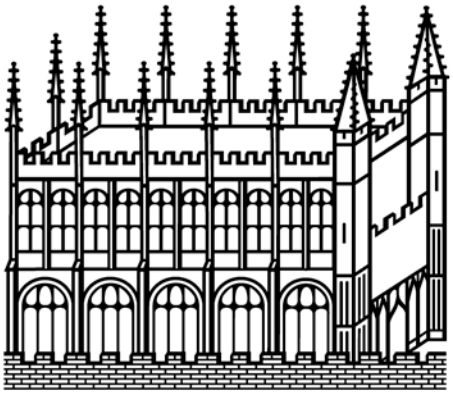
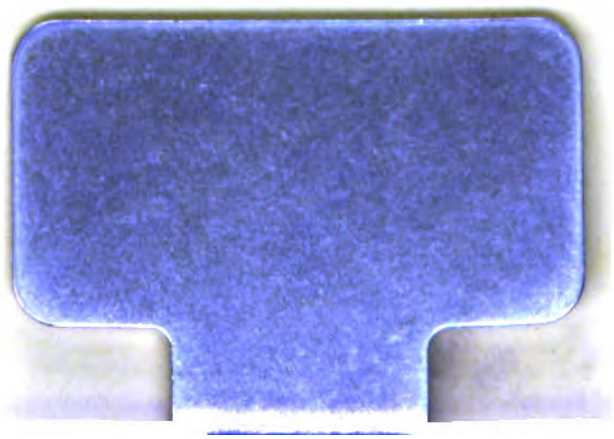


Henri and Louis.

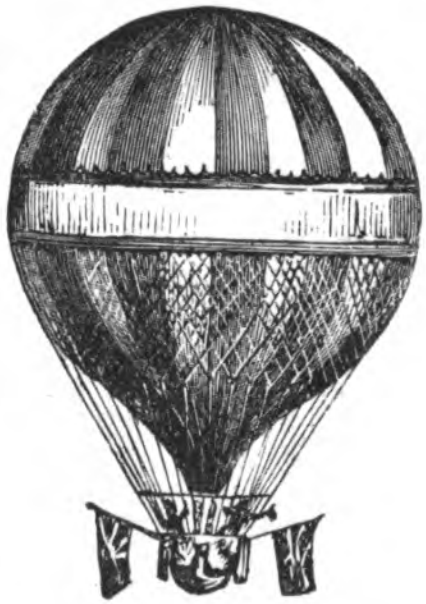


HENRI AND LOUIS

HENRI AND LOUIS

A STORY OF

THE SIEGE OF PARIS



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HENRI AND LOUIS.

CHAPTER I.

JUST before the war broke out between France and Prussia, there lived in Paris an officer in Marshal Bazaine's staff; he had got leave of absence for a year, and had come with his wife and two little sons to spend it in Paris.

There were no happier or better little boys than Henri and Louis. Their papa taught them implicit obedience, and to

be truthful and upright. He used to say to them, 'My sons, you will never know how to rule well, when you have grown to be men, unless you are taught to obey as children.' Their mamma taught them to love God, and look on Him as their Heavenly Father. She often told them the story of the Lord Jesus Christ's life upon earth, and how He came into the world to redeem us from sin, and to make us holy and happy for ever in heaven.

Henri and Louis had a very faithful nurse, named Clochette, who used often to come and see them; she lived in a quiet street off one of the leading thoroughfares of the city, and supported herself by carving out in wood, and

modelling the most beautiful little toys, which she sold in the toy-shops in Paris.

On Henri's and Louis' birth-days she always invented an especial new toy for them, and brought it to them as a present. Sometimes it would be the prettiest little carriage, with a coachman in the box, which, by pulling a string, could be made to blow a horn, and the horses prance and paw the ground. At other times, perhaps, it would be a soldier that, at the word of command, could be made to go through his drill, shoulder his musket, and present, fire. The little boys had also a tutor who attended them from ten till two every day except Saturday,

which was a holiday; and on that day their papa and mamma generally planned some delightful excursion for them. In the summer afternoons they would go to the Bois de Boulogne, in a *voiture* (or carriage), and, when they got there, their papa would hire ponies for them and they would scamper about, trying races on the smooth turf under the large spreading trees. On other holidays they would go to the Jardin des Plantes, and see all the wild animals. There were two elephants there, named Castor and Pollux, huge creatures, but very gentle; and it was such a treat to them to get a ride on the back of one of these, they moved so majestically along.

One day that they had got a great

many good marks from their tutor for their lessons and conduct, their papa said to them, 'Do you know where I am going to bring you to-day?'

'Oh, papa, we cannot guess,' said Henri, 'some delightful place, I am sure.'

'It is to the gardens at Versailles, *mes enfants*,' he replied. 'The fountains are to play at three o'clock, and I wish you to see them.

The boys were delighted; and when they found themselves on the broad gravel walks, and saw all the statues and fountains, they thought how pleasant it would be to live there always. They seated themselves on the stone coping at the edge of the frog fountains

(so called from having innumerable figures of frogs in every direction round the basin), and when the jets of water all burst forth from the mouths of the frogs, and shot up high into the air, falling down in showers of spray, they were perfectly charmed. Louis was in such a state of excitement that he dropped his hat into the water. Just as he had given it up for lost, and was thinking how he would walk home without one, a nice boy (a good deal taller than Henri) came up to them with his tutor, and said—

'Shall I get your hat for you?'

'Oh do, please,' said Louis. So he called to a large black water-dog, 'Carlo, Carlo, come here,' at the same time

throwing a stone near where the hat was. Carlo immediately plunged in, and brought the hat, all dripping, and laid it at his master's feet. Henri and Louis both thanked him, and, as in a short time they became great friends, little Louis ventured to ask him how old he was.

'I am past six,' he added; 'but you must be very old, for you are taller than Henri, and he is nine.'

'Oh,' answered the little boy, 'every one knows my age, for I am the Prince Imperial.'

The boys were rather astonished at hearing this, as he looked so like any other boy; but they liked him very much, and thought how good-

natured and pleasant he was; and the little Prince also liked them, and ran to his tutor to ask him if he might walk about with them a little. The tutor inquired who they were, and finding they were the sons of Colonel De Lisle (whose name was well known as being an officer of great bravery and merit, who had distinguished himself in Algeria), at once gave his consent; so Henri ran to ask leave of his parents, who all this time were sitting in a seat with some friends they had accidentally met. The boys told them that their young friend was the Prince Imperial; on hearing which their father rose, and bowing, asked him for the Emperor, whom he had known many years before.

The three boys then went off together, and had such a pleasant walk. The Prince asked them if they had ever heard of his Lilliputian railway. 'No,' they answered, 'but we would so much like to see it.'

'What is it like?' asked Louis.

'Oh, I shall show it to you,' said the Prince. 'If you come to St. Cloud, on Tuesday next, I have got a half-holiday, and we shall have such fun together.'

It was now time for them to return to their parents; and, after rejoining them, they bid good-bye to the little Prince, and returned home delighted with their day.

Henri and Louis thought Tuesday would never come; but at last the happy

day arrived, and their papa sent them in charge of their tutor to St. Cloud, where the young Prince met them; and, after conducting them through a great number of winding walks, they at length came to an open space where was the most beautiful little station-house ever seen. They passed through it, and came on the platform of the tiniest real railway ever made. There were a number of very small carriages, only large enough for children, and the most complete little engine and tender, the same size.

The Prince told them to get into a carriage, that he might give them a ride on his railway, calling at the same time to a little boy, dressed up as a guard, to open the door. The engine-driver

heaped on coals to get up steam, and off they set down the line, the boys thinking it the best fun in the world, and quite sorry to get out when they came to the end of the line; but the Prince said, 'I must now show you my museum.' They then passed through another little station-house, and came to a thatched cottage with stained-glass windows.

