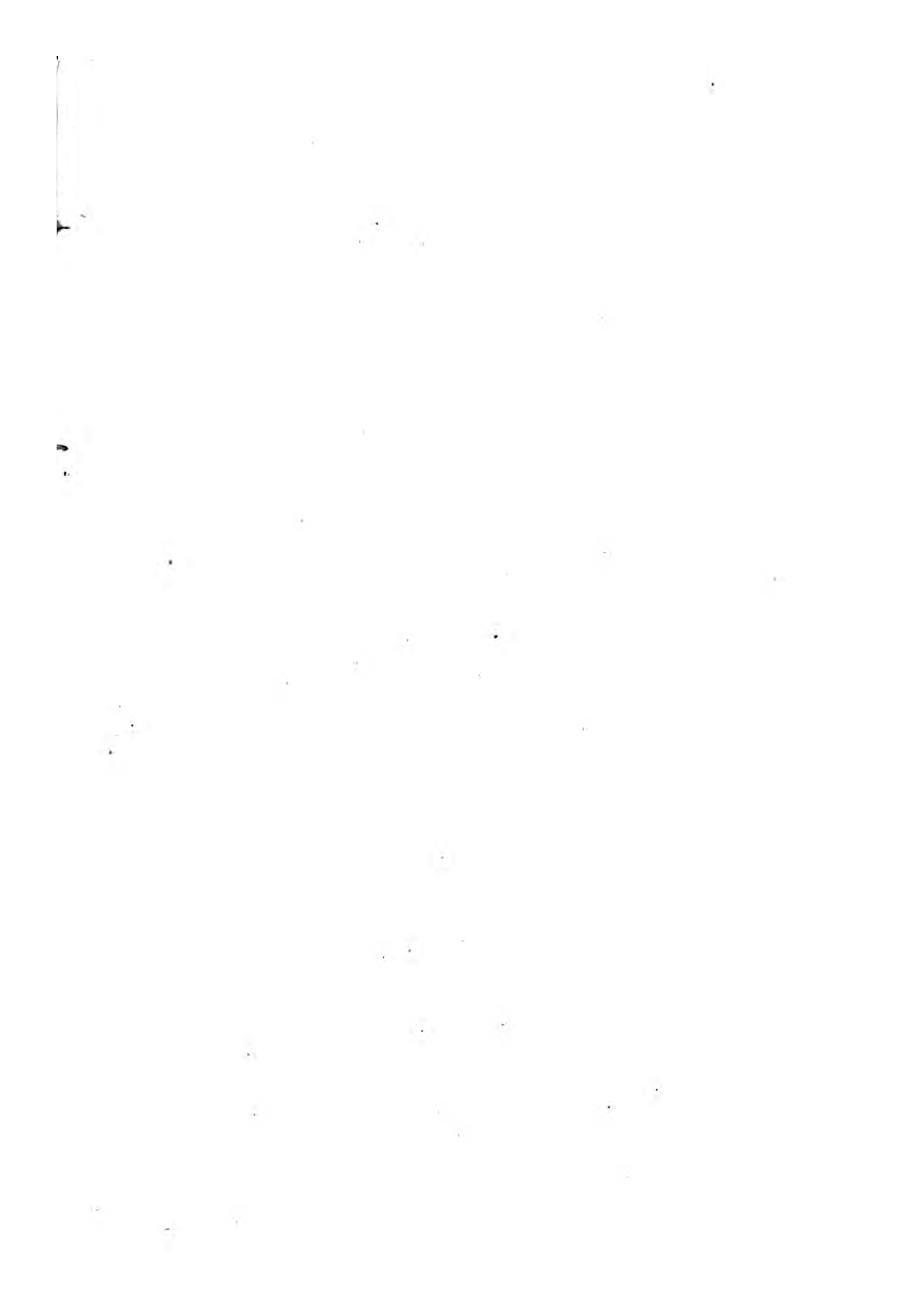






PIERROT.

Humbly Born, but Noble of Heart.





“WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, MY POOR LITTLE BOY?”—*l’age 6.*

(Frontispiece).

OF THE N. ...

BY

S. DE K.



London:

E. MARLBOROUGH AND CO.,
51, OLD BAILEY, E.C.



"COME, MY POOR LITTLE 'BOY!'"--111

(1 - *et. spicco*).

PIERROT.

Humbly Born, but Noble of Heart.

A TALE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY

S. DE K.



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THIS LITTLE STORY

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY THE AUTHORESS

TO

EWEN CAMERON ROBERT GOFF.

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PIERROT:

Humbly Born, but Noble of Heart.

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE PIERROT AND HIS DORMOUSE.

IT was the last day of the year 17—, and through the streets of Paris the wild winter wind blew sharp and frosty; deep snow covered the ground, and the sun shone not, for it was hidden under a sombre mantle of gray clouds.

In one of the dull but aristocratic streets of the Faubourg St. Germain, near the great entrance gate of the Duc de St. A.'s mansion—or "hôtel," as the

houses of the French nobility are called—the small form of a child, clad in dark-brown tattered clothes, was crouching on the snow. The very coarseness of his garments, however, somewhat protected the poor half-frozen body of their owner, who was no other than a poor little boy from the mountains of Auvergne, brought to Paris by a Savoyard, with many other boys, on speculation; some earning money by sweeping chimneys, and the younger ones wandering in the great city, either with their dormice or their hurdy-gurdies, and asking charity of the passers-by. Poor little Pierrot, who had lost his way in the noble faubourg, was in the deepest distress. His dormouse—the only faithful friend he had—had died an hour ago. Pierrot could not at first believe in the death of his little favourite, with whom he shared every morsel given to him for his subsistence, and to whom he confided his sorrows and pleasures, and with

whom he found comfort whenever he was beaten or scolded for not having brought back to his master the number of coppers he was required to earn in the day. And when food was refused him, because he had not earned it, it was by talking to his dormouse that Pierrot consoled himself, till God's angels came down to close his heavy eyelids, sending him bright dreams which made him forget his waking miseries.

The child had taken the dormouse out of its cage, and tenderly pillowed it on his little beating heart, whilst big tears fell from his large black eyes, almost freezing on his cheeks. But, alas! nothing could restore life to the little companion of his wretched life; colder and colder it became, and not even the warmth of his own body could lend any to his dead friend. Still Pierrot kept it on his heart, and then hunger, cold, sorrow, and weariness caused him to fall asleep at the door of the house of the great Duc de St. A.

During his peaceful slumbers he dreamed of his poor but happy home in Auvergne ; of his kind mother and father, from whom he had been stolen one day when he had wandered away from the house. True, some time or other he would have had to come to the great city, like other children of the province ; but he was still too young at that time, and, besides, his father would probably have come with him. In his dream he saw everything so plainly ! He first fancied himself playing under the chestnut-trees with his little sister Mariette ; then they entered their cottage to eat the chestnut hasty pudding, the usual fare of the mountaineers, and he could see the loving face of his mother, as well as that of his father, for they were kind people the Oudouls. But the dream soon vanished, though Pierrot did not awake at once, and did not even hear the approach of a grand carriage which had stopped at the gate.

Whilst the coachman was waiting for the gate to be opened, a lady sitting in the carriage had perceived the small bundle curled up by the gate brought so fully into relief by contrast with the whiteness of the snow. She immediately pulled the check-string; the footman alighted from his seat and came to the carriage window, the lady letting down the glass to speak to him.

“Tell the coachman to wait a minute,” said the Duchesse; “I wish to know what that poor little child is doing there on such a fearfully cold day.”

The footman went to Pierrot, shook him several times before he could awake him, and at last succeeded in doing so. Pierrot, suddenly roused out of his sleep, was frightened; his tears began to flow afresh, and he could not answer the questions asked of him. The coachman and his horses became impatient, the footman did the same, but the lady was determined to know about the child, and,

opening the door, she stepped out of the carriage, to the great astonishment of the servants.

“Madame la Duchesse will catch her death of cold,” said the footman, stepping back to let her come nearer the child.

“Never mind,” replied the young Duchesse. “But the horses had better not be kept waiting; tell the coachman to go on.”

And when Pierrot heard her sweet silvery voice, he lifted his eyes and looked at the beautiful lady before him, seemingly very much struck, but not at all frightened.

“What are you doing here, my poor little boy?” the Duchesse kindly said.

“I have lost my way,” replied Pierrot, “and my little dormouse—my only friend in Paris—is dead, and I shall be beaten by my master and starved when I go back to him,” and then the child broke down afresh, and his scalding tears fell faster than ever.

“Poor little fellow,” ejaculated the kind-hearted Duchesse, “you shall neither be starved nor beaten. Firmin,” she continued, turning to the servant, “help him up, he must go into the lodge; I will speak to Madame Augereau,” and so saying the Duchesse passed under the porte-cochère* and entered the lodge, followed by Firmin and Pierrot.

The concierge† rose from her kneeling posture, for she was mending her fire, when she heard the door opening, and could scarcely believe her eyes to see the Duchesse herself enter the lodge.

“Madame Augereau,” said the Duchesse de St. A., smiling kindly to the concierge, “I have found this poor little child lying on the snow in great tribulation on account of his having lost his dormouse, and also because he is afraid of being beaten by his master when he

* Carriage-gate.

† Lodge-keeper.

returns to him. Will you oblige me by taking care of him for me until my foster-mother comes to fetch him?"

But scarcely had the Duchesse finished speaking, when a handsome peasant woman entered the lodge, carrying in her hands a pair of sabots.*

"Ah! ma bonne mère nourrice,"† said the young Duchesse, affectionately, "you are afraid I shall take cold, and you have brought your wooden shoes for me to put on. Thank you so much, for indeed the snow is deep, and my boots are too thin to walk over it with impunity. But look at this dear little Auvergnat I found at the gate, cold and hungry; and to add to this, he has lost his only friend, his little dormouse."

"Poor little dear!" ejaculated the peasant woman. "May I take care of

* Wooden shoes.

† Ah! my good foster-mother.

him?" she continued, addressing her lovely foster-daughter.

"I was going to propose it to you, chère mère nourrice. But how shall we manage about clothes?"

"If Madame la Duchesse will allow me," said the concierge, "I will give the poor child the clothes of my own little boy; they will fit him exactly," and she turned away to hide her tears, for her little boy was dead.

"It is very kind of you, Madame Augereau; I am much obliged to you, and Mère Thérèse will arrange matters with you." Then turning to the child, "I shall see you again, my little man; try to be comforted. Good afternoon, Madame Augereau." And the Duchesse left the lodge, highly amused at the way she walked with her foster-mother's clumsy sabots.

A footman was waiting at the vestibule door, and immediately assisted the Duchesse to take off her wooden shoes.

“Has Monsieur le Duc returned?” she asked.

“No, Madame la Duchesse, but I think there is a note in the boudoir from Monsieur le Duc.”

CHAPTER II.

MADAME LA DUCHESSE DE ST. A.

THE Duchesse de St. A. was about eighteen when this story begins. She was very lovely, and one of the sweetest women ever known. Her heart and her purse were both open to sympathize with and relieve every case of affliction. To do good was the aim of her young life, and no one ever applied to her in vain. An orphan at the tender age of five, she had been brought up by an aunt, whose good qualities and virtues were soon implanted in the mind of the orphan girl. Even the foster-mother vied with the great lady in teaching her foster-child all that was right and good, for, though poor, she was high-principled, and her religion was that of the heart. Thérèse having been a

widow and childless a year after her marriage, had remained ever since with Mdlle. de * * *, for neither as a child nor when grown up would Mdlle. de * * * have consented to part with her foster-mother, for whom she felt the affection of a daughter.

Thérèse, although a peasant, had a manner which many a lady might have been pleased to possess, and then she was very handsome, which gave her an additional charm, though, had she been plain, her goodness would fully have made up for her want of beauty.

The Duchesse had only been married a few months, and was now in Paris for the first time. She did not much care for the gaieties of the Court, and, preferring the quiet life she had led in the country, was longing to go back there as soon as the season was over. She often pictured to herself the charming life she would lead at the old château of St. A. among the country people, trying to do as much

good as she could. In Paris, of course, it was much more difficult for her to discover those whom she would have liked to help, although they abounded; but she was too young to be allowed to go about, even accompanied by Thérèse. The Duc did not approve of it, and so it was seldom that she could find any object for her charity, except in giving money to the subscription lists continually presented to her. This mode of giving did not content her heart. She would have preferred visiting the poor herself; consoling them in their afflictions; sympathizing with them in their distress; giving them food for the soul as well as for the body; in fact, helping them to bear the miseries of this life by teaching them to hope for a happier life hereafter in "the better land." The finding of little Pierrot had been a melancholy pleasure to her. She knew that her husband would not object to his remaining an inmate of the house, espe-

cially as he would be entirely under the charge of Thérèse.

When the Duchesse entered her boudoir, her maid came to take off her things, and as soon as she was left alone she opened the note sent by her husband. He would be detained later than he had expected, and he begged she would excuse him if he were unable to return in time for dinner. It made Madame de St. A. sad, for she loved her husband's company above all things, and to sit in state to a solitary dinner was far from pleasing to her. However, it could not be helped, and seeing some of her little winged pensioners pecking at the window panes, she rang the bell, and asked for some bread.

In the meantime she opened the window, and the little birds began twittering and flying around her, seemingly enjoying the sweet tones of her silvery voice. But when the servant appeared with the golden salver upon which were sundry

pieces of bread and cake, they took to flight, evidently frightened at the newcomer. A few minutes elapsed before they would trust themselves back to the window. The Duchesse could not help smiling, and then she called them whilst crumbling the bread and cake on the window sill.

“Silly little birdies,” she said, “why are you frightened? Am not I here to protect you?” And, as if they understood the kind words of their friend, they soon returned, some of them perching on her head and shoulders, others on her hands, and then, as if entirely reassured, they flocked to their dainty meal.

Not a day had passed since the wintry season had set in without the kind young Duchesse feeding the little birds twice; or if at any time she was unable to do so, Thérèse took her place, being the only one of all the other members of the household of whom they were not frightened. The sweet little songsters

are generally mute during days of frost and snow, till the fresh breeze of spring comes back, bringing happiness to them as well as to all those who love nature and rejoice at the sight of the first perfumed flowers in the hedges and meadows; but after their sumptuous repast of bread and cake they chirped, as if to thank their benefactress, and then flew away. And as they flew off, Madame de St. A. said softly to herself,

“Aux petits des oiseaux Il donne la pature,
Et Sa bonté s’étend sur toute la nature.” *

For a little while she watched the flight of her winged friends, and then, turning round, she looked at the many luxuries with which she was surrounded.

