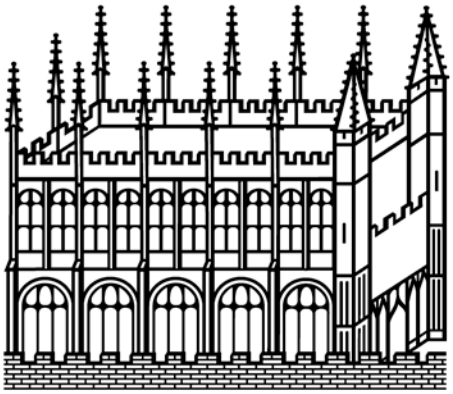

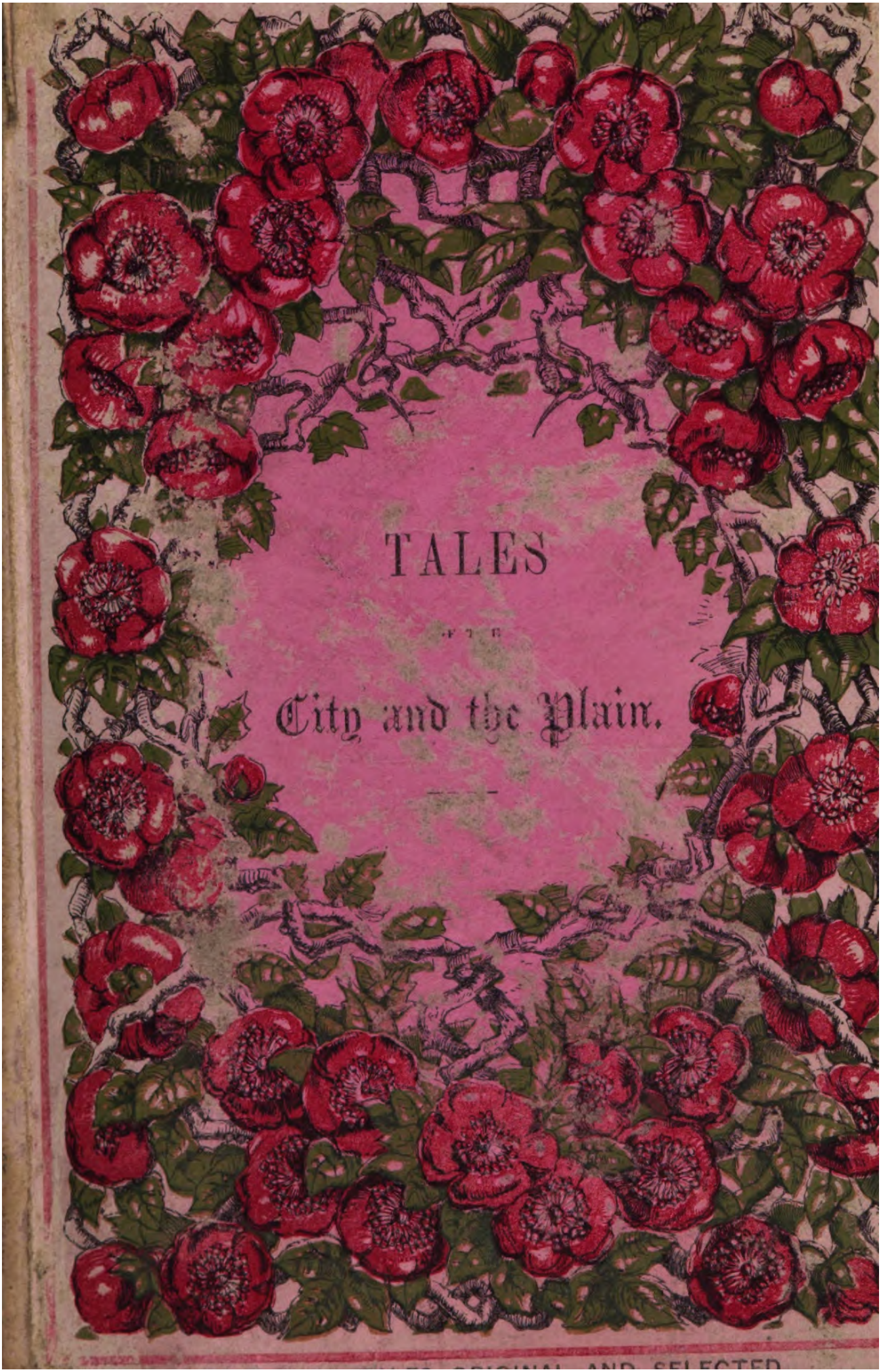
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TALES OF THE CITY

AND

THE PLAIN.

Tales

of the

City and the Plain.

CONTENTS.

MADELEINE, THE ROSIÈRE.

MADELEINE, THE ROSIERE.

CHAPTER I.

MADEMOISELLE LAGUNE, the shrew of the village of Nogent, and hostess of the "Auberge à Bon Port," stood at the door of her inn one fine May morning, surrounded by a crowd of gossips; her hands were in the capacious pockets of her white apron, except when she raised them in energetic declamation; her voice was loud, her eyeballs starting, and her eyes, and those of all the listeners, were fixed on a girl of about fourteen, sitting on a low stool at the door, and holding on her lap an infant of some four months old, who with its little soft, smiling face, lay placidly calm in sleep. And yet it was an orphan; poor little thing! an orphan of a few hours! It had a name, "Madeleine;" it was all it possessed; for its mother lay dead in a garret of the inn. And its father? Why, he too had gone to his grave; so all the gossips standing there said, on the report of that quiet girl of fourteen, who alone seemed to take any interest in the poor baby.

"And what's to become of that?" loudly inquired Mdlle. Lagune, pointing downwards to the child. "This is the misfortune of having a house open to the

public. I am sure if I had imagined such a result, that woman never should have entered my door."

"Ah, it was an unpleasant affair!" chimed in two or three of the bystanders; "but you must let the parish bury the mother, and send the child to the hospice."

The little girl who held it looked up, and, by an involuntary movement, clasped the poor infant to her breast, which awoke it, not with a cry, but a smile, as it looked upon its nurse with a pair of full blue eyes.

"And then, too," continued Mdlle. Lagune, "to think of the stupidity of Louise there, never calling me up-stairs though she saw how ill the woman was; and all we know about her is from the little she herself told the child and Père Gallin; and of course *he* will tell nothing. I warrant ye, I'd have discovered all, had Louise called me."

"She bade me not leave her at the last, and you were too busy to come when I did ask you," answered the girl, gently.

"And whom should you obey?" cried Mademoiselle, angrily: "a stranger, or your aunt?"

The girl made no reply, but endeavoured to still the poor infant, who had begun to cry.

"What ails the child?" asked one of the listeners; "it seems ill too."

"Oh, I dare say it is hungry," replied the hostess. "It has been with its dying mother all night; and she couldn't nourish it much."

Louise sprang from her seat, with a cold look of horror on her childish face.

"Poor child!" cried several of the bystanders.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed her aunt to the girl, who was hastily entering the auberge.

"To seek food for the poor infant," was the reply, as if amazed at the question.

"Ah, well! go this once; but remember, that

child goes to the hospice afterwards. *I* can't afford to keep it."

Humanity sealed the lips of all; there was not one approving word. Amidst this silence, a rosy, buxom woman drew near the crowd, for whom they all made way.

"Here is Madame Bertrand," was whispered around.

"Has anything occurred?" inquired the new-comer, smiling good-humouredly. Half-a-dozen voices began at once to relate the events of the last few days, out of which but little could be gleaned, from the anxiety of each speaker to be heard.

"Permit me," said Mdlle. Lagune, with authority; "*I* will inform Madame Bertrand of this affair. You see, madam," she continued, addressing that person, "just a week ago, one evening there came a poor sickly-looking young woman into the auberge, carrying a baby in her arms. After some slight refreshment, she inquired if she could have a bed-room for a few days; 'something very cheap,' she added. Well, madam, as I have a tender heart—the worse for me sometimes—I allowed her to remain."

"And where did she come from? What was her name?" inquired Madame Bertrand.

"Oh!" answered Mdlle, hesitating; "I was so dreadfully engaged, it being the cattle-fair last week at Châlons, and so many drovers passing through Nogent, that I forgot to make very minute inquiries, intending to do so every day; and as she paid me a week's lodging, mentioning she was from Châlons, I imagined she came with some one who had attended the fair."

"Then you have no passport? Why not ask for one at once?"

"Alas! Madame Bertrand, she died last night!"

This sudden announcement struck a chill on the

warm heart of the inquirer. After a moment's pause she recollected the child.

"Where is the infant?" she asked.

"Here, madam," answered Louise, who had returned, with the baby in one arm and a cup of sop in the other hand.

The eager, intelligent face of the motherless infant attracted Madame Bertrand. Its little wondering eyes were fixed on the crowd, and the tiny hands closely pressed together, and then to the pale little lips, in gnawing hunger.

"She is starving," whispered one; and poor Louise sank on her stool once more; and a tear of pity stole down that *old* child's face, as she fed her hungering chance-sent sister-mortal. Poor Louise! No one could live with Mdlle. Lagune and preserve nature's freshness. This little daisy, though her own orphan niece, had bowed her head, and become that sorrowful thing to see—an *old* child.

"Louise knows more about it," cried all. "She was constantly with her."

"Come, Louise, my child," said Madame Bertrand, kindly; "tell us all."

"Madam," replied she in sentences, often interrupted to soothe and feed the child she seemed to have appropriated to herself,—"when I took the mother of the little Madeleine here up-stairs to her room, I offered to carry the child, she seemed so weary. However, this she declined; but when we arrived there, I was only just in time to catch it, for the poor mother fell back exhausted; she was very ill,—and so white, and pretty too, though so delicate."

"Never mind your remarks, Louise," cried her aunt, in her shrewish tone.

"Leave her to tell it her own way," gently suggested the listener.

"When she recovered," continued Louise, "she

asked me if a great many men were not employed at Vincennes, at the château, in work of various kinds; if there was not work to be had in the forest for wood-cutters, &c. I told her there were many men employed about there, I believed. She said no more then, but next day went out early, only returning at night, fatigued and weary"——here Louise paused a moment; her colour came and went; she seemed to be musing.

"Well?" exclaimed they all.

"I know but little more," concluded she, evidently quite clear in her mind about the debated point, whatever it had been; "except that she went out every day, and always came back weary and sad, until yesterday, and then she was too ill to go out; she had been crying all night" (here the old child forgot her forced age, and wept fresh, young tears of compassion), "and in the morning she was unable to leave her bed. At her request I went to my aunt; but she was very busy, and could not come up."

"Hold!" cried Mademoiselle: "if we lodge people for almost nothing, we cannot be at their beck and call too! Besides, she had Louise, and I didn't know she was so ill."

No one coincided with her. Louise continued:

"Towards night she grew worse; my aunt was going out, and I could not stay much with her; and I did not think her dying. About nine o'clock she asked to see the curé; so I ran down, and told Jean to run for him. I begged my aunt to allow me to remain with her that night; but—but—"

"How could the girl do her work, madam, if she sat up all night?" apologetically asked the hostess.

"But I crept back," added Louise, resolutely, "after M. le Curé had left, who did not think her

so near death, and stayed with her all night; towards morning she grew calmer, and then I wanted to call my aunt, but she would not let me; she said that having heard of her husband's death, it had much afflicted her, but that now she felt better: I was tired," continued Louise, after a pause, "and had fallen asleep, when poor little Madeleine here awoke me by her cries; I jumped up, the light was just growing clear in the room, and by it I saw the child struggling to get out of its mother's arms; it was pressed so tightly to her breast; and when I looked closer—" (here she grew very pale, and her tears froze in her eyes and stood still,) "she was dead and cold."

A shudder crept through all save one.

"And what," cried Mademoiselle Lagune, "am I to do with her? I shall get into some trouble about the passport; but who could have dreamed that she only came here to die? I have sent for the authorities, and they must bury her; and the child must go to the hospice."

"No," cried a warm-hearted woman's voice; "*I* will take it home, till something be heard of its relations."

"Heaven reward and bless you!" burst from the crowd, as Madame Bertrand held out her arms to take the little castaway.

"Oh, Madame!" cried Mademoiselle Lagune, curtseying;—for Madame Bertrand was somebody in the village;—she was not very rich, it is true, but she possessed several houses, and her husband had been mayor;—"Oh, Madame, I'm sure no one can feel for the poor infant more than I do, and the poor mother; but there, *she's* happy now!" and she sighed with a sanctimonious air.

Half-an-hour afterwards, Madame Bertrand, and Louise carrying the child, traversed the village

towards the home of the former; there was a field to cross,—and before they were half-way there, Louise suddenly stopped.

"Madame," she cried, gently pulling the other's dress, who was in deep thought,—"now we are out of all hearing, I have something to tell you."

"What is it, Louise?" said she.

"I did not like mentioning all before so many; I knew mere curiosity brought most there: so I resolved to tell only you. When Madeleine's mother was sensible last night, she drew me close to her and said, 'My good girl, I feel I am dying; I could have wished to tell all to an older, safer ear, you are so young; but time presses, and I cannot die happy without confiding my poor little Madeleine to some female heart; remember well all I am telling you.' I told her," continued Louise, "that I was much steadier than I seemed; and I think she thought so too; for she appeared quite certain I should do her bidding."

The girl then told how the wayfarer, then lying dead, had been left very early with only a mother's care, her father having been a rich farmer near Amiens; that as she grew up, among many who wished to marry her, was one Gilles Frémont, and they were married a year and a half; that almost all her money was in her mother's power, who had promised her father never to re-marry, and faithfully to keep it in trust for their child. But promises to the dead are often forgotten. A month after that daughter's marriage the parent united herself to a young man of no very good character, and all her daughter's money went to pay his debts. From that moment Gilles Frémont changed; he had never been a very loving husband, and he did not hesitate to tell her that interest alone had made him marry her. Indeed, from the moment of the mother's marriage

his conduct proved it; he grew reckless of all; the little ground they possessed was left uncultivated, and he was frequently absent for weeks. At last he went, and never returned; after waiting in vain for months, (for when he quitted home Madeleine was just born,) Thérèse sold the little all she possessed in the world, and started in a vain search after him. Long and wide she wandered, and at last traced him to Nogent. The rest is soon told: day after day she quitted the auberge seeking him. At last she learned that he had been employed felling wood in the Bois de Vincennes; that a tree had struck him; and that he had been carried to the hospital, and was dead. The same night on which she heard this news, the weary spirit burst its bonds, and poor little Madeleine was an orphan."

"Thank you, Louise, for your confidence in me," said Madame Bertrand, laying a hand on the girl's shoulder. "But was this all she said? No wish expressed about the child?"

"She was going to say something more, Madame, but a kind of drowsiness seemed to come over her, and she never spoke to me again; her last word was Madeleine!"

"Poor mother! poor child!" said the little saddened woman. None sorrow sooner than the mirthful; the cheerful heart is ever one of peace and charity; both engender deep feeling.

They soon after reached home. Men are, generally speaking, less enthusiastic, slower to act from impulse, than women. M. Bertrand was a very good man; but nevertheless rather more calculating than his wife; besides, let us admit—in justice to him—that it may not always be prudent to allow the heart full play, without calling in reflection to one's aid; and a man has a right to question the exact prudence with which his wife acts, however kindly and like a

Christian, in coming home from a morning walk with an infant of totally unknown parentage, of which she had bound herself to undertake the charge, as though she had been its mother. Madame felt all the justice of his remarks, and looked pained. Louise was saddened, and pressing the poor child to her breast, wished—oh, so much!—that *she* could take it herself. Madeleine looked up, her little cheeks like two peaches, and the large blue eyes stared at the strange man; and then—was it some prompting angel bade her stretch out her arms towards him, laughing? Be it as it may, that night little Madeleine slept in a roughly constructed cot, much like a wooden box, until a better could be procured, by the bedside of M. and Madame Bertrand; and a month afterwards, had he been offered the Prefectship of Paris to give up the child, he would have said, "No, I love her as if she were my own!"

CHAPTER II.

FIFTEEN years slipped away, almost imperceptibly; little seemed changed, if we except perhaps the baby Madeleine, who had become a beautiful girl, and as Père Gallin said rejoicing, when any one spoke of her comeliness, "The face is plain in comparison with the mind, for that is adorned with those lilies which are more beautiful than the glory of Solomon;" and the good man looked with righteous pride on the soul he had so anxiously watched over, and preserved in its original image—its Maker's. All save one spoke well of Madeleine, and this was her first enemy in the village, Mademoiselle Lagune, who was still the crabbed mistress of L'Auberge à Bon Port.

Poor Louise, who had watched so lovingly over the infancy of "her child," as she ever called the orphan girl, had returned to her aunt,—for now Madeleine needed her services no more, save as a friend,—to soothe, if possible, the gall-imbued years in their descending vale of her crabbed relative.

Some women devote themselves to the solace of others—true Sisters of Mercy, though without the garb; Louise was one of these. She had resided several years with Madame Bertrand, after this good dame had taken the orphan to her home; and though Madeleine grew up filled with grateful affection for her kind second mother, and the excellent but somewhat too hasty M. Bertrand, yet all her tenderest affections were given to Louise, who was as her mother, her sister, her all. We said Mademoiselle Lagune disliked her; there is an old adage which may best explain this, "The injured *may* forgive, the injurer never!" She felt she had acted harshly to the dying mother, and with unchristian feeling towards the child; Madame Bertrand's kindness was a living reproach to her, and yet she had not felt disposed to offend that lady by refusing to allow her niece to look after the child. Now Louise had returned, and she felt a growing satisfaction in heaping on the tame, quiet woman the offences of the girl of fourteen. Louise returned to the auberge when her little charge was about eight years of age, and from that period to the present hour, her love and care had been unchangeable towards the orphan, for whom Mademoiselle Lagune delighted to predict every species of misfortune and evil. "She was a come-by-chance; she must be of bad breed; who knew whether her mother had ever been married? Père Gallin might be, assuredly *was*, a good man; but, for the sake of the respectability of the village, he certainly ought to be a little more communicative, just to ease people's minds! Certainly

she, for one, felt *very* uncomfortable, especially as the mother had been harboured in her house," &c. &c. And then she would seek Père Gallin, and with hypocritically feigned sanctity declare, that her mind was much disturbed on account of these events, dreading lest some share or connivance in the sin might be imputed to her, for sin she feared there had been. But the good curé only smiled; all her cunning devices to cheat him of his secret were vain. "Rest perfectly satisfied, my good demoiselle," he would reply, placidly smiling; "if there have been error, good little Madeleine is no party to it, no sharer in it; I exonerate you too from any participation." "Then there *has* been error?" would she exclaim, exulting in her own cleverness. "My daughter, I said, *if*," would be the quiet rejoinder as he rubbed his hands composedly; and the unsatisfied woman was fain to return home brooding over that cruel "if," which shut the gates to further inquiry or knowledge.

Mademoiselle Lagune had a nephew, Louise's brother, but her junior by nine years. It never entered into Mademoiselle's head, that *her* nephew, presumptive heir to her property, could fall in love with an unknown orphan; even the prospect of the fortune she would undoubtedly receive from the Bertrands could not reconcile her to the match; she had indeed arranged one, years before, with the parents of an only daughter, wealthy and retired from business, residing in the neighbourhood; all was settled but one thing,—Alexis' consent. Louise, like a clever general, whose whole thought was fixed upon her brother's marriage with Madeleine, never hinted such a possibility to either; in fact, she appeared rather to discountenance any intimacy between them, and looked grave when little Madeleine begged for Alexis to come and spend the day with them; and, on

the other hand, she was continually speaking to him of his aunt's choice, Mademoiselle Frogé. Of course, the thing exactly turned out as she ardently desired it should; he and Madeleine liked each other as children, and loved fervently and truly as a youth of twenty and a girl of fifteen will, whose affections are based upon esteem. This was a thunderbolt to Mademoiselle Lagune, who had deemed Mademoiselle Frogé a sufficient "electric conductor" against so fearful a visitation. What was to be done? She did not like offending the Bertrands, and, on the other hand, her word had long been pledged to the Frogés. It is rather unwise sometimes to treat our children as mere automatons in our hands; we suddenly, by some severe shock, are taught to know that they have vitality and wills of their own: these she now discovered in Alexis. "He had never dreamed of any but Madeleine! Leave her! Oh, no! if her foster-parents refused him, well then he never would marry, he would go for a soldier."

Sometimes the thing we threaten to do comes unexpectedly upon us, as if to try our resolution. Alexis was cast in the following drawing for the conscription, and found himself, before he had time even to collect his thoughts, an embryo man of war and glory. "Of course," he said composedly to Louise, "my aunt will buy a substitute;" but "my aunt" had not the slightest idea of such a thing; she saw her vantage ground too well. "The service would do him good; times were peaceable; and, without offending any one, she might eventually please herself;" so she firmly refused her consent to his boyish engagement with Madeleine, on the grounds that it would not be for their future happiness to affiance them before he had seen a little of the world; young men will change sometimes; and while she was deaf to all arguments and prayers on this subject, she

ratified her promise to the Frogés, who were ignorant of the heart's choice of Alexis Vallette.

Poor Alexis, and still sadder Madeleine, what could they do? only love truly, be true to themselves, and wait patiently. But all these were very good arguments—very painful practice—especially for her; he would be going among new scenes and companions, which would amuse and interest him; *perhaps* he might forget her! But she must remain, and reckon his footsteps fleeing *from* her, which her sad heart would vainly endeavour to overtake. Then, too, the misery of walking *alone*, where we have been cheered by a kindly, loving support! Poor Madeleine grew very pale and very melancholy, and even her kind parents of adoption, and Louise, for awhile failed in comforting her.

"O Madeleine!" exclaimed Alexis, about a week before he was to leave the village; "if I only had five hundred francs, I could release myself, and still be near you; but I have nothing, except what my aunt gives me, neither has Louise."

"Nor I, Alexis," said the weeping girl; "and my good mother will not give me any to assist in an act of disobedience towards Mademoiselle Lagune; besides, she too wishes you to see the world. It is very strange they think it so necessary to drive you into a place they all agree in calling so bad, just to try you; to my thinking, it is always safer not to put our fingers too near the fire; though healed, they might be scarred for life."

"Never mind, Madeleine dearest," he answered, endeavouring to soothe, even though suffering keenly himself. "I shall come back sooner than they expect; seven years, indeed! I will get the money somehow for a substitute, and return loving you doubly for the privation of your presence."

And thus comforted she tried to look forward with

hope; but the chance of his obtaining so large a sum seemed almost an impossibility; still she was too young to give way to despair, and the succeeding days passed more hopefully than she had at one time deemed possible.

We have said but little of the foster-parents of Madeleine; but our readers must admit them into their imaginations as good, excellent, but every-day people; there would be little to tell very interesting of them, if we except their unceasing care and love for their charge; the whole business of their lives seemed to be how to secure her happiness and well-being, and up to the present moment she had not caused them one hour's uneasiness. The attachment between her and Alexis was looked upon with pleasure, and a hope that the firmness and faith of the young man would insure the ultimate consent of his aunt. He was ever welcomed at their house, and his approaching departure cast its gloom over their household, for poor Madeleine's blue eyes were overflowing with tears, and her once laughing tones turned to sighs. But time, heartless time, hurries us on to the goal of sorrow; the day came, and even the young soldier's voice trembled when he bade all farewell, and imprinted his last kiss on Madeleine's forehead. Louise stood by to comfort; but she too was weeping. At last the final words had to be spoken; and as he whispered them to the sobbing girl, he added, "Cheer up, my Madeleine, my little wife, I shall *soon return;* but do not speak this to any one; I have a scheme in view to enable me to do so; farewell, my beloved." And he was gone on his career; perhaps to forget her. Poor Madeleine!

CHAPTER III.

Of all the many fêtes in France, there is not one more pleasing to behold than the fête of *la Rosière*. It is the earliest dream of a village maiden's heart, to bear off the palm of goodness. Unlike the prize of beauty, it excites no evil passions: the very object of desire quells all such. It is a prize of virtue, humility, industry, goodness, which the plainest may run for; happy the one who wins! Not alone is she crowned with roses, but a subscription-purse is raised for her, a gold chain given, and above all, amidst the tears of the whole congregation, in some quiet little rural chapel, the good pastor, who has watched the training of this favourite child and pupil, gives her his blessing, after delivering a feeling and perhaps most eloquent discourse. From the earliest days of childhood, Père Gallin had set his heart upon one day crowning little Madeleine, the poor orphan child. In the meantime, many older girls passed, of course, before her, and each one had been held up as an example to her, until the child's every thought was fixed, not on the purse or golden chain, but upon the wreath of roses. Her dream at length seemed certain of realization; so pure, so good was Madeleine, that unanimously all elected her for the honour, to which election the good curé gave his conscientious assent.

This was the streak of blue in Madeleine's clouded sky after Alexis's departure; for her sky was a very troubled one: the uncertainty of ever gaining his aunt's consent to their marriage, even ultimately; and then the many chances in the life of a man for the first time quitting home for the busy world. True, she had been all to him in their village; but then he would see so many fairer faces than her own—for though very fair in all other eyes, Madeleine had

a humble opinion of her own charms, and this the farther enhanced them, as it lent a mild and gentle look to her soft downcast eye. Surely the child born in sorrow bears that impression on her countenance; it never is joyous, like the one which has seen the light in bright sunshine. However, as the moment approached for the fête of the *Rosière*, a quiet joy shone on her open brow, where all was peace—the peace a good conscience gives. Then, too, she should no longer be quite a dependent for a fortune—though the kindness of the Bertrands made her feel that dependence but little—she would have a purse of nearly twenty pounds; for the neighbouring ladies all subscribed to it, and the village was not very small, and all put their mite to this good act; a gold chain, too, would be given in the chapel, with due ceremony. All these thoughts so occupied her, that she passed over more tranquilly than she otherwise would have done, the fact that Alexis had not written for nearly a week. She spoke of it to Louise; but this loving friend strove to bring peace to her heart, by pointing out all the hurry, weariness, and toil of a soldier's march; for he was journeying onward every day farther from Nogent and Madeleine. Despite every argument in favour of patience, however, her heart began to beat more rapidly, and a little flush of anxiety was on her cheek as the second week crept on, and still no news from him. "Surely he must be ill?" she said anxiously to Louise; "and how shall we hear? His aunt will not tell us, even if she knows; and Madame Bertrand, though so good and kind, sees nothing to be uneasy about. What can we do, Louise?"

This good creature forbore to tell the anxious girl how troubled she herself felt, having written to Alexis, unknown to any one, without receiving a reply; still she naturally did not suffer so much as Madeleine;

she was older, and *only* a sister, though a much-attached one; and she argued, until she persuaded herself that his duties alone caused his silence.

Affairs stood thus, when a circumstance so painful to all occurred, that for a few days every other thought was set aside. Monsieur Bertrand was in the habit—a thing well known in the village—of collecting the rents of some houses he possessed in the neighbourhood at given times, and frequently these remained in his possession for days, until all were received, when he placed the sum in his lawyer's hands. On the day when the last rent had been paid him, their quiet house was entered in the night, and the whole amount carried off. It seemed the person or persons must have been well acquainted with the habits of the family and where the money was kept, or else have made minute inquiries; for nothing else was touched, but the bureau alone opened, and its contents taken. We are wrong in saying nothing else was stolen; there was a miniature, one of Madame Bertrand's mother, which she prized much; it was set in an old-fashioned setting resembling brilliants, but its actual value was nothing. The sum purloined amounted to about forty pounds; and this to persons of not large income was a considerable loss; though perhaps the most painful sensation, after all, was the idea that their quiet dwelling had been mysteriously entered by the midnight thief.