'This is where I keep most of my curiosities,' said the Prince.

On entering they found the room quite full of all sorts of curious things (most of which the Empress, his mother, had brought from the East a present to her son), besides bows, arrows, balls, tops, and every kind of game you could think of. The room had looking-glasses all

round, set in shells, which reflected the boys in a hundred different places.

After admiring all the pretty things, the Prince then brought them into a room where was a nice luncheon laid out, which they enjoyed so much after walking and seeing so many things.

Henri had promised to meet his tutor at four o'clock, at the entrance gate; so they now said they must go, though they felt so sorry to leave; but their papa had told them always to be punctual in keeping their engagements, and they would not be late for the world. The little Prince then accompanied them to the gate, and said, in bidding them good-bye, that he hoped he would soon see them again.

CHAPTER II.

BUT all these pleasant days were soon to be over for poor Henri and Louis. There had been great talk, for some time, about a war with Prussia; and at length the Emperor boldly declared war, and the whole of Paris was in the greatest state of excitement. The streets were crowded from morning till night, nothing to be seen but troops marching, horses prancing, and bands playing. Shouts of 'Vive L'Empereur' filled the air, and men were even kissing each other in the

streets. The boys thought war must be a very pleasant thing, people were in such joy about it.

Their papa shook his head and said—

'Ah! they little know what misery it may bring on them. Many a gallant soldier, now marching through Paris, may soon lie low on the battle-field.'

'But what, papa,' said Henri, who was very fond of knowing the reason for everything, 'what is the Emperor going to war with the Prussians for?'

'You would not understand it if I told you, Henri. No, nor wiser heads than yours can scarcely understand it. It is because the King of Prussia wants to put a Prince on the throne of Spain that France does not approve of.'

'Perhaps, papa,' said Henri, 'he is not a good man.'

'Oh, it is not that;' answered his papa, 'but it would be well, indeed, if kings could be always chosen for being wise and good.'

Colonel De Lisle was ordered to join his regiment in a very few days, and proceed to Metz; and, as his wife could not bear the thoughts of his being wounded in battle, and not to be near him, she determined to follow her husband in about a week, much as she grieved at parting with her sons.

Henri and Louis begged hard to be brought too, for they had heard that the Prince was to accompany his father to the seat of war. Their papa told them it

was impossible, but that, if all went well, he would send for them in about a month; so their mamma made arrangements that they were to remain in Paris in charge of Clochette, who, she knew, would take the best care of them. Accordingly, she engaged a nice little bed-room for them in their nurse's lodgings, next to her sitting-room, and fitted it up with everything she knew the boys would like. They had two little brass beds, two dressing-tables, and two of everything; and their mamma brought them a present of two nice new Bibles, with pictures and maps in them, and their names engraven on the clasps.

All their books, drawing materials,

pictures, and games, were brought from the house they had been in, and it kept them quite busy and amused, arranging everything; for their mamma always liked them to keep their room tidy, and leave nothing scattered about.

At length the day came that their papa was to leave, and they went with him to the station (to see him off), which was crowded with soldiers and officers, who were loudly cheered by the crowd. Poor Henri and Louis felt very sorrowful in bidding good-bye to their dear papa, and stood on theplat form waving handkerchiefs till he was lost to their view. Their mamma had not yet gone; and as long as they had her, they felt happy. But she was to leave in

a week, and the day soon wore round that she, too, was to part her dear boys ; and she tore herself away with many tears. The last thing she said to them was, 'My darling sons will be sure to remember that God will watch over them and take care of them, though their mother be far away, and try to be always good and obedient boys.'

Clochette brought them home to their new abode, and did all she could to comfort them and make them happy, and in a little time they became more cheerful. Their tutor still continued to attend them, and they were very attentive and diligent at their studies. The part of their lessons they liked best was their maps, and they would always turn

to the map of Europe, and find out all the towns near which the French and German armies were encamped, and trace the course of the Rhine. Their tutor, too, was very much interested about the war; and he would take the greatest pains to explain to them all about the French and German boundaries. They had had one letter from their mamma, telling of her safe arrival at Metz, but as yet there had been no engagement with the enemy, nor did she think it likely (she said) that their papa would be in any of the first engagements.

But one morning that Clochette had been out marketing, she came in quite excited, exclaiming—'Oh, Master Henri, I have great news for you to-day; we

have beaten the Prussians in a great battle, and have taken the town of Saarbruck from them.'

'Huzzah!' cried both the boys at once. 'Tell us all about it, nurse. Was the Emperor there?'

'Yes,' said Clochette, 'and the Prince too, and the balls were rolling to his very feet.'

'Was he afraid?' asked Louis.

'Not a bit,' answered nurse; 'for he took up one of the balls, and kept it as a trophy.'

'O, how I wish that papa had taken us to the war!' said Henri; 'I would so much like to see a battle.'

'O, Master Henri, you would not like to shoot any one, I am sure!'

'No, nurse, I would not—except a Prussian,' he added, after a little.

'Do you remember the little Prussian boy you were so fond of last spring?' said nurse.

'Indeed, I do; he was the best fellow I ever met, and we were so sorry when he left Paris.'

'You would not like to shoot him, even in a battle?'

'Oh, nurse, how you talk! I would as soon shoot myself.'

CHAPTER III.

AFTER this there were no more victories for the French. Disaster and defeat followed in battle after battle, until at length the Emperor, in despair, surrendered at Sedan, and laid down his sword at the King of Prussia's feet. The Crown Prince then marched rapidly on towards Paris, which was placed in a state of siege. In the meantime, poor wounded soldiers were arriving every day in Paris, and Henri and Louis never went out that

they did not see numbers of them being driven slowly to the hospital, looking pale and haggard with suffering. 'Oh!' thought the boys, 'if our dear papa should be wounded like any of these, how dreadful it would be!'

Then came the Revolution. The Emperor was deposed, and a Republic was established; a riotous mob took possession of the streets, destroying and insulting everything that belonged to the Emperor or Empress; their statues and busts were thrown down, broken and defaced. They even rushed into the Palace of the Tuileries, and the poor Empress had only time to escape with one attendant, and take refuge in England. The Prince her son had been sent

there some time before, and was now at Hastings; and the Empress was enabled to join him there after three or four days of great fatigue and hardships. No letters now ever found their way to the little De Lisles or their nurse, for Marshal Bazaine's army (to which Colonel De Lisle belonged) was hemmed in round Metz by the Prussian forces. Madame De Lisle had given Clochette a sum of money for her sons' expenses, which was fast diminishing, and no more remittances came; but Clochette managed to eke it out by the sale of her toys. She was afraid now to allow her young charges to go out without being with them herself, as the streets were so riotous; so, to keep them amused in the

house, she bought them a box of tools, and taught them to carve in wood, and Henri soon became quite skilful and clever at it. Their tutor had been enrolled in the National Guards, and had long since ceased to attend them; but Henri rather liked not having any lessons to learn just now, as he was so busy carving a wreath of leaves round a work-box he intended to give to his mamma on her return.

Paris was now regularly invested by Prussians, and no one allowed either to come in or go out. Clochette took the boys, one day, to see the great fortifications and ramparts they were still working at round the city; and they were astonished when they saw the immense

mounds of earthwork, trunks of trees, bricks, stones, and rubbish of all kinds being gradually built up into great walls and ditches to keep out the enemy.

'Only fancy,' said Henri, 'their cutting down all the lovely trees in the Bois de Boulogne we used to have such fine playing under.'

'Yes,' answered Louis.

'And do you remember your hiding from me, one day, in a hole in an immense large tree, and I could not find you for ever so long? Oh, I hope they have not cut it down.'

'I fear they have,' said Louis, 'for the whole place is now filled with cattle and sheep.'