“Could all these be conducive to my happiness,” she said aloud, “were not He who gave them to me, for ever present in my thoughts? God has been most

* “To the birds’ little ones He gives food, and His kindness extends over the whole of nature.”

gracious to me in enabling me to do good; but how I wish I could do much more than I do. I am afraid I leave a great deal undone." Then sitting down by the fire, the Duchesse took up her work (destined for some charity), and plied her needle diligently, until she was aroused from her thoughts by the entrance of her maid.

"Would Madame la Duchesse like to see the little Auvergnat now?" she said. "Thérèse has dressed him in his new clothes."

"I will come almost directly," she replied.

CHAPTER III.

PIERROT'S METAMORPHOSIS.

A FEW minutes elapsed, and then the Duchesse left her boudoir, passing through the ante-room, where a number of servants were sitting. They all rose as she passed, and she soon reached the part of the house where Thérèse lived.

“Well, my little man,” said Madame de St. A., with her kind, bewitching smile, “how do you feel now? Happier, I hope, than when I saw you first.”

“Oh, yes, madame,” replied the child, in his patois; “but my little dormouse will never speak to me again; she is really dead, and I can no longer share with her anything that is given me,” and his eyes filled again with tears.

“We must try and get you another, and you can teach her to love you and be your friend, as was the one you have lost. You must not cry, my little boy; you make me quite unhappy. Have you had anything to eat?”

But Pierrot could not answer; his little heart was so full of grief that he sobbed again and again, and Thérèse answered for him :

“I had a very great deal of trouble in making him taste some food, although, poor little mite, he was very hungry; but he frets so much about his little companion, it makes one sad to hear him talking about it. But what do you think of the change, my darling?” (for in private Thérèse could never bring herself to speak to her foster-child except with endearing terms). “Does he not look different now, so clean and nice?”

“It really is a marvellous change, my good Thérèse, and what will you do with him?”

“Teach him to love God, and do what is right,” answered the peasant woman. “If you will allow me to keep him, he shall be my own little boy, until he goes back to his own parents. And it would be a great kindness, perhaps, to let them know where the child is; they must be very miserable without him.”

“We must wait a while before asking him any more questions,” said the Duchesse, “it seems to break his heart when he is spoken to. I do not know what Monsieur le Duc will say about our keeping him here,” she continued, “though I feel almost sure he will have no objection to his remaining amongst us.”

“I am sure he will not,” answered Thérèse. “Monsieur le Duc is so fond of you, my sweet one, that he can never refuse any of your requests. At all events, if he may remain here with me until we go back to the country, I can then have him to live with me at my own

little cottage ; he will be a companion to me."

"Ma bonne Thérèse, you are like me, you much prefer our own dear native place to this brilliant city," said the Duchesse, smiling. "I am sure I was not born for all this grandeur ; I think I would much rather be a peasant than a Duchesse."

"No, no, darling," said Thérèse, almost reproachfully ; "no one was ever more worthy of a coronet than you are, my own darling child. Would that all the ladies at Court were as great an ornament as you are."

"Oh ! Thérèse, you must not say those things. You know you always taught me not to be proud of my birth, nor of my rank, and now you are forgetting your good teachings. I am afraid your love for me blinds you ; you see in me what I fear I do not really possess."

"Well, my beloved child," returned the foster-mother, "you are right ; I

should keep to myself what I think. Only I know I shall not spoil you with my foolish talk; you will never forget that, in the eyes of Almighty God, we are all equal."

"Non, ma chère Thérèse," she replied, passing her arm caressingly round her nurse's neck and kissing her, "I do not mean to be spoilt. I always feel that it was only for some good purpose that God, in His unerring wisdom, placed me in the high station I occupy, and I hope He will help me to fulfil whatever duties are marked out for me in a spirit of humility and obedience."

"That is right, ma mignonne; * seek His grace that you may never turn away from the right path, and God will bless you."

Whilst the Duchesse and her foster-mother were talking, Pierrot stared at them with his bright jet-like eyes,

* My darling.

wondering what was the meaning of their words. He looked like another being now, and no one would have recognized him as the poor tattered little Auvergnat of a few hours before. His tears had ceased falling, and there was so much brightness in his whole countenance that both the Duchesse and Thérèse inwardly remarked it. The Duchesse spoke to him again.

“I will ask my husband to allow us to keep you, my little boy. Would you like to stay here with good kind Thérèse, who will teach you to love God and to be good?”

“Oh! yes, I would, kind lady. Pray don't let me go back to the bad man. I will do all you tell me. I'll work very hard.”

“You will not have very hard work here, my child,” returned Madame de St. A. “Perhaps I shall make a little page of you. You will have to carry my messages and help Thérèse, and then

you must also learn how to read and write, and when we are in the country you will have to help me with my garden."

"Oh! dear good lady, that will be nice. But shall I be able to have another dormouse, and can I bury my little dead one somewhere, please, lady?" And his tears began to fall afresh.

"I do not know, my child, when or where we can get a dormouse; perhaps you will have to wait till we go into the country. But as to burying the dead one, I dare say good Thérèse will show you some little corner in the garden; only the snow is very, very deep, and it is too late to-night, it is getting so dark."

"We will see to that to-morrow," said Thérèse; "in the morning we can bury your little friend. But you must try and console yourself, my little Pierrot."

"Monsieur le Duc has returned, Madame la Duchesse," said Céleste, the maid, "and is waiting in the boudoir."

“Then good night, little one, be comforted. I will speak to Monsieur le Duc about you. Ma bonne Thérèse, do not forget to come to my dressing-room before I go to bed.”

CHAPTER IV.

MONSIEUR LE DUC DE ST. A.

PERHAPS no man ever possessed in a higher degree than the young Duc de St. A. the qualities which are conducive to happiness, and especially that of others. He was a nobleman in every sense of the word.

“I am so very glad you have returned,” said the Duchesse, on entering the *boudoir*; “from your note I fancied you would be detained, and I was rather dreading to spend the evening without you.”

“The King did not keep us so long as I expected he would, so that I immediately came back, knowing full well you would be here, and, perhaps, alone. I suppose you have had no visitors.”

“Not exactly,” said the young wife, with a smile of intense pleasure; “only a poor little Auvergnat whom I found at our gate.” And the Duchesse related all about Pierrot.

“Ah,” said the Duc, laughing, “you, too, have a fondness for little Auvergnats, Marguerite. When I was a small boy, my great delight was to have a chat with them when they came to sweep the chimneys at the castle, or, indeed, here. Once I remember one came with his father; he was a handsome boy, and sang his song when on the chimney tops in a first-rate style, so that when he had done his work I told the servants to give him a good breakfast, and whilst he and his father had it, I talked to them. And what do you think I found out?”

“I really could not say,” said the Duchesse.

“Well, I discovered that the father had been a soldier in my father’s regiment, and his sister a servant in my grand-

father's house. I went immediately to tell the Duc. It turned out that the soldier had saved my father from an untimely death by covering him with his own body whilst he was attacked by the enemy. The brave fellow had never said a word on the subject, thus receiving no reward from my father, who, on account of his wounds, had to be carried away immediately. But the mountaineer had not forgotten the Duc's name, and on passing by St. A. he came, though not with the slightest intention to beg. Had I not spoken to him, he would not have mentioned anything. They are a retiring, honest, hard-working set, the Auvergnats, and deserve to be noticed."*

"And what did your father do?"

"He told him to ask for whatever he wished for. 'My general,' replied the Auvergnat, 'I did not save your life for

* I am sorry to say the Auvergnats are no longer what they were in those days. Tourists have completely spoilt them.—S. DE K.

the sake of a reward; but now that I see you looking so hale and healthy I have my reward and want no other.' However, my father insisted on his naming something, and the modest request was—a few francs, to add to what they would earn during their tour, in order to buy a cow. The Duc gave four hundred francs—an immense fortune for the man—and told him to take back his boy to his mountain home, and if ever he wanted anything more to let him know."

"Did the Duc ever hear of him afterwards?" asked the Duchesse.

"Twice, to apprise my father of his prosperity, and to convey his thanks for the benefits bestowed upon him and his children. They had a farm, and were all prosperous."

"I hope my little man will turn out a good boy," put in Madame de St. A. "I am so glad you are kind enough to allow him to stay here; and Thérèse will be so happy too. I was almost afraid you

would have an objection to keeping him."

"My dearest Marguerite, you do me wrong," returned the Duc de St. A. "I would not deprive you of anything for worlds. I know full well that all your aims are to do good and make others happy, and therefore it would be cruel on my part to refuse any of your requests."

"You are so very, very kind to me," replied the young wife, with a loving smile, "I am sure you would never do anything to annoy me; but, in this instance, I thought you might not like the child to be here."

"Whatever my Marguerite likes I like," replied the Duc. "But, about the reception at the Tuileries to-morrow, I was going to tell you that the hour has been changed for us; the Queen wishes us to come a quarter of an hour earlier. Her Majesty was charming; she spoke in the kindest manner of you. I think

she regrets you are so fond of leading a retired life.”

“ I certainly do not care much for going to Court except when there is no reception. However, I have made up my mind to do as you wish on the subject,” she gently said.

“ We must do our duty, my dearest Marguerite, and I know that no one wishes to do it more than you—first to God, and then to our King.”

“ Certainly,” emphatically replied the Duchesse.

CHAPTER V.

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT THE HÔTEL DE ST. A.
PIERROT BURIES HIS LITTLE FRIEND.

THÉRÈSE, as was her wont, was astir betimes on the first day of the year. Long before any of the inmates of the hôtel had opened their eyes, her room was done, and Pierrot also was up. He had found in one of his shoes a silver coin, which made him clap his hands with joy, and Thérèse moreover told him that the next day she would go and buy him some new clothes, which were to be a present from the Duchesse.

“And who gave me this bright piece of money?” asked Pierrot.

“The kind Duc de St. A.,” replied Thérèse; “and what will you do with it?”

“I will keep it in a little bag for my father and mother, and perhaps I may earn some more before I go back to them. Oh, won't they be pleased! But,” he continued, with tears blinding his eyes, “where is my dear little dormouse?”

“Outside on the window sill,” replied Thérèse. “We must go and bury it, as soon as the door is opened, just under our window, so that no one may disturb it. There is a rose-tree there. Won't that be nice for your little friend to be buried among the roses?”

“Ah! yes, it will,” returned Pierrot, with a sob, “but I shall never see her again for all that.”

“Well now, my little Pierrot, I will tell you something. God does not like us to grieve too much over what we lose. He gives us things and takes them away from us, and we must try to bear it because it is our heavenly Father's will that it should be so.”

“I can't understand you at all,” replied

the child ; “ God did not give her to me. I found her myself, and put her into a cage which I used to carry about, and then that unkind man stole me away.”

“ Ah ! my little Pierrot, we don't see the great and good God who lives in heaven, but, although we don't *see* Him giving us anything, nevertheless all we have comes from Him. Had it not been for the death of your little pet, you would probably not be here. You would not have cried yourself to sleep on the doorstep, and the kind Duchesse would not have seen you. You would still be with the unkind man. Come, my child, kneel down before me, join your little hands, and I will teach you to know Him who is so good to us all.”

Pierrot did as he was bid, repeating words he could hardly understand, though feeling all the time a sort of reverence for the Divine Being to whom he spoke. After the prayer was over, hearing that the doors were being unfastened down-

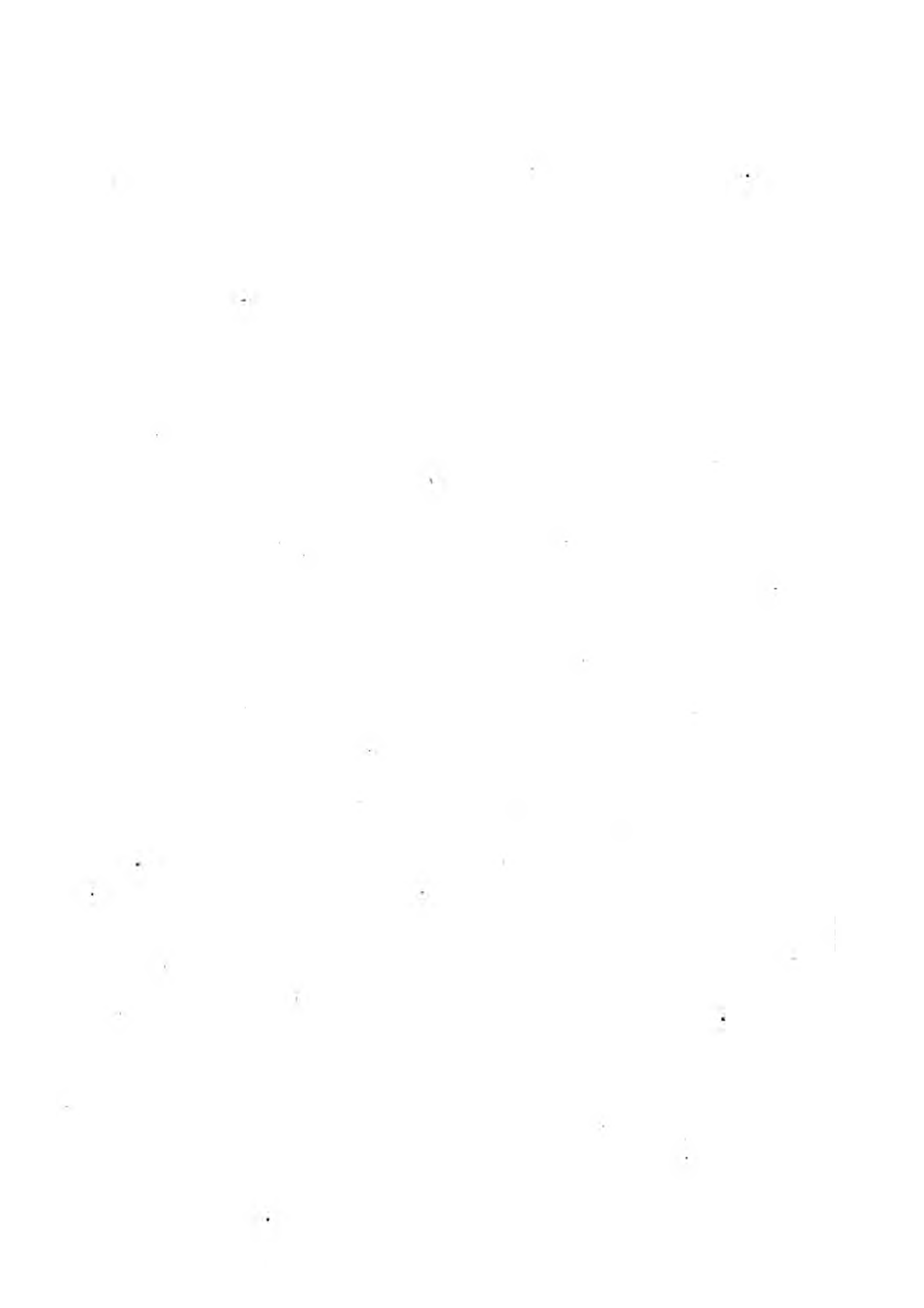
stairs, Thérèse and her companion went out in order to bury the dormouse. They removed the snow, and had a great deal of trouble in digging a small hole to make a grave. There Pierrot deposited his pet, after kissing its frozen body many times, covered it up, and then both the woman and child re-entered the house.