Some short time before this took place, two men of suspicious appearance had been in the neighbourhood, and remained for some days at "L'Auberge à Bon Port;" as their papers were correct in the eyes of the gendarmes, nothing could be said about them, neither had Mademoiselle Lagune any right to complain, for they paid well; but there was a certain unmistakable air about them, which made all look shyly upon them. After the robbery had been committed,

Mademoiselle Lagune was the first to remember that they had made especial inquiries about the Bertrands, and, strange to say, about Madeleine, as to who she was — her age, name — was she any relative, &c. There were others to confirm this strange account, for they had been particularly inquisitive about the girl. Now though no one could, however malignant, for an instant suspect that she had any knowledge of these men, still to a sensitive mind it was a painful thing in any way to have her name implicated with such characters. Madeleine suffered keenly. Mademoiselle Lagune, too, had spoken to every one of the men inquiring about her; so much so, that many a homely jest was pointed at her, such as,—"Ha, Mademoiselle *la Rosière!* so you have acquaintances thieves, have you?—Don't let them steal your fortune or gold chain, however," and the like. And the poor girl, struggling to seem calm, oppressed by such jests and Alexis's strange silence, would creep away and weep bitterly. To one only person could she open her whole heart; not even to Louise could she do this, but to Père Gallin. One day she sought him, more oppressed in heart than ever; it wanted about a week of the fête; she told him her many sorrows, which the good man endeavoured to lighten to her young bosom; then she spoke of the mysterious terror this robbery had inspired her with—a terror as though she had in some way caused it. He laughed at these ideas, attributing them to the chatterings of Mademoiselle Lagune and her set; then, assuming a more serious tone, and taking her hand, he said, "My child, I have long been going to tell you something which I think you ought to know: it is rather a painful subject, and I have consequently deferred it; but as recent events have engendered reflection in your young mind, it is better at once to tell you. Madeleine, I believe you have a father living."

Madeleine turned pale and trembled; she knew enough of her own history (Louise had confided it to her) to look upon his memory, for such she had deemed it, with distrust and horror. His cruel desertion of her poor mother was enough to cause this feeling; and now to know that he was in existence, created a chill at her heart like death; she felt as if she were already claimed by him, and subject to his control. Père Gallin continued,—"From all your unfortunate mother told me, I was led to doubt whether she had had sufficient proof of his death; consequently I made every inquiry, which ended in my positively discovering that the man killed by the falling of the tree was not your father, though he had been occupied as a wood-cutter. I traced him from place to place: the last was to the employ of a wood-merchant in Paris, whose service he quitted suddenly, saying he had inherited some property near Rouen. I wrote to a friend there, but every trace failed; this is four years since: what has become of him, I know not. I must tell you, my child, that from the character I heard of him everywhere, I deemed it better to keep all this knowledge to myself. I do not mean to say he bore a dishonest name, but a wild, unsettled one. I have friends still making inquiries; and should we discover him, Madeleine, I will tell you."

Madeleine was weeping; she scarcely knew why.

"Do not weep, my child," said the kind man; "it should comfort you to know that a parent exists; for as the old saying has it, 'Blood is thicker than water.' Though Monsieur and Madame Bertrand have been as parents to you, yet some day it may solace you to find a father, and let us hope, with increasing years, a good man."

"I will hope so, father," she answered, trying to still her tears; "but I am so sorrowful, that everything terrifies me now." Some time longer he spoke

to her; and her heart, beneath the influence of his kindness, and the spell which those whom Heaven sends to comfort us in our afflictions ever exercises over our minds, grew almost cheerful, and she cast her care for awhile behind her.

"You did not tell me where you last heard of my poor father," she said.

"He was with Monsieur Lafon, wood-merchant, Quai St. Michel," was the reply.

"I will pray for him," she said. "The good God will perhaps hear a child's prayer for her father."

Taking leave of the Curé, she proceeded homewards more cheerful and hopeful.

CHAPTER IV.

MONSIEUR and Madame Bertrand's house was in profound repose, to all appearance, at ten o'clock on the evening of this day; but Madeleine sat some time after this hour at her window, which looked into the garden: the girl of scarcely sixteen seemed at one step to have grown to mature womanhood; so much does thought call forth all the energies, and ripen the mind's half-formed ideas. Her mind reverted to her father; she thought of him even more than of Alexis; she pondered whether it were quite right on her part to remain in inactive comfort, when possibly a parent might be in want or trouble. "I will ask Père Gallin," she mentally said; "I know he will tell me what I ought to do."

Thus thinking, she rose to undress for the night. She had been sitting without a light; as she quitted the window and raised a hand to close the lattice, a shadow seemed to glide beneath the shade of a wide-spreading apple-tree in full blossom. She started,

drew back, looking fixedly on the spot, but nothing more appeared; still her heart beat; and hastily drawing her white dimity curtain before the window, she retired to rest, but without remembering to fasten the lattice. Young heads sleep heavily, more so in sorrow than in joy; this latter may give them dreams of feather-weight; but sorrow is a plummet, and bears down the eyelid. Madeleine sank into a deep heavy sleep, and dreamed she saw her father; he was beside her, and in her intense anxiety to distinguish his features, she started up in fear; and all at once she became conscious, to her horror, that she was not alone in that dark chamber. Her alarm prevented her from uttering more than an exclamation of intense terror; and she then thought she heard a well-remembered voice, in a tone so low as to be scarcely recognisable, saying to her, "Hush, Madeleine! if you betray me, I am lost."

"Alexis!" she exclaimed; "Alexis! you here, and thus! What has occurred? Speak, for you inspire me with a terror I cannot express."

"Madeleine," he whispered, again taking her hand, which was cold and clammy like death, "Madeleine, you once said you loved me above all on earth; I come this night to ask you again, is it so? Are you certain that nothing can ever wean your affections from me?"

"Nothing, Alexis," she breathed through her chattering teeth. "I have told you so before; you should have believed me; but surely you have come this night for some other cause than to ask a question so often answered before?" Even as she spoke, she wondered at her own coldness; she who would once have flown to meet his welcoming embrace, was now cold and motionless; he, too, seemed changed and paralysed; it was like a meeting of spirits, not of flesh and blood.

"I want you to tell me, to assure me," he impatiently cried, raising his voice higher, "that nothing shall ever part us, not if you meet your father."

"What do you know of him?" she asked, in wild surprise.

"This, that you will meet soon; he may not seek you, but you will meet."

"Strange," she uttered, "that you should speak of that which only was uttered to me this day! but let this tranquillize you—nor father, friends, fate—nothing shall part us."

"You have forgotten one thing in your enumeration, Madeleine—*crime*, would not *that* part us?"

"Alexis!" she almost shrieked, clasping both his cold hands in hers, "do not drive me mad; you cannot be guilty of crime!"

"I knew it!" he answered despondingly, endeavouring to withdraw the hands she still clasped; "let me go; for you I have committed it, and you turn from me; let me go; I can add another to the one already done, and die!"

"My love, my affianced husband—my all—" sobbed the suffering girl; "I will never desert you. If you have done a wrong act, I will stand by, and soothing, win you to repentance and right; but I will never leave you, Alexis—I will never leave you."

"Thanks, my Madeleine," he replied, in the same unchanged, hopeless tone; "now I can return to my regiment for awhile; only for awhile, for *soon I shall be free*."

"Then you have not deserted?" she asked in amazement; "I thought this was your crime."

"Desertion!" and he laughed hoarsely. "Desertion! child's play. No; I am here with the consent of my superiors; I was taken ill, and they gave me a month's leave; but I have not shown myself yet *here*, you will understand why *soon;* the fact is, I could

not leave you; you were surrounded by so many temptations. I know Louis Debrets loves you; how then could I leave you for perhaps seven long years? Madeleine, my crime is *theft; I* robbed this house last week, and have lain hidden ever since; the notes, however, are changed into good louis-d'or, and soon I shall be free; then I will save—save—save every sous, and repay back the forty pounds, anonymously, when you are mine."

The horror-stricken girl shrank back from his clasping arm which essayed to detain her; she was speechless, but the heart beat quickly and convulsively.

"Now, Madeleine," he continued, without appearing to notice her agony, "I must go; I am expected somewhere, and the sunrise must not find me here; but, before I go, swear not to betray me to any one, not to speak of this, not to hint it; not, above all, to the Père Gallin."

"Oh!" almost shrieked Madeleine, "I cannot deceive him; it would be sacrilege."

"Are you mad?" he exclaimed; "why, he would in some manner make it known, and I be lost."

"He would not, Alexis, he would not; but I dare not bear the burden alone of this heavy secret and crime."

"A crime!" he added, in a low tone of bitterness; "crime for you, and you will betray and condemn me *everlastingly;* mind that, girl; for the day it becomes known, I die. Keep the secret, and I will in a short time restore all; besides, the error is mine, not yours; think to what an eternal fate you doom me; think, girl—think, Madeleine, you whom I love so madly—think, and swear to keep the secret."

He clasped her hands in both of his, and her trembling, scarcely articulating lips repeated after him a solemn oath of secresy. As the last words were uttered he stooped, and pressing his lips on her

brow, whispered—"Now, farewell awhile; I must fly; were I found here, discovery would be inevitable; I shall soon be free, and near you once more. Farewell, my own love, *la Rosière;* on that day of rejoicing remember me, your Alexis."

She saw him creep towards the window; he turned, waved his hand, stepped through the lattice, and descended a ladder placed outside. With straining eyes she watched all this, and then sank back fainting on her pillow. It appeared to her imagination, on surveying the events we have related, that this insensibility had been succeeded by a feverish sleep; for she started from a confused dream of other things, to recall, after awhile, the whole of the painful scene with Alexis.

At first she felt disposed to imagine it the hallucination of slumbering fancy, and had almost made up her mind to set it down as such; but when she started at an early hour from her bed, and looked out of the window, there stood an unmistakable evidence of her nocturnal visitor: a ladder was placed against the wall, her lattice was open, and on the ledge inside lay a bouquet of flowers still fresh and unfaded. This circumstance seemed a convincing proof of Alexis's presence; for often had he brought the ladder from its accustomed place to gather some ripe fruit for her, or else arrange the vine and clematis which clustered round the window. Madeleine raised them to her lip, but ere they touched it the first thought of mysterious happiness at his presence was chased by the memory of his crime, and with a shudder she flung them from her; then a second thought arose within her—she must remove all evidence of his visit. As she prepared to do this, the remembrance of the promise extorted from her arose in her mind, and with that recollection the last ray of comfort forsook her, for she had resolved upon laying the

whole affair before Père Gallin; now that was impossible, for she had solemnly sworn secresy for awhile, especially to him. The weeping, agitated girl opened her door gently, and creeping down-stairs stole into the garden; beneath her window were the prints of a man's footsteps in the soft earth; these she effaced carefully with a rake, and removing the ladder carried it into an out-house from whence it had been taken. Before the servant had risen, every trace had disappeared, and the wretched girl was sitting on the edge of her bed in solitude and terror, weeping bitterly.

Alexis had argued with her, and pointed out that it was no crime of hers; that she was quite innocent: consequently she endeavoured so to persuade herself. But there is a little inward monitor which never deceives us; she felt that the promise of concealment was an error on her part; yet how break her oath? Poor Madeleine, with no one to guide, nothing to direct or counsel her but her own uninformed though upright mind, grew hourly more feverish and uneasy. All noticed this; and the continued silence of Alexis was by Louise deemed a sufficient cause. Monsieur and Madame Bertrand forgot their young days of love, and overlooking the fact of his prolonged silence, attributed her restless state to the nervousness natural to a young girl going for the first time to play a prominent part in a public ceremony; and the very means they took of re-assuring her made her position more painful; for from morning till night she heard nothing else spoken of but the coming honour, by her, as they expressed it, so well deserved. Her heart said otherwise; for she could no longer lay it bare in all candour to the one who had instructed her from infancy. Before the day of the ceremony, it became necessary that she should approach the confessional, and with a clear

conscience receive her *Rosière's* crown. The war within her was a fearful one. How tell that she was bound by a solemn oath not to divulge a crime? how conceal it? At last the sophistry of Alexis's arguments prevailed; she had been so much accustomed to look up to him in all things, as one superior to herself, and on whose judgment she relied when embarrassed, that this at last prevailed over her own rectitude of decision, and she persuaded herself against the promptings of her conscience, and kept silence about his visit and crime. "After all," she said to herself, "I have done no ill; I am not bound in charity to reveal the faults of others."

Of course this maxim is most true; but circumstances alter cases; and it would have been better to appeal to the direction of another, more competent to guide her in so serious an affair.

CHAPTER V.

NONE but the wretched Madeleine herself knew her deep anxiety as the day approached for the fête. Every moment since that fatal night she had been hoping to see Alexis arrive; hoping and dreading—for his freedom would be purchased by the loss of his soul's purity and uprightness; still she longed to see and urge upon him some speedy method of restitution and repentance. But time flew on, and he neither came nor wrote; the evening before the fête had now arrived. As she looked upon her white dress of purity and truth, a cold shudder crept over her; her heart disavowed the justice of the robe; she argued in her own favour, but conscience said, "There

is one hidden spot wherein you have tacitly been deceiving."

The morning came, and a bright joyous sun lit up the scene. There were bands of village musicians, who, if not worthy of exalted places in an orchestra, assuredly made up for want of talent by their heartiness and sincerity. Madeleine could scarcely walk down the stairs when Louise came as her handmaiden to summon her; she, in her ignorance, attributed much of the other's agitation to timidity and her naturally retiring disposition. These might once have acted upon her feelings; but everything else was absorbed in the thought, the undying thought, "I am not worthy of this."

At last she reached the street—or road, as, from its quietness, it rather deserved to be called. Madame Bertrand had kissed her half-an-hour before, as she confided her to Louise, bidding her be courageous; and with her husband and several neighbours proceeded to the village church, where the ceremony was to take place.

The road before the house was one motley crowd of persons in their gayest attire; and the bands played—different airs, it is true; but who cared? they enlivened the scene, and that was all which was required. As the *Rosière* appeared, a loud shout greeted her; she looked very pale, pale almost as the white ribbons in her little cap.

"Lean on me," whispered Louise. "Poor child, you are trembling; there, I know what you are thinking of, 'If he were here!' but don't fret; some day he will be beside you for even a happier day than this."

Madeleine gasped for breath.

"Mademoiselle Madeleine," said a young man stepping forward with a timid air, holding a bouquet in his hand, "will you oblige me, and wear these

flowers to-day? I have chosen the best I could find any where; I know you like white roses, and they are suited for this fête."

She gazed on them with a haggard eye—they reminded her of the bouquet which had been left on her window; she took them, however, with a trembling hand.

"Thank you, Louis Debrets," she said with an effort; "I will wear them."

"Those of some one else whom I know, would have been more acceptable," he added in a low tone; "but he is not here to give them, so I must be his substitute. Don't be angry at what I say, Mademoiselle; you will understand what I mean soon; don't think me jealous; I know you love him, so there's no hope for me, and he loves you, *and will redeem his promise soon,* and come to you."

Madeleine shrank back aghast on Louise's arm; there was a significance of manner about this youth, which convinced her that he was by some means cognisant of Alexis's visit to her, possibly of his crime. Though well aware that the two had been bosom friends until a rivalry created a coolness, still she could not imagine that Alexis would confide his dreadful secret to Louis.

As the latter drew back amidst the crowd, Madeleine, staggering beneath her emotions, allowed herself to be surrounded by her white-clad companions and led towards the church. The youth, extreme beauty, goodness, and above all, peculiarity of her orphan state, had interested all the neighbourhood in Madeleine's favour; consequently the church was crowded, and the bright sun shone through the windows on the well-dressed persons assembled, not only from the immediate neighbourhood, but the surrounding country seats. The curé stood at the altar, rejoicing in the tribute paid to the excellence of his protégée.

At last the music sounded without, and a band of children entered, two and two, scattering flowers before the cluster of girls that followed, in the midst of whom Madeleine advanced up the nave. There was a murmur of admiration as she did so, for her nervous excitement added fresh charms to her beauty; she looked flushed, and the generally mild blue eye was flashing and wandering around; but as she advanced towards the altar her whole countenance changed, and she became deadly pale. She knelt down outside the rails, surrounded by her companions, and the curé with more than usual fervour pronounced a blessing upon all, and especially on the *Rosière*, who knelt before him. Then with a deep sonorous voice he commenced a discourse upon the occasion of that meeting, exhorting all to strive in pious emulation for the crown of merit in the succeeding year, then about to be awarded to the one before them. As he spoke with fervour and earnestness many wept, Madame Bertrand audibly so; but hers were tears of rejoicing and affection; her long care of that orphan girl was amply rewarded at that moment. Madeleine's eyes were dry, again her cheek had flushed, and the breath came oppressively from her bosom as she concealed her face in her handkerchief. At last the discourse was ended, and the curé descending from the altar took her by the hand with a cheering smile, and led her trembling steps towards the lady appointed by her position to give the awarded gifts.

"Courage, my child," he said; "do not tremble thus; I am near to support you; take courage, my good Madeleine."

Almost unconscious, she was led forward; and kneeling before the Comtesse de Guaie, her knees clung to the ground, and her hands were clenched, not clasped together.

"Poor child," said that lady, "you are agitated; there, hold up your head;" and she raised the chin, and patted the fair but feverish cheek; then loosening her hold, she placed, with many cheering words, the wreath of fresh white roses on her head, and the chain around her neck. Madeleine was as a statue, and essayed in vain to hold the purse tendered to her grasp. "Poor child, how timid she is!" said the Countess. "Monsieur le Curé, pray take it for her."

Père Gallin did as requested, at the same time encouragingly placing a hand on Madeleine's drooping head. "And here, my good girl," said a lady stepping from her seat, "here are a pair of earrings for you, for I often heard how good and virtuous you were; come, hold up your head, and let me put them in your ears."

And the fair hands adorned the now weeping girl with those much-treasured ornaments of the French peasant, long gold drops. As Madeleine's head was raised, drop after drop fell cold and heavily from her eyes; there was no sob, no contortion of muscle; they fell like the heavy drops preluding a coming storm, when skies lighten, and Heaven's angry voice is heard in thunder. At last Madeleine was once more kneeling before the altar, and the solemn benediction began which was to terminate the fête in its more serious character, and give up the assembled villagers to their dance on the green or *place*. Of all in that church, perhaps but one felt real envy; for with the young there was hope for the next year, and good resolutions with many, coupled with the only innocent ambition, that of excelling others in doing well and rightly; but one felt *real envy*, and it was the gratuitous envy of a bad heart; for she, Mademoiselle Lagune, was not of an age to aspire to the title conferred on Madeleine, but she had from

her infancy hated that girl, and now shook her malignant head, whispering to a neighbour, "Look at the conceited upstart, how she tries to seem humble and modest, though I know her bosom is in a glow of gratified vanity! Crying, too! what a comedy! crocodile tears! and to think of her daring to aspire to my Alexis! Marry him, indeed! but we shall see, we shall see!" And her face glowed with indignation at the idea.

The service proceeded; but when the last hymn was sung, and the Benediction given, as the Curé turned to leave the altar, Madeleine rose frantically, and then dropping on her knees exclaimed, with clasped hands—

"My father! Monsieur le Curé! forgive me! I am not worthy; I have deceived you all; I have sinned deeply; take back all, all." And with trembling hands she tore the earrings from her ears, the chain from her neck, and lastly the wreath of white roses, casting each on the floor of the sanctuary, the railing of which stood open for M. Gallin to pass through.

A general consternation pervaded the retiring congregation; all turned, and those who had left the place to await the procession outside, rushed hurriedly in again.

"Madeleine, my child," he exclaimed, taking her hand and standing over her, "come to yourself, you must be mad; what can you have done? what can *you* have committed so grave?"

"My child, my dear child," sobbed Madame Bertrand, clasping her in her arms. "Oh, Monsieur le Curé, do not think it; she must be mad; what can she have done?"

"I knew it, I knew it," exclaimed Mademoiselle Lagune, in glee to her neighbour; "didn't I tell you she was a hypocrite? ah! she never took *me* in;

poor foolish Madame Bertrand, to have nurtured this snake in her bosom!"

She seemed to have reason for this last sentence, when Madeleine, turning from Madame Bertrand's motherly embrace, raised her clasped hands to the curé, and implored in agony—

"Ask her, my good mother, to pardon me, for it is towards her that I have been most guilty and ungrateful: I know all about the robbery of her house!"

"You, Madeleine!" burst involuntarily from Madame Bertrand and the curé at the same moment, whilst a cold shuddering exclamation was breathed by all around.

"I was innocent of all knowledge of it till a week since," she uttered hurriedly, "and then it was confided to me; and in my anguish, scarcely knowing what I did, I bound myself by oath not to reveal it, and I have been wretched ever since. But I could bear the burden no longer; come what may, I have cast it from me!"

"And you have done well, Madeleine," said the curé gravely; "but something more remains to complete the act; you must here, before all, name the robbers, and how you became acquainted with them. You owe this to your own reputation, which I sincerely trust will come clear and pure out of this sad affair."

"Were she lost, quite lost," urged the Countess de Guaic, who had drawn near, in a deprecating tone, "she would not have thus accused herself."

"I trust so, I hope so," answered he gravely.

"I am sure of it," cried the generous little Madame Bertrand, taking her shrinking hand; "poor child, she has been led into this cruel position."

"Make her tell the name of her accomplice," cried Mademoiselle Lagune in her shrill tone.

"You had better tell all now, dear child," said her foster-mother; "tell all, and clear yourself; it will prevent ill-nature and malevolence."

She had recognised the voice of the last speaker; it was Louise, who stood beside the stricken girl, endeavouring to comfort and sustain her.

"Yes, Madeleine, you must name the thief, and how you are acquainted with the whole affair," said the curé. "This sacred edifice should witness your first step towards repentance, at the feet of Him whom you have offended;" and he turned sadly towards the altar.

For some moments Madeleine was silent, her eyes raised to the altar, her lips moving; at last, turning towards the curé, she exclaimed, "The thief was Alexis Vallette!"

A wild shriek burst from Mademoiselle Lagune. "'Tis false! 'tis a base fabrication, invented to ruin him from spite!"

Some one fell heavily to the ground; it was Louise fainting; but Madeleine never saw her, she was too much absorbed in her painful accusation against the man she loved.

"Remember, Madeleine Frémont," said the curé sternly, "in whose presence you are, and tell all fully and candidly."

No one had noticed Madame Bertrand, whose trembling hands held a letter she had just taken from her pocket. After a few moments' thought, Madeleine, still kneeling, having solemnly promised to speak all the truth, related her midnight interview with Alexis, and his promise soon to return free.

"There is no proof; 'tis a falsehood!" again shrieked his aunt.

"Hush, silence!" exclaimed Père Gallin sternly.

"Alas, alas!" ejaculated Madame Bertrand, "I

fear it is too true; for here is a letter I only received this morning from Alexis Vallette, written hurriedly, saying he would explain his long silence—a silence which has surprised us all—and begging me to cheer up Madeleine, as he had found a substitute, and was coming in a few days to remove all obstacles to his marriage with Madeleine.

We will sum up the conclusion of this scene in as few words as possible. Mademoiselle Lagune called loudly for Louis Debrets, who was known as an intimate friend of her poor maligned Alexis; but he was sought for in vain. After giving Madeleine the flowers, he had disappeared; no one had seen him in or near the church. This confirmed the idea of Alexis's guilt; the other had purposely concealed himself, having perhaps, though unnoticed, heard Madeleine's accusation. Who shall paint her deep affliction? Called upon in conscience to accuse, perhaps condemn her lover, the unhappy girl was bowed to the earth. Obliged to bring forward all the proof against him, she spoke of the flowers he had left in her room; these she had buried in a corner of the garden, to destroy every indication of his visit, and there they were found, faded and decaying, the bouquet of white roses, of which she was so fond, and which Alexis was wont to present her with. On closely examining the ground, the prints were still perceptible where the ladder had indented it.

Poor Madeleine was taken charge of by la Comtesse de Guaie, and driven home in her carriage to Madame Bertrand's, more dead than alive. No good, kind heart could blame her, for the self-accusation attested her repentance of any participation in the forced concealment of the crime of another. The curé accompanied her; all tried to soothe her, except Monsieur Bertrand, who, though an excellent man,

was rather narrow-minded; he blamed her, without well knowing why, and did not scruple in showing it.

CHAPTER VI.

When the Curé accompanied Madeleine home in the Countess de Guaie's carriage, he inquired more closely into all the circumstances of this painfully strange affair than he had chosen to do before the curious assembled in the church, in which group Mademoiselle Lagune stood pre-eminent; and while blaming Madeleine for entering into the mysterious oath to Alexis to conceal so criminal an act, he was forced, in self-accusing justice, to admit that he had acted without sufficient reflection himself, in the agitation of the moment, in not only permitting her so hastily to break it, but urging her to do so in the public manner in which it had been done. But the regret was now tardy; the evil of it had commenced its work in all sorts of uncharitable surmises, which she felt by intuition. Père Gallin tried, by every possible means of consolation, to calm and soothe the afflicted girl; and, taking a fatherly leave of her, with a promise to call early on the morrow, he bade her adieu, as he placed her in the ever-loving arms of her adopted mother. Despite that motherly care, however, Madeleine's state was so wild and excited, that the doctor, whom Madame Bertrand called in, ordered her instantly to be put to bed, and kept as quiet as possible. Where, then, was her ever-loving, faithful Louise? No one thought of her: who reckons a sister's love in comparison with an affianced wife's? And yet it often is far deeper and more devoted. She lay at home on her solitary bed, her head buried

in the pillow, lest her aunt should hear her sobs; for Mademoiselle Lagune's grief was of that violent nature, that it only added to her niece's, it could not soothe it. She was in a passion with every one; and even accused Louise as the primary cause of all, in having, sixteen years before, saved the child's life, which had grown up to be her curse.

The affair, of course, so publicly spoken of, got into the hands of the police authorities; and an officer was sent off to arrest Alexis Valette on a charge of robbery. Something of this reached Madeleine's ears. To see him brought in a prisoner,—to stay and condemn him, was impossible; one thing only remained to be done, to escape; but how? Some one was constantly entering her room; then, too, the idea of a dark reprehensive look from Mons. Bertrand, made the cold tremor of fear creep through her veins. Escape—there was only that; but how accomplish it? Night was coming on; what a long, wretched day that one had been! Sunday, too, the *Rosière* fête-day; and as she thought over all the promised joy of that day, before Alexis's visit, her excitement became redoubled: she must fly all. Thus only could she find peace. Poor girl; she was sighing for that which had left her for many a long day to come. Once or twice Madame Bertrand entered her room and whispered to her; she did not speak, though awake: she could not bear kind words; they killed her. At last her resolution was taken; and when Madame Bertrand came to her bedside again, she threw her arms round her neck; she could not bear to go without her blessing; and craving that, she dropped more calm from her all-but mother's arms, and begged to be allowed to rest. Madame Bertrand blessed and embraced her, spoke some words of comfort to her, and left her in seeming peace.

All was now quiet, and the time creeping on

towards midnight. Madeleine arose, wrote a few hasty, affectionate lines to her "dear mother," as she called her, beseeching her to forgive, and not blame her too much; said that she could not remain and meet Alexis a prisoner; but added that she would write to her kind mother and benefactress as soon as she had met with a situation. To Louise she also enclosed a few lines, imploring her forgiveness for the unwilling sorrow she had occasioned her. She then dressed hastily, and before the church-clock tolled midnight, was on the high road, and alone, journeying towards Paris. As she passed the outskirts of the village, the sound of the clock came booming through the air from the church-steeple; it seemed to her as if the quiet, holy spot she had well-nigh profaned, where so often she had knelt in placid joy and adoration, was sending a loud-tongued messenger on her track to drive her forth. Still, with the last tone of it, she knelt down and prayed earnestly and fervently for guidance and support. "After all," she said, rising, "I have not been guilty, except of the temporary concealment, through fear; perhaps my good angel may walk beside and lead me in my search, and some rich reward be mine, if I succeed." She thought then not of the rewards of earth; she was comforted, for higher hopes were hers; the good counsels of the good curé had not been cast away. Thus the girl journeyed on, whilst in fancy she saw a shadow with silver wings meekly folded, walking beside to cheer her; and she gently uttered a hymn to her guardian angel, which Louise had taught her when a little child.