An old soldier then came up to them,

quite pleased to see them (as he had served under their father), and asked them 'Would they like to go up on the ramparts?' 'Very much,' they said. So, while nurse sat on the trunk of a tree, he took them up and showed them everything, and gave them a peep at the Prussians through a telescope.

But now came days of privation and sorrow to the poor little boys. It was nearly two months since the siege had commenced, and provisions were every day becoming more scarce; so that Clochette could only afford to give them a little meat or fowl once a week. They lived principally on bread, tea, and coffee, with sometimes a little fruit or wine. But they bore up bravely, still

expecting and longing for letters from their dear mamma.

But, alas! one day their kind nurse complained of feeling ill; the next she was worse, and quite unable to leave her bed. Henri made tea for her and coaxed her to eat, but it was no use, she could not swallow a morsel of food. And she gradually became worse and worse, and so weak as to be scarcely able to speak; but they would hear her murmuring, 'Oh, my dear mistress's children. What will become of them when I am gone?' Then she would appear to be praying to God to take care of them. Henri and Louis were greatly grieved, and hardly ever left her bed-side, trying to soothe and cheer her.

One evening she called Henri over to her and said—'My dear child, I feel that I must soon be taken away from you, and you will remember that your poor old nurse, with her dying breath, leaves in your charge your little brother Louis. It grieves me to leave you alone here, but I am not afraid to die, for your dear mother taught me to trust alone in Jesus, and I know that God will accept me, for the sake of that loving Saviour who died to save sinners.'

She then took out a purse, which contained about 25 francs (all the money she had left) and gave it to Henri, and showed him a receipt for the rent of their lodgings, paid in advance for a month.

'You must be very saving,' she said, 'or the money will not last long.'

The tears were streaming down Henri's cheeks, and he promised to do all she told him. But poor Louis burst out crying—

'Nurse, dear nurse, you must not leave us; God will not take you away.'

After a little they became more calm; and, as nurse appeared to be sleeping, they too lay down on a little mattress at her bed-side, and forgot all their sorrow in a sound and healthful sleep.

In the morning, when they awoke, they found her cold and dead; for her spirit had taken flight in the night, and they were left alone. Their cries then brought up the woman of the house, but

she was a cold, hard-hearted woman, and fled away immediately, as she fancied poor Clochette had died of fever. However, she sent a servant, who brought the little boys into their own room, and spoke kindly to them. Next morning men came with a coffin, and took away their nurse from their sight for ever.

Now, indeed, the cares of life came upon Henri, and he not yet ten years old; but he was such a brave-hearted, truthful, and affectionate boy, that Louis never wanted for any care or love that he could give him. No one came near them in the house, they were so much taken up with their own privations; so that Henri had everything to do. He dressed himself

and Louis in the morning, got breakfast and all their other meals; but very often they had nothing but bread without any butter, and tea without milk or cream, for breakfast, dinner, and supper; and they did so long to taste a little bit of mutton, beef or fowl; but the purse was getting lower and lower every day, in spite of all the economy that Henri could use; and it would have taken all that it contained to buy a few pounds of beef or mutton.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE day, as Henri and Louis were taking a walk along the 'Avenue de Paris,' they saw a man coming towards them with a basket and some curious little things, strung on a stick, in it. They were wondering what they were, when the man came up to them and said—

'Come, young gentlemen, buy my rats this morning; they have been caught in a granary, and fed on the best of corn, and are delicious!'

Henri shook his head and said—'Oh,

I could never bring myself to eat a rat. Could you, Louis?'

'I don't know,' answered Louis. 'I think I could bring myself to eat anything, I am so hungry. Do buy one or two, Henri; we'll roast them over the fire, and call them snipe!'

By this time there was quite a crowd collected round the basket, and nearly all the rats were sold; so Henri could no longer resist the temptation, and bought two small ones, for which he paid a franc each. The man papered them up, and they walked joyfully off with their treasure, thinking of the fun they would have roasting them.

When they got home to their lodgings, they set about making a good

fire for their cooking operations. The woman of the house was in the habit of supplying them with a small pan of charcoal every day; but it held so very little, that it was finished before half the day was over, and the rest of the evening they were obliged to sit shivering in the cold, or else go to bed to keep themselves warm. However, on this particular day there was rather more than usual so; they put it all on, to make a very good fire, and now had to set about roasting their rats.

'I'll tell you what,' said Louis; 'we can tie them on a string, and you shall hold it while I turn them round.'

'The very thing,' replied Henri; 'only I have thought of a plan about the

string. We can put a nail in the chimney-piece, which is made of wood, and tie the string to it.'

So the rats, in about half an hour, were really done to a turn—nicely browned, and quite juicy; and no two little boys ever enjoyed a meal more; for, added to their hunger—which was very good sauce—the rats in themselves were very nice, something like snipe or partridge. They had also two potatoes, which they boiled in a saucepan, and about half a glass of wine each, which was the last draining of a bottle that nurse had left; so that they thought they had quite a feast, and quite forgot it was rats they were eating, as they always called them snipe.

The little boys did not mind having no fire that evening, but amused themselves at their carving in wood, and talking of the happy time when they would be with their papa and mamma again.

'Oh, dear, dear mamma,' said Henri, with mournful impatience, 'why does she not write to us? But she must have written, and the cruel Prussians have taken the letters.'

'I wish, Henri,' said Louis, 'we had a little pigeon here, and we could tie a letter on its tail, and send it to her; no Prussian could get at that, I am sure.'

'Perhaps they would send a hawk after it; but no, they could not be so cruel,' replied Henri.

The boys had taken out their Bibles, as they were in the habit of reading a portion of the Scripture, verse about, every evening. The part they happened to be reading was the 12th chapter of Acts,—about Peter being apprehended and put into prison, and delivered to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; and how the angel of the Lord came and opened his prison doors, causing the chains to fall from off his hands; and how he brought him safely out of the prison, and through the iron gates of the city, which opened to him of their own accord.

'I wish,' said Louis, 'that God would send his angel and deliver Paris out of the hands of the Prussians.'

'Perhaps,' said Henri, 'the people are not sorry enough for their sins, and do not pray to Him enough; for you know, Louis, "prayer was made without ceasing, of the Church, unto God for Peter." Mamma says God likes to see people happy, and not miserable, and that it is on account of the wickedness of man that war and every other misery comes on the world.'

When Henri counted his purse that night, before he went to bed, he found it only contained five francs, and the poor little boy lay awake long after Louis was sound asleep, revolving in his mind how he would make it last, and give Louis enough to eat; then he thought to himself, 'I will only eat half the quantity

I give to Louis, which will make it last two or three days longer, and then I may have a letter from mamma.' So, having made this unselfish resolution, he fell into a peaceful sleep.

Next morning Henri began his system of self-denial, for he gave Louis a whole slice of bread, when he only took half himself, and the same in everything he eat; but, notwithstanding all his efforts, there came a day when the last franc was spent out of the purse. Then, indeed, poor Henri's lot was hard to bear.

Louis was crying to him—'Oh, Henri, I do feel so faint; could you not get me anything to eat—even a dry crust?'

Henri threw his arms round him, and in a soothing tone of pity and love, said to him—'Louis, darling, I have no money to buy anything; but let us kneel down and pray to God to give us this day our day our daily bread.'

So they both knelt down and repeated the Lord's Prayer with the most earnest and heartfelt devotion, asking God at the end to bless their papa and mamma, and send them news from them soon. They rose up from their knees greatly comforted.

Just then, the little maid servant, who was kind to them before, came into the room with their allowance of charcoal, and, seeing them look so miserable, ran down stairs and brought up a small bun,

which she divided between them; but the poor girl deprived herself of it to give to them, as it was all she had for her own breakfast.