“Go back upstairs, Pierrot,” said Thérèse, “and I will soon bring you your breakfast.”

New Year's-day was a grand day in France in those times, much more so than it is now, though perhaps not quite so brilliant as under the Empire. The servants in the hôtel were most of them anxiously waiting for Thérèse, who was to distribute to the under-servants the gifts intended for them by the Duc and Duchesse. When she had done this, she went back to her charge, carrying up his breakfast and her own. The good peasant woman felt happier now that she had a little companion to take care

of, and they talked together in the most friendly manner. Then Thérèse had to make a second toilet, in order to dress herself in the new things her foster-daughter and her husband the Duc had given her the previous evening. She had been told she would have to bring Pierrot to be shown to the Duc, and the little fellow rather rejoiced at the idea than otherwise. So our good Thérèse arrayed herself in a beautifully fine dark-blue cloth dress, bound with black velvet. On her shoulders she wore a handkerchief, with a white ground, and a border of very gay flowers. Her coiffe* was trimmed with most beautiful lace; her apron being of a dark crimson colour, whilst round her neck she wore a black velvet ribbon, from which hung a gold heart and cross, and a splendid pair of earrings completed her attire.

* Cap.





“WELL, LITTLE PIERROT,” SAID THE DUC, “HOW DID YOU LIKE YOUR BRIGHT COIN, AND WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO WITH IT?”—Page 37.

Soon the summons came for Thérèse and Pierrot to make their appearance. The Duc and the Duchesse were still in the breakfast-room when they entered.

The little Auvergnat was more awed by the grand pictures hung upon the walls, which stared at him, than by the sight of the nobleman and his wife. Indeed, there was nothing in them to awe any one, they looked so good and amiable.

“Well, little Pierrot,” said the Duc, “how did you like your bright franc, and what do you intend to do with it?”

“I humbly thank you much, Monsieur le Duc and Madame la Duchesse,” he said, looking at both with his large black eyes, and showing as he smiled a row of pearly white teeth, “I will keep it for my father and mother.”

“Where do you come from, my child?” inquired the Duc de St. A.

“From the mountains of Auvergne,” replied Pierrot.

“ But know you not the name of your native village, or of some town near ? ”

“ There was no village where we were, and I don't know any town.”

“ This is very awkward,” said the nobleman, “ for we cannot send word to your parents that you are here, my little fellow ; so you will have to wait until you are a big boy, and go yourself to find them. Would you like to stay with Mère Thérèse till we can think of something for you to do ? ”

Poor little Pierrot's eyes filled whilst the Duc spoke, especially when he found he could not go back, nor hear of his father and mother ; however, he did his best to keep the tears back, and thinking he ought to be thankful, and show his gratitude by amusing the Duc and the Duchesse, he voluntarily began to dance and sing his little patois song, whilst his poor aching heart was inwardly bleeding. The Duchesse saw all this, as well as her husband and Thérèse, and

it made a very good impression on all three.

“Would you like to go and see the shops with ma bonne Thérèse?” asked the Duchesse, when he had finished dancing.

“Perhaps the wicked man would catch me if I go out, or else I should like it, Madame la Duchesse.”

“He would not know you again,” smiled the kind Madame de St. A., “you are too much altered. Besides, Thérèse will take care of you. I will give her money to buy you something, as it is New Year’s-day.”

“May I buy a dormouse?” asked Pierrot.

“I am afraid you will not find any in Paris now, except belonging to some of the little Savoyards or Auvergnats.”

“I think you had better avoid your country folks,” said the Duc; “they might tell the naughty man, and he would come and fetch you. Wait till we

go into the country, and then you will have as many dormice as you wish."

"At what time are you going to Court, madame?" asked Thérèse. "Pierrot would like to see you dressed and starting in your grand coach."

"At twelve precisely, ma bonne mère, and you must come with me whilst I dress; Pierrot can stay with the servants in the ante-room."

CHAPTER VI.

PIERROT AND THÉRÈSE TAKE A WALK.

PIERROT'S eyes were quite dazzled when the Duchesse passed through the ante-room to enter her carriage, followed by the Duc in his brilliant Court dress.

“I should like to see the King and Queen,” said Pierrot to Thérèse; “shall we see them when we are out?”

“No, my child; but perhaps you may some day. I think we had better go out now, and we shall have a chance to see all the grand carriages.”

So they both started out, walking at a very good pace, notwithstanding the depth of the snow. But Pierrot felt very frightened that the naughty man would come after him. He had a faint idea that he had lived in the same locality, though very far from the Hôtel de St. A., and when

they had crossed the Seine he seemed to breathe more freely. He had no recollection of the places he saw, and gave himself up to his delight and wonder at all the carriages he saw, with their armorial bearings, and the grand liveries of the servants. But all the time he held fast by Thérèse's hand, and, after having looked at the motley throng, they left the Tuileries, to gaze at the shops. To Thérèse it was dull work. She would have preferred being at home; but she knew it amused her little charge, and therefore she willingly went on with him, till some of the stalls in the street attracted his attention. At one they sold knives, and he looked at them with a very great wish to possess one. Thérèse bought the one he had selected, then gave him a cake and some sweetmeats, and both returned to the hôtel. Pierrot was rather sorry not to stay out longer in order to see the gay sights, but Thérèse was glad to return to her solitude, for

she found no pleasure in going about the streets of Paris. She longed for her little cottage, her garden, and the fields and vineyards of her native village. When they arrived in their street they found the great gates still wide open, carriage after carriage entering and going out, as all the gentlemen who had any acquaintance with the Duc and Duchesse left their cards on that day at the Hôtel de St. A. Thérèse, in order to please Pierrot, sat at one of the windows from which they could see all that went on. The good woman was pleased to see that Pierrot—at any rate for a few hours—forgot his sorrows, and it was only when it began to grow dark that they went back to their own room. Then Thérèse, sitting in the firelight, related some of the Bible stories to little Pierrot, who listened with the greatest attention. It was especially the history of Joseph and his brethren which interested him the most. And it was all quite new to him.

“It’s something like me,” said Pierrot, with a sigh; “I am lost to my father and mother; but shall I ever be like Joseph at the King’s Court, do you think?”

“No, my child,” replied Thérèse; “but I hope you will do what is right, and, in whatever position the Almighty is pleased to place you, will do your best to fill it properly, and so you will be happy. There’s not much happiness for Kings and Queens, I take it, nor many of the great and rich people we saw to-day. Peasants like you and me, Pierrot, are much better off.”

But Pierrot could not exactly see that, though he made no comment on the subject.

There were grand doings amongst the servants on that New Year’s-day, especially at supper, which was to be a very amusing affair; but Thérèse, as usual, went down to fetch hers and her little companion’s, and, as soon as the meal was over, Pierrot being very tired

he went to bed, and Thérèse waited to be called as soon as the Duchesse went to change her dress to go to a ball.

“Ah! ma bonne mère nourrice,” said the young Duchesse, as soon as she saw her foster-mother, “how I envy you, to be able to stay at home; I am very tired, and yet I have to go out again.”

“You do look tired, indeed,” replied Thérèse, whilst several waiting-women busied themselves with their mistress. “My darling child, must you really go to the ball?”

“I do it as a duty, not as a pleasure, I can assure you. The Queen has expressed to me again to-day her wish that I should come, and I could not possibly refuse; her Majesty’s wishes are law. But do you know, I have been speaking of you to Madame Elizabeth, the King’s sister. Madame Royale* was near her aunt, and, hearing me speak of you, asked several

* Title which was given to the Princess Royal.

questions, and was much amused when I told her about little Pierrot and his dormouse."

"Ah! the little dear," said the peasant woman, "how I should like to see her and her aunt, the good Princesse Elizabeth. What a blessing it would be if there were more like her at Court. And did you see the little Dauphin?*" I should like to see him, too."

"Yes; he was standing near Marie Antoinette. I spoke to him, also, when the reception was over. He has such lovely hair—long, fair, and curly; he is his mother's idol. I must try to find out when the royal children are likely to be out, and you and Pierrot must go and look at them."

"It would be a treat. In fact, I should like to see all the royal family before I leave Paris."

* Title which in those days was given to the eldest son of the King.

“I dare say you will have the opportunity to see them all some day or other,” and with these words the Duchesse rose. She was now dressed and looked very lovely. “Good night, ma bonne Thérèse,” she said, kissing her foster-mother.

“I will go down to see you off, my darling. I hope you will not take cold.”

“If I do, chère Thérèse, I shall be sure to be well nursed by you. However, I have no wish to be ill, so that I may not give you any trouble or anxiety.”

“Good night, Thérèse,” said the Duc de St. A., who met his wife on the grand staircase. “Do you envy us our first day of January?” he continued, laughing.

“No, Monsieur le Duc; I prefer staying here, and I wish you were doing the same, for you must both be very tired.”

The Duchesse cast another glance at Thérèse as she was stepping into the carriage, and soon it was out of sight.

CHAPTER VII.

THÉRÈSE AND PIERROT SEE THE ROYAL
FAMILY AT VERSAILLES.

THE Court had left Paris. Versailles was greatly preferred by all the members of the "famille royale," and the Duc and Duchesse de St. A. had also gone there for a week previous to their departure for the country. Thérèse and Pierrot went as well; and it was in the Orangerie—or, at least, when the royal family were going there—that Thérèse and her companions saw the lovely Queen, her children, Madame Elizabeth, and Louis XVI. The Duchesse de St. A. was amongst the suite, and as she happened to be walking behind Madame Elizabeth, the latter turned round to ask the Duchesse whether it was not her foster-mother and the little Auvergnat she saw in the distance. The

Duchesse replying in the affirmative, good, kind Madame Elizabeth smiled, and that sweet, condescending smile was never forgotten by Thérèse and the little Auvergnat.

When the royal party turned to go back to the palace, the Dauphin and Madame Royale—to whom Madame Elizabeth had spoken about the Duchesse's nurse and her protégé—also made a sign of recognition to the happy peasants. For them, indeed, it was a day of days ever to be remembered.

During her stay in Paris, Madame la Duchesse de St. A. had endeavoured to teach Pierrot to read. It was rather a difficult task, for although the child was bright, he had an immense deal of trouble in mastering the words, which, as a rule, seemed to dance before his eyes. But so willing was he to please his kind and noble mistress that she saw at once it was not his fault, and patiently, day after day, she continued her teaching.

Pierrot was much more clever with his fingers. He could carve some funny little things, which showed that he had taste. He had also some notion of drawing. Strange-looking things he drew with a piece of coal on the passage wall leading to the kitchen. Of course it had to be washed out, as Thérèse thought it did not look nice. Paper and pencils he could not get, and therefore he had to give up this amusement.

“When we are in my cottage,” said Thérèse to him, “then you can do what you like on the outside walls, Pierrot.”

In those days paper was a luxury which could not easily be had, especially for spoiling, and Thérèse would not have thought it proper to ask the Duchesse for such a thing.

The time at last came for the household to depart. Half of the servants left Paris first, and then the other half followed with the Duc and the Duchesse, Thérèse and

Pierrot travelling outside the Duc's carriage.

Great was the joy of these two to leave the city, which, as a rule, appeared to them so very dull. This joy was fully shared by the Duc and Duchesse. They, too, preferred a country life, although feeling a regret to leave their King and Queen, for they were both devoted to the royal family.

CHAPTER VIII.

PIERROT IS ACCUSED OF HAVING STOLEN
ONE OF THE DUCHESSÉ'S RINGS.

A FEW days after her arrival at the Château de St. A., the young Duchesse re-commenced the lessons with Pierrot, and now began to teach him writing. This pleased him far more than reading, and in a very short time he made rapid progress. He was very happy, little Pierrot. Thérèse had got him a dormouse, which was an endless source of pleasure to him. Then he helped the Duchesse with her gardening, remaining the greater part of the day at the château with Thérèse, and after seven in the evening returning to their cottage.

It was spring-time, with all the wild flowers in bloom, and Pierrot gathered them in the woods and hedges to bring

to his benefactress, who never was so happy as when she was admiring God's wonders in nature. The sweet perfume of flowers, the singing of the birds in their leafy bowers, made her raise her eyes towards heaven in thanksgiving for all the blessings she enjoyed, which feelings were devoutly shared by her husband. Spring, summer, and part of autumn had passed away in perfect happiness for our little friend, when an untoward incident well-nigh broke his heart.

The Duchesse de St. A. was in the habit of wearing a ring which had belonged to her mother, and, indeed, not only for this circumstance did she so highly value it, but also because it had been in her family for centuries. A Crusader had brought it from the Holy Land, it having been given to him by Godefroy de Bouillon, King of Jerusalem, for the Crusader's betrothed. It had nothing very remarkable, except for its antiquity. Being slightly too large for

Madame de St. A., she generally wore another ring over it; but it appears that one morning she had forgotten to take that precaution, and as she was gardening with Pierrot she took it off, putting it on the window sill—for they were close to one of the drawing-room windows. Unexpectedly the Duchesse was summoned indoors; she forgot her ring, and little Pierrot went on with what he had to do. Madame de St. A. not returning, he went away to look for Thérèse. Visitors had come, so that Pierrot did not see the Duchesse again on that day.

It was only at night that Madame de St. A. missed her ring, and she immediately sent Céleste to tell one of her under waiting-women to go and look for it. The girl went and found the ring, but some evil thought came to her that she would keep it and make the Duchesse believe that Pierrot had stolen it.

As it often happens in a house where there is a favourite, servants are apt to

dislike him or her, and although the little Auvergnat was the kindest-hearted and most obliging child alive, still he had more enemies than friends in the household.

The maid was not so good as she ought to have been, and, having made up her mind to sell the jewel to the first pedlar who should pass, she secreted it, and returned to tell Céleste that no ring could be found, adding that she felt sure Pierrot had stolen it.

“He is a little thief,” she added; “more than once I have discovered him prying about the rooms when we were in Paris, and for my part I believe he took some of my things which disappeared.”

“Why did you not tell the Duchesse?” asked Céleste.

“From pity for the child,” returned the deceitful maid; “I was afraid he would be turned adrift, and I should not have been at peace with my own heart had I done it.”

“But you might, at all events, have spoken to Thérèse. And now you see it is much worse. Had he been stopped at first he would not have gone on thus. I suppose I must tell all this to Madame la Duchesse.”

“Do as you think proper,” and she turned away, as her face was burning with shame and looked dreadfully guilty.

When the Duchesse was told of this she would not believe it, and it grieved her beyond all things to hear that her little favourite should thus be accused of theft. However, she made up her mind to talk to him the next morning as he came to his lessons.