The morning broke clear and bright; still Madeleine journeyed onward with the small parcel in her hand, which contained a change of linen—all she had taken with her—and about fifteen francs in her

purse. Poor child! she thought this would last an age! She had never known the necessity of a day's pinching want, or even the expense of daily bread, when every loaf has to be paid for, and the meagre purse diminishes by huge strides. But she did not consider this; her thoughts were fixed on two things. One was to increase, as quickly as possible, the distance between herself and Nogent; for she felt assured, in her ignorance of law, that by her absence Alexis would be saved; for who could convict, or condemn him? The next fixed idea of her mind—one which had long before this day sprung up in her heart—was to find her father! Ever since she heard of his existence, something had been urging her to seek him, though other duties, and perhaps joys, had of late banished it. Care brings many a beautiful bud to the rich flower's full bloom; so it was with this: and now, strange to all, having seldom in her short life been even in the streets of Paris, she was hastening thither to seek one, with the slight clue she possessed, amidst so many thousands! She did not speak of "luck" or "fate" bringing it to pass; she thought of One only; and to Him she prayed as she walked onwards. A market-cart overtaking her, she begged a ride, for her feet began to feel the length of road she had come. The man and his wife cheerfully gave her what she solicited; remarking, at the same time, "that it was early for a young girl to be alone on the road."

"I am going to Paris to join my father," she confidently said; for her heart felt assured, by its extraordinary lightness under her heavy affliction, that some happiness was in store for her.

"And he lets you travel alone? a pretty girl like you?" asked the woman.

"He is only a workman," she added; "and I am

going to seek a situation; I have been staying with some friends at Nogent."

The woman looked earnestly at her; for, in spite of her modest attire and little close peasant cap, Madeleine looked like one to be served, not to serve: the little hands were white as milk; altogether, she seemed much unfitted for a servant. Little more passed,—for she avoided, as well as she could, all questioning; when they arrived at the nearest point to the Quai St. Michel, she got out, and thanking her friends of an hour, stepped quickly away. After many inquiries, she found herself at last in the place she sought; but it was still very early; what could she do? She paused an instant, and looked around. A quiet little shop stood near, from whence issued the refreshing odour of coffee; it was an early breakfast-house. She made a step towards it; but beside it another door stood open; it was one of those houses which seldom close in France. "I will go there *first*," she whispered, stilling the cravings of hunger and fatigue, "and sanctify this day, my *first* in search of a parent."

And she turned into the house of God, and knelt down in humility and resignation, to hear the first early mass. When it was over she rose to depart; but her strength seemed insufficient to carry out her resolves. So she sank down again on her seat; and she may be surely forgiven—this poor wandering child—if nature sought refreshment in a deep, overpowering sleep. When she awoke, the day had sufficiently advanced for her to prosecute her search, by calling upon Monsieur Lafon, where her father was last heard of. After taking some refreshment in the little shop before alluded to, she proceeded towards the wood-yard. There was something so timid, so gentle in her manner, that the master himself proceeded to make inquiries for her; and she finally

ascertained that though he had not worked there for a long time, he had called about four months before the present period to inquire for employment, promising to return.

Madeleine's heart bounded with joy; her father lived! "And can you not give me his address?" she inquired, anxiously.

"I cannot," was the reply; "but he said he lived near the Barrière Montmartre, where he had been working lately. If you inquire at the wood-yards in that neighbourhood, probably you may find him; but call here again, and should he return, I will ask his address."

Thanking the speaker, she turned away. Here was another trial for her, to discover the Barrière Montmartre, but the anxious spirit did not tire; and early in the afternoon she found herself in that quarter of Paris. She inquired here in vain, however, for Gilles Frémont; no one knew him at any of the wood-yards; no such person was known. Disheartened and tired, she sat down on a large stone where they were building; and the tears began to fall from her eyes for the first time since her search. As she sat thus, a mason employed about the building approached her. "Why are you crying, *petite?*" he asked, kindly; "can I do anything for you?"

Madeleine looked up; her face was so pale and fair, that the man moved a step back in respectful attention.

"Thank you," she said gently, "I am in much trouble; I have been vainly seeking some one all the morning."

"A lover?" he asked, half smiling.

"No," she answered, blushing, "my father; can you tell me where I might be likely to hear of one Gilles Frémont; he could tell me about him;" she did not like saying that he was her father.

"Frémont, Frémont," he answered, "I think I have heard the name; but I am a stranger about here; this is my first job"—he pointed to the building,—"but go there, to that wayside house, *Au bon Enfant;* it is a place of resort for us workmen; the woman who keeps it is a good body. Say that I, Jacques the mason, sent you, and she will treat you kindly; I cannot leave my work, or I would go with you. There, don't cry, my poor child; I dare say you will find him. Have you come far? And what is your name?"

"My name is Madeleine," she answered, "and I have come a long way in search of him."

"Poor thing!" he said again, kindly; "go there, and if you cannot find him, come to me; I will help you in your search when my work is done."

Madeleine's face brightened; one kind word, one look of sympathy in her loneliness, was enough to cheer her onward. Oh, surely, when the Evil One invented a curse to lead us to recklessness and despair, he never imagined anything so perfect for his work as uncheered toil, solitude, and mental suffering without sympathy! The labouring body or mind, and none to share its cares or hopes!

CHAPTER VII.

MADELEINE rose smiling, and thanking her new friend, hastened forward. Jacques was young, and amidst the partial uncleanliness of face incidental to his occupation, a comely man of some four-and-twenty years. He stood watching the steps of the hurrying girl; while several men of various classes, in the house and about the door, turned to stare at

the pretty modest face approaching. Madeleine saw this and stopped.

"Madame Leon," cried one of them, looking in at the door, "here is a handsome demoiselle evidently seeking some place or person; go ask her what it is; she's worth the trouble."

These latter words were significantly uttered; and with the last one, a stout, well-looking dame came forth. Madeleine stood in confusion and irresolute at a short distance off.

"You are seeking some one, my child?" asked the woman, in a motherly tone: "can I assist you?"

"If you please, Madame," she replied. "A workman, Jacques the mason, bade me say he sent me here for information."

"Oh, Jacques!" she cried, looking a little annoyed. "Does he know you?"

Madeleine briefly explained how; and ended by her untiring question about Gilles Frémont. The woman's face assumed a look of surprise as she said hurriedly, "Jacques did well to send you; I think I can find out what you want. But take care to whom you address yourself; speak to no one but me; come in, I will take charge of you." And passing by the assembled persons with a quiet, sedate look, before which all fell back, she led Madeleine into the *auberge*, and thence into an inner room, apart from all. The door being closed, she endeavoured to elicit from the girl how she knew Gilles Frémont, and why she was seeking him?—but something sealed her tongue; she, all confidence generally, could not feel it towards this woman; and she merely stated that some one had spoken to her of him; she had a very serious circumstance to relate to him alone; she could tell no one else.

"Who can have spoken to you of him?" asked

the woman in surprise; "a young girl like you, evidently from the country."

Madeleine felt her position a most awkward one, alone and unknown, inquiring for a strange man: if he should arrive, what could she say? And lost in these thoughts she looked down, blushing deeply. Not a movement of hers was lost upon the woman. The other saw this, and looking up at last, said, "It was the *curé* of our village who spoke to me of him."

"A *curé!*" exclaimed the hostess, opening her eyes. "'Tis very strange: from whence do you come?"

Madeleine was silent.

"Show me your papers," cried the other, holding out her hand.

"Papers!" asked Madeleine. "What papers?"

"Well, your passport; you must show it to the police, or they will detain you."

"Passport!—Detain me!" she exclaimed, rising in terror. "Let me go, pray let me go; I have none. If they detain me, I shall never see—Gilles Frémont," she concluded, after a moment's hesitation.

"I cannot comprehend it," uttered the really amazed woman. "Surely a young, pretty girl like you cannot—but no, it is impossible! for Gilles Frémont is old enough to be your father; and—but there is no accounting for what women will do. Tell me candidly—you are safe with me—is this Frémont a lover of yours?"

"Mine!" exclaimed the girl, blushing in deep indignant refutation. "I have no lovers; and—and—" she added with simplicity, sighing deeply at the same time at the memories it awakened, "our *curé*, who has known me from my infancy, had me chosen *Rosière* the other day."

"A *Rosière!*" almost shrieked the hostess, laughing till she cried; "and seeking Gilles Frémont!"

Madeleine's heart trembled with the terror her words and manner excited; she sprang up, and stood gazing with distended eyes on the other.

"Come, sit down," said the woman at last, taking her hand and reseating her almost forcibly, her alarm was so great. "Pardon me,—I could not help laughing; there, don't be afraid of me,—I am not a bad person when folks know me; trust me, your secret will be safe, and I may be able to serve you; at all events I will screen you from the police by saying you are my niece, else they would arrest you, having no passport."

"I am very much obliged to you, Madame," uttered she, struggling to keep back her tears; "you are very kind to a stranger, a friendless girl like myself; and I will tell you why I seek Gilles Frémont. He does not know me, but I am his daughter."

"Daughter! You the child of a man like that! And he has not seen you, you say? By whom were you brought up? where do you come from? and above all, why seek him now?"

"I only knew he lived a few weeks since."

"And are you so homeless as to hope for one with him?"

"I care not how homely it may be, so I am with him," she responded. "I can work, too, for I daresay my father will get occupation again soon. Monsieur Lafon told me he would employ him shortly."

"What do you think your father is, my child?"

"A workman, is he not? He was a woodcutter at Monsieur Lafon's."

The woman smiled strangely, and seemed about to speak; then pausing, she tried to elicit from Madeleine her whole history; but this she withheld, merely

saying that circumstances made her desirous of seeking her father's care; promising at some future time to confide all to her new friend.

"Well," said the woman, taking her hand and surveying it, "you must keep your secret, I suppose; however, I will befriend you, and you shall find your father. But you talk of work; these hands seem to have done little."

"I had no occasion to labour, Madame; but I can do so now, and am not above it; only give me employment."

"Well, we must speak to Frémont; only take this hint, have a quiet tongue, except, of course, to your father, and *keep to yourself;*" these words she whispered. "We are often deceived," she mentally ejaculated; "but I will watch her closely. I have taken a fancy to this child. If she be innocent, what a lovely thing innocence is!" And the woman's face grew grave and saddened for a moment. She was, however, aroused from reflection by the door gently opening, and a man's head being thrust through the aperture.

"Mother Leon," he said, "why have you hidden yourself? Here are a dozen asking for you. Ha! a young girl; fresh and pretty. Who is that, mother?" And he entered as he spoke.

"Gilles Frémont," said the hostess, "come here; shut the door, I want you."

"That suits me very well, when you have a girl like this beside you." And he closed the door and advanced.

It would be impossible to describe Madeleine's emotion. Not all the anxious desire to see her father which had driven her to the rash step she had taken could prompt her to rush into his arms, claiming his love and blessing, as she had thought so fondly of doing when they should meet. No, her

feelings were those of repulsion towards this man; there was a careless, reckless, libertine manner about him, before which she involuntarily shrunk back. He was about forty, of a cold, forbidding countenance, yet over which the reckless air we have before alluded to cast an almost refinement of expression; he was perfectly calm and at ease, certainly above the class *workman*, though not by any means a gentleman; then his dress was somewhat shabby, but not that of a man doing any laborious work; neither did the hands, though coarse in form, indicate much hard-earned bread-getting. As he advanced he stared freely at the shrinking girl, and at last exclaimed—

"Where have I seen you before? I know your face perfectly; where have I seen you? And he tried to take her hand, but her first impulse was to shrink back.

"You alarm the child," said Madame Leon, kindly; "she is not used to Parisian manners. Search in your memory, Gilles Frémont, and you will possibly discover *why* you think you have seen her before; 'tis perhaps a likeness."

"Likeness? no, 'tis herself," he added. "We have met lately; but where, child? Do you not know me?"

"She knows you; but I question if she has ever seen you before," said the hostess.

"Let the girl speak," he said coarsely. "I want her to tell me; there, I knew I should win you to kindness at last." And soothing his tone to gentleness, he took the hand she relinquished to his grasp. "And now tell me where we met; for you look so modest, it puzzles me."

"Hush!" cried the woman, hastily. "You forget yourself. And you, child, tell him why you have been seeking him."

"Seeking me?" he exclaimed in deep surprise

and pleasure. "Ah, come, tell me that; I long to hear; I knew we had met before." And seating himself beside her, he kissed the hand still in his grasp; but with a sudden effort she withdrew it, and clasping both hers together said in low tremulous accents,—

"This must be ended, or I shall die. Tell me, Monsieur, my ——," she paused,—the word father clung to the roof of her mouth, she could not utter it,—" tell me," she continued, " do you not remember a Thérèse, one you loved, sixteen years since?"

"Oh-h!" he laughed, "you go far back. I have loved many; how remember one?"

"I mean," she continued, almost crying, "Thérèse Delisle of Amiens; *your* wife, and *my* mother."

The man jumped up, an expression of almost laughter passed like a shadow over his face, then veiling it with his open palm, he looked all surprise at his newly-discovered child as he asked, hurrying question after question,—

"And you have come to seek your father? who told you he lived? how did you find him? you are Madeleine Frémont, then?"

"I have been seeking you all day," she uttered in tears, she scarcely knew whether of joy or sorrow. "I left No—"

"Hush!" he cried hastily, "do not name place or person; but perhaps Madame knows all?" And he turned towards the hostess, who was all attention.

"No," answered Madeleine, "I merely said you were my father."

"Good, sensible child," he said paternally, "come to your father's arms! I love you dearly already."

And, forgetting her first impression, the girl clung to her father's neck.

"You need not be afraid of me, Gilles Frémont," said the landlady, rising from her set; "I have

known more of your secrets than the finding of this daughter of yours. However, I forgive you; only be a good father to the girl, for I have taken a liking to her, poor little thing, seeking you as she has done."

"I love her dearly," he exclaimed, encircling the girl in his arms. "And now, my good mother Leon, not a word of this to any one. I merely wish it said that I have brought home my daughter,"—and he winked at the hostess,—"to take charge of my house."

CHAPTER VIII.

"AND now, Madeleine," said her father, drawing her to a chair beside his own, when the hostess had quitted the room, "I want to speak seriously to you." His manner was totally changed; it was polished, almost elegant; so much so, that, combined with the language, she stared with amazement, asking herself the question—"whether this man ever could have been a workman?" Then her unsophisticated nature arranged all, by concluding that, forced by poverty to gain a living by any honest means, he had subdued his pride to labour with his hands, and to seem what by birth he was not. For she knew her father had been decently educated, and bred up for better things than his fate afterwards destined him to. "In the first place," he continued, "we must change your name; I have my reasons for that, which you need not know at present; I will arrange secresy with Madame Leon. Drop the Madeleine awhile; you must be called ——"

"Let me be called Thérèse, then, my poor mother's name," she anxiously asked.

"No," he replied, "that will not do either; what signifies the name you bear for awhile? Justine will do as well as any other; so let it be Justine. Remember *this*, for 'tis of consequence, breathe neither name nor history to any one: I will say you have been at school in Normandy; say as little as possible about it."

"But all this will be untrue, father," she said, looking up in his face. "I cannot tell a falsehood."

"Pshaw, child! you will tell many before you die. But as you have a scruple; why, I suppose you have been at school? the Bertrands sent you to one?"

"Yes, father. But how do you know all about them so well?" And her eyes distended with surprise.

"Never mind that; I knew you lived, and all about you, you see; still I had not resolved when to claim you. You were well off; I not rich; I would not bring you to poverty."

"My dear father," she cried, pressing his hand; and her heart began almost to trust and love, where she had feared so much at first. "Yes, I have been at school," she added, "several years; but only a day-scholar."

"Never mind, that will do; as you are so very scrupulous about the truth, if asked, you can say you have been at school. I will arrange the rest, for you will meet few persons except in my company, and young ladies should be reserved." A smile lit up his cold face.

"Young ladies?" she cried. "But you are only a poor man, are you, father? And I have come to share and help your poverty."

"This is very good of you," he answered; "and though I am not rich, yet I am not so poor as you imagine."

"But you are working for Monsieur Lafon?"

"True; a temporary poverty. I have inherited some money lately, and am about taking a cottage outside the *Barrière* here; I dare say I shall make you comfortable enough if you are a good girl. But *à propos*, Justine, tell me how and why you left Nogent?"

Madeleine sighed heavily; the excitement of the past hour had driven home from her thoughts. She, however, briefly related all particulars to her father —her love for Alexis, the scene in the church, and the one in her chamber at midnight. When she named this, Gilles stared in wonder and amazement; he was speechless for awhile, then rising hastily, paced the room, convulsed with laughter. Madeleine stared like one bereft of sense.

"Why," he said at last, struggling to be calm, "you must be the victim of some jest, or mad somnambulist, or something of the sort, to tell me such a tale expecting me to believe it."

"Father," she exclaimed energetically, "go and ask the curé if I am not speaking truth."

"I do not doubt your belief in it, but it could never have happened; no man would tell such a story and convict himself. Were you other than you are, child, I should say you had been taking strong drink; as it is, you have dreamt it."

"No, father, it occurred as I tell you; for Alexis has since written to a friend, saying he had found a substitute; and how procure that without money? Then the flowers left in my room were found, and the prints of the ladder; how account for all this?"

"Well, never mind," he hastily said; "you acted foolishly in betraying him. Where is he?"

"The gensdarmes were sent to bring him a prisoner," she uttered in deep suffering.

"What a stupid affair!" he cried, rising impatiently, and making a few steps forward: then stop-

ping and facing her, he added, "Mind, speak to *no one* of this. I would not have your name implicated in such an affair; drop Nogent altogether. And hearken, Justine, it will be necessary for me to leave you here a few days; but I shall be near you,—with you, I should say; the fact is, I have not yet quite decided upon a house. This, though a very humble auberge, is kept by a most excellent woman; one, too, with whom I wish to be on terms, for reasons too lengthy to tell you; but, remember, whilst we stay, not one word of your past life—of Nogent, the Bertrands, anything, in short — but she will not question you; keep in your own room, unless I take you out. By the way, what clothes have you? have you no bonnet? only that cap?"

"No, father, I left all behind me. I thought my father a poor workman; I came as his child should come."

"Very humble and very meek," and he patted her bent head; "I see I shall be able to mould you to my wishes,—my habits, I mean,—I am odd to deal with at times; but I will see to all, or Madame Leon shall. You must have a bonnet and veil, and never go out without the latter down; these Bertrands will of course seek you, and I cannot afford to part with my child now I have found her. Adieu, Justine. I will send Madame to you presently. Remember all I have said; be silent." And embracing her affectionately, he quitted the room, and she heard the key grate in the lock.

Poor Madeleine, left alone, fell into deep thought. Her greatest trouble was a strange feeling of disappointment that her father should be other than she had fancied him—a simple workman. It was not a romantic idea, but a noble one. She had fled in search of him as a duty, to cheer his poverty, and perhaps comfort and soothe him in trouble; she

came to find a gay, prosperous man, towards whom, though her father, she could not approach unfearingly, so much had her first impression of repulsion left a trace on her heart. Depend upon it, reader, that this is an instinct given us by Heaven's gift—nature; we have it in common with the animal, the bird, and the insect. We should always look warily upon the person against whom our heart revolts *at first sight*.

Madame Leon came soon afterwards to the room, where its occupant had been weeping over past scenes, lost friends, and, above all, Alexis's trouble, of which she had been so unhappily the cause. Not a question was asked by this woman; her manner was kind, motherly, and affectionate; without a remark, she prefaced her conversation by calling her, with respect but not servility, "Mademoiselle Justine," as if to show her that she had been tutored, and could be trusted. She went on to say; "As a great many persons frequent the house, some a little wild,—and a lone widow as I am cannot always restrain them, so your father wishes you to remain entirely in the room I will prepare for you up-stairs; but you shall not be dull, I will come to you and bring you some books; do you like play-books?"

"I have never read any; I don't think I should," she replied.

"How strange!" ejaculated the woman; "but then Monsieur Frémont" (it was *Monsieur* Frémont now, not Gilles) "tells me you have been very strictly brought up; well, what can I give you to amuse you, my child?"

"I can work very well, or embroider, if you have any to do, Madame," answered poor Madeleine, thinking at the same time that at dear Nogent she had never needed to seek amusement; for when not employed at home she was engaged in some way for

the curé, visiting his poor or sick, or decorating the chapel.

"What are you thinking of, Mademoiselle Justine?"

Instead of answering, Madeleine began to weep in silence,—those tears which chill the very heart, they fall so hopeless and cold.

"Ah, well! I must not inquire," continued the woman kindly, herself a good deal affected; "but there, my child," and she took her hand, "don't think me a cold-hearted mere hostess of—of—this auberge," she added, as if lost for a word; "I had a heart as gentle as your own once, perhaps circumstances make us—" again she seemed at a loss, "worldly," she concluded; "but if you ever want a friend," here she lowered her voice cautiously—"*and you may*—come fearlessly to me, I will be one to you; for you have interested me much, poor child!"

Madeleine pressed her hand, and gratefully thanked her, adding at the same time,—

"But I think I shall be able to make my father love me, and he will be kind to me."

"Perhaps; but men are changeable. He is still young, he may marry, or neglect you, or—in short, remember what I have said, and keep it to yourself. Now I will go and make your room comfortable." And kissing the fair, smooth brow of the maiden, she quitted the room; and again the key turned in the lock outside.

CHAPTER IX.

A FORTNIGHT after the above events, the hostess "*Au bon Enfant*" sat in the room we have just quitted, and a man beside her, but of a style totally different from Gilles Frémont, though about the same age. He was rather tall, and assuredly had been handsome, but care or toil had made sad ravages in his appearance; his countenance was sad, almost approaching to gloom and sullenness; he looked like one who had passed all his noon of life on the edge of a running stream, striving to stay the ever-fleeting shadows of the sun, finding only at last, when the luminary sank to rest and set in all his western glory, that they were *but* shadows, and the night, cold and chill, around him. There was a restlessness in his eye too, painful to behold, a look of terror and suspicion. With all these faults of countenance, he was a man of anything but unpleasing aspect; he rather inspired confidence and liking. His class was more the mechanic, as indicated both by dress and language, than the gentleman; with him too Madame Leon seemed quite at her ease.

"Pierre Frison," she said, in continuation of their previous conversation, "I wish you would go at once to Frémont's; I don't quite like the way he is acting. You know it is a rule I make, never to betray a secret confided to me, when I have promised to keep it; it wouldn't do in my position here; so I can tell you no more than this, that he has kept this girl's existence concealed up to the present time, for reasons best known to himself; he has educated her well, but never scarcely went to see her, and she, tired of

school and the friends he had confided her to, ran away, and came alone to Paris to seek him."

"But how did she trace him?" asked the other, in surprise, and thoughtfully.

"Oh, she had an address, or clue, I suppose, but more than this I cannot say. But what I want you to do is this—" she paused an instant and looked down. "Look here, Pierre Frison," she said at last, resolutely, "there is a chord left untouched by the world, however bad we may be, in most persons' hearts; this girl has found mine, and made it resound. Lost as we may be, it is impossible to come in contact with a creature like Justine, and not bow down before her; her simple purity, firm truth, and uncanting religion, even the few days she was here, have made me think deeply. I have seen much that is good and worthy in you, Pierre; I know you will not laugh at what I say; but it would almost break my heart to know that wrong came to that child."

"What can I do?" he asked coldly; "she is with her father; surely he will see no evil happens to her."

"He!" she cried, contemptuously; "don't you yet know what Gilles Frémont is? will he spare any one, if to act otherwise would suit him better? This girl he has placed at the head of an establishment, a pavilion surrounded by gardens and high walls, at Batignolles, and there she serves by her beauty, most unconsciously, as a decoy for young men, who are plundered by him and his associates."

"You have suddenly grown very scrupulous," he replied, sarcastically.

"And you reckless, Pierre; when first I knew you, a year since, you were not thus. Whatever you might have done, still you had feeling; but since that last affair at ——"

"Hush!" he exclaimed, with an oath, "do not

speak of *that;* what I did before was in fair war; if men are fools, and will play with wiser hands, they must expect to lose; 'tis all fair. When I could get honest work, however humble, I did it, and set the rest aside; but a man cannot starve; this last affair has made a felon of me, and I am, hand and foot, in Frémont's power: I would to Heaven I had never met that man!"

"Well but, Pierre," she said, soothingly, "you did not profit by it; you were drunk when you did it; you gave all to him."

"True, but I helped to commit the act, and it hangs like a curse over me. I cannot be honest now. I went to seek work the other day; but I have not gone back since, though it was promised me. This curse is over me: I would I had never seen that man!"

"And, Pierre, with such a man you would leave a perfectly innocent girl, though his child!"

"What would you have me do?" he asked again.

"Go and see him, and go often; I have confidence in you."

"But he fights shy of me; I met him the other day, dashingly dressed, and I suppose he didn't like my shabby clothes, for he just gave me a nod, and hurried on; besides, he comes here no more."

"Go there, Pierre; he *dare* not refuse to receive you. Go boldly, go to-night: he has a party, I know; some of *ours* are to be there, and several strangers; tell Justine, privately, that I bade you see her; for, poor child, she grew confiding in me before she left, and she went downhearted enough, I can tell you."

"I'll see her to-night," was Pierre's reply, though gloomily given; "I should be sorry if evil befel an innocent girl; if I can avert it, I will. There are enough bad ones in the world by inclination; if I can

keep one well-intentioned right, I'll do it; she is just sixteen, you say? Poor child, only sixteen!" and the man sighed.

Madame Leon had told the exact truth. Madeleine had found a father, but he was one better never known to one like herself. The unsophisticated child of village life, it is true, was blinded to his mode of existence and her own position, yet she was most unhappy. All her expectations in finding him had been crushed; she came to win and receive a father's love, and great as her efforts were, she could not give hers; all true affection must be based on respect; without it, it is a gossamer's web broken by a breeze. How respect a man who surrounded her with falsehood? and how disentangle herself? True, she only tacitly permitted it, by not revealing her real name; but every day she had to encounter some painful scene with him, where her strict probity and truthfulness made war against some effort of his to destroy them, by leading her into duplicity, or abetting him in schemes revolting, though incomprehensible to her. Over her prudent conduct, with regard to his many visitors, he alone watched with almost more than a father's jealous eye, though no such watching was needed, for all her thoughts were with Alexis, of whose fate, however, she could as yet ascertain nothing. Her father had made her solemnly promise to communicate with no one unknown to him; she promised, and even he had perfect faith in her truth. It is not to be supposed that one so fair as she was passed unnoticed among her father's guests; no, this would not have suited him; she was in his house to allure and attract; and so well did she perform this office, though involuntarily, that it became a summons of pleasurable anticipation to more than one man of some fashionable club in Paris,—"Let us go to-night and see Frémont's fair daughter."

Madeleine always retired early—for she was not allowed to sell her society too cheaply—and with joy she quitted the rooms, where, though there was not high play until she retired, still she saw enough to grieve and wound her. Then, too, Frémont had forbidden her even to attend to her religious duties. In vain she implored, entreated; he seized the first excuse to prohibit her even going to church: here, however, she was firm in a refusal to comply with his wishes. "Father," she said—and the girl was all woman in spirit—"only in this I must disobey you; you are my earthly parent, it is true, but I have One above you; He has never deserted me, and His laws I must obey."