CHAPTER V.

ANY one to see Henri and Louis now would scarcely recognise them to be the bright and blooming boys of a few months ago. Privation was telling on them every day, and they had become so thin that their clothes appeared to be hanging loose on them. Henri's sweet and noble countenance had got a look of care and anxiety in it that was painful to behold in one so young; and Louis' cheeks, once so round and rosy, had become pale and thin, and his large

dark eyes had got a wistful, hungry look in them; but through all their privations it was touching to witness their great love for each other, and how Henri would deny himself anything for the sake of the little brother who looked up to him with such confiding trust.

After their meagre breakfast, Henri began turning over in his mind some means of making out life. Nurse had told them, if it came to the worst, to try and dispose of some of their things, and he did try once or twice, but had always been unsuccessful. Now, however, a bright thought struck him——

'Louis,' said he, 'do you remember the fancy shop on the Boulevards that mamma used to buy so many things in,

and how kind the woman in the shop was to us, always giving us some tart or sweetmeat every time we went there ?'

'Yes,' said Louis; 'she gave me a present of a whole box of bon-bons last Christmas.'

'Well, Louis, I think she might buy the work-box I had intended for mamma. It is quite finished, and is so pretty; and, you know, she was always asking nurse to make carved wood-work articles for her.'

Louis brightened up at the idea, and was impatient for Henri to get on his coat and hat, that they might set out on their walk to the Boulevards. 'Very likely she will give us a tart each,' he said, 'or at least a biscuit; and if she

buys your box, we shall be able to get something for our dinner.'

So off they set, quite cheerily, with hope still bright in their young hearts.

It was nearly a mile from where they lived to the shop they were going to, on the Boulevards; but the day was bright and clear, though it was in the month of November, and the sun shone down on the beleaguered city to gladden for a little with his bright beams the many anxious hearts that were beating within it. Provisions had now become so scarce, that it was only the very rich that could afford themselves the necessaries of life. Cat and dog's flesh was eagerly bought by the people, and a market established for the sale of it.

The shops, except the restaurants, were almost deserted, and even ladies would pass by the prettiest bonnet, or article of dress, and linger longingly at a *pâté*, or sausage, in the window of a restaurant.

The little boys threaded their way through the various streets which led to the Boulevards, and at length arrived at the shop they were seeking for. They entered it, but no kind face greeted them, as was wont, with a welcome. There was a strange man behind the counter, and Henri ventured to ask him, timidly, if Madame Bonheur was at home?

'No,' replied the man, 'she does not live here now. She left Paris before the

siege began, and has gone to live with her daughter in Brussels.'

Henri's countenance fell at hearing this news, but he thought, 'Perhaps the man will buy the box from me.' So he took it out of the paper and showed it to him, telling how Madame Bonheur used to buy these sort of things from his nurse.

The man admired it, and said it was very pretty; but he shook his head, and added that he was quite overstocked with everything of the kind, and could get no sale for them.

Henri was too proud to press him any further, so he turned round, and walked slowly out of the shop.

Poor little Louis had been so cruelly disappointed in all his expectations, that,

when he got outside the door, he could no longer contain, but burst into a passionate flood of tears.

'Oh, Henri, Henri, we shall die; no one will give us anything to eat.'

Henri's tears could not be restrained either, but he tried to comfort Louis, and led him over to a seat under the trees, where they both sat down. They had not been seated long, when a man with a thick, curly moustache and beard happened to be passing by, and, seeing the two little boys look so forsaken and sorrowful, came up to them, and, with a look of compassion on his kind face asked them what was the matter. There was something in the voice startled them, it was so familiar. Henri

lifted his eyes to look at him, and Oh, joy of joys, it was the face of a dear friend they well knew.

'Dear, dear Monsieur Pierre,' they both exclaimed, 'we are so glad to see you.'

The man sat down beside them on the seat, taking Louis on his knee, and putting his arm round Henri.

'Now,' said he, 'tell me how it is I see you both here looking so sad. The Colonel, your father, I know, must be at the war; I hope you have had no bad news of him? But how is Madame, your mother, and are you still living in the Rue St. Honore?'

'Oh no, no,' said Henri, 'we are quite alone, living in lodgings. We have not

heard from dear papa or mamma for more than two months. Nurse is dead; we have no one to take care of us; all our money is spent, and we have nothing to eat.'

The man looked full of compassion.

'My dear boy,' he said, 'I am so grieved to hear all this; but tell me how it is I find you wandering here so far from your lodgings?'

Henri then explained every thing to him, and the great disappointment they met with in not being able to sell the box.

'Come along with me,' said the man.

The boys rose up, delighted to find a protector, and walked off with him down the Boulevards. He stopped at the door

of a café, and brought them in, ordering for them hot coffee, fresh rolls, butter, and eggs, for which you may be sure he paid a good round sum.

While Henri and Louis are enjoying their coffee, I must go back a little and explain to you who their kind friend was.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME years before my story opens Colonel and Madame De Lisle were staying for a short time at a villa on the banks of the Seine. Walking one day in a shrubbery near the house, Colonel De Lisle was startled by hearing cries of deep distress proceeding from the direction of the river. He rushed down, and saw a young girl wringing her hands in the greatest distraction, and crying, 'Oh, my brother will be drowned! See, he has sunk! Will no one save him?' Colonel De

Lisle did not hesitate a moment, but threw off his coat, plunged in, and, diving for the man, with a strong effort brought him to the surface, though in doing so he almost lost his own life, as he grasped him so tightly as almost to prevent his being able to swim. However, he succeeded in reaching the bank in safety, and both were got out of the water by the by-standers. The man was almost lifeless. He had gone in to bathe, and, not being able to swim, had got out of his depth, and would have been lost had not timely assistance come. Colonel De Lisle now ordered him to be conveyed to his own villa, and everything was done to restore animation, happily with success, for in a short time he was able

to express his thanks and gratitude to Colonel De Lisle for saving his life, and to return home accompanied by his sister. The young man's name was Pierre Volant, and from that time the greatest friendship existed between him and his preserver, for whom he entertained the greatest reverence and love, and there was nothing he would not have done to show forth his gratitude. He had been brought up as a mechanic, but was so clever, and such a universal genius, that nothing seemed to come wrong to him. When Henri and Louis were very little fellows, there was no person they so much enjoyed being with as 'Monsieur Pierre' (as they called him); and when they left the country and came into Paris, Pierre

often came to see them. He was at present employed as aeronaut of the Balloon Post, which now left Paris regularly two or three times a week; and he guided his balloon with such skill and cleverness that none made more successful voyages than he did.

But now we must return to Henri and Louis, whom we left sitting in the coffee house, refreshed and strengthened by the comfortable meal their kind and thoughtful friend had provided for them. There was a good fire in a recess near them, and all three drew over their chairs to it, and sat talking of all their adventures since last they had met, till Pierre Volant suddenly drew out his watch, and, looking at it, said—

'My dear boys, I am quite forgetting myself, for it is now one o'clock, and the Balloon Post goes out at two, so I really must tear myself away from you, or I will be quite late.'

The poor boys looked utterly stunned when they heard this announcement, and cried out—

'Oh, Pierre, *dear* Pierre, you must not—you cannot leave us here to die. We will go all over the world with you. Do take us with you in the balloon; perhaps it will bring us some place near to where papa and mamma are, and we can go to them.'

They then came over to him, and clung to him with such looks of earnest entreaty, that Pierre was fairly overcome.

'My dear boys,' he said, 'I would gladly take you with me if I could; but I fear to expose you to the danger and perils of such a voyage, and you don't know how cold it is when you get up so high from the earth; and, besides, I am not sure that I shall be allowed to take you.'

'Oh, we don't mind the cold,' said Henri; 'we don't mind any discomfort if we are only with you.'