It was a bright autumnal morning as Pierrot was leaving Thérèse's cottage after his breakfast in order to go to his beloved instructress. Although the trees were already beginning to lose their foliage, the old walnut-trees about the park—as well as the oaks, still covered with acorns—bore leaves enough to

make them pleasant to look at, and, through the net-work of the branches left bare here and there, he could see the house. On the hedges he had found some trailing convolvuli and wild clematis, and had made a small nosegay for the Duchesse, who invariably received his little offerings as if they had been most precious.

The little Auvergnat was particularly happy that morning, and sang to himself, far from expecting the accusation which had been brought against him.

As he entered the large court-yard, into which the back rooms of the castle looked, some of the servants were going to and fro, and the word "thief" was audibly pronounced. However, Pierrot paid no attention, and wended his way to the vestibule, as was his wont, and there waited the usual summons to the Duchesse's presence. His little bundle of books was ready, and he was looking over some of his reading, when Céleste

came to tell him that the Duchesse was waiting for him.

His bright eyes became still more so as he entered the room, and there was so much honesty and innocence pervading his countenance, that Madame de St. A. did not for a moment doubt that the child had never done the deed. However, she thought she would ask him whether he had seen the ring. After having inquired about Thérèse, she said,—

“Have you by chance seen a ring of mine yesterday, after I left you, my little Pierrot?”

“No, Madame la Duchesse; shall I go and look for it?” he replied, his countenance being as frank and open as ever.

“One of the maids went to look yesterday, and could not find it, and do you know, my little man, you are accused of having taken it.”

Pierrot opened his eyes wider than

usual, and stared at the Duchesse in utter astonishment.

“I!” he said, emphatically; “why, Madame la Duchesse, you would surely never believe that I should do such a wicked thing? Besides, what should I do with a ring?”

“I do not believe it, my little Pierrot. I can read in your face that you are as innocent as your little dormouse. However, I thought it best to ask you.”

“Ah! Madame la Duchesse,” exclaimed Pierrot, his eyes filling with tears, “as I came in this morning some of the servants were talking together, and I heard them saying ‘*thief*.’ I did not think they meant me. But the great God in heaven knows that I am innocent. Has He not said, *Thou shalt not steal?* and would I steal? Oh! Madame la Duchesse, believe me when I tell you that I never stole as much as a pin in your house, nor anywhere else.”

As he was finishing these words, the

Duc entered. Pierrot immediately told him of what he was accused, in a manner so straightforward, in one so young and unsophisticated, that Monsieur de St. A. felt as convinced as his wife was that there was some underhand work going on against the little Auvergnat, and he and the Duchesse made sure that the maid was herself the guilty party. She was immediately sent for. Cross-examined by the Duc, she maintained her innocence, but her guilty face and her denunciations against the poor little child made matters worse for her, and she was told to leave the house in a week's time. As soon as she was out of the room, she burst out in invectives against Pierrot, and her fellow-servants somewhat pitied her, as she was not disliked by them. Scarcely an hour had elapsed since the scene enacted in the Duchesse's boudoir, when the maid saw a pedlar coming through a small path leading from the back entrance to the





“WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME FOR IT?”—Page 61.

road. She rushed to him, and told him that her master and mistress had forbidden pedlars to come in, but she wished to get a few things in exchange for an old ring her godmother had given her.

“My godmother was a lady,” she added, “and that’s the reason she wore rings. What will you give me for it?” she continued, drawing it out of an inside pocket, without the pedlar seeing her, as he was busy unfolding his pack. “But let us go behind that shed, and be quick to show me your goods, I am in a hurry.”

The pedlar first looked at the ring; he had little or no idea of its value, still he thought it would not be a bad bargain, and he allowed the girl to choose two or three bright-looking handkerchiefs, and a piece of lace to trim a cap.

“Pray don’t tell any one you have been here,” she said, “it’s as much as my place is worth. I should be sent away

if they knew at the castle that I have had dealings with you," and she ran away as fast as she could.

The pedlar leisurely folded up his goods, slung his pack on his back, and went away.

When Thérèse was told that Pierrot had been accused of theft, the good-hearted peasant burst into tears. Pierrot was as much to her now as if he had been her own child; he had endeared himself to her more and more every day, and this seemed the cruellest thing to say of him. Pierrot had kept up wonderfully well all day, but when alone with Thérèse, when he knelt before her to say his prayers as usual, then his poor little broken heart could no longer restrain itself, and he sobbed till Thérèse also blended her tears with his. She kissed him over and over again, as she had never done before, and both prayed for the accuser, in order that God might make her repent of her evil deeds.

The still more marked kindness shown to Pierrot by the Duc and the Duchesse caused the servants to be far more unkind to the child whenever the occasion presented itself; but he bore it all patiently, and not even to his kind mother Thérèse—as he had taken the habit of calling her—did he complain.

A few weeks after this event, Thérèse was taken ill. Madame de St. A. came to nurse her, and would fain have had her at the castle, but unfortunately the Duc was obliged to go back to Paris, and the Duchesse, notwithstanding her distress at having to leave her foster-mother behind, knew that it was her duty to accompany her husband. Therefore, after having given her everything which she thought would make her comfortable, and urged upon Pierrot to be her kind nurse, and found a nice peasant woman, who had promised to stay night and day at the cottage,

Madame de St. A. bade farewell to Thérèse and Pierrot.

Great was the sorrow of those two to be thus separated from one whose kindness and gentleness caused her to be so much beloved. And they were not alone in regretting the Duchesse's departure ; for others also were recipients of her gifts and her kind words. Indeed, whenever she appeared at any of the farms or cottages, it was like a brilliant ray of sunshine shedding its warmth and glow on the poor and afflicted, as well as on the rich and happy.

CHAPTER IX.

PIERROT SELLS HIS CARVINGS.

DURING Thérèse's illness Pierrot seldom went out, except when he was obliged to go to the town in order to get what was wanted in the small household. He had much business on hand, for the Duchesse had told him to write to her in order to let her know how Thérèse was getting on, and he found it very difficult to express himself and to spell his words; but, anxious to show his benefactress that he had profited by her lessons, he puzzled his poor little brains, and was often almost ready to cry over his task. Then he had gone on with his carving, and, as he was getting more expert at it, he thought he might in time be able to sell some of it on market days; little

children would be glad to have his carvings, he thought; and so, bent on being useful and industrious, he spent some of the winter months in a most busy manner.

His care of Thérèse was very great. It was strange to see so young a child—especially in that class—so careful and tender, and, more wonderful still, that he should not have been more clumsy. But having been so much with the Duchesse had polished him marvellously well, for he was not one to let things pass unnoticed.

Poor Thérèse, although not old, was getting blind; yet she was perfectly resigned to the will of God, and never complained. She sat hour after hour by the fire spinning, so as not to be idle, and in the evening little Pierrot read some chapters of the Bible to her, and then, when he had done, they talked together over what had been read, and often would end the day by singing some

of the hymns or psalms Thérèse had taught him.

When February came, Pierrot began to be anxious to carve flowers in wood, and his first attempt was a snowdrop, the herald of spring. He would have been delighted had he been able to send a large bouquet of those white bell-shaped blossoms—which are scarcely distinguishable from the snow, except from their long green leaves—to the dear Duchesse, who loved flowers so much. When the golden-coloured crocuses and the bright celandine showed themselves, he was still more wishful that he might send them. However, it could not be, and he had to content himself by trying to imitate them in carving. His first attempts were not very good. However, as he had already several things ready, he made for himself a tray, put his wares on it, and one day when Thérèse had a companion to take care of her, he started in a very hopeful spirit for the old town, thinking all the

time how pleased his father and his mother would be if they could see him with his handiwork, for very often he thought of his kind parents, and of little Mariette, and would have given much had he been able to go and see them and give them the money he had saved.

When he found himself in the crowd of people who were thronging the market-place, he began to feel very shy, and soon retreated towards a less crowded spot. Under the old gateway—separating the old from the new town—there were two or three tiny shops, just large enough for one person to sit in with her goods. In one of them was a very old woman selling cakes and other eatables. When she saw little Pierrot she felt drawn to him, and she beckoned him.

“Who are you, my little fellow?” she said.

“I am a little Auvergnat,” returned Pierrot, “and I live with Thérèse, the

Duchesse's foster-mother. I carved these things, and I should like very much to sell them."

"Then sit down here, it will be warmer than wandering about. Many people come to buy cakes and other wares of mine, and you will have a chance to sell some of yours. There is a cake for you; eat it, my child, it is very good."

"Thank you much," said Pierrot, "you are very kind; would you like one of my little things in return?"

"If you don't sell them all," said the shopkeeper, "I'll take one with pleasure. It will look pretty on my mantle-shelf, and it will be a remembrance of you. But are you the little fellow who was accused of having stolen the Duchesse's ring?"

"Yes," replied poor little Pierrot, with a sigh; "but it is not true. I never took it."

"I believe you, my child; you have an honest face. I am sure you would

never steal. Besides, I'll tell you what I heard no longer ago than last market-day. A pedlar came here and said to me, 'I heard that the Duchesse de St. A. had lost a ring some months ago. I wonder whether it is the one that a maid from the castle exchanged for some of my goods? She told me it had belonged to her godmother, who was a lady, and had given it to her.' 'Her godmother, forsooth,' I said, 'did you believe her? Why, do you know, a poor little boy found by the Duchesse in Paris has been accused by that maid of having stolen the ring. What did you do with it?' 'I sold it to the jeweller in the Grand' Rue,'* returned the pedlar; 'but I shan't say anything about it, for fear of getting into trouble.' And he went away, so that I don't know any more about it. But as soon as my daughter comes, if you like, we'll go to the jeweller to try

* High Street.

to find out whether he still has the ring ; I dare say you'll know it."

"I don't know that I shall," replied Pierrot, "for the Duchesse sometimes wore many rings. Still, I might happen to recollect it."

People now came to buy cakes, and cut short the conversation. The kind-hearted old woman begged the customers to buy some of Pierrot's little toys. Two or three did ; and then, when Mother Françoise's daughter came, she was told about Pierrot, and she, too, was sorry for him, for she had children of her own, and could feel for the little Auvergnat. She had brought her mother's dinner—a large dish of hot soup.

"You must share this with me," said Françoise ; "it will warm you, and then we'll go to the jeweller's."

"You must not give me your dinner," said Pierrot ; "I am not very hungry now, after having eaten that nice cake, and I can wait for a little while longer ;

besides, I have a piece of bread and bacon in my pocket. Thérèse gave them to me before I came. But if you will take half of this, I'll take a little of your soup, for it smells very nice, and looks hot, too."

"Very well," answered Françoise, "exchange is no robbery, so you'll share my soup, and I'll have some of your bread and bacon."

Then the old woman and the child ate their dinner, whilst the daughter attended to the customers. When they had finished, Françoise put on her capote,* Pierrot took up his tray, and both crossed the market-place and were soon in the Grand' Rue. Before they had reached the jeweller's shop two little ladies, who were accompanied by their nurses, stopped to look at the wood carvings, and bought several. Pierrot was delighted, for now he had but few left.

* A long cloak with a hood.

Monsieur Benoit, who was the only jeweller and silversmith in the place, was seated in his shop waiting for customers. He was rather surprised on seeing old Françoise and Pierrot, but he knew the former, and asked her kindly what he could do for her.

“Nothing for me, thank you, Monsieur Benoit; but this little fellow has been accused, by a good-for-nothing girl at the Duchesse de St. A.’s, of having stolen a ring, and, last market-day, the very pedlar to whom she sold it told me that he bought one at the castle and sold it to you, so I came with the lad to ask you whether you would allow him to look at it and see whether he recognizes it as the Duchesse’s or not.”

“He does not look much like a thief,” said M. Benoit, who had been looking at the child’s innocent face. “To tell you the truth, I never buy anything from those pedlars, but when he told me about having had it from a servant at the castle,

notwithstanding her well-arranged falsehood I thought she might have stolen it, so bought it on that account." And he brought out the ring and showed it to Pierrot.

"Oh, yes, I know that ring well enough; the Duchesse always wore it. She will be so pleased to have it again, and she will be sure now that I did not steal it. Of course, she told me she never would believe I had taken it; still, she will be made sure of it," and he clapped his hands in great glee.

"How old are you?" asked Monsieur Benoit.

"I don't know," replied Pierrot. "But will you please write at once to the Duchesse, and tell her of her ring? She will be so glad."

"I will do so to-day, my boy. What are these?" he continued, pointing to the toys.

"I carved them to sell."

"I will call my children to look at

them ;” and soon three little girls came into the shop and bought the rest of the toys.

“I am so much obliged,” said Pierrot. “What can I do to show you how grateful I am ?” he said, turning to old Françoise. “I have no more toys to give you, but I’ll carve you one and bring it to you next week.”

“Dance and sing some of your songs,” said Monsieur Benoit, “it will amuse the children.”

Pierrot obeyed and began to dance, gesticulating and singing as little Auvergnats and Savoyards do, just in the same manner as the Pifferari, and the children laughed, and were so much amused that they asked Pierrot to come again soon. Of course the little Auvergnat promised to do so, and left the shop with Françoise in the greatest happiness.

“God has been very good to me,” he said to his kind old friend, as they were

wending their way back to the market-place. "He put it into your heart to befriend me, and now I am cleared from the accusation brought against me. And poor dear mother Thérèse, she will be so glad too."

"Well," answered Françoise, "it has been a happy day for me, too, my child. I always try my best to do a kindness to my fellow-creatures every day, and if I am only able to give a crust in my Saviour's name I feel that the day has not been quite lost."

Pierrot was anxious to return to his village to tell the news to Thérèse, and he took leave of his new friend, who wished him to have something more to eat before starting, but he would not accept anything more, and, after renewing his thanks to her, he was soon on his way home, running the greater part of the way, for he longed to relate his adventures.

Thérèse was immensely delighted on

hearing about the ring ; for although she knew full well that neither the Duc nor the Duchesse believed Pierrot to be guilty, still, to her, the feeling was very uncomfortable, and so it had been to the poor boy.