"I dare you to go, Justine," he cried, in anger; "I defy you, unless I choose."

"Perhaps so, father," she said meekly; "but if I can, I shall; nothing shall extort a contrary promise from me."

"But I tell you, Justine, you cannot, unless I choose; I am master here."

"I know that, father, and must submit; but you cannot control my thoughts or prayers. I can pray for you and myself, even in my chamber; and placing faith where it is due, I trust to be heard, and I *know* I shall be upheld in all trials."

It was to this girl Pierre Frison came, an unwelcome guest in her father's house. When he entered—for he came early—only one or two were assembled, and these were men evidently of their own stamp, known to each. Frémont's brow knit in ill-suppressed rage when Pierre was announced.

"I came," said this latter, assuming a tone of cheerfulness widely different to that he had used when speaking to Madame Leon, "Frémont, to be presented to your handsome daughter; every one is speaking of her."

"Where?" asked Frémont, sulkily; "people are very busy."

"What! does that annoy you? you should close your doors, then; and, on the contrary, I hear of your *fêtes* from all the world. I did not venture sooner, for I am a homely man, and I was not in great funds, nor dressed well enough to meet your visitors; but to-day a friend lent me some money and this suit of clothes;—so I have come; I knew you would be glad to see me."

"So I am, Pierre," answered the master, clearing his brow by an effort; "but I doubt if Justine will come down this evening. I hear she is not very well; I will go and see." And he hurried towards the door, purposing to desire her not to appear that evening, from some motive best known to himself; but as he approached the door, it opened, and Madeleine herself entered. Frémont started back.

"I heard you were ill, and not coming down," he said, hurriedly.

"No, father," she replied, "I am quite well: who told you so?"

"Well, Josephine, I think; but never mind, I rejoice to see you; here's an old friend of mine wishing to be presented to you," and he led her towards Pierre Frison.

Frison stared, as if some magnetic influence attracted him; then bowing awkwardly, said, with homely warmth, very different to the polished phraseology of those who generally met in her father's rooms, "Oh, how lovely Mademoiselle is! very lovely! they did not speak half highly enough of her; and she looks so good! Permit an old man to shake you by the hand." And he suited the action to the word.

Though the words were all in praise of her beauty,

still there was nothing to make her dislike them; they were naturally uttered, and nature spoke to her own child in Madeleine. She started at the homely voice, it recalled her village home; and, giving her hand freely, she looked up in the speaker's face with a smile, which many of her gay young gallants from club and hall would have envied.

Frémont, the keen man of the world, saw in an instant this freemasonry of thought between them, and again he frowned.

"Come, Frison," he said, "though you call yourself old, you are my junior, and I allow no one of any age to make free with Justine, not even an old friend like yourself; hands off, Pierre."

"I forgot my polished manners," he replied, smiling; "but Mademoiselle looked so natural, so unlike our grand ladies in general, that I thought I was once more in my village, and not in Paris." And, awkwardly bowing, he followed Frémont to a seat beside his own; but the train was lighted, the two village hearts had met in a world of spirit, ever above our heads, guiding sympathizing souls together. They sat apart, but both wished to be beside one another; and when fresh arrivals poured in, despite the obvious vigilance and uneasiness of Frémont, Pierre in his awkward unpolished manner drew near Madeleine, and the girl smiled again as he dropped into a seat near her own, and said in a lone tone, without preface:—

"Mademoiselle, a friend, a sincere one of yours, Madame Leon, urged me to come to-night; she fears you may not be happy, and she bade me tell you always to remember her; if she can serve you, you may rely upon her; she is well and honestly disposed towards you."

And Madeleine firmly believed it, because he said so; so much does true honesty of purpose gild the

humblest page of the human countenance, and make us read it in clear bold characters.

"Shall you come here often?" said she. "I hope you will. Do, Monsieur Frison, and tell Madame Leon I never shall forget her kindness, or fail to seek it in my need."

"I am glad I came, and I did not want to do so," he said, in the same low tone; "for I saw the other day that Frémont looked coldly upon me, and I see it more so to-night; but I neither know the cause, nor care. I shall return soon; and take care of yourself, my child, for you are here alone among all these wild men."

"But my father never leaves me," she replied. Frison seemed about to say something serious; twice he essayed, then checking himself added, after a peculiar look towards Frémont,—

"Don't trust any one *here;* fathers cannot always watch; be on your guard; I will see you again soon somehow. Now, good-night; I see Gilles wishes me gone; take care of yourself."

And unseen by Frémont, whose attention had been momentarily drawn aside, for he had scarcely taken his eyes off them, being unable to leave a table where *écarté* was being arranged, Pierre seized her hand again with his homely grasp, and Madeleine almost burst into tears as he rose, so much had his manner and language recalled Nogent and its associations.

CHAPTER X.

WE must now transport the reader to Nogent, the day Madeleine's flight was discovered, which did not take place, however, for hours; not, indeed, before she had been safely lodged in the auberge with Madame Leon. Madame Bertrand had crept to her room, and finding the curtains closed, she withdrew, imagining that a heavy sleep had fallen on the sorrowing girl. At noon Louise came; whatever her own affliction, she could not leave her beloved Madeleine uncomforted by her presence. She at once guessed that more than ordinary sleep had overcome the girl; she crept, however, softly into the room, then approached the bed. A loud cry announced the truth. Consternation filled the breasts of all; even the letter she had left failed in assuaging it. In all directions messengers were despatched on the vain search; it was only when every other chance had failed, that the police were applied to; but after two days of anxious and indefatigable inquiry on their part, all that could be ascertained was, that a market-gardener had given her a lift to Paris. There all traces of her were lost, for in no place more than this are there houses where persons may lie concealed in defiance of the police, and Madeleine by strange chance met with one of these: when no passport is sent to the prefecture, the residence of a person is not easily discovered where dozens reside in one house, and, generally speaking, no one knows who his neighbour is. To add to all their trouble, the gensdarmes were, as the reader knows, sent to bring Alexis a prisoner to Nogent as a felon. Loud were Mdlle. Lagune's

exclamations and prophecies against poor Madeleine, who had innocently wrought this ill.

In the midst of all this consternation, to the surprise of every one, one day Alexis walked into his aunt's house free and unshackled, dressed in coloured clothes, no uniform on his back, or gendarme to escort him! True, he was pale and thin, but in high spirits, and not a little amazed at the effect his arrival produced upon all there assembled.

"Fly, wretch, disgrace to your name!" shrieked his aunt, waving him back, "brought up as you have been, to become a thief, a felon!"

Alexis stood aghast; he thought sudden madness had seized upon her. Alarmed at the cry, Louise hastily entered; in an instant she was round her dear brother's neck.

"Oh, Alexis!" she cried, "why have you come? Why have you brought this grief upon us all? Fly, my brother, and do not add to our sorrow by letting us see you in the hands of justice!"

"Are you all mad? you too?" he exclaimed, pushing back Louise, and gazing from one to the other; "what have I done? I came to rejoice you all, I hoped, by returning free, and this is my reception!"

A few hurried words explained all; at the recital he turned ghastly pale.

"Madeleine!" he ejaculated, "Madeleine! she must have had a vision, or be a sleep-walker: I can bring proof, convincing proof, that for a week I never quitted my bed from fever, neither have I been a day absent from my regiment, or superior's presence; for myself, I have nothing to fear, I can clear all suspicion away; but Madeleine, she must be mad!" and he made a step towards the door.

It would be impossible to paint Louise's joy at the assurance of her brother's innocence; but Mdlle.

Lagune, like too many women, loved the horrible and exciting; she would not be happy or consoled.

"How, then, are you free?" she cried, placing herself before the door to prevent his egress; "where did you *honestly* obtain the money for a substitute?"

"The substitute," he replied, and his voice trembled with emotion, "I never can repay; it is an act of the purest friendship. Louis Debrets and I were, as you know, like brothers from childhood; then, unhappily, we both loved the same person; and this friend, this true brother, let other thoughts sway him but for a day when I was drawn for the conscription. He wrote a letter which followed me, saying he could not bear to see Madeleine's sorrow; that he should like to serve; and, finally, seeing other hopes of succour fail, I accepted; and the day Madeleine was crowned *Rosière*, he but waited to give her her bouquet at her own door, and then he quitted all for her sake and mine: he is my substitute!"

A murmur of applause burst from all assembled in the auberge. Louise was weeping in Alexis's arms.

"Well, settle your affairs amongst you," cried Mdlle. Lagune, stepping aside; "but I don't see it clear yet; who stole the money, I should like to know?" She would almost have preferred her nephew's guilt to anything terminating happily. "And don't think," she continued, "that you shall ever marry that bad one! She's off, that's one comfort!"

The worst had to be told to poor Alexis,—Madeleine's terror and flight. He was like a madman, in the dread of the evil which would inevitably befal her. The gensdarmes despatched to arrest Alexis returned after two days with most convincing proof that he had never been absent an hour without leave; and at the moment in which he was accused of visiting Madeleine was confined to his bed,

recovering from a severe attack of fever. Great were the rejoicings at his innocence; then arose the question about Madeleine's perfect sanity, until the bouquet left in her room was named, and the marks of the ladder beneath her window remembered: these threw the affair as much as ever in the dark. Poor Alexis left others to unravel the thread of this most strange mystery; as for himself, he started for Paris, to search every corner, if necessary, of that huge hiding-place, for his beloved Madeleine."

CHAPTER XI.

THE morning after Pierre Frison's visit at Frémont's, the latter sat at breakfast with Madeleine; he seemed embarrassed, as though desirous of broaching some difficult subject; at last, taking her hand, and looking earnestly at her, he commenced. "Justine," he said, "it is time I should speak to you on a subject generally agreeable to young ladies—marriage; tell me, among the many visiting here at different times, have you seen none likely to make an impression on your heart? Speak candidly to me as a friend, not a father." And he pressed her hand tenderly, while his eyes never quitted her face.

She coloured deeply. "Oh, father," she answered, "do not speak to me on so painful a subject as this ever must be; you know all my history; having lost Alexis, I never could marry another."

"Pooh! nonsense, child! you cannot be serious; he was a common thief, a burglar, you know; you could never dream of him again."

"I know that, father; but he did it for me; he was led into the act, not thinking of all the error of

it; but though I may not be his wife, I need not marry another."

"Then no one visiting here pleases you?"

"No one, indeed."

"Do you know I imagined, girls are such odd creatures, that you had taken a sudden fancy last night for Pierre Frison." And he looked intensely at her.

"Oh, no, father; not as you mean;" and she smiled: "but I *did* take a fancy to him; I should like to see him often: he reminded me of the country, and——"

"There, utter the word 'home;' I cannot feel offended; I know early habits are the strongest. But to return to this Pierre; such a man would be too *old* for you, would he not?"

"Oh, age would never be an objection, if I could love; but he is not old; you are not old, are you?"

"Well, Justine," and his eye lightened, "I am glad you think so; for I am jealous of your love, and would not lose it. Look here, my Justine, I hope soon to be in a position to leave France; we will go to Italy, away from all, and live quietly for one another; should you like that, dearest?" And he fondly kissed her hand. She blushed deeply; why, she could not define; it was a painful feeling.

"I like France," she replied, "and you have promised soon to make peace for me with my kind benefactors and dear Louise; I should like to live near them."

"And see this Alexis?" he exclaimed, crimsoning with anger.

"Poor Alexis!" she uttered in tears, "Heaven knows where he may be!"

"At the galleys, probably; a thief! No, Justine; if I give up all society for you, you must do the like for me; we will go, darling, away from all; at all

events, for awhile; you know not, child, how I love you."

Again she trembled, scarce knowing wherefore; it was a feeling of ungovernable fear. "If we leave France," she said at last, anxious to turn the current of his thoughts, which alarmed her, though unconscious of their exact purport, "may I then go to church as I ever used to do, and not live as I am now living? Oh, dear father, let me go now! You cannot tell how lonely it makes me feel, this privation; for I cannot understand your dislike to it; and what we are at a loss to comprehend alarms and pains."

"Why, Justine, too much devotion unfits a girl for all the duties of society, and the pleasures of her age."

"Oh no, dear father; no one was so happy, so lively as I was at Nogent; for my heart had nothing to desire; I was in peace and love with Heaven and man."

"I dare say what you say is very pretty; but I will have no priestly influence in my house—spies and traitors!"

"Hush, dear father!" she cried, putting her hand on his mouth; "you are not just or truthful. Oh, our dear curé was the godsend to all, rich or poor; his steps brought comfort, as the spring flowers!"

"Little enthusiast!" he cried, catching her in his arms: "there, embrace your father, and look your best to-night. I expect many friends, but only keep your smiles for me. And *apropos*, I have given orders you should always be denied to this Pierre Frison; he is a presuming, low man, and unfit for your society."

So saying he quitted the room, and she fell into a train of deep thought. Why should her father forbid her all exercise of her religion? why place spies over her, as he had done in all the servants? and why forbid

her writing to tell Madame Bertrand where she was? To send, unknown to him, was impossible; she never stirred out alone; and once having asked a servant to post a letter, her father was informed of her request, and a stricter guard placed over her actions, because she had candidly told him recently, on his refusal to allow her to write to her friends, that if she could she should do so.

Some days passed, and Pierre Frison had more than once been sent from the door. Madame Leon ventured too; but her success was not greater; though politely received, she was told "Mademoiselle was from home with Monsieur, and would not return all day."

"Pierre," she said that evening, "you must endeavour to see that girl; I have strange misgivings about her. I wish I had not sworn so solemnly to keep something secret, which Gilles asked me to do; but look, Pierre, there was a time an oath broken, or anything else, would not have startled me; but that girl bewitched me while she was staying here. I should never rest if harm came to Justine."

"I will see her somehow," answered Pierre; "but what do you fear so much? Gilles will protect her: he is her father."

"That's just it, Pierre: do you know, I sometimes doubt *that;* but I cannot tell you why."

"Then I will see her to-day, if I storm the house," he cried, rising, with a deep glow over his cheek. "Farewell, mother; you shall see me to-night."

Gilles Frémont's pavilion required a little repairing; one of the garden-walls was crumbling down; a high wind displaced several of the bricks, more were falling, and an aperture was made; to a man dreading intrusive visits from police, nothing must be lost sight of. For his security a mason was sent by the landlord, and by a strange coincidence, (but

all these strange coincidences are the inscrutable tools of Providence,) Jacques, the mason who directed Madeleine to the auberge, came with mortar and hod to repair the mischief. He worked cheerfully for some hours, enlivening his toil by whistle and song.

There was a pretty shady walk in the garden, whither Madeleine was in the constant habit of walking. Frémont had gone out early; and so his child, unquestioned, though not unwatched—that never was the case—rambled up and down. Jacques was sitting astride on the wall, singing and working. Madeleine stopped and looked up at the cheerful singer; their eyes met; Jacques stood transfixed, a trowel in one hand, a brick in the other. "Well!" he mentally exclaimed, "if ever I saw one face on two different bodies, that is the young girl who was asking for—for—what was the name?" And he searched awhile in his recollections—"Dupont—Brémont—no, not that"—and he continued calling upon memory, who obstinately kept her tablets well clutched in her hand. Again he looked; Madeleine had walked on. "Jacques, my friend," he said to himself, trowelling at the brick which was too large for his purpose, "you are mad or a fool. That young lady the poor girl who sat crying on the stone! What an idea! Your wine was too strong this morning, Jacques!" And he got down his ladder on the other side leading into the road, to fetch another load of bricks. As he plodded up with them, with his head bent beneath the load, he did not at first notice the white dress floating beside his work; when he did so, the sight nearly destroyed his equilibrium. He managed, however, to place his hod on the wall, and utter "*excusez!*" (the French word in all difficulty,) as he snatched off his cap.

"Are you not Jacques, the mason?" asked a gentle voice.

"I *knew* it was the same face!" he exclaimed, joyously dropping from the wall beside her. "Oh, Mademoiselle, I am so glad to see you, and looking so well. Who would have thought it? and did you find the monsieur you were looking for? Madame at the auberge would scarcely answer me when I asked her."

"Yes," she replied, smiling kindly, "I found my father, Gilles Frémont."

"That's the name!" he cried, rejoicing; "I couldn't recollect it. Ah, 'twas your father! Well, that was odd, that a young lady should be seeking her father, not knowing where to find him! it *was* odd!"

"And we are living here, Jacques. 'Tis strange you should come to repair this wall: have you breakfasted? Will you come in and have some? I never shall forget your kindness, and that but for you I might never have found him." Something like a regret escaped her heart that she ever had done so; but she checked the thought, and urged him to enter the house and refresh himself.

"I remember all now," he said, "and how you sobbed out your name when I asked it; Madeleine, is it not so, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes," she whispered, looking round; "but hush! some one is coming. I want you," she quickly added—it was the thought of a moment—"to put a letter in the post for me; but be silent. I will go and write it; the servant shall bring you some refreshment here, that will be better. Good Jacques, I never shall forget your kindness that day."

"Mademoiselle will be quite sunburnt without her bonnet or parasol," said a servant, approaching, who had been set as a kind of spy on her actions.

"Thank you," answered Madeleine coldly, "I am coming in. Tell cook to bring out a good breakfast and wine to this man; I owe him a great obligation."

"But, Mademoiselle," said she, hesitatingly, "Monsieur said the wall was to be completed immediately, and this will delay it."

"Do as I tell you," she replied, annoyed at the woman's interruption, "or I will do it myself. Breakfast well, Jacques; I shall return soon." And nodding kindly, she hastened towards the house.

"You don't see this man again, if I can prevent it," said the woman to herself; "master will blame me for all. I wonder how and where she knew him!" And in her anxiety to prevent the meeting, she removed a barrier to facilitate the workings of destiny, by making the man carry his breakfast over the wall, and sit outside to eat it.

CHAPTER XII.

MADELEINE hastened in her anxiety, at all risks, to write to Madame Bertrand, and confide the letter to Jacques. While she was thus employed, that man sat outside the garden-wall on a large stone, as she had sat the first time they met; but unlike her, he was eating heartily, and singing as he did so. Jacques had a very light heart, and the fair girl's remembrance of him cheered that heart—good thoughts or deeds dance around us as sunbeams. As he ate, sang, and pondered, he was too much absorbed at first to see a man standing observing him and the broken wall with anxious eyes. Looking up at last, he noticed him, and after a moment's hesitation, touched his cap, and said,—

"Good day, Monsieur Frison; we do not often see you at the *Bon Enfant*."

"No," answered the other; "I have been busy lately elsewhere."

"Will you drink a glass of wine?" he cried, politely offering the glass and bottle.

"Thank you, no," was the reply; "I have just breakfasted; but you have come far for a job to-day."

"It is all the same to me," he laughed; "my employer sent me: and, look you, I don't care how often I have such a one; we don't always have fare like this," and he held up the carcass of a turkey; "and the oddest adventure—listen:" and with a mouth busily employed on the good things before him, Jacques recounted the whole affair from first to last. Frison literally staggered beneath the strange history, but when Jacques mentioned the name of Madeleine, he became pale to his very lips. Apparently he was a man of resolute action, full of energy; for without hesitation, he said, laying a hand on the other's shoulder, "Jacques, you are a good man, and ready to assist a girl in distress, are you not?"

"I'd be killed to serve a woman who needed my help," he answered, looking up.

"No one ever needed it more than that girl yonder; she is in the hands of a ruffian, and not her father; he has borrowed the name to ruin her."

"Well, if I didn't think there was something queer in it!" exclaimed he, starting up. "What shall I do?"

"Only run and fetch a coach to the end of this road, and bid the driver wait; give him that to secure him." And he flung a ten-sous piece to the flying Jacques. When he was gone, without hesitation Pierre mounted the ladder; it was a quiet road, almost uninhabited; at all events, deeds done in daylight excite no suspicion. Descending the other side, without considering a moment what to say in case of meeting any one—possibly Frémont himself

—he walked towards the house. Madeleine was in the drawing-room, where Pierre had before seen her, writing her hurried letter; and the maid, knowing her safe there, was lounging in the dining-room, from whence she could watch all. She sprang forward when she saw Pierre advancing towards the one where Madeleine was.

"Monsieur," she cried, wondering how he had entered, "Mademoiselle is not within." He was a man of quick wit, and at once understood that Frémont was from home.

"I come to seek Mademoiselle," he answered quickly; "Mademoiselle Justine!" he said, raising his voice, "where are you?"

Madeleine hastily opened the door, alarmed at the voice; what could it mean? Without the slightest hesitation she advanced smiling towards Frison, who entered the room with her, both followed by the woman.

"Madeleine," he said resolutely, "I summon you to follow me. You are in a house of gamblers; and the man you call Gilles Frémont is not your father, neither is he Frémont."

"O Heavens!" she exclaimed, staggering; then by an impulse of terror grasping his arm, "Take me away, Monsieur Frison; pray take me away. My heart has not deceived me; I dreaded that man."

"Mademoiselle," cried the woman, endeavouring to detain her, "you cannot go without Monsieur's leave."

"Back!" exclaimed Frison, shaking her from Madeleine's arm, "back! and await your master yourself, and tell him Pierre Frison has discovered all." And with one movement he drew Madeleine into the passage, and locked the door on the other. As he hurried the girl away, half dead with fear, he heard the crashing of glass, the woman evidently

bursting open the windows leading into the garden, which had been nailed up for security; but before other aid could be called to assist her, Pierre and Madeleine were in the road. Jacques, not well comprehending all, but seeing there had been danger to her, took the hand she held out in gratitude to him as she entered the coach.

"Jacques, we shall meet to-night at the auberge; good-bye, friend, till then," said Pierre, as the door closed.

"Where to, Monsieur?" asked the driver.

"Just beyond the barrier," answered he; and the coach moved off; and so did Jacques, and in five minutes more he was once again upon the wall, singing as he worked and pondered. At the barrier Pierre quitted the coach, and turning off down a street till he came to the next stand, entered another with the trembling Madeleine, and bade the man drive towards the Barrière Montmartre.

"There?" cried she, in momentary alarm.

"Yes," he answered, "there you will be safe and protected. You do not fear me?"

"No," she replied, "I did not from the first; but I feared all others."

"And you did well, Madeleine," he said, replying to the first part of her speech. "I would not harm you for the world. *I* am Gilles Frémont, and you are my daughter!"

CONCLUSION.

MADEMOISELLE LAGUNE was startled out of all muscular power, and her blood "iced in her veins," as she expressed it, by the entrance into her auberge of one of the very men she so well remembered to have seen just before the Bertrand robbery. Still greater was her surprise when this man audaciously inquired if Monsieur and Madame Bertrand were at Nogent, and then, without hesitation, advanced towards their house. When a stranger was announced, Alexis, who sat there, prepared to go; Pierre, for he it was, met him on the threshold.

"I beg pardon, Monsieur," said the new-comer, respectfully, "but I think I see Monsieur Alexis Vallette, do I not?"

The other replied in the affirmative.

"May I then solicit your presence here in what I have to relate?—it concerns you."

Alexis, amazed, drew back, while Pierre advanced towards Monsieur and Madame Bertrand. The latter had evidently been in tears: Alexis had just returned from Paris, without having obtained the slightest clue to Madeleine.

"May I inquire your business?" asked Monsieur Bertrand. One name sufficed—Madeleine's; it was a passport to the anxious attention of all. We will not give Pierre Frison's, or, as he truly called himself, Gilles Frémont's, broken recital, but place the facts before the reader. The following was the substance of his recital:—

When Gilles deserted his wife, led away by gaiety and bad company, he hastened to Paris, and there for some time lived a life of idleness, until the money he possessed was quite expended. With poverty came

other thoughts—of home, his wife and child. With some difficulty he traced his unfortunate wife to Nogent, thence to her early grave. He found out the child had been adopted, his own death rumoured; so he returned to the capital, supporting himself by work, as he best could. The *Auberge au bon Enfant* had been kept by a man who, marrying a handsome wife, made it serve a double purpose, and his wife was the attraction. Workmen of all classes assembled by day, and gamblers and thieves by night. There Gilles came as a mechanic, and left it, if not an actual thief, one not over-scrupulous about trifles, especially at play. Prior to his frequenting the house, he had become intimate with the person we have known as Gilles Frémont, but who was the real Pierre Frison, and this intimacy continued for some time: he, Frémont, believing him wild and thoughtless, like himself, but an honest man—that is, not a thief: for though Gilles did not look too closely at trifles, he had never made himself amenable to the law. Pierre, however, was a much worse character than he had supposed; and about a year before we have met them, to screen him in an affair of police, as well as to destroy his own identity, Gilles lent him his name and passport. Something there was in Gilles' heart ever speaking of respectability and home, and an uncontrollable feeling induced him to go to Nogent once more; Pierre accompanied him; and they were the two who inquired about the Bertrands and Madeleine. Pierre, more fortunate than Gilles, saw Madeleine, as he was loitering about the Bertrands' with an idea in his mind, which, unhappily, the two put into practice; but to Gilles' credit be it said, that the other induced him to go for the supposed purpose of carrying off the girl, a sudden desire of Gilles' reckless and weary heart. Pierre had made him partially tipsy, and the robbery was effected before Gilles well

knew what he was about; and this once accomplished, he fled, forgetting Madeleine and all, terrified at his first actual crime. Pierre tried to laugh him out of his scruples; but once away, he felt so much horror of the act towards his child's benefactors, that not one sous of the ill-gotten money would he touch, only the old miniature before spoken of, intending some day to restore it, as in all probability it was prized much: this he now laid before Madame Bertrand, in confirmation of his story. He then related Madeleine's history and escape; together with his intimate conviction that Pierre had intended taking her away; and ultimately avowing the truth, force her into a marriage, in order to use her beauty as a means of furthering his plans on the unwary.

This strange revelation had the most painful effect upon the listeners, even amidst their joy at the recovery of Madeleine; for now the thieves were discovered, how account for her extraordinary assertion about Alexis's visit? Then, again, what was to be done about her father? Of course, now he would remain with his child; and though his present conduct spoke in his favour, how answer for a man of whom the antecedents were so questionable? But he himself put all these doubts to rest, by expressing a desire once more to place his child beneath the care of her benefactors, if they would receive her, as her error had been one of conscience after all: and then he said he should leave Paris altogether, and seek employment in the country, and by that means strive to retrieve his character, stained by many faults, if not actual crimes. Alexis would fain have rushed off at once to seek Madeleine; but it was arranged that the whole affair, for a few days, should be a secret between those present and the curé, who had been called in to consult with them, and then that the Bertrands, Alexis, and Gilles should set out for Paris.

We will not endeavour to depict the scene of reunion between her and those she loved so well: one, however, was wanting to complete her joy, Louise; but all had deemed it better for a few days not to tell her more than that Madeleine had been traced; for they feared lest in her joy she might betray something to Mademoiselle Lagune, who was wild with ungratified curiosity when the Bertrands quitted Nogent with Alexis and the strange man. In vain she endeavoured to prevent her nephew from going; and all that remained for her to do was to scold poor Louise—the camel who had to bear with patience all the burdens heaped upon her

The most puzzling circumstance of all was Madeleine's still persisting in her firm belief about the visit to her chamber; she was treated as a visionary, a somnambulist, but she shook her head. "Some one came," she firmly said; "witness the ladder and flowers!" So much did this idea haunt her mind, that her joy was tainted by it, and nothing could induce her to return to Nogent with this perplexing thought. "She was happy now," she said, "that her dear father and mother Bertrand had received her again to their arms, and Alexis cleared of all possible suspicion" (though the evidence of his superiors at his regiment had done this;) "and now she would go with her real parent, as a child should, and work to comfort and support him." With him she removed to a quiet lodging for a few days; the Bertrands returned disconsolately to Nogent, and Alexis to seek every possible means of elucidating the mystery.