Pierre at last consented, and said he would apply to the manager of the Balloon Company, and that if he gave permission, he would bring them.

Henri and Louis could hardly contain their delight at hearing this; so he hurried off with them in the direction of

the place he was going to, and in passing by a shop, went in and bought them fur caps, and two soft warm woollen rugs to wrap round them in the balloon. He also provided himself with a small basket containing a bottle of wine, some sandwiches and biscuits. When he arrived at the starting place, he went directly to the manager to ask leave to take the two boys with him.

'Their father,' said he, 'saved my life, and I cannot, will not, leave them here behind me, perhaps to perish.'

So the manager reluctantly gave his consent, for he feared to displease Pierre, he was so invaluable as an aeronaut.

They now entered into a sort of enclosed place, and saw the wonderful

balloon they had heard so much talk about, but had never before seen. There it was, ready to start, with the basket-car attached to it, in which they were to sit. A man had just arrived with a large wooden cage full of the carrier pigeons, those pretty creatures, who, with such wonderful instinct, fly back to their homes from hundreds and hundreds of miles away, bringing news to the longing and aching hearts shut up in a besieged city. Well might the Parisians breathe a prayer in the words of the hymn—'Return, oh heavenly dove, return, sweet messenger of rest,' for how often have they brought a loving message from an absent friend, (which were always written on small slips of paper

and fastened round the middle feather in the tail.) These birds were now put into the car, and Pierre Volant then said —'Come, my dear boys, get in, and may God speed us on our journey.'

Henri and Louis got in, and their kind friend settled them comfortably, and wrapped the rugs round them, but he looked anxious, and felt more nervous than he had ever done in going such a voyage before.

The ropes were now cut, and the balloon rose majestically in the air. What a sight now greeted the astonished eyes of Henri and Louis. There lay the beautiful city of Paris beneath them; they could see its streets, avenues, churches, spires, palaces, all at a glance;

the great ramparts they had been on, and the forts bristling with guns—and, more to be wondered at than all, the whole city encircled by the Prussian army, with their arms and accoutrements gleaming and glancing in the setting sun like diamonds.

As the balloon rose higher, they almost appeared like swarms of flies, so numerous were they.

'Ah, I see something moving in the direction we are going,' said Louis, 'like little tiny horsemen.'

''Tis the Uhlans,' replied Pierre, 'and no doubt they will fire a shot after us.'

Just as he said these words a shot did whiz past them, but happily without doing them any injury.

It was now getting rather dusk, and the wind appeared to be rising, and clouds gathering and hanging low round the horizon. Pierre became anxious, and remarked, 'I don't like the point the wind is in to-day; I fear we shall have great difficulty in getting near Tours.' He then made them eat some sandwiches and take a small quantity of brandy each, to keep them from taking cold. Night came quickly on, and with it blinding showers of rain, so that nothing was to be seen. The wind, too, was blowing quite a gale from the east, which brought them towards the coast, and Pierre found it impossible to guide the balloon any other way; so 'on she sped on the wings of the wind,' getting higher and

higher. By and bye a most entrancing sight met their view. The balloon had risen above the clouds, and the moon was shining brightly down on silvery and wreathing masses of vapour that looked like snow. Henri and Louis felt filled with a strange awe at the beauty and solemn stillness of the scene—nothing to break the silence except the gentle cooing of the carrier pigeons. Now and then they would appear to dip beneath the clouds and get into mist and darkness again. Pierre tried to lower the balloon a little, but found that something had gone wrong, so the only thing he could do was just to let her drift where she would. Morning came, and he found to his dismay that they were being blown

right towards the coast. Henri and Louis had fallen asleep, rocked by the winds, and slept on long after daylight broke,—they had been so worn out with excitement and watching. When they opened their eyes, the sea was roaring beneath them, and Pierre was straining every nerve, and using every effort to alter the course of the balloon, but alas! without effect; so with a look of despair he cried, ''Tis no use, I fear we must perish. Oh, why did I consent to bring the sons of him who saved my life into such danger?'

The poor little boys' faces were blanched with fear at the sight of their peril, but Henri soon regained composure and comforted Pierre by

saying, 'Dear Pierre, do not blame yourself. We would rather die with you than be left to starve, shut up in Paris.'

Pierre embraced him, and his fine face was turned upwards for a moment with a prayer for help from God. The storm had now abated, and a thick mist appeared rising up over the sea, which seemed to carry the voices of men in ships at a distance. Pierre now took out of his waistcoat pocket a small slip of paper, and wrote these words on it—'I fear there is very little hope that we can be saved. We are right over the sea in the English Channel.—(Signed) Pierre Volant, Nov. 29, 2 o'clock p.m.'

This slip of paper he fastened on the tail of one of the carrier pigeons, and let

her fly off, which she did swiftly in the direction of Paris. 'I may as well,' he said, 'let all the poor birds off, they at least will be safe.' He was just opening the cage for this purpose, when the silk that composed the balloon gave way, and she suddenly collapsed and fell like a shot, precipitating them all into the sea. Their flight through the air was so rapid, and the shock so great, that it was some time before they regained consciousness of what had happened; but, Oh, horrors! when Henri and Louis came to themselves, they saw their devoted friend and companion separated from them and drifting out to sea, grasping the wooden cage. They heard his voice borne upon the breeze, in supplicating accents beseeching

them to hold fast by each other and the wreck. The thick fog soon hid him from their view, and they were left alone on the wide waste of waters.

But Henri's presence of mind did not even then forsake him. There were two large air-cushions in the car, and these he seized hold of, and giving one to Louis and retaining the other himself, he managed to get up in a sitting posture on the floating part of the wood-work that seemed most elevated. Fortunately the sea had now calmed down, so that the spray no longer washed over them, and they were enabled to sit thus, and await their fate with trembling hearts. Imagine these two poor little boys in the midst of the lonely ocean, no living thing

to be seen, and nothing heard except the noise of 'many waters.' But hope had not yet died out of their breasts, for they still trusted with childlike faith to their Father in heaven to save them. And they were saved, for the mist cleared away when daylight faded, and the moon arose and disclosed to their longing gaze a large vessel, moving very slowly, with the sails flapping for want of wind.

'Oh, Henri,' whispered Louis, 'do you see that?'

'Hush, Louis,' answered Henri, in eager and trembling accents, ''Tis a ship, and there is a man looking over the edge of it. Shout with all your might, dear Louis, and I shall do the same.'

So they both joined in shouting with all their feeble strength, but so weak were they with cold and hunger, from long exposure, that but the faintest echo reached the ship. Henri then remembered that he had a whistle in his pocket the morning he left Paris. This he drew out, and gave such a shrill blast that it resounded over the waves, and pierced the ears of the ship's crew.

But let us now go on board for a moment, and listen to what the sailors are saying.

The man looking over the edge of the vessel strains his eyes in the direction of the wreck of the balloon, and addressing his comrades, says—

'Come here, Jack. Do you see some-

thing white floating eastward, about a quarter of a mile off?'

'That I do,' answered Jack, 'and what's more, I see something moving on it.'

'Hark! do you not hear like a faint cry for help?'

The cry for help is succeeded by a prolonged whistle. The men start to their feet and inform the Captain, who comes with his telescope and discovers the two little figures, with the moonlight streaming on their faces, making them look like spirits of the ocean. He immediately orders a boat to be lowered and put to sea, and the two men jump in and pull rapidly towards the wreck. You may judge with what feelings of intense

joy and thankfulness Henri and Louis watched the boat nearing towards them. In a few moments she was alongside the wreck, and the kind-hearted Jack lifted the poor little benumbed and half-frozen boys into the boat, with the greatest care and tenderness.

CHAPTER VII.