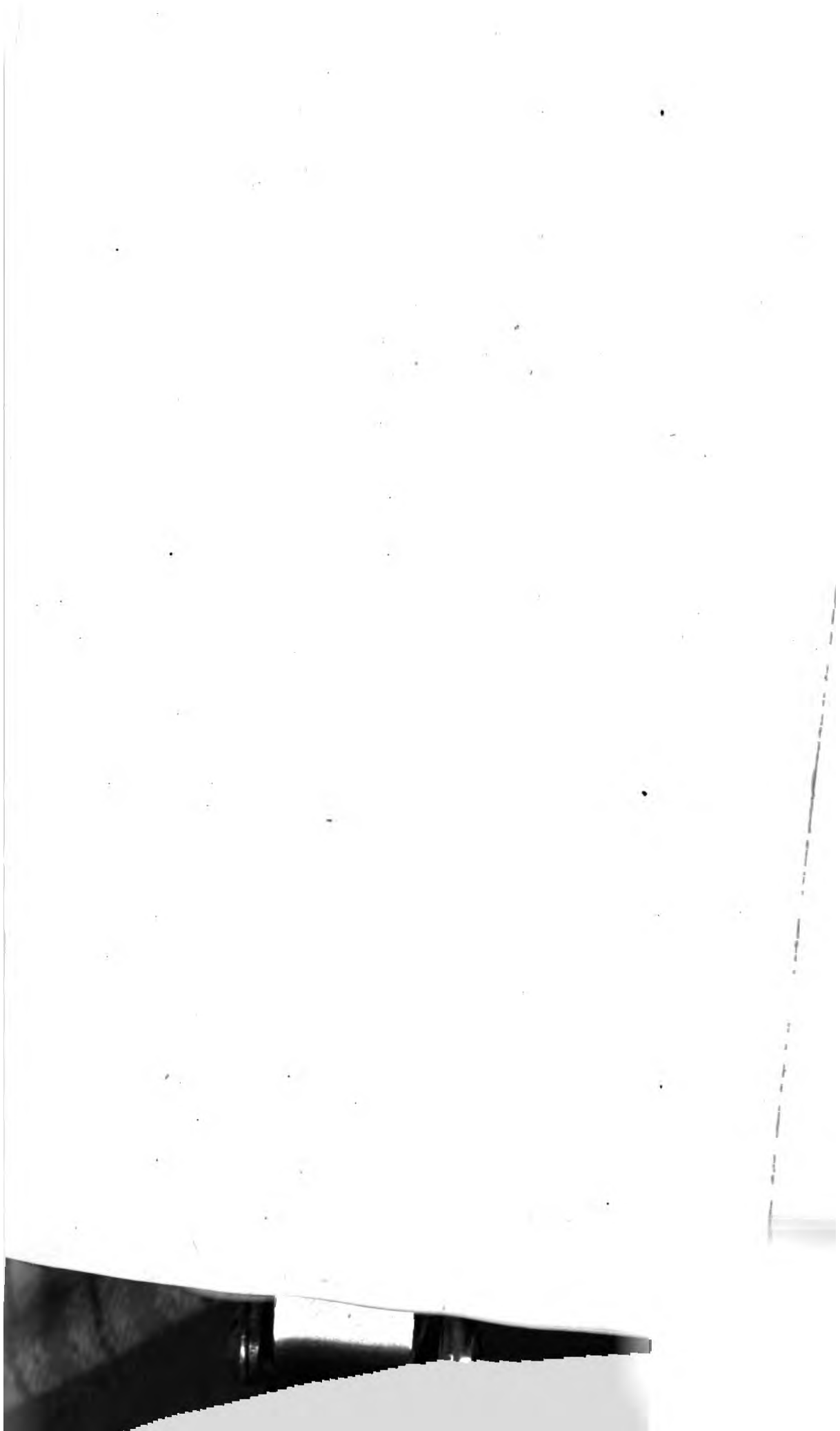
Before going to bed, both Thérèse and her little adopted son offered their thanks to Him who had been so gracious as to allow the child's innocence to be made manifest, and their rest that night was still more peaceful than usual.

CHAPTER X.

PIERROT'S PRESENT TO FRANÇOISE.

PIERROT gave himself up to his favourite employment more than ever after this, only he sadly wanted better tools and more choice wood. However, with what he had, he managed to carve a very funny little squirrel, eating a nut, and a flower, which would have puzzled a botanist to say what it resembled, but nevertheless it was pretty; it only wanted a sort of finishing touch, which poor little Pierrot could not yet give. He attempted a few other things, and then, when he had enough to make a show on his little tray, he started for the town. It happened to be a fair day, so that his chances were very good.

He went at once to old Françoise's





“OH, YOU DEAR LITTLE FELLOW, IT’S KIND OF YOU TO HAVE MADE ME SUCH PRETTY THINGS; THE BEST ON YOUR TRAY, I DECLARE.”—Page 79.

small shop, and found her very busy selling her wares, so he waited till she was at liberty, and then presented his carvings to her.

“Oh, you dear little fellow, it’s kind of you to have made me such pretty things; the best on your tray, I declare.”

“I took greater pains with them than with the others,” replied Pierrot. “You deserve them for your kindness, and I only wish I could have done something better. But wait till I am cleverer, and then I’ll make you something worth looking at.”

“These will be quite sufficient for me, little one. I like them much, and am very pleased to have them. But go and warm yourself, and we will have our dinner together as we did before. You had better go at once to Monsieur Benoit, and then come back to me. Don’t be later than one, or else our soup will be spoilt.”

“I’ll be sure to be back in time,” said

Pierrot, and he hurried to the Grand^e Rue, wishing, if possible, to get better customers than in the market-place.

There were people in the jeweller's shop, and Pierrot waited at the door until the customers were gone. Whilst standing there, a lady and her little boy passed. Both were attracted, the lady by Pierrot's beautiful black eyes and smiling face, and the little boy by the toys; they stopped and asked the price of a mouse and a rat.

"Please, lady, give me what you like," answered Pierrot, "I never know what to ask for these things."

"Who carved them?" inquired the lady.

"I did," returned Pierrot. "I know they are not well carved, but I want proper wood and a better knife, and perhaps I might improve."

"Who taught you?" asked the lady.

"No one, madame; I teach myself. I like to carve very much."

“Do you live here?”

“Near the Château de St. A. I live with the Duchesse’s foster-mother.”

“Oh! indeed,” ejaculated the lady. “Well, I will give you a franc for the mouse and the rat as my little boy likes them, and you seem a good boy, for I suppose you must be good or else Mère Thérèse would not keep you with her.” And with these words, she nodded kindly to Pierrot, the little boy did the same, and they soon disappeared. At last the shop was empty, and Pierrot entered.

“Ah, little Pierrot,” said Monsieur Benoit, who had just been making a most excellent bargain, and was in very good spirits, “I have news for you. The Duchesse has written to me and asked me to keep her ring safely for her until she returns, and she is going to write to you. Is not that kind and condescending, for a great lady like that to write to a little fellow like you?”

“She is kind to me, indeed,” replied Pierrot; “she has written once before. You know she taught me how to read and write.”

“Did she?” exclaimed Monsieur Benoit. “There are very few ladies who would do that. Well, you are a lucky fellow, Pierrot. But show me your toys. You have very few to-day.”

“I gave the best to Mère Françoise, and sold two just now. These are not nice. I’ll make better ones for the next time, and then perhaps you would like some for your little girls?”

“They are not at home to-day, Pierrot. But I am going to give you an order. I want you to carve a stag like this” (showing him one in silver), “and if you can imitate it well, I’ll give you one franc for it.”

Pierrot took a good survey of the stag, and said he would do his best.

“Would you not like to be a silver-smith?” asked Monsieur Benoit.

“I don’t know yet,” answered Pierrot. “You see, I’m but a very little fellow, and at present I only care to carve and draw.”

“Do you draw?” the jeweller said, inquiringly.

“Only on the walls,” replied Pierrot, “with a bit of charcoal, because I can get no paper nor pencils.”

“Well, to be sure, paper is dear, and one cannot afford to spoil it; but I’ll give you some old pieces of cardboard which will do for you to try on; also, a pencil, and when next you come you must let me see what you have done.”

“Everybody is very kind to me,” said little Pierrot. “I am so much obliged to you, and—” But he could not finish his sentence, for several people entered, and Pierrot went away. He stopped amongst the crowd in the market-place till the clock of the old town-hall struck a quarter to one. He had sold the rest of his toys for a few sous, and he hastened

to old Françoise's shop. There was a tolerably good blaze in the queer fireplace, which stood in a quiet corner, and Françoise and her guest, each with a dish of soup, began to eat very heartily.

Whilst discussing their soup, Françoise told Pierrot how in olden times Kings, Queens, Princes, and Princesses, followed by their suite, had passed through that old gateway, either going back to the castle or going to the chase, as all the new town had been nothing but fields leading to the Grand Forest, where the King went hunting. This made Pierrot wish that it were still the case.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STAG.

PIERROT was anxious to return home in order to begin his stag. However, he walked about for a little while; then, buying a cake for Mère Thérèse, he wended his way towards the castle. The road was not so solitary as usual; the peasants were either still going to the fair or going back to their villages, so that Pierrot chatted with some of them, telling them his history, which they thought very wonderful.

A great surprise awaited him on his arrival. Thérèse had received a letter from her foster-daughter, which enclosed one for Pierrot, and, as Thérèse could not read, she longed for the little fellow to come back. But, before his reading

the letters, the kind woman made him sit down on his stool under the large mantelshelf and drink some warm milk which had been awaiting him. Pierrot had some difficulty in obeying his adopted mother's commands, being so eager to know what his kind benefactress said. He scalded his throat dreadfully in trying to drink quickly, and then he opened the letter and read the one to Thérèse first, and then his own. It was full of good advice and expressions of kindly feelings; and, when Pierrot came to the part in which the Duchesse said that Madame Royale had asked after him, and also Madame Elizabeth and the little Dauphin, he clapped his hands, then threw himself into Thérèse's arms, almost crying with joy. After this little scene he related his day's adventures, and could not rest until he had begun his stag.

Poor blind Thérèse went on with her spinning, whilst Pierrot, by the light of

his candle, made of rosin, and giving the faintest possible light, began to prepare the wood for his great work.

Now and then some of the peasant women came in of an evening to spin, and the old men related stories, which made the time pass very pleasantly. On that evening no one had been, for they were all busy at home; having gone to the fair, many things had been left undone before leaving home. So Thérèse and Pierrot were by themselves, and the former told over again the Bible stories they so much delighted in.

Days passed before the stag was finished, as Pierrot had taken very great pains with it, and had also attempted to draw it on the cardboard. It was not at all a bad attempt, and he greatly hoped that Monsieur Benoit would approve of it. Several other little toys were also carved, and, as usual, Pierrot went to the market-place. He was very sorry to find that his kind old friend Françoise

was laid up. He asked where she lived, and thought that after he had sold his carvings he would go and sit with her, and do whatever he could for her.

Monsieur Benoit was extremely pleased with the wooden stag, and, instead of one franc, gave Pierrot two, for the imitation of the silver one was very good. He also commended the attempt Pierrot had made to draw the stag on the cardboard.

“You must persevere, my child,” said Monsieur Benoit; “you may some day become a very good draughtsman, and make your fortune.”

“Where are your little girls?” inquired Pierrot, after having assured the jeweller that he would always try to do his best.

“I am sorry you cannot see them again to-day; they are all ill with bad colds; but I will ask my wife to come and see your work.”

Madame Benoit came, and was equally pleased.

“Come into the kitchen, Pierrot,” she said, “and have something to eat. Little children are always hungry; besides, you have had a very long and cold walk.”

“Yes,” said the Auvergnat, “and my kind friend Françoise is ill, so that I can’t have my dinner with her. But, for the matter of that, I could buy bread. Thérèse always tells me that I must not be troublesome to people.”

“You are not at all troublesome,” replied Madame Benoit. “I like you, Pierrot; it is a pleasure to me to do you a kindness.”

Pierrot had a much better dinner given to him than he would have had with Françoise, and he would not eat all he had on his plate.

“Why do you not eat all?” asked Madame Benoit, who had returned to the kitchen.

“Because I should like, if you will allow me, to take this to poor old Fran-

çoise; I dare say she has nothing nice like this to eat."

"Very well, my child," said Madame Benoit; "take it away with you; she will be greatly pleased at your kind thought of her."

Pierrot, instead of waiting to sell his toys, ran as fast as his legs could carry him to Françoise's abode. It was a very poorly furnished room, but kept clean and tidy. Françoise was very surprised to see Pierrot, and much gratified at his having thought of her.

"Well, you are a kind little soul. Heaven reward you for it, my child," said the old woman.

Accustomed as he was to wait upon Thérèse, Pierrot was as handy as any little girl would have been, and, till Françoise's daughter returned, he remained with the old woman, amusing her with his talk, and brightening her lonely room with his presence.

It was late that day when he returned

to the village, and Thérèse was fretting, fancying something had happened to him ; but when she heard the reason why he had been so long, she told him he had done right. The poor old woman had shared her scanty meals with him, and he had shown her his gratitude in sharing his dainty one with her, and waiting upon her when on her bed of sickness. Surely he must feel very happy to have been useful and kind.

“I am,” he replied. Then a sudden thought struck him, and he burst into tears, saying, “Oh, if I could but see my dear father and mother!”

CHAPTER XII.

THE DUC AND DUCHESSE RETURN HOME.

IT was a joyful day for Thérèse and Pierrot when the Duchesse de St. A. came back from Paris with her husband.

Her first visit was to her foster-mother, who had been prevented from going to the castle to welcome her beloved foster-daughter by reason of illness. The Duchesse was as charming as ever, and stayed the greater part of the day with Thérèse, waiting upon her with much tenderness.

Pierrot, too, had his share of the Duchesse's kindness, and she was very much pleased with the wood carvings which he had done for her.

“The Duc de St. A. has brought you some good knives for your carving, Pierrot; to-morrow you must come and fetch them.”

“He has been such a comfort to me,” said Thérèse; “I don’t know what I should have done without him, and when he has to go away from me it will be a great sorrow to me.”

The next day Pierrot went to the château to fetch his presents, and to show his drawings.

“I can assure you, Pierrot,” said the Duc, laughing, “that I could not do as much. I am not at all clever with my fingers; I can only wield the sword for the defence of my King and my country. Do you know that his Majesty kindly allowed me to go into his workshop several times—”

“His workshop!” exclaimed Pierrot, interrupting the Duc in the midst of his sentence.

“Pierrot, my boy, you should never

interrupt people when they are talking," said the Duc, kindly, "but I dare say you were never told."

"Oh, yes," replied Pierrot, blushing, "Madame la Duchesse has often told me, but I was so astonished to hear about the King's workshop that I could not help it, Monsieur le Duc."

"Well, I was going to say that his Majesty showed me some keys he had made, and beautiful they were; he is a most clever locksmith."

"A King making keys!" ejaculated Pierrot, "and his hands must be so black."

"It does not improve them, certainly, and yet it seemed as if it did not do them much harm. But now, Pierrot, you must think what you would like to be. It will not make you rich to carve toys. I think there is a good deal in you, and though you are too young yet to be sent as an apprentice, you must not waste your time. If you really turn out a good

draughtsman, that would be very nice ; otherwise, we must see about something else."

"Please, Monsieur le Duc, may I stay a few years longer with Thérèse, and garden with Madame la Duchesse, and in the evenings I can carve or draw?"