Pierre Frison had absconded no one knew whither. Madame Leon, after Madeleine's departure from the auberge, sold it and retired. "Mademoiselle," she said, on their last interview, "I could never again countenance or lend myself to what I have done;

for since we met, I have had sight given me to see all my faults. If ever you hear of me again, I hope it will be as a better woman; it was a bad husband led me into connivance at wrong. I think we all in our lives meet an angel on our path; either we yield to it, or repulse its influence. You have been mine; and depend on my words, my dear child, that one so good as yourself will find all your trials turn to joys."

The words were prophetic. Alexis, of course, had not forgotten the friend who had sacrificed himself to save him, Louis Debrets; to him all these strange circumstances were detailed by letter. One day, about a week after the meeting of Madeleine and the Bertrands, he arrived at Nogent, having obtained leave of a few days, and there he publicly acknowledged that he had been Madeleine's nocturnal visitor. "I knew," he said, "that Alexis frequently rose early, for I have accompanied him to leave a bouquet of Madeleine's favourite roses on the window-sill by means of a ladder; I loved her dearly, I was going on her account, and a strange impulse induced me that night to leave her a remembrance; I thought she would guess I had done so, as Alexis was gone, and feel pleased at the act. When I mounted the ladder, I found the lattice open; I looked in, Madeleine was in a deep sleep. I thought I should like to see her again, as I had fully purposed leaving on the morrow. As I stood beside her bed she gave a wild start, as if my presence had become perceptible to her in sleep, and sitting up, called me "Alexis." The moon shone into the room, and I saw she was fast asleep, but her eyes open and fixed. I was too much terrified to move at first; at last I tried to speak to her, but she continued muttering in a wild frantic manner. Thinking her mad, I crept towards her and pressed her hand; it was cold and clammy. I expected every moment to hear her shriek out, and

in a state of almost madness myself at the effect of my foolish visit, I stole out of the window, and once below, hurried away forgetting the ladder. This event detained me until the day she was to be crowned *Rosière.* I wanted to know whether she would speak of it to any one, but she was silent. I gave her her bouquet as she was going to the church, and then I left. I could not have borne to see her there; it would have been too much like her marriage, and with another."

This, then, was the solution of the strange mystery. Madeleine's excited imagination from Alexis's departure, and the inuendoes about the supposed thieves inquiring for her, had produced a vision like a somnambulist's sleep, in which her anxious thoughts wrought the well-knitted tale. All, save her unfeeling enemy, Mademoiselle Lagune, were rejoiced, and looked forward to the hour of her return with joy. The robbery was still unexplained, except to a few; and the men's inquiring for her was fully accounted for—one was her father. It would have made Mademoiselle Lagune too unpopular to hold out against the prayers of all; even the Countess de Guaie came to entreat for the young people. The result was, that once again the village church was crowded, again the children strewed flowers, the sun shone, and a *Rosière* bride, but with blushing happy face, received the benediction of the worthy curé; and when he exhorted the young couple afterwards, there was no trembling of fear or shame in the girl who raised her streaming eyes in gratitude to Heaven, which had only tried her to reward her patience; and she blessed her sufferings when she reflected that she had been the humble instrument of calling two to their Maker in penitence and supplication, Madame Leon and her poor father. The latter, comforted and cheered, and strong in his good resolutions, entered

a situation as foreman, which Monsieur Bertrand had obtained for him in a manufactory near Nogent, where he could often see and be supported by his child's affection. Jacques sang as ever at his work; nor was he forgotten in a wedding gift of gratitude from Madeleine. Louise settled quietly down as an old maid, "to nurse the children," she said, laughing, "as she had done the mother." All were happy but Mademoiselle Lagune, who, when she saw every one pleased, could not forbear (even though Madeleine was her niece now) saying significantly—

"As you dreamt the wrong thief, why don't you try and dream the right one? I dare say you could, if you pleased!"

The human kind is like the vegetable: some are roses and lilies; some are nettles, ever stinging.

Tales

of the

City and the Plain.

BLIND ROSA.

BLIND ROSA.

On a fine summer's day, in the year 1846, the diligence that runs between Antwerp and Turnhout was seen proceeding on its usual journey along the highway. The horses trotted, the wheels rattled, the coach creaked, the conductor spurred on the horses unceasingly with the clacking of his tongue; the dogs barked in the distance; the birds rose from the fields, and mounted aloft; the shadows ran by the side of the diligence, and danced, with fantastic bounds and leaps, between the trees and bushes.

On a sudden the conductor stopped at a short distance from a lonely inn, and, descending from his seat, opened the door of the coach without saying a word, let down the iron steps, and held out his arm to a traveller, who, with his portmanteau in his hand, stepped out on the road. The conductor put up the steps again as silently, shut the door, sprang into his seat, and whistled gently as a signal for his horses to start afresh on their journey. The animals resumed their trot, and the heavy waggon proceeded on its monotonous course.

In the meantime the traveller had entered the inn, and, calling for a glass of beer, sat down at

a table. He was a man above the middle stature, and seemed to be about fifty years of age. He might have even been taken for a sexagenarian, had not his vigorous mien, animated and lively look, and a certain youthful smile that played about his mouth, given him a more youthful appearance. His hair, indeed, was grey, and his brow furrowed, and his countenance showed that amount of decay which fatiguing labour and continued anxiety imprint on the features. Nevertheless, his manly chest and erect bearing could not escape observation, and his eye still glowed with the fire of a hale and vigorous maturity.

From his dress he might have been supposed to be a rich citizen: there was nothing striking in it, except that from his coat being buttoned up to his chin, and his having a large meerschaum hanging at his breast, he might have been taken for an old military man, or a German.

After waiting on him, the people in the house went about their usual business, without taking any further notice of him. He saw the two daughters go backwards and forwards, the father supply the fire with wood and turf, and the mother fill the dinner-pot, but no one addressed a single word to him, although his eyes followed every member of the family with longing gaze, and in his looks might be read the question,—"Don't you then, know me?"

The beating of a clock, hung up on the wall, now caught his ear. It seemed as if the sound affected him painfully, for his countenance assumed the expression of an unpleasant surprise, which chased the smile from his lips. He rose up and looked at the clock ill-humouredly, until it had ceased to strike nine o'clock.

The landlady noticed the unaccountable excitement of the traveller, and stood near him, in a state of

astonishment, looking up at the clock in order to discover what he had seen in it so extraordinary.

"The clock has a fine sound, has it not?" she remarked to him. "It has gone now for twenty years without having occasion for the clockmaker to touch it."

"Twenty years!" exclaimed the traveller, "what then has become of the clock that was here before? Where is the image of the Blessed Virgin that stood on the chimney? Is it both broken and forgotten?"

The woman looked at the stranger with surprise, and replied, "Our Zanna broke the image when she was a little child, in playing with it: it was such a bad one, that even the clergyman advised us to buy another: here is the new one; don't you think it much finer than the old?"

The traveller shook his head in token of dissent.

"As to the clock," she continued, "you will hear it immediately: the ugly old machine was always behind, and has been put away in the lumber-room for ages: there it is just beginning to rattle!"

In fact, a peculiar sound was now heard in the room, proceeding from behind a wooden partition: it resembled the hoarse voice of a bird calling out nine times—Cuckoo, cuckoo.

This extraordinary sound, nevertheless, caused the traveller to smile with delight. Accompanied by the woman, he went into the lumber-room, and there saw, with eyes that glistened with pleasure, the old clock-work, that had not yet ceased its cuckoo note.

The woman's two daughters now drew near the stranger, from curiosity, and stared, first at him, and then at their mother, with astonishment. The looks of the two girls awoke him to a consciousness of his situation, and he returned to the coffee-room, followed by his three attendants.

There is no question but that he was pleasingly affected, for his countenance became animated with so attractive and amiable an expression, and his eyes, moistened with tears, shone so brilliantly, that both the girls, with evident feelings of affection and good-will, drew closer to him.

Taking hold of each of them by the hand, he said,—

"What I am about seems, no doubt, curious to you, my dears; you cannot conceive how it is that the voice of the old cuckoo should delight me so much. Alas! I was also once a child, and my father used to come here, after the benediction, to take a glass of ale; and when I was a good boy, I was allowed to come with him. For hours I have stood there, waiting for the cuckoo to open his little door; and then I would dance and jump in harmony with the measure of his song, wondering in my simplicity at the poor bird, which I thought a master-piece. And the image of the Blessed Virgin, which one of you broke, I loved for its beautiful blue cloak, and because the child Jesus stretched forth its hands to me a child, and laughed when I laughed. Now the child is nearly sixty years old, his hair is grey, and his face wrinkled; he has lived thirty-four years in the steppes of Russia; and yet he remembers the Blessed Virgin and the cuckoo-clock as vividly as if his father had brought him here for the last time only yesterday."

"Are you, then, from our village?" inquired Zanna.

"Yes, certainly," replied the stranger, quickly. But this explanation had not the desired effect; the girls smiled somewhat more confidingly, but this was all; they seemed to be quite indifferent to the traveller's account of himself.

Turning round to their mother, he then said,

"Can you tell me what has become of old Baes Joostens?"

"If you mean Baes Jan," replied the woman, "he has been dead these five-and-twenty years."

"And his wife, the good, stout, jolly lady, Petronille?"

"She is also dead," was the reply.

"Dead! dead!" exclaimed the stranger, with a sigh; "and the young shepherd, Andries, who made such fine wicker-baskets?"

"Also dead," replied the landlady.

The traveller bent down his head, and became buried in his own melancholy reflections.

In the meanwhile the landlady had gone into the barn, in order to acquaint her husband with the conversation which she had had with this unknown person. The landlord accordingly entered the room, and, by the heavy tread of his wooden shoes, roused the traveller from his reverie; who, starting up, held out his hand, delighted, to the man. The latter, however, took it quite coldly, and looked at him with an indifferent air.

"Don't you know me, then, Peter Joostens?" inquired the stranger, mournfully.

"No; I don't recollect ever having seen you before," was the reply.

"Have you forgotten, then, who it was that risked his life to save yours, when you had sunk in the water, under the ice, and would inevitably have perished without help?"

The man shrugged his shoulders.

Much affected at the insensibility of the fellow, the traveller further asked,—

"Have you really forgotten the youth who defended you from the attacks of the bigger boys, and made you a present of so many birds'-eggs for the purpose of completing your May-feast? who taught

you also to make all sorts of whistles out of reeds, and took you with him when he went to market with the tile-maker's carts?"

"I have some slight recollection of what you speak about," he replied; "my deceased father told me that I was saved from drowning when I was a child of six years old, by Long John, who went away with others in the time of the French as cannoneer in the service of the Emperor: who knows in what unconsecrated ground his bones are resting! May God have mercy on his soul!"

"Ah, you do know me, then, at last!" exclaimed the stranger; "I am Long John, or rather John Slaets." No reply being made to this, he added, surprised, "You surely recollect the good marksman at bird-shooting, the same who was thought the best sportsman for miles round, who carried off all the prizes, and was envied by the young men because the girls liked to see him? I am that person, John Slaets by name."

"It may be all very true," replied the innkeeper, mistrustfully, "but yet I do not remember you; no offence to you, my dear Sir. There is no bird-shooting carried on any longer in our parish; the shooting-ground has been turned into a country seat, which has had no inhabitant for a year past, owing to the death of the lady proprietor."

Repulsed by the cool behaviour of the innkeeper, the traveller made no further attempt to be recognised by him. He therefore quietly remarked, before going away, "There are in the village, no doubt, many of my friends who have not forgotten me. You, Peter Joostens, were very young at the time when I went away. I am sure that Paul the tile-maker will recognise me as soon as he sees me. Does he still live at the clay-pits?"

"The tile-work was burnt down long ago; the

clay-pits have been filled up, and now produce crops of the finest hay. The meadow now belongs to Tist, —the rich Tist."

"And what has become of Paul?"

"After the misfortune of the fire, the family was scattered abroad; I do not know for certain, but perhaps he is dead. As I see that you are referring to times so long past, I would beg to suggest that the grave-digger would be the best person to answer your inquiries, for otherwise you will certainly find it difficult to meet with any other person who can do so. He can tell you off by heart all that has passed in the village for a hundred years."

"Yes, to be sure, Mr. Landlord, the grave-digger will be the right man. Peter John must be now ninety years old."

"Peter John? that is not the name of the grave-digger. Lauw Stevens is his name."

The stranger was pleased to hear this, and said,— "Thank God that one, at least, of my old companions is still left!"

"Was Lauw, then, your friend, Sir?"

"Not exactly a friend," replied the traveller, shaking his head: "we were always quarrelling, and often rivals. Once, in the heat of our struggling, I threw him from the little bridge into the stream, so that he was nearly drowned; but that is more than thirty years since. Lauw will be glad to see me again. Now, Mr. Landlord, give me your hand: I hope to drink a glass of ale at your house sometimes."

So saying, he paid his bill, and taking up his portmanteau, left the house. At the back of the inn he struck into a path which led him through a plantation of young firs.

Although the acquaintance he had made with the innkeeper was not of a very agreeable nature, it had

still yielded some consolation to our traveller's heart; he had felt charmed by inhaling again the fragrance of early years; the recollections that thronged upon him at every step infused new life into him. But the young trees could say nothing to him: in their stead, in former times, stood a fine forest, whose trees were thick with birds' nests, and whose skirts brought to maturity refreshing crops of bilberries. But, alas! the forest had shared the fate of the inhabitants of the village. The old trees had fallen, or had been cut down; a new generation had taken their place, a generation that was strange and indifferent towards him. But the song of the birds, that resounded from all parts of the leafy covert, was still the same; the winds sighed softly, as of old, through the branches; the grasshoppers chirruped as of yore, and the refreshing breeze still came wafted over the fragrant heath. All things had altered—except nature:—her works, in their great features, still remained the same. Such were the thoughts that arose in our traveller's mind; and although joyous and cheerful, he pursued his path without looking up from the ground till he was out of the wood.

Then was presented to his gaze a succession of fields and meadows, among which the silver threads of a stream wound their way. In the back-ground, a short distance off, rose the church-spire, with its golden cock, that shone in the sunbeams like a day-star; and, further off, the windmills whirled their red sails round and round.

Overpowered by inexplicable emotions, the traveller stood still: his eyes became filled with tears; he dropped his portmanteau on the ground, and stretched forth his hands, while his countenance beamed with affection and rapture.

At the same moment the sound of the *Angelus* was heard.

The traveller knelt down, with his head sunk on his breast, and remained in this state, motionless, for some time, but profoundly affected. His heart and his lips poured forth a prayer, inaudible to mortal ears save his own, as he raised his eyes and hands towards heaven, with deep-felt thanks. Then, taking up his portmanteau, he said, looking towards the church-tower,—

"At least thou art not altered—thou lowly church, wherein I was baptized, and where my first Communion was made; and where everything within its walls seemed to me so holy and wonderful. Yes, I shall see thee again: I shall see the Blessed Virgin with her golden dress and silver crown; St. Anthony, with the pretty pig; St. Ursula; and the black demon with the red tongue, about whom I used to dream so often! And the organ, on which the sacristan played so beautifully, while we, with swelling hearts, sang—AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA!"

These last words the traveller sang out, aloud, while at the same time the tears rolled down his cheeks. Silently, and in musing mood, he walked on further, until he came to a small bridge which led across the rivulet to a turf-field.

Here his countenance became animated with delight, and he said with great emotion,—

"Here it was that I first pressed Rosa's hand in mine: here it was that our eyes confessed for the first time, that upon earth there is a blessedness which seizes on the heart with sovereign power, and opens up heaven to the youthful mind. As now, so then, the yellow water-flag flaunted in the sunshine, the frogs croaked, and the larks sang above our heads."

Stepping across the bridge, he said to himself,—

"The frogs that witnessed our love are dead! the flowers are dead! the larks are dead! Now an old man, who returns home like a shadow of departed

years, greets their offspring! And Rosa, my dear Rosa, is she still living? Perhaps—probably—she is married, and surrounded by children. Those who remain at home quickly forget their unfortunate brethren, who wander about, far from home, in wretchedness and sorrow. Poor pilgrim," he said, with a sigh, "the old jealousy still arises in thy breast, as if thy heart still were in its spring; the time of love is past, long since. Be it so, that she only recognises me, and remembers our early friendship, I will not lament the journey of 1800 miles, and will gladly quit this world, to repose in peace beside my departed friends and relations."

A little further on, and near the village, he entered an inn, whose sign carried a plough, and called for a glass of beer.

In the chimney-corner, by the great pot, sat a very old man, who gazed into the fire with the immoveability of a statue.

Before the woman had returned from the cellar with the beer, the traveller had recognised the old man. Drawing his chair nearer to him, he seized his hand and said joyfully,—

"God be thanked that He has permitted you to live so long, Baes Joris. You are one that remain to us of the good old times. Don't you know me? Don't you know the mad youngster that crept so often through your hedge, and ate the apples before they were ripe?"

"Ninety-six years!" muttered the old man, without moving.

"Very likely; but tell me, Joris, is the wheelwright's Rosa still living?"

"Ninety-six years!" repeated the old man, with hollow voice.

The woman now made her appearance with the beer, and said,—"He is blind and deaf, Sir; don't

give yourself the trouble to speak to him, for he cannot understand you."

"Blind and deaf!" exclaimed the stranger, in a melancholy tone. "What havoc the inexorable progress of time makes in thirty years! I now walk among the ruins of a whole race of mankind."

"Do you inquire about the wheelwright's Rosa?" continued the woman. "Our wheelwright had several daughters, but there was no Rosa among them. Lisbeth was the eldest, and married the letter-carrier; the second was Goude, and makes caps; the third is Nele; and the youngest is Anna, who is of weak intellect."

"I do not speak of these people," replied the stranger, impatiently; "I mean the family of Kobe Meulinckz."

"Oh, they are all dead, long ago, Sir," was the woman's reply.

Deeply affected by this piece of intelligence, the traveller paid for his glass of beer and left the inn with feverish haste. At the door he held up his hands to his eyes, and exclaimed despairingly,—

"Good Heavens! Even my poor Rosa is dead! Dead! dead! still the same inexorable word. Will no one on earth recognise me? not one friendly eye greet me?"

With tottering steps, as if intoxicated, he entered a wood, and leaned his sorrowing head against a tree in order to recover himself. He then directed his steps towards the village. His path led him across a solitary churchyard, where at the foot of the cross he stood with uncovered head, and said,—

"Here, before the image of the Crucified, Rosa promised that she would remain true to me and await my return. Anguish overcame us at parting, on this seat fell our tears; in deep grief she received my dearly bought love-pledge, a golden heart. Poor

Rosa! perhaps I now stand above your mouldering remains."

In this melancholy mood of mind he sank down, quite dispirited, on a bench, on which he sat for a long time almost unconscious. His gaze wandered over the churchyard, and the narrow mounds of earth which indicated the newly-made graves. It grieved him to see how that many of the wooden crosses had fallen down from age and decay, while no filial hand was there to re-erect them, as a token of remembrance, above the last resting-place of a father or a mother. His own parents, too, slept here, beneath the sod; but who could tell him the exact spot?

He sat here for a long time absorbed in melancholy reflection. Eternity—unfathomable eternity—oppressed his soul like a heavy leaden coffin. He was awakened from this trance by the sound of a human footstep.

It was the old grave-digger, who with his spade on his shoulder was going along the churchyard wall. He bore the marks of poverty and wretchedness; his shoulders were much bent, and had become crooked with constant work at the spade. His hair was white, and his face wrinkled, but his eyes still glowed with vigour and animation.

The traveller recognised Lauw—his rival—at the first glance, and would have run to meet him, had not the bitter disappointments which he had already experienced made him resolve to say nothing, but wait to see whether Lauw would know him again.

The grave-digger stood looking at him for some time with evident curiosity, and then began with his spade to mark off a piece of ground for a new grave, casting a stolen glance every now and then at the person who sat before him, while his eyes sparkled with apparent pleasure. The traveller, who noticed the expression of the grave-digger's countenance, felt

his heart beat faster within him, and waited in the expectation that Lauw would come to him, and call him by his name.

The grave-digger looked at him once more in a very scrutinizing manner, and then put his hand into the pocket of his old jacket, from which he drew out a little dirty old book, to which a black-lead pencil was attached by a leathern string. Turning round, he seemed to write something in the little book.

This proceeding, which was accompanied by a look of exultation, surprised the traveller so much, that he rose up, and going to the grave-digger, asked him, in a tone of surprise, what it was that he had written in the book.

"That is my concern," he replied: "your name in the list has stood open for a terrible long time; I have now put a cross before your name."

"Do you know me then?" asked the traveller, with a joyful air.

"Know you?" replied the grave-digger slily; "that may or may not be: I only recollect, as if it were yesterday, that an envious fellow threw me into the water, and nearly drowned me, because Rosa, the wheelwright's daughter, loved me. Many a year has passed since then."

"Do you say that Rosa loved you?" replied the stranger: "I can tell you that that is not true!"

"You know it is true very well, you jealous fool! Did she not wear for a whole year the consecrated ring that I brought with me from Scherpen-havel, until you forcibly took it away, and threw it into the river?"

At hearing this, the countenance of the traveller wore a melancholy smile. "Lauw! Lauw!" he exclaimed, "the recollection of these old times makes us children again. Believe me, Rosa never loved you as you now think. She took your ring from a

friendly feeling, and because it was consecrated. In my younger days, I was forward and rude, and did not always keep on the best terms with my comrades; but surely a period of four-and-thirty years, a period that acts so destructively on men and things, ought to have cooled down our wretched passions. Am I to find an implacable enemy in the only person who has not forgotten me? Come, give me your hand, and let us be friends: I will make you happy for the remainder of your life."

The grave-digger, however, withdrew his hand, and said angrily,—

"It is too late to forget; you have embittered my whole life. There has not been a single day that I have not thought about you. You, who have contributed so much to my unhappiness, may easily judge if your name can be blessed by me."

The traveller smote his trembling hands together, looked up to heaven, and exclaimed in tones of anguish, "Alas! hatred alone recognises me! hatred alone forgets nothing!"

"You have done well," continued the grave-digger, laughing, "to come back, in order to lay your bones beside those of your parents. I have kept a good grave for you. When blustering old Jan is committed to the earth, the rain will wash away the villany from his carcase!"

Every member of the traveller's body trembled when he heard this barbarous piece of wit. Indignation and anger were depicted on his countenance. He soon, however, became more composed; and dejection and compassion took the place of his former feelings. "You hesitate," he said, "to give your hand to a brother, who returns home after an absence of four-and-thirty years! Your first greeting given to an old comrade is one of bitter scorn! That is not right on your part, Lauw. Be it so; we

will say no more about it. But tell me where my deceased parents are interred."

"I don't know," muttered the grave-digger; "that was five-and-twenty years ago, and since then the same place has been occupied by other graves three times over." These words had such a melancholy effect on the traveller, that his head drooped powerlessly on his breast, and he stood staring before him lost in vacancy and in sorrow.

The grave-digger continued at his work, but more slowly, as if overpowered by a train of gloomy reflections. He remarked and scanned the deep affliction of the traveller, and shuddered at the thirst of revenge which had led him to torment a fellow-creature so exceedingly. This change of mood was depicted in his countenance; the tone of bitter scorn which was formerly heard from his lips, ceased; he looked for some time at his grieving comrade with growing sympathy, and advancing slowly towards him, took hold of his hand, and said in a softened and impressive manner,—

"Jan, my friend, forgive what I have said and done. I have treated you shamefully, although you must consider that I have suffered very much through your means."

"Lauw," replied the other, much affected, and shaking his hand; "these were errors of our youth. To show you how little I thought upon our old enmity, when I heard you pronounce my name, I felt myself indescribably happy. For that I am thankful to you, however much your wicked contempt struck to my heart. But now tell me, Lauw, where is Rosa buried? It will give her joy in heaven to see us reconciled, and both standing above her last resting-place."

"You want to know where Rosa is buried?" repeated the grave-digger. "Would to God that she were indeed in her grave, poor creature!"

"What do you say?" exclaimed the traveller; "is Rosa still living?"

"Yes, she is living, if that can be called living which consists in bearing the dreadful lot which she has to endure."

"You terrify me; for God's sake, tell me what misfortune has befallen her."

"She is blind."

"Blind! Rosa blind! Without eyes to look on me again? Alas! alas!"

Overcome by grief, he tottered to a seat, and sank down upon it.

The grave-digger came up to him and said,—

"She has been blind for the last ten years, and goes about begging her daily bread. I give her two stivers weekly, and whenever we bake, she receives a piece of bread."

The traveller jumped up, shook earnestly the grave-digger's hand, and said,—

"A thousand thanks! God bless you for your love to Rosa! In her name, I take upon me to reward you, for I am rich. To-day we shall see each other again. But do tell me, in few words, where Rosa lives. Every moment must be for her a century of misery."

With these words he drew the grave-digger by the hand, and went in the direction of the gate leading out of the churchyard. Having reached the wall, the grave-digger pointed with his finger, and said,—

"Do you see that small chimney smoking at the corner of the wood? That is the cottage of the broom-maker, Nelis Ooms; Rosa lives there."

Without waiting for further explanations, the traveller proceeded through the village in the direction indicated. He soon arrived at the lonely dwelling. It was a humble hut, built of clay and rushes, and whitewashed on the outside. A few steps from the

door were four little children, who, basking in the sun, were pleasantly occupied in binding up wreaths of wild flowers, consisting of corn-flowers and poppy-heads. They were barefooted and half-naked. The eldest, a boy of about six years old, had nothing on him but a linen shirt. While his three little sisters looked at the stranger slily and bashfully, the boy gazed at him uninterruptedly with his great eyes, that showed surprise and curiosity. The traveller smiled to the children, but went into the hut without stopping, and saw in a corner a man occupied in binding up brooms, while a woman sat by the fire at her spinning-wheel. They seemed to be about thirty years of age, and it could easily be seen that they were a happy and contented couple. Besides, everything they wore, and all about them, was as clean and tidy as could be expected from country people in their condition of life.

His entrance did not occasion them much surprise, although they politely came forward to offer their services. They thought that he wished to inquire his way, and the man was advancing towards the door in order to point out the right road to him; but when, instead of asking that, he inquired if Rosa Meulinckz lived there, the husband and wife looked at each other with astonishment, and could scarcely find words to reply.

"Yes, dear Sir," at length said the man, "Rosa lives here, but she is at present gone out begging. Do you wish to speak with her?"

"Where is she?" exclaimed the stranger, in an excited manner. "Cannot you find her immediately?"

"That would be difficult, Sir; she is gone out with an attendant, to make her weekly round; but she will certainly return in an hour; she never fails."

"Can I wait here, my good folks, until she comes home?"

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when the man went hastily into an adjoining apartment, and brought out a better kind of chair than the rough one which stood in the outer room. Not content with this, the woman went to a drawer, and took out a snow-white cloth, which she spread out on the chair, which was then presented for the stranger to rest upon, who was surprised at such slight but well-meant marks of politeness, and returned the cloth to the woman with many thanks. He then quietly sat down, and began to look around the room in order to see if he could discover anything in it that would tell him about Rosa. Turning his head, he felt a little hand sliding into his, and playing with his fingers. Looking with some curiosity to see who was the perpetrator of this friendly greeting, his look met that of a blue-eyed little boy, who gazed upon him with a kind of heavenly innocence, as if he had been his father or his brother.

"Come here, Peterkin," said the mother; "you must not make so bold with the gentleman."

Peterkin, however, seemed not to hear this piece of advice, but continued to look at and fondle the unknown person, so that our traveller was quite at a loss to understand the friendly ways of the child.