IN a short time Henri and Louis were on board the ship, which was an English vessel, trading between Dieppe and London. The Captain and crew were all English, but spoke French fluently, so that Henri and Louis were at no loss in making themselves understood, and they all listened in astonishment to the wonderful story of their voyage in the balloon, and their escape from drowning when it fell; but their tears flowed fast

when they spoke of their dear friend, Pierre, being separated from them and drifted out to sea.

'Cheer up, my lads,' said Jack, 'ten chances to one but he's saved, there were so many fishing craft off Dieppe this evening.'

'Can he swim?'

'Oh yes,' said Henri. 'He was near being drowned once, and since then he learned to be an expert swimmer.'

The boys were comforted at hearing this, and the Captain then sent them down to the cabin and ordered their wet clothes to be taken off, and refreshments to be given them; after which they were put into such snug little berths that, worn out and exhausted as they were with all

their sufferings and perils, they soon fell into a profound slumber.

Next morning when they opened their eyes in their tiny beds, they felt so bewildered that they could not think for some time where they were.

'Henri,' whispered Louis, 'where are we?'

Henri sat up, and looking about him in a dreamy sort of way, at length replied—

'We are in a ship. Don't you recollect, Louis, how we were saved from being drowned, and being brought here in a boat, and everything.'

'Oh yes. I wonder where this ship is going to?'

'I heard the sailor (who was so kind

to us) called Jack, say we were going to London.'

'Oh, Henri, won't that be nice? We can go to Aunt Herbert's and see Charlie and them all.'

'That's just what I thought of when I heard it last night, and I know her address; mamma used always to direct her letters to 60 Gloucester Terrace, Kensington Gardens.'

Jack now came into the little cabin with their clothes nicely warmed and dried, and they both jumped out of their berths, but felt so giddy and stiff as to be hardly able to stand. However, Jack helped them to dress, and brought them into the small saloon, where they had breakfast with the Captain, a bluff but

fine specimen of a jolly old tar, who had been all his life on the sea.

'Come, my little lads,' he said, 'eat a good breakfast, and you shall tell me all your adventures over again. What a lucky thing it was the balloon fell into the sea instead of on land, as you could not have been saved so easily. It might have fallen on the top of a house, Church spire, or fifty other dangerous places. I often pity people on land in stormy weather, in danger of having their houses blown about their ears.'

Henri and Louis opened their eyes at hearing this, as they had always had an idea before that being on land in stormy weather was safer than on sea, but thought the Captain ought to be the best

judge. They sat chatting with him a good while after breakfast, and told him they had an aunt living in London, which he said he was glad to hear, as he expected to land them safely at London Bridge the day after to-morrow.

[The aunt that they mentioned was a sister of Madame De Lisle. She had married a rich Englishman, and was living in a handsome house at the West End. She had three children—a boy named Charlie, about a year older than Henri, and two little girls, Louise and Hortense. Charlie had been over in Paris the year of the Exhibition with his parents, and the cousins were very fond of each other, and often longed to meet again.]

When Henri and Louis came on deck, their friend Jack took them under his especial charge, and brought them all over the ship, explaining everything to them; and, as they had never been on board anything larger than a boat before, they were quite delighted with the novelty of their position. The shores of France, their native land, had quite disappeared during the night, and they were now sailing along the south coast of England, with just sufficient breeze to waft them along without creating sea-sickness.

'Jack,' said Henri, 'can you tell me the name of that place?'

He was gazing on a long line of terraces and houses, with balconies shining

in the morning sun. Behind them were very high cliffs, and on the top of one of them the ruins of an old castle.

'Hastings,' answered Jack. 'I was born and bred there, and my wife and little ones live there now.'

'Oh, Louis,' exclaimed Henri, 'do look here. Only fancy that being Hastings, where the Prince was staying when he first came to England.'

Jack lifted Louis up in his arms that he might see it better.

'Oh, is it not a lovely place?' he said. 'I'm so glad I have seen it. I wish I could know which house he was living in.'

'I can show it to you,' answered Jack; 'it was at the Marine Hotel. People

wondered why he did not go to "the Queen's," which is one of the grandest hotels in the place. Do you see the old castle on the cliffs? Well, just below it there is a terrace of houses, and in the middle one, "Marine Hotel," in large letters of gold. Can you see it now?'

'Oh, quite plainly,' both boys answered.

Jack was very fond of talking about Hastings, so he went on telling them of the Norman Invasion, which, as they had not begun to learn English history, was quite new to them.

'That old castle on the cliffs,' he said, 'was built by William the Conqueror. It was near this, in Pevensey Bay, that he landed with his French followers, and

the great battle of Hastings was fought at Battle Abbey, about nine miles from this. Harold, the King of England, was slain at it with an arrow (for they had no mitrailleuses or needle guns in those days), and William became King in his stead. He was a countryman of your own, Master Henri, so you ought to know all about it.'

'Was he a Frenchman, Jack?' asked Henri.

'Yes; he was the Duke of Normandy,' replied Jack, 'and if you had been alive at that time, and come to England, you would have been quite at home, as I am told he made all the people learn to speak French.'

'How nice that must have been,' said

Louis. Henri and I only know a little English, but when we go to London Charlie will teach us, as he can speak both French and English.'

Hastings now gradually became more distant as the ship sailed on, and when they rounded the headland it was quite lost to their view. The wind continuing favourable, brought them the evening of the second day at the mouth of the Thames, and early the next morning, when Henri and Louis were fast asleep in their berths, they arrived at London Bridge.

CHAPTER VIII.

HENRI and Louis were wakened with such a noise over-head of pulling of ropes, clanking of chains, feet rapidly passing to and fro, shouting of sailors; so they jumped up, and, quickly dressing themselves, went on deck to find they were alongside the wharf, and with such a sea of masts of ships, steamers, boats in view, as never met their astonished gaze before; everything was new to them, and they could hardly believe they were really in London. But Jack came over

to them and told them they had better go down to the cabin, and have breakfast as soon as possible, for that the Captain thought it best that they should land before the ship began to unlade her cargo.

'If I had time,' said Jack, 'I would go and take charge of you myself to wherever you are going; but all hands will be required on board, and the Captain is rather out of sorts this morning about some letter he received.'

'Oh,' said Henri, 'I think we shall be able to make out our way, for, after poor nurse's death, we used to go all over Paris by ourselves, and I have my aunt's address written on a slip of paper.'

'You must ask a policeman,' said Jack, 'to put you into a proper omnibus.'

So they went down and had breakfast, and prepared to depart. They had no luggage except the two rugs and air cushions that Jack had saved from the wreck of the balloon. These he promised he would put up and send by the carrier. He had also saved a letter bag full of despatches from Paris, which the Captain said he would deliver up to the Post-office authorities in London. So Henri and Louis went and bid good-bye to the Captain, and thanked him for all his kindness. He shook hands heartily with them, and said he hoped he would hear of their safe arrival at their aunt's; but he never thought of inquiring whether they had any money to bring them there, and Henri did not like

to ask any from him. Jack saw them out of the ship and safely up the steps, leading to the street. He would fain have taken care of them the whole way, but he dare not be long away. In parting with them, he promised when he went back to Dieppe to make every inquiry about Pierre, and write and tell them if he had been saved.

So these two poor little boys were again left alone, and now in a strange city, the language of which they could only speak a very few words—but on they went, following the crowd. It was just the hour when business men were all arriving in the city on their way to their offices, and the omnibuses were all crowded, both inside and on the top, so

if they even had money to pay their fare they could hardly have got a seat.

'Henri,' said Louis, 'do you think that Gloucester Terrace is far from this?'

'I don't know,' said Henri, 'but here is a policeman: we can ask him.'

So they went up to him, and, showing him the slip of paper, asked him, in broken English, the way to Gloucester Terrace.