"We shall see what Madame la Duchesse says, Pierrot. I have no doubt she and Thérèse will not object to having you some years longer, and for my part, if you continue to behave as you have hitherto, I shall have no objection to your remaining with us as long as it is likely to be for your good."

"Oh, thank you so very, very much, Monsieur le Duc," ejaculated Pierrot, his eyes moistened with tears. "I only wish now I could see my father and mother, and my dear little Mariette."

"When you are older, and you have

saved money, you must go back to Auvergne and try to find them. How glad and astonished they will be when, instead of seeing a little chimney sweep, they behold a clean-looking young boy, having made money by his carvings, and also by waiting upon the Duchesse. They will be very proud, won't they, Pierrot?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Duc; but they must not be proud, because it is wrong, isn't it?"

"So it is, Pierrot," returned the Duc, smiling at the unintentional rebuke of the little fellow. "I should have said happy. Now I must give you the knives I brought for you."

Pierrot was in ecstasies. He examined them with the eye of a connoisseur, and then said, "They are very good, Monsieur le Duc, the points are beautiful, and now I think I shall be able to improve very much, all owing to your great kindness. Indeed, I am a lucky little fellow. Ah!

if only my poor tiny mouse was alive, how she would enjoy being here, too. I have another, though, but an old friend is better than a new one."

CHAPTER XIII.

PIERROT LOSES SOME OF HIS FRIENDS.

WE must now pass briefly over some of the years spent by Pierrot with his kind friends. Old Françoise was dead; so also was Thérèse, and this had been a great blow to both the Duchesse and Pierrot. Thérèse, when ill, had been taken to the château in order that Madame de St. A. should herself be able to be constantly with her, and at night Pierrot watched his adopted mother with the greatest affection. In fact, except when the Duchesse was present, the young Auvergnat would not leave her.

Thérèse's possessions were few; they only consisted of her cottage and garden, and a small sum of money. These, however, she left to Pierrot, who thought

himself immensely rich, and would have given anything to have had his parents with him.

For the last two years he had acted as a servant in the household of the Duc, as he could not make up his mind to leave them. He was now getting on for about fourteen—his age was not exactly known—and, as he was showing more and more aptitude and cleverness at his carving, the Duc proposed that he should go as an apprentice to Monsieur Benoit, the latter having constantly said he would like to have him, as he thought that it would be a good thing for the lad to become a chaser—"a second Benvenuto Cellini," he used to say, laughing.

So Pierrot left the château with great regret, but, whenever the Duc and Duchesse were at home, he often paid visits to his kind friends, and always met with a hearty welcome. When they were in Paris he felt very dull, notwithstanding the kindness of the Benoit family, with

whom he was in great favour. He liked his new friends much ; but he could not forget his first protectors. He pleased his master in every way, for he worked very hard and with great zeal. His hours of leisure, which were few and only in the evening, he employed in drawing, often preparing designs for chasing.

But there was a cloud on the horizon. Rumours of misfortunes for France were heard more than once in Monsieur Benoit's shop, and Pierrot listened to all he heard with a very sad heart. He understood, from what he heard, that the royal family, the aristocracy, and all those attached to them were in danger ; and at meal times there was little else spoken of amongst the Benoits.

Day after day various rumours became facts, and at last they heard, with the greatest horror, that the royal family were shut up in the Temple.

The Duchesse de St. A. had been

brought back from Paris by her husband, thinking that she would be in greater safety at the château. He had caused Pierrot to leave Monsieur Benoit for a time, in order that the boy—of whose devotedness to his wife he was well assured—should be near her, to guard her if danger arose.

The boy was certainly very young, but the Duc could not help fancying that he could rely upon him better than on any of his servants, and he was not mistaken, for Pierrot watched everything that went on, and listened to what was said, in the most attentive manner, although pretending not to do so.

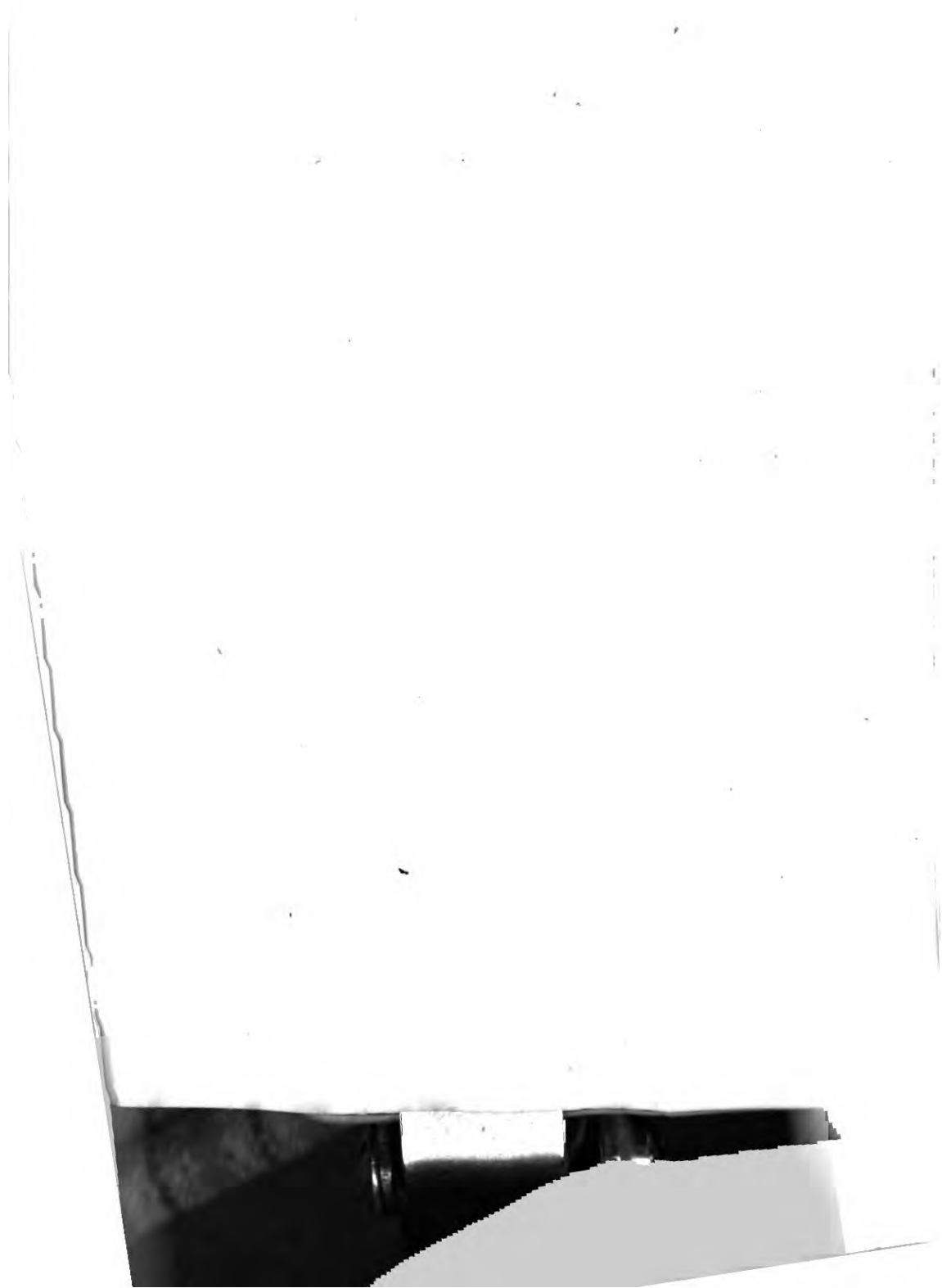
Things became worse and worse. The news from Paris was at times terrible to hear, and Pierrot entreated the Duchesse to fly from the château in disguise, but she would not, imagining that her husband might perhaps be able to return to her, or let her know what she must do. Thus day after day she waited in the

deepest anxiety, till, alas! a messenger arrived in the town one day, bringing the news that the good King Louis XVI. had been guillotined, and also a list of names of members of the aristocracy who had suffered the same death. The name of the Duc de St. A. was amongst these. Pierrot heard the servants talking about it, and he carried the terrible piece of intelligence to his beloved mistress.

The Duchesse remained for a while like a statue of despair, and Pierrot waited in silent grief until she should speak. Time flew rapidly away, and she still uttered not a word. At last Pierrot made bold to speak.

“Madame la Duchesse, what will you do now? I heard the servants say the Republicans are coming. Already the château of the Marquis de *** has been pillaged and half burnt. It is not many miles from here, you know.”

“What can I do but await my fate?”





“IT WAS TOO LATE. THE DOOR OF THE APARTMENT WAS BURST OPEN, AND A DOZEN MEN RUSHED IN.”—Page 103.

she resignedly said, her beautiful face bathed in tears.

“Oh! no, Madame la Duchesse, you must not stay here. Let us go away this very night ; I will protect you.”

“My poor child,” replied Madame de St. A., a sad smile piercing through the cloud of distress which overcast her brow, “I know you would do your best to protect me, but you are too young, and you— Hark! what is that noise?”

“Fly, madame, fly!” exclaimed the boy; “it is your enemies, they will carry you away.”

Pierrot, forgetting now the rank of his benefactress, took hold of her hand, hoping to persuade her to leave the room, and get away through the park. But it was too late. The door of the apartment was burst open, and a dozen men, with red caps on their heads, rushed in.

“Citoyenne,”* said the chief amongst

* Citizen woman. An appellation the Republicans gave to every lady.

them, "we suppose you are aware of your husband's fate, and the same is awaiting you also unless you prefer becoming a Republican. Cry, 'Long live the Republic, one and indivisible!' and your life shall be spared."

"Never!" she exclaimed, with a firm voice. "I am ready to follow you."

The Duchess de St. A. turned round to see what had become of Pierrot, but she could not see him, and, fancying that he had been terrified at the sight of those monsters, she advanced towards the door, then stopped and asked them whether they would allow her to get some covering for her head.

"A nice excuse," they said, roaring with laughter, "and then you would try to escape, my pretty bird. No, no, come as you are."

The Duchesse disdained to expostulate with them, and followed her captors. They made her walk for some time, and then they all got into an immense cart,

and drove away, singing Republican songs. Their rudeness to the unfortunate Duchesse was odious, but she bore her misery with calm dignity, remembering that our Saviour had suffered far worse indignities for the sake of poor sinners, and she silently prayed for her tormentors.

She was conducted to the town prison, which was completely full. Night and day the unhappy prisoners had to stand, as there was no accommodation for them, and no room to lie down to sleep. Amidst this crowd of Royalists, many were known to the Duchesse, and it was a sort of comfort to be able to speak to friends. Three days passed in this wretched state; the prisoners being all but starved, and, indeed, the little food they got was so disgusting that they were scarcely able to touch it.

On the fourth day of her imprisonment, one of the gaolers entered the room—an immense place, which had once been a

banqueting hall, for the prison was the old castle which in former days had been used by Kings—and read aloud the names of those who were to go at once to Paris. The Duchesse was of the number.

CHAPTER XIV.

PIERROT ENDEAVOURS TO SAVE THE DUCHESS DE ST. A.

THE little Auvergnat too well knew that resistance was impossible; still, he thought he would do his best to save the Duchesse. For several days he had prepared everything for flight, and, when he saw that his kind friend was taken prisoner, he made up his mind to try and follow her, and, perhaps, manage to bribe some of the gaolers by giving them his little savings.

He was ready to cry when he heard the coarse shouts of the Republicans while carrying the good Duchesse away, but he knew this could not help him, and, instead of giving way to his feelings, he knelt down and prayed to God

that he might be able to save his best earthly friend from her approaching fate.

Then, taking all his money, he was just about to leave the château, when he thought that he might possibly find money in the Duchesse's bureau, and, as he had really very little of his own, it would be a great help. He softly went to the room, opened the door very cautiously, and entered, without perceiving that some one was there. Notwithstanding the noiseless manner with which he had come, Céleste, the Duchesse's maid, turned sharply round and saw him.

"Oh! I am glad it is you, Pierrot," she said, in a whisper. "Come here. I know you are entirely devoted to our good mistress, and you will help me; but," she said, interrupting herself, "what were you coming here for?"

"To try to find some money," he replied. "I have but very little of my own, and, as I want to bribe the gaolers,

I thought I had better take what may be in the drawers."

"Poor Pierrot!" sighed Céleste, "you are a great deal too young to do much good, I am afraid. Still, do your best, my boy; and now let us see about what you want. We must be quick, for I want to hide the Duchesse's jewels. You must help me to bury them in some safe place."

"But," said Pierrot, "I thought you were talking against the Duchesse with the other servants."

"No, I did not say anything, my child; I was perfectly silent. But we must make haste, for if we are found out we may perhaps go to prison, too."

The casket containing Madame de St. A.'s jewels was soon brought out from its usual place.

"Now," Céleste said to Pierrot, "take this and go as far as the pond; I'll follow you. I must get a spade, and we will bury the box. Go down by the tower

staircase, otherwise you might be found out."

Pierrot did as he was bid, and ran as fast as he could to the place indicated by the maid. She was not long after Pierrot, and at the foot of a willow they made a large hole, burying the treasure, and covering its hiding-place with turf, being careful to strew over it as much rubbish as they could.

"What are you going to do now?" said Céleste.

"I am going to walk to the town and see whether Monsieur Benoit can keep me for a day or two. I'll buy a bonnet rouge,* and look as Republican as I am able, in order to mix with the Reds and hear what they say. If I cannot bribe the gaolers, I'll follow the Duchesse to Paris, and there, perhaps, I shall have more chance. And you, Céleste, what are you going to do?"

* Red cap—the emblem of the Republicans.

“Stay here as long as I can, to watch the others.”

“Well, then, good-bye,” said Pierrot ; “perhaps we may never meet again, so give me a kiss, Céleste. I hope nothing bad will happen to you.”

“Adieu,” said the maid, kissing the boy. “God bless and preserve you, my child, and help you to save our excellent mistress. And, mind, if you both go to foreign parts, try to let me know. I’ll come to wait upon her in whatever part of the world she dwells.”

Pierrot promised it, and he was soon out of sight, the waiting-woman hurrying back to the château.

The young Auvergnat flew rather than walked. It was very late when he arrived in the town, which was dark and gloomy. He went first to the Benoits’, but no one came to answer his summons. After waiting a while, he turned away with a heavy heart, and scarcely knew what to do ; but at last he made up his

mind to go as far as the prison. Arrived there, he found the gloom and darkness still more oppressive to his heart than it had been at the Benois' door. All was silent, and for a while the Republicans were at rest. He sat down on a stone. It reminded him of the day he had been found by the Duchesse. It was cold, but there was no snow on the ground, and soon fatigue and sorrow lulled him to sleep.