"Dear child," the stranger said, "your blue eyes pierce deeply into my soul, and because you are so pretty I will make you a present."

He then put his hand in his pocket, and drew out a little purse with a silver clasp and adorned with variegated ornaments, which he gave to the little boy after putting some money in it.

The child looked at the present with much delight, but still kept hold of the traveller's hand.

The mother drew near and made a motion to the

child, and said, "Peterkin, you must not be rude; thank the gentleman and kiss his hand."

The child kissed his hand, made a bow to him, and said, with a clear voice, "Best thanks, Long Jan."

A stroke of lightning could not have confounded the traveller more than to hear his name thus pronounced from the mouth of the innocent child. Tears involuntarily rolled down his cheeks; he took the child on his knee, and looked him steadfastly in the face.

"So you know me, do you, you little cherub? And yet you never saw me before. How is this? Who taught you my name?"

"Blind Rosa," was the reply.

"But how is it possible that you could know me? God himself must have taught your childish mind."

"Oh, I knew you immediately," cried Peterkin, "for when I led Rosa out begging, she was always speaking about you, and said you were so tall, and had black sparkling eyes, and that you would be sure to come back, and bring us all many pretty things. I was not, therefore, afraid of you, for Rosa had taught me to love you, and had said that you would give me a large bow and arrows."

These simple stories and disclosures on the part of the child transported the traveller with delight. He suddenly lifted the boy from the ground, kissed him affectionately, and said to his parents with great emotion,—

"This child, my good friends, will be taken care of. I will take charge of his up-bringing and education, and I trust it will prove a blessing for him to have recognised me."

The parents were quite stupefied with delight and astonishment. The husband replied in a confused manner,—

"You are by far too good; we also thought we recognised you, but we were not so sure of it, because Rosa had not told us that you were so rich."

"My good friends," replied the stranger, "and so you know me! Hitherto, as the reward of all my inquiries here, I have met only with death and forgetfulness; but here, among you, I have found friends, relations, and a family."

The woman pointed to an image of the Blessed Virgin that stood on the mantelpiece, and said,—"Every Saturday evening a candle was lit here for the safe return, or for the repose of the soul, of Jan Slaets."

The traveller devoutly lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,—

"Almighty God, I thank Thee that Thou hast given greater might to love than to hatred! My enemy has concealed my name within his bosom, associated with the gloomy remembrance of his ill-will: my loving friend has lived in my remembrance, and with all around her, animated by her love, she has kept me, as it were, ever present in this family, and made me even a favourite of the children, while yet between us there was a distance of more than a thousand miles! My God! I am sufficiently rewarded."

A long silence ensued on this, before Jan could overcome his emotion, at seeing which the people of the house were filled with deep reverence for him. The husband had betaken himself again to his work, but was always ready, at the slightest signal, to render any service to his guest, who had taken Peterkin again on his knee, and now asked the good woman, quite composedly, if Rosa had lived long with her. The woman, as if preparing to enter on a long explanation, came nearer with her spinning-wheel, and sitting down, said,—

"I will tell you, dear Sir, how that happened:—You must know that when Rosa's parents died, the children separated. Rosa, whom all the gold in the world would not have induced to marry—the reason why, I need not tell you—Rosa ceded her whole share to her brother, only stipulating to reside in his house during her lifetime. She then took to millinery, and made a good deal of money by it, and having no occasion to give the money to her brother, she spent all her earnings in good works, visited the sick, and paid for the doctor when it was necessary. She was always ready to comfort the sorrowful, and had ever something nice at hand in cases of illness. When my husband and I had been only married six months, he came home one day with a very bad cold, of which you hear the remains in the cough that he still has about him. We have to thank God and the good Rosa that he is not now lying in the churchyard. Oh, could you only have seen, dear Sir, what she did for us, out of pure love and kindness! She brought us coverlets, for it was cold, and we were in the most extreme poverty; she brought two doctors from other parishes, who consulted with our own doctor about the case of the sick man; she sat up with him, alleviated his sufferings and my grief by her affectionate conversation, and gave us all the money that was needed to pay for food and doctor's stuff,—for Rosa was a favourite with every body;—and when she went to the lady at the mansion, or the farmer, to beg something for the poor, she was never refused a small contribution. For six weeks my husband kept his bed, and Rosa never ceased protecting and assisting us, until he by degrees was able to return to his work."

"How glad I should be to see poor blind Rosa!" said the traveller.

The husband raised his head from his work, tears

stood in his eyes, and he exclaimed with enthusiasm, —"If I could give my heart's blood to restore her sight, I would willingly do it, to the last drop."

This burst of feeling affected Jan exceedingly; the good woman remarked it, and made a sign to her husband to be more moderate in his remarks. She then continued,—

"Three months afterwards God gave us a child, the same that sits on your knee. Rosa wished to stand godmother to it, and Peter, my husband's brother, was to be godfather. On the day of the baptism inquiry was made as to the child's name. Rosa wished that it should be called John, but the godfather, a worthy man, but rather obstinate and self-willed, insisted that its name should be Peter. After long discussion the child was baptized John Peter; we call him Peterkin, because his godfather has a right to decide about that, and he will have it so, and we should be sorry if it were otherwise. Rosa, however, will not hear a word about Peter, and always calls the child Johnny. The child is accustomed to it, and knows that it is so called because, dear Sir, it is your name."

The traveller pressed the boy fondly to his breast, and kissed him warmly. With silent wonder he looked in the child's friendly eyes, and his heart was deeply affected.

The woman went on to say,—

"Rosa's brother had engaged with people in Antwerp, to buy up all kinds of provisions, and to take them over to England. It was said that by such a trade he would become rich, for every week he took ten carts full of provisions to Antwerp. At first, all went on quite well, but the bankruptcy of a man in Antwerp for whom he was security deprived him of all his gains, and he could scarcely pay half his debts. From grief occasioned by this he soon after died, and

we trust that God Almighty took him to a better world. Rosa then went to live with Flinck the grocer, in a little room in his house. In the same year, Charles, the grocer's son, who had been a soldier, came home with bad eyes, and in two weeks afterwards the young man became quite blind. Rosa, who felt for him, and listened only to the feelings of her heart, tended him during his illness, and took him out on her arm, in order to amuse him. Unfortunately, she caught the same disease in her eyes, and since then she has never seen the light of the sun. Flinck, the grocer, is dead, and his children are scattered about in the world. Poor blind Charles lives at a farm-house in Lierre. We then begged Rosa, poor girl! to come and live with us, and told her how glad we should be to have her in our house, and to work for her as long as we lived. She complied with our request. Since then, six years have passed, and she has never heard from us but friendly words, thank God! for she is herself all love and goodness; and if there is any service to render to Rosa, the children fight about it who shall do it first."

"And yet she begs!" replied the traveller.

"Yes, dear Sir," said the woman, with somewhat of pride in her manner, "but that is not our fault. Do not think that we have forgotten what Rosa did for us. Even if we had been suffering from hunger, and were in the greatest straits, we never would have imposed it upon her to beg. When our family increased so quickly, Rosa thought, the good creature, that she would prove a burden to us, and wanted to assist us. She could not be persuaded to the contrary, and actually fell ill in consequence, and after half a year's resistance, we were obliged to yield.

"It is, however, no disgrace for a poor blind creature to beg. But we don't need it, although we are

poor. Of what she obtains by begging, she presses a little upon us, for we cannot always be disputing with her; but we give her back double as much for it. Without knowing it, she is better clad than we are, and the food we give her is also much better. The remainder of the money got by her, I think I have understood from her own words that she puts it by in a savings-bank, until the children are grown up. Her affection deserves thanks, and we cannot act contrary to her wishes."

The traveller listened to all this account in silence; but a happy smile about his mouth, and his eyes suffused with tears, showed how deeply his feelings were affected by all that the woman told him.

The woman ceased speaking, and applied herself to her task of spinning. The traveller remained sunk in thought for a while. All at once, he set down the child on the ground, went up to the husband, and said in an authoritative tone—"Leave off working!"

The broom-maker did not comprehend rightly what was said to him, and was startled by the peculiar tone in which it was uttered.

"Give over work, and give me your hand, Farmer Nelis!"

"Farmer!" muttered the besom-maker, astonished.

"Yes!" said the traveller, "throw the besoms out at the door: I will give you a farm-yard, four milk cows, a calf, two horses, and everything necessary for husbandry. You do not believe me," he continued, showing the broom-maker a handfull of money, "but I tell you the truth. I might give you money: I esteem and love you too much to offer you money; I will rather make you the proprietor of a small farm, and be the protector of your children, even after my death."

The worthy folks looked at him with tearful eyes, and seemed scarcely to know rightly what was going on.

While the traveller was about to make them fresh assurances of his good intentions, Peterkin took him by the hand, as if he had something to communicate to him.

"Well, dear child, what have you got to tell me?"

"Mr. John," replied the boy, "look, the labourers are coming home from the field. I am sure to meet Rosa; shall I run and tell her that you are come?"

The traveller seized Peterkin by the hand, and drew him hastily towards the door, and said,—

"Come, come, rather take me to her!"

So saying, and bidding a hasty good-bye to the people of the house, he followed the child, who was proceeding with hasty steps in the direction of the centre of the village.

As soon as they came to the first houses, the peasants rushed out in surprise, from barns and stables, and looked after the traveller and the boy, as if they were a wonder to behold. In truth, they presented a singular spectacle: the child in his shirt, and barefooted, dancing along and laughing and frolicking, with a hold of the unknown person's hand. The astonished people could not conceive what the rich gentleman, who seemed to them to be at least a lord, had to do with Peter the broom-maker. Their astonishment increased when they saw the stranger bend down and kiss the child. The only thought that entered their minds was, that the rich man had taken the child from his parents, in order to bring it up as his own. People from the city, who have no children of their own, are often accustomed to do this; and little Peterkin was the prettiest child in the village, with his large blue eyes and bright

curly locks. Still it did seem amusing that the rich gentleman should take the child along with him in nothing but his shirt! The traveller walked rapidly on. The whole village seemed lit up, as it were, with a magical glow. The verdure of the trees seemed of a brighter green; the lowly huts of the inhabitants wore a holiday smile; the birds sang with enchanting melody; the air was impregnated with balsamic odours, and life-giving energy.

The traveller's attention had been diverted from the child, to enjoy all this new blessedness. In this state his gaze was directed to a distance, and he endeavoured to pierce through the foliage that seemed to close up the path at the other end of the village.

Suddenly the child seized his hand with all its might, and said,—

"Look! look! there comes Rosa with our Trinny!"

And, in fact, an old blind woman now made her appearance, led by a little girl, and coming along through the village. The traveller, instead of following the hasty invitation of the child, stood still to contemplate, with grief and sorrow, the poor blind female, who was approaching with unsteady steps. Was this his Rosa? Could this be the beautiful and amiable maiden whose image still lived so brightly and youthfully in his heart?

This reflection lasted only for a moment; he led the child along with him, and ran to meet her; but when he was now only a few paces from her, he could no longer contain himself, and exclaimed, "Rosa! Rosa!"

As soon as this sound reached the ears of the blind Rosa, she withdrew her hand from that of her leader, and her whole frame began to tremble; but recovering herself, she stretched out her arms, and ran forward, crying, "John! John!" She then felt

in her bosom for a golden cross that hung about her neck by a string, which she broke in two, and, holding up the cross to him, fell upon his breast. Disengaging herself however from his arms, she gently took him by the hand, and said,—

"O my dear friend, do not think it is because I am not overjoyed at finding you again, but there is a vow which I made to God, and which I must first perform: come with me to the churchyard."

He scarcely understood what she meant, but there was something so solemn and sacred in the tone of her voice, that he yielded without hesitation. Without noticing the bystanders, who had run from all quarters and stood about them, he led Rosa to the churchyard. Here she went to the seat beneath the cross, and beckoned to him to kneel down beside her, saying, "I made a promise to heaven that we should make our thanksgiving together on this spot." She raised her clasped hands, uttered softly a prayer, and then threw her arms about her friend's neck, and embraced him. In the mean time, Peterkin danced about the people from the village, clapping his hands, and crying out, "It is Long John! it is Long John!"

On a fine autumn day in 1846, the diligence from Antwerp to Turnhout drove along the road at the accustomed hour. Suddenly the driver drew up at a short distance from a lonely inn, and opened the coach door. Two young travellers leaped out, laughing and exulting, and spreading out their arms like birds escaped from captivity, and which are again essaying their wings in perfect liberty; they looked at the trees and the beautiful blue sky, with the rapture which we experience when we have left the city, and are enjoying the unbounded scene of nature with every breath we draw. Looking towards the field, the younger traveller exclaimed enthusiastically,—

"Listen! listen!"

In fact, at this moment an indistinct sound of music was heard through the trees. The air was of a quick and merry character, so that, in hearing it, one could scarcely refrain from dancing. While the younger of the two stood pointing with his finger in silent delight, the other said, as if in mockery,—

"'There under the lime-trees, to trumpet and horn,
Around in the dance a gay crowd is borne;
And none of them all, who there laugh and sing,
Think on sorrow or death, or any sad thing.'

"Come, come, friend John, do not be so soon inspired; probably it is nothing but the celebration of the appointment of a new mayor."

"No, no," said the other; "this is no merely official rejoicing. Let us go and see the village girls dancing; it is so pretty!"

"First of all, let us go into the village, and get a glass of ale at Baes Joostens's, and inquire what is going on, and enjoy the pleasure of an unexpected surprise."

The two travellers stepped into the inn, and thought they should have split their sides with laughing, as soon as they put their heads within the room. There stood Baes Joostens, stiff and upright as a poker, against the chimney. His long, blue, holiday coat, full of folds, hung down nearly to his feet. He saluted his well-known guests with a forced smile, in which a degree of shame was apparent; and he scarcely dared to budge, on account of his stiff shirt-collar, which at every movement pricked his ears.

When the travellers entered he called out, impatiently, but without turning his head,—

"Zanna, Zanna, be quick! I hear music. I told you that you would be too late."

Zanna came running in with a nosegay, and

looking so beautiful, with her nicely-plaited high-peaked cap, her woollen gown, rose-coloured boddice, and large gold ornament on her breast in the form of a heart, and her ear-rings! Her face wore the blush of joyous expectancy, and resembled a huge flower, unfolding its dark leaves.

"A lovely peony, that opens its blossoms on a fine May-day!" exclaimed the younger of the two companions.

Zanna had now drawn the two glasses of beer, and ran, singing and laughing, with her flowers, to the door.

Baes now called out at the top of his voice, very impatiently,—

"Lisbeth! if you don't come down directly, I will go without you as sure as I am standing here."

An old clock, that hung on the wall, pointed at this moment to the hour of nine, and called out in a sombre tone—"Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"

"What bad taste is this?" inquired one of the travellers. "Have you sold the beautiful clock that used to stand here, in order to torment yourselves all the year round with this death-song?"

"Yes, yes," said the landlord, laughing, "be as merry as you please over this bird; he brings me in yearly many golden ducats; a good field, that needs no manure."

Four cannon shots were now heard in the distance.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" shouted the landlord, "the feast has begun; that woman will sicken me with her delay."

"But," asked the elder traveller, "what is going on here to-day? Is it fair time? Or has the king come to the village?"

"Oh, there are wonderful things going on here to-day," replied the landlord; "if you knew all, you might fill a book with it, and tell no stories. The old

cuckoo, also, has his place in the history of Blind Rosa."

"'*Blind Rosa!*' what a fine title!" interrupted the younger traveller; "that would make a fine companion to the '*Sick Youth.*'"

"No, that won't do," replied the other; "as we are going out to collect matter for tales, we must share fairly in the invention of them."

"Well, then," said the younger, half mournfully, "we can afterwards draw lots about it."

"Be it so," replied the other; "and now, Landlord, push away these ugly shirt-collars from your ears, and tell us all about it. Whenever the book is printed, you shall get a copy for your trouble."

"I cannot undertake to explain it all to you now," he replied, "for I hear my wife coming down stairs to set out with me. But come along with us to the village, and I will tell you by the way why the cannon are firing and the music is playing."

The landlady now entered the room, and dazzled the eyes of the travellers by the brilliancy of her toilette, which consisted of mingled colours of red and blue, yellow and white. She ran to her husband, pulled his shirt-collar up a little higher, took hold of his arm, and led him hastily out of doors. The two travellers followed them, and during the journey Baes Joostens told his attentive hearers the whole history of Long John and Blind Rosa; and although in doing this he was well-nigh out of breath, he was, nevertheless, assailed with all sorts of questions. They learned also that Mr. Slaets, that is Long John, had purchased the old cuckoo, in order to hang up the old clock in the inn: that he had been four-and-thirty years in Russia, during which time he had become rich by the fur-trade; that he had purchased the manorial estate, on which he intended to reside with Rosa and the family of the broom-maker,

whose children he had adopted; that he had made a present to the grave-digger of a considerable sum; and finally, to-day, had prepared a great festival for the labourers on his estate.

The speaker was still going on with his story when the party reached the village; and now the travellers listened no longer to what he said, for they were fully occupied in gazing at all the wonders presented to their view. The whole village in front of the houses was adorned with green pine-trees, bound together by snow-white garlands or magnificent wreaths of flowers. At intervals above the heads of the spectators, all kinds of inscriptions were seen in large red letters. Maypoles were erected here and there, with small flags, ornaments in tinsel, and festoons of birds' eggs and glass-ware. On the ground, along the path of the procession, the boys and girls had placed wreaths of flowers on the silvery heath-sand, and had inscribed in it, according to custom, the signatures of Jesus and Mary. The letters J. and R., signifying John and Rosa, and forming a cypher, were also enclosed in a wreath, and were the device of the schoolmaster.

A crowd from all the neighbouring villages, prompted by curiosity, was collected together, in order to witness this remarkable marriage. The travellers moved about from one group to another, and heard what the people said; but before the procession, which was coming across the fields, reached the village, they ran to the entrance of the churchyard, and stationed themselves there in an elevated position, for the purpose of having a good view of everything.

They looked at the procession with a kind of reverence; and in truth it was beautiful and touching to such a degree, as to kindle within the breasts of the young travellers feelings of poetry and romance.

More than sixty young girls, from five to ten years of age, dressed in white, walked in the bridal array, with the enchanting smile of childhood, like lambs sent down from the fold of heaven. Wreaths of roses, encircling their brows, and entwined amidst their loosely flowing locks, seemed to contest the prize of beauty with the crimson lips of the children.

The younger of the two travellers remarked,—

This is like a fairy tale of Andersen; the sylphs have forsaken the heart of the flowers; simplicity and innocence—youth and beauty—what an enchanting picture!"

"Ho, ho! here come the peonies; and Hannah Joostens, the landlord's wife, foremost of all," observed the elder traveller; but the younger was too deeply affected by all that he heard and saw to notice so unpoetical a remark. He looked with transport on the bigger girls, who, in formal state and resplendent with health and beauty, followed the children. How beautiful seemed the features of these grown-up maidens, beneath their high-pointed and snow-white caps! How charming the mantling colour that crimsoned their cheeks! How enchanting their modest smile—that went and came, like the breath of zephyr on a summer evening over the glassy lake!

Ah! there comes blind Rosa, with her bridegroom, Mr. Slaets. How happy the poor woman must be, after suffering so much! Sunk down to beggary; mourning for four-and-thirty years, and feeding her soul with a hope which she herself acknowledged to be vain; and now he has come, the friend of her childhood—of her youth! Leaning on his arm, she walks to the altar of God, who has heard her. The vow pledged beneath the cross in the churchyard is now to become a reality, and she is to be John's wife! On her breast still shines the simple golden cross

that Long John had given her! Now she hears the joyful greetings, the songs and the music, that celebrate his return! She trembles with emotion, and presses her husband's arm more closely to her, as if she doubted the reality of her happiness.

Nelis, with his wife and children, follow next. They are all dressed like wealthy peasants. The parents walk first, with downcast heads, and wiping away the tears of astonishment and gratitude from their eyes, as often as they look upon their blind benefactress. Peterkin holds his head erect, while his fair hair, that plays about his neck, streams in the breeze. He has a hold of his sister's hand.

But what a troop is here! the remains of an army shattered by the power of time!

About twenty men follow Nelis's children. In truth, they presented a singular spectacle; they were nearly all grey-headed or bald; many were bent, and the greater number leant on their staves; two had crutches, one was blind and deaf, and all were so decrepit and exhausted by long years of toil, that one might have thought that death had brought them out by force from their graves.

In front went Lauw Stevens, who stooped so that he almost touched the ground with his hands. Blind Baes, from the Plough Inn, supported himself by leaning on the miller's grandfather. These patriarchs formed the remains of a generation that lived at the time when Long John was the cock of the village, and had won for himself the first place by his youthful courage.

Next came the village folk, men and women, who had been invited to the bridal.

The procession entered the church;—the people outside heard the organ accompanying a festal song.

The younger traveller led his companion aside, in the churchyard. Stooping down, he turned round, and presented to the other his closed hand, from which hung two straws, saying at the same time,— "Draw!" "Why so quickly?" asked the other. "Never mind; the subject pleases me, and I wish to know whether I am to treat it or not."

The elder drew one of the straws; the younger threw his on the ground, and with a sigh exclaimed, "I have lost!"

So it happens, dear reader, that the elder of the two companions has told you the story of Blind Rosa. It is a pity; for otherwise you might have read in beautiful verse what I have told you in bad prose. May fortune favour you better another time!

H. C.

STEPHEN KRISMER.

STEPHEN KRISMER:

A TALE OF THE TYROL.

JANA, the sister and housekeeper of Stephen Krismer, curate[1] of the little village of See, in the Tyrol, had just entered the room with a letter in her hand, which she laid before her brother, who was at that moment drinking a glass of wine with his friend, the co-operator of the parish. "Where does this letter come from?" inquired he, as he took it up and examined it attentively.

"The smith has just now brought it from Landek," she replied; and then taking up the empty flask from the table, she went to fill it anew in the cellar.

"Surely," said the curate, in a soliloquising tone, "this is the miller of Brennbühel's writing. What can have happened?" While he spoke he opened the letter, and began to read it aloud, interrupting himself every now and then to comment on its contents:—

"DEAR HERR STEPHEN,—

"The gun has long been loaded, now it is about to be fired: ('What! is it possible that they are

[1] It may be necessary to acquaint our English readers, that in foreign countries the *Curate* is the parish priest; his assistant, if he has any, being called by different titles in different places, as *Vicaire* in France and Belgium, *Kooperator* in the Tyrol, &c.

going to fight again already?') I am unable any longer to approach my own fireside with my pipe, for the whole kitchen is full of women, tarts, and puddings. With the blessing of God, they will be a happy couple. ('Ah, indeed, this is it? My spiritual[1] bride Hannah has another bridegroom!') On Carnival-Monday they are to be married. ('On Carnival-Monday! to-morrow! and I have had no invitation until now!') It is true, dear Herr Stephen, that you have often promised Hannah that you would tie the holy knot, and pronounce the nuptial benediction, and the bride weeps much that this cannot be. ('Cannot be! And wherefore? what is to prevent it?') Captain H——, whom you lately offended so much, when you were with the people of Arz at the skirmish near the long bridge, is now quartered in the village inn close by; and he storms and swears, that if you should chance to fall into his hands, he will send you in chains to Munich. Therefore, we entreat you to remain at home, and to remember the bridal pair and all of us in your prayers. God be with you! Your old friend,

"JOHN NEURUERER, *Miller*."

"That would be a fine story, indeed!" said the curate, when he had finished reading; "I not marry them! Only think, Jana," he added, addressing his sister, who at that moment came in and set the wine-flask on the table,—"only think; the miller of Brennbühel's daughter Hannah is to be married to-morrow, and I shall not be there!" Throwing

[1] To understand this phrase it is necessary to observe, that it is the custom in some parts of the Tyrol for a priest, when he first celebrates mass, to choose some little girl from among the children of his acquaintance to assist at the ceremony. She kneels within the sanctuary, dressed in holiday attire, crowns the chalice with flowers, and, we believe, assists in other ways; during the rest of her life she is supposed to have a special claim on the kind offices of the priest, and is sometimes called his spiritual bride.

the letter from him, he strode up and down the room in an agitated manner, while the housekeeper folded her arms, and gazed at her brother with some surprise.

"And why cannot you be at the wedding?" she demanded.

"Vexatious! provoking!" was the only answer she could obtain from him. But suddenly his face began to brighten; he swallowed hastily a mouthful of wine, and looked towards the clock.

"Just twelve o'clock," he said aloud; "at half-past one I shall be in Piams, at half-past two in Landek; there I can take a pony, if I find no other conveyance. At seven o'clock I shall be in Brennbühel."

"But, Herr Curate," interrupted the co-operator, "bethink yourself of the risk you run in this expedition."

"Are you also a child?" replied Herr Stephen, laughing, as he hastened out of the room and went upstairs to his chamber.

The good kind-hearted Jana was not a little terrified by the words which the co-operator had uttered, who now taking up the letter read it aloud to her, while she listened with anxiety. When he had finished, they both agreed that the journey was decidedly a dangerous one, and they resolved to do all they could to dissuade the curate from attempting it. Jana, already trembling in every limb, went upstairs with a beating heart to seek her brother. He had in the meanwhile taken off his robe, put on his new velvet waistcoat, then his well-kept primizrock[1] of fine blue cloth, and finally his smooth grey cloak over all. As his sister entered, he was just taking the money-bag from the cupboard, and putting a few

[1] The coat worn by a priest on the day that he says his first mass.

dollars and zwanzigers into his pocket. Poor Jana stood motionless before him, gazing at him in mute terror, while the tears rolled from her eyes; but it was not till he stretched out his hand to reach down from the peg on which it hung his wide felt hat with silk tassels, that she threw herself into his arms and cried, "For God's sake, brother! for God's sake, do not go!"

At the same moment the co-operator also entered the room, and said, "Herr Curate, remain here, and give up this journey."

The good curate, thus pressed on both sides, twirled his hat round and round in his hand, and smiled as he replied, "You are foolish people; do not hinder me. As it is, I have little time to waste."

"I beg you, in God's name, to remain," cried poor Jana, sobbing aloud, as she covered her face with her apron; while the co-operator added in a serious tone,—

"You expose yourself unnecessarily to an evident danger, Herr Stephen."

"Where is the danger?" answered the good curate; "was not an amnesty guaranteed to us? Who has any right to lay hands on me, or even to threaten me? I have given a promise to my spiritual bride that I would perform this ceremony, and I see no real hindrance to prevent me from doing so."

"But," persisted the co-operator, "the bride herself, as well as her parents, wish you to remain at home under the circumstances."

"Because they are too anxious on account of me," replied Herr Stephen. "But if I do not appear, a cloud will hang over all the festivities; a feeling of oppression and restraint will come upon them, and they will say one to another, 'It is a shame that we cannot even celebrate a wedding as we wish.' Do you think the bride will be able to restrain her tears?

She will sit by the bridegroom with a sad countenance, and no one will be really serene and cheerful at heart. It is the will of God that nuptial festivities should be observed with joy; and as Christ was pleased to ennoble the wedding in Cana of Galilee by his presence, so will I, as a servant and messenger of the Lord, be present at and enliven in a Christian manner this marriage at Brennbühel. It may even happen that I may be able in this way to put an end to the unjust threats of that Bavarian braggart."

"But look at poor Jana," answered the co-operator; "surely you should consider your own sister more than them; and even if all ends happily, you will cause her, meanwhile, much anxiety on your account, which you could so easily spare her."

At these words Jana began to weep still more vehemently. Then Herr Stephen put on a serious look, and spoke with more energy than before.