The policeman said, 'Ah, it is a long way from here,'—but, pointing in the direction of the statue to King William, said—'Go down King William Street, past the Mansion House, through Fleet Street, across St. Paul's Church-yard, over the Holborn Viaduct into Oxford Street, then ask another policeman.'

Henri and Louis stared at him, quite mystified with his long harangue, hardly a word of which they understood, and off he walked quite unconcernedly, not troubling his head further about them.

Henri only remembered the first street he mentioned, so he took Louis by the hand, and walked on as far as the corner of the Mansion House, when he again paused, not knowing where to turn.

'Ah, Henri,' said Louis, 'this is not like our dear Paris, there is such a noise and bustle, and the crowd will crush us to death.'

'Hold fast by me, and I will protect you,' said Henri.

As they talked thus, there was a gentleman close behind them, hurrying to his offices, and, overhearing what they were saying, thought to himself—

'These are two little French refugees; what nice little fellows they are; I will just speak to them, and ask them where they are going.'

So he said to them, in French—'My good little boys, where are you going to? have you lost your way?'

Henri brightened up at hearing himself spoken to in his own language, and replied—

'We are going to Gloucester Terrace. We came from Paris in a balloon, which fell into the sea; a ship picked us up and brought us to London, but it is such a

crowded place that we cannot make out our way.'

'No wonder, indeed,' said the gentleman, looking utterly astonished at what Henri told him. 'I cannot wait here,' he continued, 'so come along with me; my offices are close by here, and see if I don't find some one to take care of you.'

So they followed him while he walked quickly in front of the Mansion House, and crossing over came to some high houses (at the top of a narrow street), with an open space railed in opposite. He stopped at the door of one of these, at the side of which, when Henri glanced up, he saw on a brass-plate, 'G. Buckland & Co., Engineers.' He pushed open the door, and they entered into a hall with a

wide stone stair-case leading up from it, which he ascended, the boys following. There were a good many doors on each landing; these he passed by, and went on till he came to a door with 'Private Office' on it; this he entered, and Henri and Louis found themselves in such a cosy, comfortable room, with a bright fire shining in the grate. Over the chimney-piece was a map of Cuba, and on other parts of the wall curious drawings that seemed to be all wheels. The room was cheerful and light, considering it was in the heart of the city.

Their unknown friend made them come over to the fire, and began to talk to them so playfully and pleasantly that he drew from them the whole story of

their lives for the last four months. But he said—

'I must not delay you long, for I am sure you are anxious to proceed to your aunt's, so I shall send one of my clerks with you to take care of you there.' He then whispered something into a tube at the corner of his desk, and presently up came a quick, bright-looking little man.

'Bardley,' he said, 'here are two little French boys, who have come all the way from Paris, in a balloon, to visit us. Can you send the junior clerk with them to Gloucester Terrace; they are sons of a Colonel in the French army?'

Bardley did not think his master was in earnest about the balloon, but he said—

'I have just sent the junior clerk a message that will take him a good while, and the others are very busy; but I have some drawings to submit to Sir James Bolton's approval, and as he lives at Westbourne Terrace, it will be quite in my way, so I think I could take charge of these young gentlemen myself.'

'Very good,' said his master, 'that will suit exactly;' then, turning to Henri and Louis, he said—

'Now, I will bid you good-bye, but you must soon come and spend a day with me at my house near London; my wife is very fond of little boys.'

Henri thanked him, and said they would like it so much; so Mr. Bardley brought them off, and, after waiting to

get his drawings, went down stairs and out into the street; but instead of going the way they came, he turned down the narrow street which led into Fleet Street, and then he hailed a hansom cab, and they all got in and drove on through street after street, till they found themselves skirting the Park. By and bye the cabman turned up into Gloucester Terrace, and you may fancy how their hearts beat with expectation when he pulled up at No. 60, and, knocking at the door, inquired if Mrs. Herbert was at home. The answer must have been 'yes,' for the cabman came over and lifted them out, and Mr. Bardley brought them up the steps and into the hall. The footman who opened the door, on being

informed who they were, showed them into a small room (with books all round, and a green baize table in the middle), while he went up stairs to the drawing-room where Mrs. Herbert was sitting with her two little girls, Louise and Hortense.

'Please 'm,' he said, 'your nephews, Colonel De Lisle's sons, have arrived from Paris, and are down in the library.'

Mrs. Herbert started up, saying, excitedly, 'Impossible! it cannot be! when did they come? who brought them?' ran down stairs, her little girls following, and when she saw it really was Henri and Louis, she threw her arms round them in the greatest delight, exclaiming in French—

'Mes chères enfants, ce n'est pas possible que je vous vois! Avez vous tombé du ciel?'

Mr. Bardley, now seeing he was no longer needed, bowed and withdrew, after briefly explaining to Mrs. Herbert how it was he came to have them under his protection.

She thanked him, and told him to express her gratitude to his employer, but for whose kindness her nephews might have been wandering about and lost in a strange city.

CHAPTER IX.

AND now, at last, these two poor little homeless, unprotected boys had found a haven of rest, for their aunt was so truly rejoiced to see them, and so loving and affectionate, that they felt almost as if they were with their own dear mamma again. She made them take off their coats and hats, come up to the drawing-room, and sit down beside her on the sofa, while they related the marvellous story of their journey from Paris, escape from drowning, and arrival in London.

'Oh, won't your dear mother be rejoiced,' she said, 'when I write and tell her that you are safe here? for I had a letter from her this morning, written in the greatest distraction, about you.'

'Oh tell us about our dear papa and mamma,' Henri and Louis both exclaimed; 'we have not heard from them for more than three months.'

So while Mrs. Herbert is relating all she knew about them (which was contained in two letters she had had lately), let us go back to the time of their departure from Paris, and give a short sketch of what befel them since.

Colonel De Lisle, you may remember, left Paris with his regiment to join the rest of Marshal Bazaine's army, and

Madame De Lisle following in about a week, took up her abode, with some other officers' wives, in lodgings, in Metz, in order to be near her husband. Then came all the disasters to the French, till Marshal Bazaine's army was regularly hemmed in round Metz by the Prussian forces, and no tidings could be heard of them for many weeks. Madame De Lisle wrote repeatedly to her sons, and sent them remittances of money, but, except the first two letters, not one ever reached them, nor did theirs ever find their way to her—all fell into the hands of the Prussians, or, failing that, were lost through the irregularity of the postal arrangements. Imagine the state of mind the poor mother was in, never

hearing from her children, and torn with anxiety about her husband; for, though he escaped unhurt in all the first engagements, she never knew what moment her worst fears might be realized.

At length, in a great battle before Metz (after rallying his men three times, and returning to the charge—his horse having been killed under him), a cannon ball struck him on the left arm, and, shattering it to pieces, left him lying senseless and bleeding on the field. There he was found by one of his own soldiers, after the battle, who at first thought he was dead, but a surgeon coming up, and examining the wound, pronounced it not to be mortal, and he was conveyed on a litter to one of the hospitals at Metz.

All that day Madame De Lisle had sat in anguish, listening to the noise of the battle, the echoing of the cannonading seeming to pierce her through the heart. Evening came on, and no tidings reached her of her husband—nothing but confused rumours, brought by fugitive soldiers, of the battle having been lost, with great slaughter on both sides. No sleep visited her eyelids that night, and early in the morning she arose and went out to search the hospitals for her husband, and there she found him, just after the arm had been amputated, lying in a death-like swoon. From that time she hardly ever left him night or day, for fever set in, and his life was despaired of for many weeks, and it was not until long after the

capitulation of Metz that he was enabled to leave his bed and slowly to recover.