Towards five o'clock, a riotous noise awoke him; he started to his feet and heard vociferous shouts. He thought it best to hide himself until he could appear as if he himself belonged to the men whom he so thoroughly despised, but in order to get to the Duchesse this was absolutely necessary, so he returned to the lower part of the town and went to Françoise's daughter. She was getting ready to go to her shop, and was much surprised on seeing Pierrot at that early hour.

“The Duchesse has been arrested,” he said to the woman, whose sympathies happened to be for the nobility.

“The dear lady, has she?” answered Manette, “and you want, maybe, to try to see her?”

“I do, Manette,” replied Pierrot. “I spent the night on a stone at the prison gate, but I have been thinking that, unless I dress up like a Red, I’ll have no chance.”

“That you won’t, my boy; can I help you?”

“Could you buy me what I want? I have money enough for the purpose.”

“Then stay here. It is early yet, and I need not go to the shop for an hour or so. But you have had no breakfast, Pierrot; have a crust of bread, or will you have the rest of my cabbage soup?”

“I’ll do with the bread, thank you, Manette, and I’ll pay you for it.”

“Nonsense, child ; it would be hard, indeed, if I could not give you a bit of something to eat, and especially when you are in so great a trouble. God will return it to me, my boy ; don't you trouble about it. Warm yourself till I come back, for you look perished.” And she went away.

Time appeared very long to Pierrot, though he was thinking of all sorts of plans, but all seemingly impossible. At last Manette returned.

“I have had much trouble in getting anything to fit you. However, I think these will do. They are not very old, either ; and the cap is quite new.”

“Oh, that I should have to put these on !” exclaimed Pierrot, with a sigh. “It seems as if I were renouncing my King and my sweet kind mistress.”

“Poor boy,” replied the woman, sorrowfully. “Mind,” she continued, “that you can come here whenever you like.”

“Thank you, Manette; you are as kind to me as your mother was.”

By this time he was travestied into a Red, and he hastened to go back to the prison. The town was now all alive with the Republicans, singing revolutionary songs, and taking people to the already crammed gaol.

Pierrot mingled with the crowd, pretending also to sing, and soon he and his hateful companions had arrived.

The prisoners were consigned to the gaoler, and Pierrot managed to enter too. It happened that the gaoler's wife was a humane woman, and it made her heart bleed to see the atrocities that went on. When she saw Pierrot, it struck her that she had seen him selling his toys in the market-place some years before, and, although he was much taller now, she had not forgotten his face.

“Come here,” she whispered to him,

as he stood on the step of the lodge; “you belong to the Duchesse’s household, and I dare say you wish to see her? Don’t be afraid of telling me; I am for the aristocrats, and I only wish I could save them all. The Benois are also here; for not only do the nobles suffer, but those who are for them, too. About twenty of the prisoners are going to Paris. They will start soon, and, whilst my husband is busy with them, I’ll try to manage your seeing your mistress. Hide here in this corner until I call you.”

Pierrot did as he was bid. He was not one to doubt people’s words, because he did not like to deceive others, and, moreover, he fancied the woman’s face was really kind and full of pity.

He remained in his hiding-place for nearly three hours. Then the gaoler’s wife came to him and said,

“Go to the door you see at the end of this passage; open it, and you will see

your friend. If you happen to meet any of the under-gaolers, say that I sent you to count the remaining prisoners, on account of their dinner."

Pierrot obeyed. None of the gaolers were about, so he entered the vast hall where the unfortunate people were. He counted them, and then made his way towards the Duchesse. She was standing against the wall, her hands clasped together, and her eyes bent to the ground. She looked dreadfully pale and ill.

Not far from her the Benoits sat on the ground, but their children were not there.

Pierrot addressed Madame de St. A. She was evidently startled on seeing the boy with a bonnet rouge on his head.

"I was obliged to disguise myself in order to be able to come here. Oh, Madame la Duchesse, can you not try to escape?"

“My poor Pierrot, it is impossible. Besides, I have no wish to live now that my husband is no more ; I long to rejoin him.”

“Then I’ll do my best to stay here as long as you do, and to follow you wherever they take you, and—”

But some of the turnkeys were coming, and the Duchesse made a sign to the boy to go away. Luckily, the men were not in a state to mind anything except singing their hideous songs. Pierrot reluctantly left the Duchesse, and, passing near the Benoits, he said,

“Where are your children ?”

“Alas ! we do not know,” replied Monsieur Benoit. “If ever you see them, Pierrot, give them our best love, and tell them that our dying words shall be a prayer to their heavenly Father to protect them and lead them in the paths of virtue and peace.”

The boy retired immediately, fearing the men might perchance drive him

away. He returned to the lodge and delivered his message.

“I think you had better go away now, my poor boy,” said the gaoler’s wife. “I was sorely afraid for you just now. But if you like to come back this evening, you may have another chance to see the Duchesse.”

The young Auvergnat knew that he could be of no use to his friends inside the prison walls. Therefore, he followed the advice given to him, and went back to Manette. He told her what he had done.

“Well, now, Pierrot, sit here until I come back, and sell my wares if any customers come. I’ll fetch our dinner.”

Fortunately, no one who knew Pierrot came to the shop, for he had a very great dread of being recognized. After his dinner, he left the market-place in order to seek the little Benoits; but his search was fruitless, and he went to Manette’s house very sorrowful indeed.

Towards evening he returned to the prison, but this time could not get admittance; so, as he had done the night before, he remained outside the walls and did not sleep at all, but kept awake all night, that he might seize the first opportunity to re-enter the gaol.

But vain were his efforts; all chance was now gone. Nevertheless, he remained at his post, famished, perished with cold, and broken-hearted.

In the afternoon a waggon came out, and amidst its occupants he saw the Duchesse. Leaning against the wall, and trying to escape the eyes of the dreadful gaolers, Pierrot remained motionless, whilst the shouts of joy of the persecutors fell like a knell on his ears. But he had one shadow of consolation, for he saw that the Duchesse had seen him, and, from her sad smile, he knew that she had recognized him. He waited until the cart was some way off; then he left his place and began to mix with the

crowd now assembling to glut over the misfortunes of the captives.

“Of course they are taking those aristocrats to Paris?” he said to his neighbour, endeavouring to steady his voice.

“To be sure they are, and it won’t be long before they go to the scaffold; ain’t you glad?”

Pierrot answered with an unearthly laugh, which the Republicans took as an assenting answer.

The young Auvergnat soon left the crowd, and ran to Manette’s.

“I’m off to Paris,” he said to his friend. “They are taking her there to be guillotined, but I may still have a chance of saving her. Oh, Manette, it is too fearful,” and he burst into tears.

“Take some food before you go, then, my Pierrot; I suppose you are starved?”

“Very nearly,” he answered, “and, were it not that I must keep up my strength, I could not swallow a mouthful,

but I'll eat as much as I can now, and then I'll go."

Manette did not prevent his going, she admired the boy for his love and gratitude to his mistress; and so they parted, Manette promising she would pray for the safety of his best friend, and for his own also.

The journey was a long one, and a very trying one, for he was obliged either to stay a long way behind the cart, or, when it stopped, to get on first, so that he might not be suspected. Cold and hunger were the order of the journey for poor Pierrot; still he suffered not half as much as the delicate, half-clad creatures who sat in the miserable waggon, exposed to all the inclemency of the season. But he could run to warm himself, and now and then get a sight of a fire at some of the farmhouses or inns he passed on his way. After several days and nights of intense suffering, the unhappy prisoners arrived

at the Conciergerie,* where they were to be incarcerated. Dreadful as it was, still it gave a shelter to the unfortunate aristocrats, some of whom prayed hourly for death.

* One of the prisons in Paris.

CHAPTER XV.

AN UNSPOKEN FAREWELL.

Now and then the Duchesse de St. A. had had a glimpse of Pierrot, and she felt grateful in her heart for his behaviour. It was a consolation to her to see those bright black eyes (which now, however, had a very mournful expression) following her wherever she was taken.

Pierrot stationed himself near the Conciergerie, and tried to get acquainted with some of the gaolers. He was successful with one of them, a young man belonging to a much higher class than his companions. He, too, was bent on attempting to rescue some of the unfortunate prisoners, or, at any rate, on trying to be the means of alleviating

their wretchedness. Pierrot mentioned the Duchesse's name to him, and he conveyed to her the messages which were given him by the young Auvergnat, and even carried to her a few dainties Pierrot had bought for his loved mistress.

His great aim was to get admission to the prison, but this he could not manage, and all his schemes for Madame de St. A.'s escape were failures, and too soon the fatal day came when the faithful Pierrot saw the cart conveying its victims to their doom. The Duchesse was there, pale, but beautiful as ever, and looking perfectly resigned to her fate.

She saw Pierrot, and kissed her hand to him, trying in the meantime to make signs to him to stay behind and not follow the sad cortége. But he could not obey her; he followed the crowd, and then the fearful spectacle was too much for him, he fell senseless, and was

all but crushed under the feet of the lookers on.

Amongst those inhuman people, there was one who seemed to possess a heart. This was a young man who was close to Pierrot when he fell and was in such danger of being trampled on by the terrible mob. He raised Pierrot from the ground and took him to his lodgings, keeping him until he was able to move about.

The young Auvergnat told his story, and his host, whose name was Henri Durand, was so struck with the simple religious feelings of his guest that not many days passed before he had become quite ashamed of his own evil ways and determined to do better.

As soon as Pierrot was able to walk, he and his new friend went to the Conciergerie, as the Auvergnat was in hopes his beloved mistress had left a message for him with the kind young gaoler.

Many hours passed before they could obtain a sight of him, but at last their patience was rewarded, and they saw him coming out. He knew Pierrot at once, and, indeed, he had been in and out of the prison in hopes of meeting him.

However, by his eyes he showed that it was not prudent the three should be seen talking together there, so that Pierrot and Henri followed him till he entered a narrow desolate street, which looked almost uninhabited. At one of the houses he stopped and then made a sign to Pierrot to come. The trio entered, and the young gaoler immediately said :—

“The Duchesse gave me these two rings for you, and a lock of her hair; here they are,” he said, drawing them out of his pocket; “one is her wedding ring, for she knew that it would be taken away from her, and therefore she desires you to keep it as a sacred trust; the

other you may do what you like with. The message she left for you was this : ' Tell Pierrot never to forsake his God, nor the path of virtue, and thank him for me for the gratitude he has shown to me by running so many dangers for my sake ; in my last prayer on earth I shall not forget him.' "

Pierrot could not restrain his tears on hearing these words, and also on beholding the tokens of friendship the good Duchesse had left him. But the young gaoler, unfortunately, had no time to stay away long, so that Pierrot was unable to hear more about his mistress.

He and his friend returned to their lodgings, avoiding as much as possible the streets which lead to the spot where the guillotine was erected.

Pierrot, on his arrival at home, was again taken ill, and Henri devoted himself to his guest, for whom he conceived a very strong affection. He

nursed him as a mother would have done, and spared nothing which he thought would be conducive to his comfort and to his restoration to health.

CHAPTER XVI.

A CHANGE FOR PIERROT AND HENRI.

BOTH friends had made up their minds to enter the Royalist army of La Vendée, and soon left Paris for the purpose.

But it was not to be so yet, for just when they were beginning to rejoice at having nearly arrived in La Vendée, they were seized by the Republican army, and obliged to follow in its wake. It was a very sore disappointment for the young fellows, and especially for Pierrot, who was much more a Royalist at heart than his companion. Under any other circumstances Pierrot would have been much too young to enter the army; but his being very tall for his age caused the

Republicans to look upon him as being fit for a soldier.

In the first encounter they had with the Royalists Pierrot was wounded, which was not very astonishing for such a young recruit, but it was not cowardice which was the cause of it.

On the contrary, he would have fought like a lion had he been fighting against the Republicans, but, finding himself face to face with a young nobleman he had seen more than once at his noble patron's, he allowed himself to be vanquished, and, when he fell, he said,

“Monsieur de L., do not despise me ; I am Pierrot, and I was going to join you and yours when I was taken, with a friend of mine, by the Republicans.”

“Pierrot!” exclaimed the young nobleman ; “my good fellow, try to go to the next village, and stay there until you are well. Mention my name and that of our

dear departed Duchesse. I know then they will take care of you, and afterwards you may have a chance to join us. Farewell, I can stop no longer; be of good cheer," and, with many others, Pierrot was left on the battle-field.

Some of the kind-hearted peasants came to render assistance to the wounded, and Pierrot, taking the opportunity of mentioning Monsieur de L.'s name, as well as that of the Duchesse, was immediately taken into a farm-house, and treated as if he had been one of the nobles.

It is impossible to follow Pierrot in all his adventures, as it would make the tale too long; but it will be necessary to say that, after he had completely recovered, he was able to join the Royalists, when he had the good fortune again to meet Monsieur de L., and for many a day they fought side by side.

At last Monsieur de L. was killed in an

engagement, whilst Pierrot, who had strenuously endeavoured to save him, was made prisoner, and from that time had to remain amongst the Republicans.

If Pierrot was unhappy at being thus forced to fight with those whose opinions he abhorred, he, however, found a great happiness in being able to make God known amongst many who knew Him not, and, young as he was, he felt that if he could make some of these men love God and see the error of their ways, he could no longer complain of his fate.

Especially when he joined the army "d'Italie," under the command of Buona- parte, and found himself in the same regiment as Henri Durand, he felt it right no longer to repine, and determined submissively to accept his fate.

He fought in all the Italian campaigns as a brave soldier should. Wounded several times, he received from the Em-

peror's own hand the Cross of the Legion of Honour, which in those days had not become so common as it is in ours, and, although he would have preferred serving under a legitimate King, he nevertheless did his duty to his utmost.

But at the Restoration, Pierrot had the honour of being spoken to by Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, whom we met before under the title of Madame Royale. Her Royal Highness was passing the troops in review. Pierrot—then Colonel Oudoul, of the Lancers—was complimented on the appearance of his regiment. Pierrot could not refrain from adding these words to his thanks :

“And may I crave permission to tell your Royal Highness that I am the little Auvergnat Pierrot of whom my sweet and kind benefactress, Madame la Duchesse de St. A., spoke at the royal palace of the Tuileries?”

“Indeed!” ejaculated the Royal Duchesse, with a deep-drawn sigh; “now I remember; you had a dormouse,” and the Princess, with a sad expression on her already melancholy face, bowed and passed on.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OLD HOME.

DURING one of the intervals of peace, the young soldier visited his old home. He had some trouble in finding his parents' whereabouts, and had well-nigh walked all through the province of Auvergne before he could get any clue as to where they lived. His joy, however, was very great when he heard that they were still living. He wished to hear them speak of him before he made himself known ; therefore, he presented himself at their cottage door as a weary traveller, asking hospitality for the night. His old father and mother were sitting alone at their dinner, when Pierrot

(then Captain Pierre Oudoul) darkened the threshold.

The old man, who sat opposite the door, seeing a shadow hiding the brilliant sun which hitherto had rejoiced him, suddenly raised his eyes, and seeing a soldier, got up and went to welcome him.