"Dear sister," said he, "do not follow your own opinion merely, but believe my words; I apprehend no danger from this affair. I do not undertake the journey for idle amusement, but to fulfil my promise, and for an end which God will certainly approve. Of this I am assured by the peace and joy of my heart, and this inward voice has never yet betrayed me. I will leave the key of the money-box here on the bench, and the day after to-morrow, by God's help, I will be here again. Herr Co-operator, I need not remind you to watch over our flock during my absence; and now—farewell."

He already had his office-book under his arm, and his Spanish ivory-topped cane in his hand; and sprinkling himself and the two others with holy water, he put on his hat and departed. The co-operator and the housekeeper followed him slowly to the door, and gazed after him in silence until he was out of sight.

As soon as Herr Stephen had left behind him the few houses which formed the little village of See, he put his stick under his arm, made the sign of the cross, and began to recite the office, looking in his book from time to time. Notwithstanding this occupation, he walked at a tolerably quick pace along the rough path through the valley, only interrupting his devotions for a few moments at the dangerous parts of the descent, and then immediately resuming them. In two hours he reached the little village of Piams, and perceived with pleasure, as he approached the principal inn, that a handsome double-seated sledge was standing at the door, the pole of which was turned in the direction of Landek. He stood still, and supporting himself on his stick, patiently awaited the arrival of the ostler, who was in the act of leading out the fiery noble-looking steed.

"Quirin," said Herr Stephen to the man, "who owns this sledge?"

"God greet you, Herr Curate," replied the ostler, "it belongs to an officer."

"To an officer?" said Herr Stephen, musingly; and then added, "Does he travel alone?"

"Yes," replied Quirin, "he does; but this is all I know of him."

During this exchange of words, a stately officer walked out of the inn-door, stroked his moustaches, and lighted his pipe. The clergyman looked up at him with a deliberating countenance, but it was not till the horse was put to the carriage, and the officer had descended the steps of the inn, and let fall the trinkgeld into the ostler's hands, that Herr Stephen drew near to him, and said rather hesitatingly,—

"With your permission, Herr Captain. It is certainly very rude of me, but I must be in Imst to-day, and the road"—

"Ah, I understand your reverence," replied the

officer courteously; "with much pleasure. Take your seat; I am going that way also."

Herr Stephen, who was a slight, active little man, swung himself lightly into the sledge beside the officer, who now took the reins and whip; and with "Alloh! Braun, Alloh!" they flew off at a good speed.

After a few minutes' silence, the officer thus commenced the conversation: "Your reverence is probably the Herr Priest of Imst?" he said inquiringly.

"No, Herr Captain," replied the other smiling.

"But you are of that country?" continued the officer.

"My home is in the village of Karres, just above Brennbühel," said the priest.

"Ah, that is very good," answered the officer; "you can then go with me as far as Brennbühel."

"May God reward you for your kindness," replied Herr Stephen.

"Your confidence in a Bavarian officer," said the other, "and your freedom from prejudice, which you manifest by thus openly driving with me through the villages, prove to me that you are not one of those narrow-minded and stubborn clergymen, who do little credit to their high office, and draw down no blessing upon the parishes committed to their care. Excuse me for expressing myself honestly, but it is a fact, that the parsons of Tyrol (let it be well understood, I do not mean the priests, but the parsons) have brought more fagots to this burning than any other class of society. Instead of peace, they have preached up hatred; instead of obedience, rebellion. Many of them have left the altar, and placed themselves at the head of factions; and their hands, which ought to be raised pure to heaven, have been stained with blood. If I were at the head of affairs, I should know well where and on whom to inflict punishments. Why

are you silent? do you disapprove of what I am saying?"

"On the contrary, Herr Captain," replied the good curate, "I think that your displeasure against many priests of our country is quite natural."

"Not far from Piams," continued the officer, with some warmth, "in the refractory Patznaun, the ecclesiastical and temporal authorities tolerate just such a wolf among the flock as I have been describing."

The curate rubbed his reddened cheeks and said, "You mean, perhaps, Stephen Krismer of See."

"The very same," answered the officer. "Do you know him intimately?"

"As well as I do myself," replied Herr Stephen.

"Indeed!" said his companion; "I have sworn to arrest him as soon as he falls into my hands."

"With your permission," replied Herr Stephen, speaking as composedly as he could, "may I ask by what crime he has excited your anger so much?"

"Is it possible that you can ask such a question, when you know him so well?" demanded the officer with some surprise; "and you were probably curate of Karres before last November? He stirred up the inhabitants of Arz to rise against the government; he drove out the fanatical people against us, against me myself, and he prepared a murderous fire to prevent my advance, so that it was in fact impossible. Moreover, the parson behaved with insolence and impertinence in the transaction, and therefore his reward shall not be forgotten."

"I understand," replied the curate, "that Stephen Krismer's only purpose was to serve his fellow-countrymen as army chaplain, for which office he procured episcopal permission. As he returned in the beginning of November over the mountains to his curacy, after the occurrences at Innsbruck, the rifle-shooters, then collected at Arz, stopped him; and instead of acting

up to his exhortations to maintain peace, they insisted upon his becoming their commander. This he refused. They then presented their arquebuses, and threatened to shoot him if he did not gratify them. To save his life, and to prevent the murder of a priest, he accommodated himself to the necessity of the moment."

"Of the moment?" said the officer scornfully; "that is hard to believe, when only a few days later he did his best to kindle rebellion and war in the very place where he was set up for the administration of Christian peace and loyalty. The madman went so far as to send mothers and daughters into the combat, and, as it is said, he even armed his own sister. How can freedom be allowed to such a monster?"

"But, Herr Captain," remonstrated the curate, "the general amnesty protects him."

"He is a dangerous man," replied the other; "and the lawful authorities have a full right, and indeed are positively obliged, to see that he shall not have the power of doing any more mischief. New occasions are not wanted to justify my interference. I have long called the attention of the colonel at Landek towards him. Not long ago we had information that he was endeavouring to call forth anew the spirit of insurrection, by means of preaching and conventicle discourses, and that he had even deposited arms in the church-vaults. Some of our officers went into Schloss Wiesberg to collect more particular information. Hear what chanced. On that very day the parson had appointed a meeting with a neighbouring priest for mutual confession at that same house, and he was even then in the parlour."

"And did not the officers take him prisoner?" asked the curate.

"As soon as he perceived the military at the door," continued the officer, "he took the leather cap from the head of a shoemaker who was accidentally at work there, covered his tonsure with it, flung off his coat, and, as the officers entered, industriously bored at the leather with his awl, stooping down the while, so that his collar was not visible. Thus he had the enjoyment of hearing all the inquiries which were made concerning him. This anecdote spread through the country like wildfire. After this warning, it was easy for the villain to convey away to surer hiding-places every thing that could betray him. He even had the boldness to appear before the landgericht (magistrate) with eighteen of his parishioners, not only to clear himself by the exterior forms of legality, but also to vent his anger by complaints of the pretended calumnies on the part of the soldiers. In spite of all this, the wily fox shall not escape us; and I have this very day been concerting measures with the major at Piams, which cannot fail of success."

"But, Herr Captain," replied the curate, "I do not believe Stephen Krismer will do any thing which deserves punishment. The circumstances of the time must surely excuse his former behaviour, for it was the people who forced him to join them."

"Yes, truly," answered the officer, "the people resemble animals in their instinct; they soon understand who sympathises with them. And indeed no priests of any worth or learning joined the rebels, but only the uncivilized parsons, who are imbued with the same prejudices and passions as the mob. It is said that the insurrectionary proclamations were only sent to ecclesiastics of a secondary grade, who, being taken from among the people, are only raised above them by their consecration to the priesthood.

And a worthy specimen of this class Stephen Krismer appears to be."

"I quite agree with you," replied the curate, "that Stephen Krismer has no claim to be reckoned among the learned. He was nearly twenty years old when, by the kind assistance of the rich miller of Brennbühel, he was enabled to commence his studies for holy orders, after having been employed during the whole of his previous life in tending goats and in manual labour. You have doubtless heard of Falkensteiner, the pious confessor of the nuns at Bruneck, who, in order to remedy the great want which then existed of additional priests, introduced a new method of education, which enabled students to go through their course in a much shorter time than before. He had under him seventy or eighty students, and any clergyman who comes from that institution is called in Tyrol a Falkensteiner. Stephen Krismer is one of these; he drinks from the spring rather than from the pitcher; he draws knowledge from God and from nature rather than from books and systems. It was because he was always more inclined to an active life than to solitary study, and also because he was not deficient in courage, that he became army chaplain; and having been once drawn in, as it were, by his clerical duties, to undertake the cause, it was but natural that the peasants should wish to employ him rather than any one else in their meditated enterprise."

During this speech the captain had several times regarded his companion with a searching and suspicious look, and he now said scornfully,—"It seems to me that you are endeavouring to make an apology for Stephen Krismer, and to excuse all his misconduct and lawless behaviour."

Here the good Herr Stephen laughed heartily as he replied, "I assure you, Herr Captain, there is

no one in this world whom I value less than Stephen Krismer."

At these words the officer, with an expression of joyful surprise on his countenance, turned towards him in a friendly manner, and shaking him warmly by the hand, exclaimed, "Excellent, your reverence! I have no doubt also that you will agree with me and with all sensible people, in the conviction that the Tyrolese insurrection was no other than a crime and an execrable rebellion. Now what do you think? Speak honestly, and I will not take offence."

"Do you really wish me to speak honestly?" asked the curate.

"Without any hesitation," replied the other; "I give you my word of honour."

"Why, then," demanded Herr Stephen, "do you consider the late resistance of the Tyrolese to be a criminal insurrection?"

"Why?" replied the captain; "because the subject owes obedience to his sovereign."

"It is true," said Herr Stephen, "that at the peace of Presburg the Emperor Francis issued his commands that we should become Bavarian subjects; but with our ancient constitution, and with the liberties and established rights which we inherited from our forefathers. The King of Bavaria promised not to alter a single iota of our constitution, and above all to protect religion. But how has he kept his oath? We all know what happened. The bishops were banished from their dioceses; the most pious and learned priests were imprisoned; our ritual torn from the hands of the Church and destroyed; our states were done away with; our young men stolen away from their homes, to the ruin of body and soul; all established order was overturned, and Tyrol degenerated into a mere Bavarian province, destitute of privileges, and oppressed on all sides."

"Oh ho!" cried the Bavarian officer; "these are your sentiments, are they? But never mind; go on without fear."

"The Emperor Francis," continued Herr Stephen, "gave us up to Bavaria under certain conditions. Can the commands of our rightful lord still remain valid, when those conditions have been utterly disregarded? No! and the Emperor Francis himself has called to us. The King of Bavaria has not kept the conditions of the contract, and therefore the contract is dissolved; we are loosed from our duty to Bavaria, and we once again belong to the Imperial house, as we have done for five centuries and a half. The Tyrolese have revolted in a spirit of loyalty, not of faithlessness."

"Reverend sir," returned the officer seriously, "I did not expect to hear such principles from your lips. You Tyrolese are indeed a fanatical and blinded people. The burning of your huts and villages once has not been sufficient, I perceive, to remove the darkness from your eyes. Can you not understand that when thrones rest upon a dead letter, they are more unsteadythan chaff before the wind? When a government guides the rudder with fettered hands, the ship of the state is dashed to pieces, and its rulers perish with it. When subjects prescribe laws to the ruler, how shall he govern them? Is he to be the servant, and they his masters? No, by my sword!" he added fiercely, tearing his bright blade half way out of the scabbard, and then thrusting it violently back again; "such an infringement of the rights of majesty, such a chaotic confusion of all natural order, shall never be borne, as long as true and gallant soldiers surround their monarch."

"But only consider the consequences," replied the priest. "When the holiest conditions of the most solemn contracts and treaties of peace are trodden

under foot; when the rights of subjects are no longer respected; and ——"

"We give you better for worse," interrupted the captain, vehemently, "and you call it an encroachment on your rights. Will you Tyrolese be as immovable as your mountains? Will you never accommodate yourselves to the times? Will you not advance with the age? Answer me this, reverend sir."

"Herr Captain," replied the curate earnestly, "I do not wish to enter into a learned discussion, whether the present representation of the people or an established parliament is most desirable; nor whether, in secular matters, the new or old system is the best; this I cannot decide: but my heart tells me that much which Bavaria inflicts upon us is crying to Heaven for vengeance; and that the Emperor Francis is justified in declaring his former cession of Tyrol invalid, after so gross a violation of the stipulations then made, is evident to my simple understanding: and if you, Herr Captain, were a Tyrolese, I feel convinced that you would be one of the most valiant defenders of our country."

"Your opinion, reverend sir, is very flattering," returned the captain courteously.

"Do not be offended," continued Herr Stephen, "with my view of the subject. It is my candid opinion, and I cannot think otherwise. You have permitted me to speak frankly to you in confidence."

"You need not fear," said the officer. "But tell me, how could you, entertaining such sentiments, speak with disapprobation of Stephen Krismer? Perhaps you only wish to take the part of the people, while you justly blame those priests who, leaving the pure atmosphere of their heavenly calling, sink down in the mire of such worldly affairs, and even mix themselves up in political quarrels. Have I guessed rightly?"

"You must pardon me, Herr Captain," replied the priest. "The Church, it is true, forbids the priest to carry arms himself, or to shed blood. But as the priest is required by his holy office to encourage his people in the performance of *all* their duties, so is he bound to fulfil this obligation in regard to their allegiance towards their fatherland and their monarch; and were he silent on this subject, it would be a grievous omission in his priestly labours. And when duty leads the peaceable inhabitants to murderous combats, and calls upon them for the sacrifice of their lives and property, shall a conscientious priest at such a moment grow dumb? or dare he desert his own in the hour of danger? Must he not then more than ever stimulate, strengthen, and animate them? Shall he not, where it is possible, share with them fatigues and dangers, assist the wounded and dying, and administer the consolations of religion on the field of battle and in the hospital?"

"Without a doubt," replied the officer, "when the cause is a just one, and duty clear as the day."

"Their duty was never doubtful to the Tyrolese," replied the curate with emphasis.

"Allowing this to be true," returned the officer, "there must be some other reason, then, which makes you bear a grudge against Stephen Krismer. Is he quarrelsome in his private life as well as in his public?"

"I must beg you not to press me any further on this subject," said the curate.

"Well, well," answered the other, "if I can at any time take your part against him, I am at your service: we shall be near neighbours; my quarters are at the Gasthaus in Brennbühel."

"I have nothing to fear from Stephen Krismer," replied the curate; "but I own that another enemy causes me great uneasiness, although I am innocent.

He dwells in Brennbühel, and may perhaps insult me this very day; in which case I beg for your protection."

"Here is my hand," replied the other warmly; "whoever he may be, I will chastise him. Though we differ in opinion, I cannot mistake your principles, and I honour the openness with which you have spoken."

During this conversation the sledge had been rapidly traversing the valley, and, leaving behind one village after another, had now arrived at the Milser Höpe, from whence the little village of Brennbühel could be discerned in the depth below at the foot of the mountain. The approaching wedding of the miller's daughter was now spoken of, and before long they drove by the miller's house; and the horse, shaking his harness, stood before the inn-door.

The captain's servant hastened to meet them; and the curate, slipping a half-krone into his hand, much to his surprise, thanked the captain for his courtesy in a simple and friendly manner. The hostess, who was a daughter of the miller's, came out to receive the guests, and turned pale with fright when she saw Herr Stephen so close to his greatest enemy: she anxiously peeped under his cloak to see if his arms were bound; but no chains were visible. The curate took an early opportunity to impress upon her that she must on no account allow any one to address him by his name; and seating himself down to a glass of wine in company with his fellow-traveller, they carried on an easy and friendly conversation.

Great confusion meanwhile pervaded the miller's house. His son had chanced to see the Herr Curate drive by at the captain's side. He immediately rushed into the room where the bride and her two sisters were arranging the dresses and garlands for the approaching festivity, and screamed out,—"Herr

Stephen is taken prisoner! The captain has just brought him in!" The poor maidens stood aghast. The garlands and dresses fell to the ground; they wrung their hands, and with loud laments hastened to tell the dreadful news to their mother; and from her they went to their father, who had locked himself up in the little empty kitchen in the upper floor, and was busily engaged in the forbidden employment of casting bullets, which brought certain death to every living thing at which they were aimed by the miller's skilful hand. The three maidens knocked with mournful clamour at the door, but received no answer. "The Herr Stephen has been brought hither in chains." Still no answer. At last, after much entreaty and loud knocking, the door was unlocked; and the stout old man came forth, holding in his hand twelve newly-cast bullets. He greeted his daughters with a harsh rebuke; but when he heard the strange intelligence he shook his head doubtfully, and said hastily and with warmth, "My bullets, then, were not made by chance." But when his anger had subsided a little, he and his wife and his well-grown sons deliberated what was best to be done. He dressed himself in his holiday coat, with the intention of going to the inn himself, and in case of necessity remonstrating with the Herr Captain.

He opened the house-door, and —— Stephen Krismer walked in! A shout of joy overpowered the curate's warm greeting; and by the earnest demands of his friends as to how he had obtained his freedom, he quickly perceived the mistake under which they laboured, and immediately explained the whole adventure to them. After a short conversation he requested the miller to invite the captain to dine with them on the morrow, that so the joke might conclude.

"Herr Stephen, Herr Stephen," replied the miller,

"you are a bold man to remain here!" and he laughed until his sides shook. He accompanied the curate to the captain's apartment, and gave him an agreeable surprise by inviting him to the wedding-feast. Of his own accord the captain offered them the use of the cannon, that nothing might be wanting to celebrate the festivity with suitable eclat.

The religious ceremony took place in the festively adorned chapel, in presence of a crowd of curious sight-loving people. Herr Stephen married them, his countenance beaming with joy. At the festive repast the clergyman was seated on the right hand, and the soldier on the left of the bridal pair. The priest was extremely lively. Toasts went round; the cannon sent forth their loudest report. The captain rose from his seat, and holding his full glass towards his fellow-traveller, cried out, "The Herr Curate of Karres! Vivat!" Stephen Krismer smiled. The guests had, it is true, been well instructed that the curate was not known to the officer; but for all that they were taken by surprise, and looked at each other with much alarm.

"Are you not, then, the curate of Karres?" demanded the officer.

The curate rose from his chair, stood boldly upright, and holding his glass on high, replied,—"It is true that I was born at Karres; but I am the curate, not of Karres, but—of See in Patznaun. Stephen Krismer drinks to the prosperity of the Herr Captain! Vivat!"

The captain remained standing as if petrified; at last he let his glass gradually sink upon the table, and exclaimed,—"So cunning a rogue I never before met with in all my life."

Krismer now whispered a word in the bride's ear. She blushed, and taking up the glass with a trem-

bling hand, said,—"Herr Captain, the bride begs a pardon for the Herr Stephen."

The soldier gently touched her glass with his own; and while the bride sipped the wine, he answered, "Who can deny any thing to the amiable bride?" and raising the glass on high, cried out, "Pardon and reconciliation." Then he struck it against the clergyman's glass until it echoed again; and the whole company arose with the unanimous cry, "Long live the Herr Captain and the Herr Stephen!"

"In case of need I should have claimed your promised protection!" said the priest, smiling, to the officer, as he seated himself.

During all this bustle it was hardly perceived that a maiden in anything but bridal attire had been forcibly dragged into the room by one of the miller's daughters. This was Jana, the curate's sister. "What dost thou here? How camest thou hither?" asked her brother, with some astonishment. The miller's daughter now related that poor Jana had been driven by anxiety to leave her home in Patznaun, and come all the way to Brennbühel. She was forced to take a seat and join in the festivities.

The captain looked at her steadfastly, and then exclaimed,—"So! The very same maiden who a short time ago so courageously fired at our people in the Patznaun valley!"

"The very same," answered the old miller, with a waggish laugh; and lifting up his glass he cried, "With your permission, Herr Captain. Long live the gallant defenders of See!" The toast was received with boisterous clamour, and even the captain clapped applause. The old man suddenly recollected himself; and giving with both hands a sign for silence, he thus spoke, addressing himself to the

officer: "As you, Herr Captain, have to-day been reconciled to Herr Stephen, and sit at our table in a friendly way, so shall all the Tyrolese and Bavarians extend their hands to each other." "Bravo!" cried the officer, and immediately stretched out his hand over the table. The old man shook it with right good will, while the side door of the apartment flew open, and the musicians of Imster were admitted, drowning all other sounds by their own joyous melodies.

O

THE

CONSCRIPT OF BAGNOLET.

In the pleasant valley which extends between Montreuil and Romainville, stands the little village of Bagnolet. As is the case in most of the environs of Paris, those of its inhabitants who are employed in husbandry, contribute each their part to supply the capital with provisious; which, like an immense gulf, swallows up the produce of the soil for fifty leagues around.

Nicolas, the son of a husbandman of the abovementioned village, strong, active, and good looking, had just attained his twentieth year. Unlike many of the peasants, who know nothing of religion but the steeple which surmounts their village, and the curé who baptizes, marries, and buries them, Nicolas, who had been better brought up, and better instructed, faithfully practised all the duties of his station, and was held in general esteem by the inhabitants of the village.

The time of conscription arrived, and Nicolas, having no desire for a military life, looked forward to the period of drawing with dismay. He had, in truth, very sufficient reasons; for his father and mother, already advanced in years, had need of his help; moreover, in the country they marry young, and Nicolas, after the drawing was over, was to

espouse Margaret, the daughter of père Mathieu, a fine comely person with rustic charms, and a rosy complexion. How, under these circumstances, should he not regard with horror the prospect of seven years service in the army, or rather the possible chance of a premature death, glorious perhaps, but still far from pleasant, among the Bedouins of Africa.

It was to avoid this misfortune that Césaire, an old shepherd of the country, and an old sorcerer to boot, came one day to offer Nicolas a spell, which, he said, was a preservative against an unlucky number. The talisman, according to his account, was infallible.

The temptation was strong, and Nicolas hesitated for a moment; but his good sense and good principles resumed their power over him, and he replied, "I have no need of your spells, my old man; I put my trust in God; one prayer to Him will be better than all your spells."

"Ah! you believe so?" said Césaire.

"Yes, I believe it."

"Well! we shall see," and looking down upon him with a contemptuous sneer, the sorcerer withdrew.

In the meantime, the expected day arrived, and Nicolas, with a tranquil mind, directed his way towards the place of drawing. It was not, however, without some apprehension that he plunged his hand into the fatal bag; he drew it out slowly; alas! his countenance changes—he becomes pale;—he has the number *three!* But his despair increased still more when, on the termination of the drawing, he found that it had fallen upon him alone of the four conscripts of his village. His three companions, who were freethinkers in religion, had had recourse to the old Césaire, and they had succeeded.

It is needless to describe the sarcasms of which poor Nicolas was the butt,—the coarse and stinging jests which were aimed at him. For several days he

concealed his despair in the retirement of his cottage, not daring to show himself, or to go out, and, at the same time, receiving the most sensible blow of all from the reproaches of his own family. The old shepherd, on the contrary, was carried in triumph all over the village, and was received with applause and bumpers of wine at every public-house which they passed.

"Long live Césaire!" "Down with the curé!" such were the cries that were heard resounding in the midst of the noise of glasses; and though Monsieur le curé did not feel at all disposed to lay down his arms before the sorcerer, yet he knew not well what to answer,—the fact was evident to all the villagers.

As for Nicolas, a still greater mortification awaited him. There are trials and afflictions of an external tenor against which we can bear up manfully, especially when we place our trust in God; but there are others which must have vent, and against which it is in vain to seek to fortify oneself beforehand, for they have their rise in the deepest feelings of the heart. Nicolas, then, was abandoning himself to the keenest distress, when suddenly some one knocked at the door. He opened; it was Father Mathieu.

"Well, my poor Nicolas," said he, as he entered, "fortune has not favoured you."

"Ah, no! Father Mathieu; that is my grief."

"Well, you have yourself to blame. You disdained the old Césaire, and would not do as the others did; and all this to save a few sous!"

A mist passed over the eyes of Nicolas:—thus to have his sentiments misconstrued, it was too much.

"In fine," added Mathieu, assuming the tone of a teacher, "to great evils we must apply great remedies. Take my advice: go, do your part as a brave man . . . Who knows,—perhaps it is the road

which will conduct you to fortune—to glory. You know the old saying,—

"'Les soldats font des généraux;
Et plus d'un maréchal de France
Est porté le sac sur le dos.'

"'Out of soldiers are made generals:
And many a marshal of France
Has started with his knapsack on his back.'

But as it may be long before this happens, and time is running on, do not be surprised if I withdraw my promise, and my daughter does not wait for you. Adieu!"

This news fell upon poor Nicolas like a thunderbolt, and he remained for some moments almost annihilated. As soon as he recovered himself, he ran to the house of the curé, and related to him all the circumstances of the visit of père Mathieu. The good curé sincerely compassionated him, but what could he do? He ventured, however, to give him some words of consolation; and entreated him not to lose his trust in Providence, but to bear up manfully, and hope the best.

Things were in this state, and Nicolas only waited for the order to march, when one day there entered the village of Bagnolet a handsome carriage with armorial bearings, drawn by four horses, and the postilion and footman in livery. Other equipages followed; and all the coachmen, cracking their whips, drove at full speed down the principal street. Every one was at his door, beholding with wondering eyes this magnificent retinue; but what was their astonishment when they saw the principal carriage stop at the door of Nicolas, and a young and beautiful lady, elegantly attired, descend from it! It was the Duchess of B——, accompanied by several ladies, all of whom likewise alighted, and entered with the Duchess into the house of Nicolas. An hour after,

they came out, and were seen to go to the house of Father Mathieu, and then to Monsieur le curé's; and, finally, all drove off and took the road to Paris.

What was it that had taken place? What was the object of this triple visit? Such was the mystery which each one endeavoured to penetrate; and of the thousand conjectures which were made, it may be said that all had the merit of being equally near, and equally far from, the truth.

The next day, which was Sunday, when the time for the sermon arrived, Monsieur le curé ascended the pulpit; and all eyes were turned towards Nicolas, as the curé said,—"There is a promise of marriage between Nicolas Germain, younger son of Jean Germain, and of Julie Juquet Germain his wife, his father and mother on one side, and Marguerite Mathieu, younger daughter of Jerome Mathieu, and Louise Jobin Mathieu his wife, her father and mother on the other side, all living in the village of Bagnolet," and the rest, according to the set form. He then preached a sermon on the providence of God, showing that to Him alone belongs the knowledge of the future, and that He never abandons those who put their trust in Him; and he ended by saying that the Duchess of B—— had charged herself with finding a substitute for Nicolas, and providing his dowry and that of Margaret;—making them a present of three thousand francs, with a complete *trousseau*. Moreover, she desired that Nicolas should supply her regularly with fruit and vegetables; she wished to be godmother to the first child which should be born of this union; and the only acknowledgment she asked was, that the young couple should pray for her.

As they came out from church, every one complimented Nicolas and Marguerite, and turned their

back upon the sorcerer, who from this time began to lose favour considerably.

But how was all this done? This is a mystery to the inhabitants of Bagnolet to this day. As we, however, have had the privilege of penetrating it, we propose, good reader, to admit you into our confidence.

A friend of the curé was in the room with him at the time when Nicolas, in despair, had related to him the sorrowful result of his unfortunate adventure. He was so much struck by it, that, on his arrival in Paris, he related the circumstances to the rich and benevolent Duchess of B——, who at once determined to carry into effect the generous plan which we have related.

Fifteen days after this event, the Duchess returned. She assisted herself at the toilet of the bride, was present at the nuptial service in the church with all her suite, and provided, moreover, all the expenses of the repast, and of the ball which followed.

As for the shepherd Césaire, he was soon appreciated at his proper value, and banished to the company of a class of people like himself;—idle vagabonds, and frequenters of the public-house.

THE SAURIMONDE.