Now, indeed, Madame De Lisle's anxiety returned in full force about her children, for she heard that the balloon post was established at Paris, and she thought a stray letter or message might have reached her, but none came. Then she thought, 'Perhaps if I write to the woman, in whose house Clochette lodged, I might hear something.' So she wrote, and this time the letter did reach; and the very day that Henri and Louis had left their lodgings not to return, the woman wrote in reply, saying that Clochette was dead, and that her sons had left one morning to take a walk, and had never returned. Such sad news

made the poor mother's heart sink in utter despair, and in this frame of mind she wrote to her sister, Mrs. Herbert, little thinking she had such joyful tidings to tell her, as that her darling sons had arrived safely in London.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE Henri and Louis sat beside their aunt, listening to all she had to relate to them of their parents, little Louise and Hortense stood gazing at their cousins, quite fascinated by them. They were two such sweet-looking little girls, very much alike, with golden hair and dark-blue eyes, and were dressed this morning in mauve cashmere, with white pinafores. Altogether, they formed such a pretty group, the contrast being so striking be-

tween the dark-eyed French boys, and the fair golden-haired English children. Charlie, their brother, was more like his cousins, but he was at school, and the holidays were not to commence for another week.

'Come over here, Hortense, chère petite,' said Mrs. Herbert to her youngest little girl, 'and speak to your cousin Louis; but he only knows a little English, so you must try and talk to him in French.'

Hortense, looking at Louis shyly from under her long eye-lashes, never said a word, but ran over to him, and, putting her arms round his neck, gave him such a sweet kiss.

Her mother, laughing, said, 'Is that

the way my little girl talks to people in French?'

It was now the children's dinner hour, and Mrs. Herbert sent Henri and Louis to dine with them, as she knew they must be very hungry, not having eaten anything since they had breakfast in the ship, so they went off with nurse, who brought them up to Master Charles's room, providing them with clean collars, and they came down, looking quite fresh, with their hair nicely brushed, and had such a comfortable dinner with their cousins. Afterwards their aunt took them out in the carriage, and brought them to 'Hyam's,' in Oxford Street, where she got them an entire outfit of new clothes—as those they had were

almost worn out—and returned home, laden with such a number of packages.

In the hall they met their uncle, Mr. Herbert, who was almost as glad to see them as their aunt had been.

'Well, my little balloon voyagers,' he said, 'have you come down to earth again? What news have you from the stars? or have you brought me any message from the man in the moon?'

The boys laughed, but Louis (who was always ready with his answer) replied—

'Oh, we like the earth best; we were too much frightened to look much at the stars, and we did not see any man in the moon.'

'Very strange,' said his uncle, 'and

you so near him, but I am glad he did not keep you up there altogether.'

Henri and Louis thought what a very pleasant man their uncle was, and what a comfort it was he could talk to them in French. Their aunt had been advising them to try and speak English as much as possible, for she said, 'You will soon pick it up if you are determined to learn it.' So they put themselves under the tuition of their little cousins, and it was most amusing to hear the lessons they got from them; but they certainly made great progress with their teachers, as in a little time they could make themselves very well understood.

What a happy life was theirs now; caressed and made much of by every

one in the house, and having two such dear little playfellows as Louise and Hortense. To add to their happiness, a few days brought a letter from their mamma (in answer to one written by their aunt), expressing the greatest joy and thankfulness that her dear boys had been preserved through so many dangers, and brought in safety to London. She also said (what pleased them most) that she had great hopes that Colonel De Lisle would obtain permission to come to England, on account of the state of his health, and Henri and Louis were looking forward with the greatest delight to once more seeing their dear papa and mamma.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE morning that the children were all standing looking out of the drawing-room window a cab drove up to the door, and out jumped a boy, a good deal taller than Henri.

'Oh, I declare, here's Charlie,' exclaimed Louise and Hortense, clapping their hands, 'let us go down to meet him.'

Charlie was in the hall when they got down, and in such spirits at getting home from school, and so pleased to see his cousins at Gloucester Terrace.

'Is mother in the drawing-room?' he asked.

Scarcely waiting for a reply, he bounded up stairs, where he found her, and kissing her, threw down three beautifully-bound books on the sofa beside her, saying—

'Here, mother, are the prizes I have gained at school this half. You will have to get a new book-shelf put up in my room, I have got so many now.'

His mother looked very much pleased, and taking up one of them, said—

'These are really very beautiful books, Charlie, and I am the more pleased to see them, my son, because it shows that you have been such a diligent, good boy at school.'

'Charlie, may we look at the pictures?' said his sisters.

'Yes, you may,' he answered, 'but take care and do not soil or tear them.' Turning to Henri and Louis, he asked them to come up stairs with him, and help him to unpack his trunk. So the boys went off together, and had so much to say to each other, that they did not make their appearance till near dinner time.

Now began a round of all sorts of amusements for Charlie and his cousins during the holidays. I could not tell you all the places they visited. They went one day to the Crystal Palace, another to the Zoological Gardens, and another to Madame Tussaud's Wax-

works. And then when Christmas came (which fell on Sunday this year), it was such a happy day for all the children. When they came down in the morning there was a table laid out in the dining-room, with presents for each of them, neatly papered up, and their names written on them. After Church Mr. Herbert took them all a walk in the Park, which was very pleasant under foot, as the ground was so crisp and hard with the frost. The ice on the water was not quite thick enough to bear, but little boys were testing its strength by throwing great stones on it.

Then in the evening they all came down for plum pudding, which was sent in blazing for the amusement of the

children; but, in the midst of all their mirth, Henri and Louis felt saddened, when they thought of what a miserable Christmas the poor people shut up in Paris were spending this year, and they would willingly (if they could) have shared some of the good things they were enjoying, with them.

A few days after Christmas, Henri came down in the morning, exclaiming,—

'Oh, aunt, I have got a letter from Pierre; he has been saved. It was just as Jack thought. He was picked up by a fisherman off Dieppe, who brought him to his cottage, but he has been very ill ever since, and it was only when Jack returned and told

him that we were safe, that he began to recover.'

Mrs. Herbert took such an interest in Pierre that she quite shared in Henri's joy at hearing such good tidings of him, for they used to talk so often about him, and long to know what had become of him, that it was the greatest relief to have all their fears set at rest.

CHAPTER XII.

ABOUT the second week in January, Colonel and Madame De Lisle arrived in London, and Henri and Louis were once more pressed to a fond mother's heart. It grieved them to see their dear father looking so pale, and with his coat sleeve fastened across his breast, but they knew how much worse it might have been, and what reason they had to be thankful that his life was spared, so they determined they would make up to him as much as possible for the loss of his arm

by anticipating his every wish, and being doubly attentive to him. And Colonel De Lisle often says that, as long as he has the use of his sons' two pair of arms, he hardly feels being deprived of one of his own.

After staying some time at Mrs. Herbert's, Colonel De Lisle took apartments near Gloucester Terrace, and Henri and Louis have gone there with their parents, but they see their cousins nearly every day, and are very happy living in London; for, though it grieves them to hear such sad accounts of the sufferings of their country, they are too young to let it prey much on their spirits, and they look forward with hope, till the dark clouds shall have all cleared away, and

brighter days dawn on the land of their birth.

The latest news is, that Paris has capitulated, and food and fuel are fast pouring in to the half-frozen and famished inhabitants. But, for many, alas! it has come too late; for the nerves that were over-strained and braced for long endurance, now that the pressure is removed, snap, and the silver cord is loosed. Railways are fast being repaired, and the post is again transmitted in the ordinary way, so that the balloon no longer wends her upward flight, measuring her miles by the speed of the wind. The carrier dove, too, sits with folded wings, and coos and mourns for the flower of her flock

that have fallen in the service of their country; but would that she could just take one flight more, and that into the citadel of her enemy, and return from thence with such a message of love, peace, and good-will, as would quell for ever the cry for war, and the noise and din of the battle, throughout the length and breadth of the land.

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THE END.

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