“I am tired,” said the captain; “may I rest under your roof a little while?”

“You are most welcome to do so,” returned the mountaineer. “Femme,”* he said to the old partner of his pilgrimage upon earth, “a plate and a knife for our unexpected guest.”

“Alas! little have we to offer him,” she replied; “still, what there is, is at his service.”

The officer sat down, and, as he was really very tired and hungry, he did not disdain the hard black bread, the chest-

* Wife.

nut porridge, and the milk which stood on the board. After having satisfied his hunger, he conversed with his hosts, asking them, first, how many children they had.

“We have had four,” replied la mère Oudoul; “but our favourite little Pierrot was either stolen or lost in the mountains, and probably devoured by the bears” (and tears began to fill her eyes). “He was a sweet child,” she continued, “and I never forget him. We had another boy, who is married, and lives not far from here, and so are his two sisters, Mariette and Jeanne; they, too, dwell in these parts.”

“Are they comfortably off?” inquired the captain.

“Well, monsieur le capitaine, the girls have each a cow, and my son has two. Oh, yes, Antoine is rich.”

“And you yourselves, my good friends, are you comfortable, too?”

“We have just enough to keep us;

the children send us milk every day, and we have a goat, with the milk of which we make cheese, and with our little patch of ground yielding barley and oats, and a few potatoes, we keep hunger out of our door ; besides, our chestnut-trees give us always a very good crop, therefore we are thankful to the Almighty, and perfectly contented. But how much I should like to know what became of my poor little Pierrot."

"Ah! yes," sighed the old man, "I should die happier if I knew what befell him."

"Perhaps I may give you tidings of him," returned the officer.

"Oh, monsieur, could it be possible?" exclaimed at once both peasants.

"Yes, my friends, I can. He is now a captain in the Lancers. He has been decorated by the Emperor's own hand, and is happy, and in a fair way to become a colonel some of these days."

“But why does he not come and see us? Perhaps he is too proud, and does not wish to know his poor humble parents?”

“You do him great injustice, I can assure you. He has tried his best to find you, and now—”

“You are our Pierrot!” ejaculated the mother in a voice choked with emotion; “our lost beloved child!” and she got up whilst the officer opened his arms to receive her.

Long did the fond old mother weep on the breast of her first-born, and, when released, he embraced the old man, who was also weeping with joy.

“I wish my brother and my sisters were here,” said the captain.

Scarcely had he finished these words, when two children entered.

“These are Jeanne’s children,” said the old mother.

“Come and kiss me, little ones,” said Pierre Oudoul. “I am little Pierrot,



"COME AND KISS ME, LITTLE ONES, I AM LITTLE PIERROT."
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who was lost a great many years ago; run and tell your mother, your aunt, and your uncle to come at once; I wish to have you all here together."

It was not long before the three families had arrived, quite crowding the little cottage. They all looked very shy in having so grand a relative; except Mariette, however, who kissed him over and over again.

For a whole month the officer remained amongst his relations, to whom he told all his adventures, and who were never tired of hearing the story over and over again.

Captain Oudoul was not rich; he had saved a little out of his scanty pay, and that little he partly gave to his father and mother, the rest being divided among his brother and sisters, and their children.

His leave was drawing to an end, so that he had to leave his mountain home, wishing to go to St. A. to try and find

out what had become of the Benoit family, as well as his old friend Manette.

He duly promised to return whenever he could ; but it was the last time he beheld his father and mother, who died whilst he was far away in Russia.

He had but very few days free before rejoining his regiment, therefore he hastened to St. A. First he went to the old château, which still stood untouched. It had been bought by a rich Republican even before the unfortunate Duchesse had been taken to prison ; thus the venerable old pile had escaped destruction.

Captain Oudoul's heart beat fast as he entered the well-remembered park, and even tears glistened in his dark eyes on seeing the garden where he so often had helped his kind and charming benefactress.

Then he remembered he was trespassing, and he cut short through the

park to go to the cottage in which he had lived with old Thérèse. It was locked, and, as its owners were either in the fields or gone to town, he turned his steps back towards the town.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SURPRISE FOR M. BENOIT.

CAPTAIN OUDOUL walked rapidly to the town, and immediately went to the jeweller's shop. Monsieur Benoit was sitting at his usual place, and, notwithstanding the years which had passed over his head, there was no great change in his appearance. He got up on seeing the officer enter, and asked what he could show him.

"It is I who want to show you something," returned the captain. "I am in possession of a curious old ring, and I should like you to tell me what the value of it is," and so saying he drew forth the ring which had belonged to the unfor-

tunate Duchesse, and held it before Monsieur Benoit.

The latter seemed startled. However, he took the ring, and, after examining it a while, he said,

“ Might I take the liberty, monsieur, of asking you how you came by this ring? I fancy it is unique, and belonged to the beautiful and unfortunate Duchesse de St. A.”

“ Exactly so,” replied the officer, with a sigh. “ The Duchesse left it to me as a token of her friendship on the day she was going to the scaffold.”

“ And do you want to part with it?” interrogatively and almost reproachfully said the jeweller.

“ Part with it?” returned Captain Oudoul, as if awaking from a dream; “ I part with it? No, never; if I were starving I would not do so.”

“ Then,” said the jeweller, “ you merely wish to know its value? Well, then, I say it is without value, as

far as you are concerned. But forgive me," he continued, "if I tell you that you forcibly remind me of a young protégé of the Duchesse; your eyes—"

"Are the eyes of Pierrot," laughed the officer; "I am little Pierrot."

The jeweller rushed into the back room as if a sudden madness had taken possession of him, and the captain heard him scream:

"Wife, children, where are you? Here is Pierrot in flesh and blood."

"Where is he? where is he?" exclaimed several voices, and soon Pierre Oudoul was surrounded by some women and children.

"Come into the back room," said Madame Benoit. "Who would ever have thought of seeing our little Pierrot look like a grand officer? Oh! it is too delightful."

"It is really most kind of you to say so," replied Pierre, "as I have no claim

to so much kindness. I was not able to find any of you," he said to the young matrons who were present. "What became of you after your parents' arrest?"

"We were hidden for weeks in the cellar, almost starving," said the eldest. "But for my brother, who went out at night to forage for our subsistence, we must have perished with hunger."

"And how long did you stay in prison?" asked the captain of Monsieur Benoit.

"A very short time. We were such small fry that we were allowed to leave the prison unmolested, especially as we refrained from expressing our opinions. Fortunately, there was but little damage done here, and we are now, thank God for it, as prosperous as we were formerly."

"It gives me much pleasure to hear it," said Captain Oudoul; "would that

my other dear kind friends had had the same fate."

"You must tell us all your adventures," said Madame Benoit.

"I think we must wait till after dinner," the jeweller remarked, "and then we shall be sure not to be interrupted. And have you forgotten how to carve?" he continued.

"No, but I have not improved. I had little or no time for such, and it was only when billeted in the towns where we had to stay a while, that now and then I amused myself by making a few things for the people I was staying with. It was a sort of thanks for what they did for me."

The two eldest daughters of the Benoits were now widows, and resided with their parents as it were, having caused the next house to open into the paternal one; therefore, they made one family.

The little children were much de-

lighted with Pierre Oudoul, who began to play with them, and also to relate to them all about his early days, not forgetting to mention his little dormouse, which probably had been the means of making him what he was.

The dinner was very lively, and as soon as things were removed, and the lights brought in, the hosts and their guest settled themselves as comfortably as they could while the latter told his adventures.

Never, perhaps, had a narrator a more satisfactory audience than Captain Oudoul now had; his listeners were all eyes and ears, and, especially when he told of his fighting alone against ten men, and taking a cannon at the end of a defile, their attention was completely riveted. Then the details of the grand display after the battle of Marengo, at which Joséphine—Buonaparte's wife—was present, also interested them much, though they were by no means Buona-

partists. It was late when the captain had ended his narrative, but his host begged of him to make their house his home during his stay in the town.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPTAIN OUDOUL CALLS UPON THE OWNER OF THE CHÂTEAU DE ST. A.

THE next morning, Captain Oudoul went out early, to see first his old friend Manette. She was seated in her little shop, and was very much astonished to see an officer stop. He asked her a few questions about the place, and then told her who he was.

She could scarcely believe him, but, after looking steadily at him, she remembered well the expression of those black bright eyes of "little Pierrot," and she could almost have kissed him, had she dared.

"This evening," said Captain Oudoul, "I'll come and see you, Manette. I

have but little time to stay here, and I am now on my way to the castle; so good-bye for the present."

Captain Oudoul walked fast on his way to the Château de St. A., and was soon there. He gave his name to the servant who opened the door, stating that he wished to see the Marquis de M. (a distant relation of the Duc, who had been fortunate enough to recover the property very little injured) on business.

He waited for a few seconds in the vestibule, and was soon ushered into the well-known room of the Duc de St. A.

"Monsieur le Marquis," he said, addressing himself to the nobleman at once, "I have come to tell you where the jewels belonging to the late lamented Duchesse de St. A. are hidden, unless, indeed, they have been removed by the lady's maid."

"The Duchesse's maid, I suppose

you mean ?” interrogatively said the Marquis.

“ Yes ; Céleste. She and I carried them out and buried them under a tree near the pond.”

“ The woman was never heard of after her mistress’s death ; no one knows what became of her. But, before we proceed, may I ask you, monsieur, in what capacity you were here during the Duchesse’s life ?”

Captain Oudoul related at once his history.

“ Then allow me to shake hands with you,” said the nobleman, in the most urbane manner. “ It is just time for breakfast ” (what in England would have been called luncheon), “ and you must stay to partake of it. I should like the Marquise to hear the story you have related to me. After the meal is over we will go and try to find the treasure. No one could give us any idea of what had become of the family heir-

looms; so we fancied that they had either been hidden by the Duchesse, or been stolen."

"We had no time to make any preparations; at least, they were made too late. Ah! Monsieur le Marquis, what a terrible fate!" and, for a second or two, the officer covered his face with his hands, unable to repress his strong emotion.

The captain was introduced to the Marquise, a very charming woman, who heard Pierre Oudoul's history with much interest. Breakfast over, they went to the spot where the jewels were. The man servant, who had accompanied the party, dug at the place indicated, and very soon the casket was taken out of the hole; it was intact.

Before Captain Oudoul's departure, it was opened, and the Marquise begged of him to choose what he would like amongst the gems, for a remembrance of the Duchesse.

“You are most kind, Madame la Marquise,” said the officer, “but my good and beloved benefactress sent me her wedding ring, and another she wore on the day she passed from earth to heaven. I have them on a chain,” and he showed them to the Marquise and to her husband. But when he saw miniatures of both the Duc and Duchesse, he said, “Some day I shall ask you to allow me to have these copied; if ever I return unscathed from those terrible wars which will be the scourge of our country.”

“Are you a Buonapartist or a Royalist?” asked the Marquise.

“A Royalist still at heart, madame, although I serve under Buonaparte.”

Then he spoke about Thérèse’s little cottage.

“She had left it to me,” he said, “and I should be glad to buy it of the present owners. In days to come I should like to alter it, and live in it.”

“It is only let,” returned the Marquis; “it is part of this property, therefore it is yours now; do whatever you wish with it.”

Captain Oudoul at first refused to accept the offer, but, after being very much pressed, he yielded, and, after a little more conversation, he left the château. From thence he went to the cottage, the inmates of which were at home.

Without telling them he was the owner of the place, he talked long with them in order to find out what sort of people they were, and, at last, seeing that they could not be better, he told them all concerning the house, reduced their rent for the time being, telling them that until his return they would have to pay it to Manette Meunier, and he left the poor peasants very happy and thankful.

Poor old Manette was much surprised as well as pleased at the kindness of the officer.

“Ah! it is the cup of cold water receiving its reward,” she said, “and you are returning it to me a hundredfold. May the Lord be praised for His mercies!”

CHAPTER XX.

A WATERLOO HERO AND HIS FARM.

AFTER the terrible disasters of the Russian campaign, our old friend, Captain Oudoul—who had been made colonel after the crossing of the Berezina—had gone to his sister Mariette, in order to recruit his health, which had been very much shattered from the numberless wounds he had received. His father and mother were no more. Mariette was left a widow with two children, who were doing well for themselves; and as the officer had a longing for the little cottage at St. A., he proposed that his sister Mariette should come and live with him.

Although Pierre Oudoul had not an

atom of pride, he, nevertheless, felt the want of living amongst better educated people than his brother and sister were, who themselves felt ill at ease with the officer. The paternal inheritance, small as it was, became the share of Antoine and Jeanne Oudoul, Pierre and Mariette now giving up all claims to it; and soon they bade farewell to the old mountain home, and came to live at St. A.

The artistic taste of Pierrot had not forsaken him, and he himself designed the improvements he wished to be made to Thérèse's little cottage, and it was not long before it had undergone a perfect metamorphosis. For the sake of old days, the cottage formed the middle of the new building, two wings being added to it. Climbers ornamented the front of this picturesque little building, in which the colonel hoped to rest from his toils. But it was not to be so. The would-be conqueror of the world had to face once

more his enemies, and Colonel Oudoul went to fight at Waterloo, where again he was terribly wounded. He did not, however, leave the army, for he now intended to serve with the Royalists. From Louis XVIII. he received the cross of St. Louis, but his health, after a few years, unfitted him for a soldier's life; he was pensioned, and returned to his peaceful little abode.

The last unmarried daughter of Monsieur Benoit shortly after became Madame Oudoul. Mariette continued to live with her brother and his wife, helping in the little farm, which was the delight of the colonel. He had purchased a good deal of ground, and spent much of his time in the healthy and interesting occupation of farming. It did not prevent him, however, from resuming his old occupations, and it was especially during the winter evenings that he enjoyed carving and drawing, ornamenting with his works the pretty

place he had built. As to his garden, it was perfect, and it was not without pride that he showed the choice plants he loved to accumulate in his small elysium. Once a week he habitually sent a large bouquet to the Marquise, who, in her turn, paid him the compliment to send him some of the magnificent roses for which her garden was famed.

The colonel had provided for Manette's old age, and he never went to the town without taking her, as well as to his relations, some of the products of his garden and his farm. He was known everywhere under the epithet of the "Soldat laboureur." *

One of his great pleasures was to have little Auvergnats and Savoyards coming to his house. He related his history to them, encouraged them to do all that was right, telling them never to forget God, and to pray to Him constantly, so that they might be guided by His

* The labouring soldier.

Almighty Hand; and not only did he help them with his advice, but also with his purse and friendship.

Monsieur Benoit, having retired from business, was, with his wife, a guest at "La Maison Blanche" * (as the colonel had named his dwelling) during the best part of summer, and often also their children and grand-children, who greatly enjoyed the kind hospitality of their affectionate and best of uncles.

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