If there is in France a district picturesque, wild, and romantic, no less from the nature of the scenery than the character of the inhabitants, it is unquestionably that of the Montagne Noire, or Black Mountain, a kind of link of the Pyrenees, which connects them with the Cevennes and Gevaudan.

To a very recent period the Montagne Noire had preserved many of the legendary traditions of the past; and, even at this day, there are those to be found who would not presume to doubt the existence of the *Fossilières*, a phalanx of bad spirits, who, according to the peasants, are always seeking to establish a terrible dominion over the human race. The most renowned of these spirits is called Tambourinet; after him come the Drac, and next the "Saurimonde," of which latter the following recital will spare us for the present any further explanations.

In 1794 there lived in the district of the Black Mountain, along with his old mother, a poor shepherd-boy of about fifteen years of age. Nothing could have been more affecting than to behold that little dwelling, in which reigned the most perfect peace. Pierre Jubal seemed to exist only in order to dedicate his life to his mother, the good Jeanne; and he looked always with impatience for the evening, when he returned to his home, where the widow would

have prepared for him some soup, and cakes of black bread. Then the mother and son conversed together, and though there were but few events in their simple existence, as in that of the persons who surrounded them, their conversation never flagged. Jeanne had at one time served in some opulent families in Paris, and was possessed of sufficient intelligence to have gathered information there which was useful to her son.

Was it because Pierre Jubal was superior to his companions, that his countenance bore the stamp of melancholy? While his sheep were at pasture, the youth read, or rather devoured, some books which he had managed to procure. When he had saved a little money, his only ambition consisted, not in buying a new *briscoat*—a kind of dalmatic—but in purchasing some fresh books. Jealous of his information, and also offended by the grave silence which he habitually preserved, the inhabitants of the village neglected no opportunity of turning him into ridicule.

"Ah!" said they, "he is going to be a *savant*, a learned man, a *monsieur*, a gentleman. You are much to blame, Pierre. What will you get by wearing out your eyes over a book of magic? You had better come and enjoy yourself on the holidays with us."

Pierre, however, did not heed these jeers; but when he found himself shunned by the youths of the neighbourhood, his melancholy increased. More than once he thought of becoming a soldier, in order to get away from a place where he could never hope for happiness: the tears of his old mother had alone restrained him. An unexpected event, however, soon changed the current of his life.

As Pierre was traversing a wood one spring morning, he heard a sort of plaintive cry. The dogs im-

mediately pricked up their ears. The shepherd took the path to the right, from whence the sound appeared to proceed, and perceived, extended on the grass, a charming little girl of about six years of age, with a complexion of the loveliest white and red, large blue eyes, and fine fair hair. He lifted up the child, and seating her on his knee, questioned her, but without obtaining other than vague replies. Nearly all he could learn was that her name was Marie. From the elegance of her dress, and the fineness of her linen, he judged that the little girl belonged to opulent parents. But where were the family of Marie? She could give no information. At all events, Pierre resolved to take his new-found treasure home.

So soon as he came in sight of his cottage, he called to his mother,—

"Here, here, mother!" he said; "I have something for you."

Astonished to hear the voice of her son, the old woman hastened forward as quickly as her years and infirmities would permit.

"What is it? what is the matter, my dear boy?" she cried. "What brings you back so soon? Has anything ill happened to you?"

"Nothing ill, mother," answered the boy, "but a piece of good fortune. Look at this pretty little dove!"

"Oh, the beautiful angel! What a darling she is! what a charming little creature!"

As the good country woman spoke thus, she took Marie in her arms, and covered her with kisses, though the child was a little frightened at those lively demonstrations of tenderness and admiration.

When Jeanne had indulged to her heart's content those feelings of pity and affection which are always inspired by infantine beauty and misfortunes, she

loaded Pierre with questions, to which he was ill able to reply.

"You see, my boy," she at last said, "we cannot let matters remain thus. Marie is a real treasure; but this treasure does not belong to us. You must set out to-morrow, and try and discover this little one's family."

Pierre, though at heart sorry to part with the child, set out to seek this information on the following day. He took Marie about the neighbourhood, but nowhere did she recognise her *dear papa!* The rich persons, and, above all, the proprietors of chateaux, might have been able to give him useful information; but the greater part of them, struck with a panic of terror at that period, had fled into Spain. After spending much time and trouble, Pierre could obtain no further satisfaction than at first; or, rather, we must correct ourselves by saying, that he had the satisfaction of knowing that he could retain possession of Marie.

Gentle affection! pure interchange of tenderness! What delight the heart experiences in the constant care of a feeble being, who returns us thanks with its harmonious voice and angelic smile! There is not a sweeter token from heaven, than a little girl with a face full of intelligence and poetry. It was not surprising that the existence of the young shepherd was wholly transformed. Farewell to the weariness of the long hours he spent in the fields! farewell to his impatience of the summer's storms and the winter's snow! These were now trifling inconveniences for Pierre Jubal; for to regain his strength and courage, he had only to say to himself,—"As soon as I get home, I shall find my little Marie on the lap of my good mother. Marie will run to meet me; I shall take her in my arms; I shall have a play with her, and then give her her reading lesson; after that we

shall all have our supper together. O Marie, my child, you are my life, my joy! For thee I labour cheerfully. I thank thee, O my God, for giving me this happiness, for which I could not have hoped!"

In these affectionate cares and joys the years slipped rapidly away, till the adopted child reached the age of marriage. Then Jeanne, who had now become very infirm, took the hands of Pierre and Marie one evening, and spoke as follows:—"My children, the time is not long, perhaps, during which I shall be permitted to remain with you. Let not this foreboding alarm you. Let me finish what I am about to say. Your life will, perhaps, be made uneasy by slanderous remarks. You are too young, Pierre, henceforth to act the part of a father and protector to Marie. On the other hand, you could neither of you endure to be separated. Well, then, the only way to settle all this is to unite you in marriage."

The young people blushed, and simultaneously looked downwards. Jeanne smiled. "There, there!" said she; "do not be ashamed, as if you had committed a fault. Poor children! be calm, and follow my advice; that alone will secure your happiness."

"Do you wish this, Marie?" said Pierre, in a voice trembling with emotion.

"Yes!" murmured the young girl, "since it is our good mamma's desire."

As may be easily supposed, the news of the approaching marriage of Pierre Jubal and Marie caused a great sensation in the village; and, with the customary kindness of the world, it was most generally condemned. Nobody, however, expressed so much contempt and anger as Madeleine Arreguy, the daughter of a rich grazier. Vain and coquettish, this young girl had refused several offers, in the hope

of becoming the wife of Pierre, and now she beheld all her expectations vanish.

At least, she wished to be revenged. Madeleine managed in such a way as if by accident to meet Pierre Jubal alone, and to have some conversation with him; no one, to have seen her, would have surmised the tempest that was raging in her bosom: she assumed an air of the most sincere friendship. "Well, Pierre!" said she, "are you really going to be married; or have they been spreading a false report?"

"The report is perfectly true, Madeleine!" answered Pierre.

"Well!" returned Madeleine, "I suppose I ought to compliment you; but, my poor friend, there is nothing but misery before you—this marriage will be your destruction!"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Pierre, with an instinctive terror.

"I speak only the truth," answered Madeleine. "Do you know anything about Marie's birth?"

"Certainly not," replied Pierre.

"And yet you are going to marry her," cried Madeleine.

"Why not?" returned Pierre; "has she not every virtue?"

"Apparently," said Madeleine, "she is possessed of all possible virtues; but in reality—"

"Madeleine!" exclaimed Pierre, interrupting her, "I will not hear you repeat any calumnies."

"It is not a calumny," returned Madeleine; "you must know what everybody says."

"And what do they say?" inquired Pierre, contemptuously.

"Why, it is believed, that Marie, whom you found in a wood, and have brought up, and whom you are going to make your wife, is neither more nor less than a SAURIMONDE!" said Madeleine.

At that terrible word, Pierre Jubal turned pale, his knees knocked together, and his hair bristled on his head.

"A *Saurimonde!*" he repeated in a faint voice.

"Not a doubt of it!" answered Madeleine; "you know well, that when the devil seeks a man's destruction, he assumes the charming appearance of a little child that has been abandoned. A man finds this child,—takes her home,—educates her,—and if he marries her, will lose his soul! The child is the *Saurimonde!*—the man is Pierre Jubal!"

And with these words, Madeleine hastily retired, without leaving the shepherd an opportunity to reply.

Pierre remained for some time motionless and thoughtful, then he pursued his way home with a slow step. It was Marie who opened the door to him. At the sight of the young girl, whom he had loved like a sister, Pierre felt himself shudder. Vainly did he endeavour to conquer the superstitious prejudices which, like a mortal poison, had been distilled into his bosom. In spite of all his efforts, the name of *Saurimonde* incessantly recurred to his mind, so that all the graces and attractions of Marie, assumed the aspect of an infernal snare contrived by Satan himself.

His affection, however, contradicted these fears; and his reason argued upon the absurdity of the stories which the inhabitants of the Montagne Noire so readily believed. Then his doubts would recur anew, and depict for him with horror the eternal abyss into which he was, perhaps, about to plunge himself. In the midst of these perplexities several days passed away; Pierre scarcely spoke, he lost his appetite and became only the shadow of himself. Jeanne and Marie were reasonably alarmed at this sudden alteration, and the young girl resolved to seek an expla-

nation. She took the opportunity one evening after the old woman had retired to rest; and returning to the room where Pierre sat silent and immovable by the fireside, she said to him, in her sweet low voice, "My friend?"

Pierre slowly raised his head; his eyes were full of tears.

"You are weeping!" said Marie.

"You need not care about that," replied Pierre.

"Not care about it!" exclaimed the young girl. "To be insensible to your sorrow, I must cease to love you, my friend, my protector; I must become indifferent to you, as you are to your poor Marie!"

It was now Marie's turn to weep; and sobs, till then suppressed, heaved her bosom.

"Well!" exclaimed Pierre, greatly affected, "I will tell you all; and you will forgive me when you know the cause of my hesitation."

Then Pierre made Marie acquainted with the reports that were current respecting her. The young girl remained calm and impassible while he spoke, and when he had finished, she replied with a smile full of dignity:—"How could you listen to such contemptible fables? You,—who have read so many books, and who have so often talked with the curé, who is wiser than you, and who does not himself believe a word of them,—is it possible that you can be infected with the superstitions of the gross and ignorant people who surround us?"

Pierre was overwhelmed by these few and simple words, and was about to answer, but at that moment the sound of wheels was heard, a carriage stopped before the house, followed by a knocking at the door, and when it was opened an elderly man of imposing aspect appeared.

"I am," said the new-comer, "the Count d'Aubrey. Do you remember me?"

"Perfectly, my Lord," answered Pierre, "though I was very young when you left the country."

"Yes," answered the Count. "I was compelled to depart in haste, leaving behind my dearest treasure. A servant to whom I had confided that treasure, bewildered with terror, had the infamy to abandon the sacred deposit I had committed to his care."

Pierre feared to understand the Count's meaning; his heart beat violently, and M. d'Aubrey continued in these words,—

"Quiet is reestablished; the various causes which kept me abroad have ceased to exist; and I come hither to resume the treasure to which I allude; that treasure is my daughter."

"Oh heavens!" exclaimed both Pierre and Marie, "then you are——"

"I am the father of that child whom you, my friend, have saved," said the Count, addressing himself to Pierre; "and be assured that my gratitude—"

"You owe me no gratitude, my Lord," answered Pierre. "I did but fulfil the duty which Heaven prescribed, when it led me to that abandoned orphan. Go, Mademoiselle Marie; and may you be happy with the noble father to whom you are restored!"

The Count offered his hand to Marie; but, drawing back, she said in an energetic tone,—

"One moment. I stand here between my father and the generous man who saved me, educated me with tenderness, and to whom I was about to consecrate my life. To-morrow, perhaps, we should have been united. Consent that Pierre should be my husband, and I shall be doubly happy again to become your daughter."

This declaration was followed by a long silence; the pride of the Count revolted at the idea of such a disproportionate marriage; but, nevertheless, his sentiments of justice finally prevailed.

"I do not hide from you, my dear Monsieur Pierre," he said, "that it is painful to me to give you the hand of my daughter; but I cannot deny the magnitude of the service you have rendered me in the preservation of Marie. She is accustomed in you to love her benefactor. Be happy, then, together; but upon condition of giving me a place in your hearts."

The two young people fell at the feet of M. d'Aubrey, who gave them his blessing.

After the first minutes of emotion, Marie said slily, "Well, Pierre, do you still think I am a *Saurimonde?*"

"Ah!" said Pierre, "you are taking your revenge!"

THE CHAPEL OF WINKELRIED.

On a beautiful day, in September 1798, M. Hermann, a rich country gentleman of Unterwald in Switzerland, gave the hand of his only daughter, Gretchen, now seventeen years of age, to Frederick Haller, a brave young mountaineer, just four years older than his bride. A more graceful couple was seldom seen; both were endowed with handsome fortunes, and, as they were generally beloved, the festivity of the day was general throughout the whole canton. Many a near as well as distant church-bell pealed out its joyful greeting with friendly rivalry, and the bride's house was tastefully adorned with festoons of flowers, and garlands of green branches. The party proceeded on their way to church, amidst the joyful sounds of music, and the noise of multiplied *vivats*, resounding from the mouths of the sympathizing bystanders.

Frederick's countenance, however, was overcast by a certain shade of melancholy, which the young man in vain endeavoured to hide by a smile. His sorrowful demeanour did not escape the penetrating eye of Gretchen.

"Dear Frederick," said she, in a low voice, "what in the name of heaven is the matter with you?"

"Me? . . . Nothing!" . . stammered Frederick.

Gretchen loved him too much to insist farther; at last, however, he replied—

"How can I have a free and joyful heart when our dear country is menaced in the most precious of her blessings—liberty? The 'Directory' has filled Switzerland with its armies, in order to destroy our ancient confederation; blood is flowing in all quarters, from Berne to Lucerne; and some *rencontres* have already taken place. You know that the troops of the French general have three times attacked our canton."

"But three times they have been repulsed," observed the young betrothed.

"An obstacle only stimulates to greater perseverance," replied Frederick; "and humiliation begets impetuosity. The French will return."

Before Gretchen, whose features betrayed the most violent emotion, had time to say a word in reply, M. Hermann, annoyed apparently by this mysterious conversation, came forward, and said,

"My children, you ought not to talk together in this private manner; until the ceremony is over, you belong to us; and then, what is the meaning of these sombre looks? Come, be cheerful; we are now just at the door of the church."

It was a solemn moment; the grand entrance was wide open; before the altar, decked with flowers, stood the venerable pastor, awaiting their arrival; the chancel resounded with the cheerful tones of the musical instruments, while the organist in the gallery completed the chorus by his imposing harmonies. The lovers knelt; the whole assembly followed their example, and immediately the ceremony commenced. But Frederick was not the only one of the sons of Unterwald, whose mind was at this moment disturbed, and many heads were turned anxiously towards the door. All at once Gretchen started and

arose from her knees; shots were heard at some distance from the village, and at the same moment a man, who had rapidly mounted the steeple, came down, exclaiming, "The enemy is at hand!" The noise of the firing became more and more distinct. The French, suddenly disembarking in the roads of Stanzstadt, had driven back the archers of Unterwald; fire and blood marked their passage; already the spot on which the church stood had become the scene of a determined conflict; the balls struck the painted windows of the church; the holy asylum was deserted by the crowd; fear and consternation everywhere prevailed. Frederick, who remained self-possessed amid all the danger, said to his betrothed:

"The ceremony must be completed; remain on your knees, Gretchen." Then turning to the priest, he said, "My father, give us the benediction?" But the priest answered not, a ball had pierced him to the heart . . . He was no more! A beautiful serenity was painted on his aged features.

A mountaineer entered the church, out of breath, and his dress stained all over with blood.

"Frederick," cried he, "remain here no longer, thy post is in our ranks; our chiefs are fallen; we place you at our head."

"I will follow you," replied the young man in a resolute tone; "but what news? is Sarnem attacked?"

"Sarnem is attacked; but a vigorous resistance is still maintained in the chapel of Saint Jacques."

"And the chapel of Winkelried?"

"It is filled with ammunition, but there are no defenders."

"Defenders!" echoed the young maiden; "the chapel shall not want these; and if there are not enough men, *women shall become men!*"

"What do you say, Gretchen?" exclaimed Frederick. "You fight! You—so delicate—so frail,—

to take a part in our dangers! Leave to others these terrible combats, and return to thy father."

"No!" answered the young girl, "the hour of timidity and weakness is past; I feel myself strong at once. Seek not to divert me from my purpose; it is as immovable as the base of our mountains. Hasten to your post: I go to mine."

"One adieu, at least, dear Gretchen," murmured Frederick; "let us hope to meet again in a better world, since we separate at the foot of the holy altar."

"Yes, we shall meet above," said she, cheerfully; "all our trials will then have ceased. Adieu!"

And while Frederick hastened to join his companions in arms, Gretchen, followed by seventeen intrepid young girls, went out of church by a back gate, and ran to take possession of the little fortress.

The chapel of Winkelried was an edifice of moderate extent, solidly built, roofed with red tile, and defended by grated loopholes. It no doubt took its name from Arnold de Winkelried, who has immortalized his name by a sublime act of devotedness.* The chapel was well supplied with ammunition, as the mountaineer had reported; and, moreover, in order to obstruct the roads leading to it, large trees had been felled, and enormous pieces of rock rolled down. Gretchen hoped to be able to arrest the progress of the enemy until the peasants from the neighbouring valley should come to the assistance of their countrymen. Meantime, mountain echoes reverberated the loud shots of the musketry; the whole country seemed one battle-field, valleys, villages, and

* At the battle of Sempach, fought between the forces of Albert, Archduke of Austria, and the Swiss, who took the field in defence of their independence, Arnold de Winkelried, seeing that the enemy's ranks, protected by their long javelins, could not be forced, rushed forward, and seized a number of these pikes, threw his body upon them, and fell prostrate, carrying them with him, and thus opening a way for his comrades into the enemy's ranks.

even private mansions; the attack was as furious as the resistance was obstinate. For the French it was a question of military glory; for the Swiss, one of freedom and fatherland. The long line of road which lay before Gretchen made her for a moment believe that her countrymen had succeeded in repulsing the enemy; but the illusion vanished at the sight of a troop of foreign soldiers suddenly advancing in the bottom of the valley, their drums beating, and their colours displayed. The young girls embraced one another, and pledged themselves to die for the holy cause.

At the very moment when the soldiers were approaching without fear the entrance of the chapel, Gretchen fired, and a ball from her carbine mortally wounded a French officer. Her companions discharged their pieces in like manner, and the destruction that followed, proved how true was their aim. The French, unable to find shelter, could not protect themselves from the murderous projectiles, which poured down upon them from all sides; while the young girls were defended by their rampart of iron and stone. The soldiers of the detachment, however, were too courageous to retreat, although fresh victims were falling around them every moment; they would rather have been massacred to the last man. Leaping, then, over the material obstacles, which had been piled up to obstruct their way, they succeeded in nearing the door of the chapel, so as to be able to reply effectually to the fire of their opponents, while the smoke prevented them from discovering the kind of adversary they had to encounter. The greater part of Gretchen's companions had either been killed or severely wounded; those who were unable to fight, charged the arms, and thus were able to make themselves useful. At last the moment arrived when resistance was no longer possible.

"Surrender!" exclaimed the French.

Gretchen, casting her eyes towards the horizon, saw on the crest of the opposite hill, the enemies' colours waving.

All was over!

"Surrender!" repeated the soldiers.

To this the maiden answered nothing; she was kneeling in prayer. At that moment, a spark falling upon a cask of powder, set it on fire. A fearful explosion took place; and the chapel of Winkelried was blown up with a noise like the thunder of an earthquake, or the irruption of a volcano.

The first soldiers who entered the ruins fell down as if thunderstruck; for they now first discovered the sex of their formidable opponents. With saddened hearts, these brave fellows retired from the scene of destruction, and cursed the sad necessities of war.

FRANCIS DOUVILLE;

OR,

THE WARNING.

FRANCIS DOUVILLE;

OR,

THE WARNING.

THE following adventure was related some time ago by a merchant in the South of France; and the circumstances seem remarkable enough to be recorded:—

It happened in the autumn of the year 17—, that I found myself obliged to make a journey of considerable length, the object of which was to visit several small towns, where I had accounts unpaid, and where I expected to obtain further orders. My physician had of late enjoined me to ride as much as possible, and I took the opportunity to put his advice into practice, by starting on my journey on horseback.

On my route, I could not deny myself the pleasure of visiting my old friend Francis Douville (knowing that I must, at all events, pass near his house), as we had been schoolfellows and playmates in our youth, had been brought up as merchants in the same town, and had commenced business about the same time. His affairs, however, did not seem to prosper like mine; he retired early, and now, it was said, lived on a small estate, which he had saved enough to purchase.—As he never came to town we had not met

for many years, and although I had often thought of visiting him, one occurrence after another had always come in the way, so that I had never been able to fulfil my intentions. The lapse of time had almost made me cease to think of him; but now the impressions of old friendship were renewed, and I was resolved that I would, at all risks, find out his residence. I did so, and Douville received me with the greatest kindness. I was entertained with the best fare which his house afforded, and he insisted that I should not think of travelling further that day. However, I could not decide on remaining with him through the night, this being the second day of my journey, but, at his earnest entreaty, promised that I would make a longer stay on my return homewards.

To say the truth, I had been somewhat disappointed with this visit. I had delighted myself with the thoughts of our meeting, had dreamed of old times, when, with glad hearts, in all the vivacity of youth, we had formed gigantic plans, and our future prospects appeared in the most dazzling colours: I wished to recal to my friend's mind the same pleasing recollections which had taken possession of my own; but I soon found that this was distasteful to him. Whenever I touched on these subjects, Douville instantly broke off the conversation,—inquired particularly, however, as to my present employments and purposes, and affected the most cordial interest in my welfare, though it was but too easy to perceive that all the while his manners were constrained, and there was moreover a certain air of mystery which I was at a loss to comprehend. This could not, I thought, arise from any special dislike to me; I fancied it might be caused by misfortunes of which I was not aware, and that sorrow had brought on him a coldness of heart, which it was not possible for the presence even of a very old and intimate friend to subdue. Indeed his

brow was furrowed by so many wrinkles; his eyes shone with such a dark mysterious fire, and their movements were so strange and wayward, that I could scarce bear to look at him. His wife, who might now be about fifty years of age, kept up a sort of grin on her countenance, which was intended for an expression of good humour, but from its strangely forced character gave her more the appearance of a malevolent sorceress than a kind hostess. She had two sons,—to the younger of whom I had once stood godfather. One was now twenty-three, the other twenty years of age; but, notwithstanding their youth, and decidedly handsome features, both were wanting in that cheerfulness, that expression of candour and confidence, which should naturally have belonged to the spring-time of life.

On inquiring what was to be their future destination I was informed that they intended to settle as agriculturists, preferring this to every other employment. I expressed my surprise at this, and gave it as my opinion, that they would succeed better as merchants, adding even a proposal to take the younger brother as a clerk into my own house. The young man appeared well pleased with my offer; but his father's vexation was so evident, that he could scarcely answer in his usual tone of voice;—"He had," he said, "been himself sufficiently unfortunate in trade, and would never consent to his son's engaging in any such speculations." As the conversation now seemed painful to him, I broke it off abruptly, and, recollecting my own urgent avocations, took my departure, renewing my promise, however, that I would, on no account, forget to visit them on my return, and remain for at least one night.

During this brief interview, I had collected materials enough for after-reflection, and continued to perplex myself on the subject all the way to my next halting-

place. Our moralists and poets describe the pleasures of a country life, and the contentment of the husbandman, in such brilliant colours, that, according to them, it is to be wondered at that any mortal who can leave town should confine himself within its gloomy prison-walls. On the other hand, they assure us, that cheerfulness, tranquillity, and health, are to be found with never-failing certainty among the fields and woods, while the townsman must always be a miserable and careworn animal. How different, on the other hand, appeared to be the reality,—of which my friend's fate was a notable example! In town he had uniformly been active and cheerful; seemed to be quite contented in his domestic circumstances; and was in all respects prosperous and happy. One glance, however, was sufficient to show that he was now thoroughly dissatisfied with his lot; his former cheerfulness had completely declined; nor between him and his wife did there appear to exist any cordial union of spirit. His sons, young as they were, had already acquired their father's gloom and perplexity of aspect; and if this could not be in their case the result of worldly cares, it might have other causes,—perhaps dissipation and sensual indulgence. As to the sloth and inactivity of all the family, this was sufficiently proved by the state of the garden, which was almost a complete wilderness, and by the miserable corn-fields, where the scanty straggling crop showed an utter want of management and attention. The house and farm-offices were half ruinous; the roads almost impassable; besides, the district in which the farm lay was gloomy and repulsive. The lands were flat and sandy, surrounded on every side by dark fir-woods, which shut out every pleasant prospect. No verdant meadows refreshed the wearied eyes; no clear lively streams varied the landscape; only, not far from the dwelling-house, there was a desolate stagnant lake, which

any good husbandman would have drained and got rid of.

I was glad when I came into the woods, which at least afforded me protection from the sun's heat; but the road, with its everlasting sameness of scenery and lonely silence, broken only by the screams of rooks and ravens, became insupportably tiresome, so that I felt again rejoiced on emerging into the open country. The district in which I now found myself seemed at first by no means attractive;—however, when I had ascended a steep eminence, a truly magnificent landscape was once more spread before me. The rich corn-fields gleamed in the golden light of the setting sun. I saw the husbandmen returning from their labours, with their herds and flocks; while in the back ground rose the church-towers of a pleasant town, where I intended to pass the night.

In this town my commercial transactions first began; but unhappily the good spirits with which I had entered its gates were soon put to flight; for I found the utmost difficulty in procuring payment of my accounts.

I had however the more reason to be satisfied that I had undertaken the journey, for I was convinced that only my presence could be a check on their vexatious delays, or prevent serious losses which I should have otherwise incurred. With a good deal of trouble, I was fortunate enough to obtain payment of several heavy accounts, which I insisted on receiving in gold, silver being inconvenient for a traveller; after which I pursued my journey. The same difficulties awaited me in other small towns; yet I was tolerably successful in overcoming these obstacles, and in winding up my affairs within the space of time which I had prescribed to myself at my departure from home.

My transactions being at last concluded, I thought of returning homewards by a new route, which was

equally convenient with the former for a traveller on horseback, and was considerably shorter than the high road. The only thing that troubled me was that I had with me a large sum of money, and as its weight was too obvious to escape notice when the portmanteau was taken from my horse at an inn, it was hardly to be expected that the thoughts of robbery would not enter into the mind of some one or another, and more than probable that attempts would be made to put such plans into execution. I had, besides, to cross long tracts of forest scenery; and now that the autumnal weather had begun to break, I was obliged, for the sake of expedition, to travel a good way in the dark. I consoled myself with the thoughts that my horse was excellent, and that I was provided with a pair of doubly-loaded pistols, by which I trusted I should be able in the hour of need to defend myself and my property.

The first day of my homeward journey I still kept on the high-road, but I had many a long mile betwixt me and the place where I intended to pass the night; so that I stopped for refreshment seldom, and as short a time as possible. My horse shared in my sufferings, and was nearly exhausted from hunger and fatigue, when at last about nightfall we reached the appointed station. But here, what a strange reception awaited me! The host and hostess exhibited visages that were, without exception, the most repulsive I had ever beheld in my life. It is impossible to conceive a more determined concentration of savage wildness, gloom, and malicious discontent, than was betrayed by these people. While they pretended to appear courteous and friendly, the effort which this obviously cost them rendered their aspect only more repulsive. I would willingly have retired to rest, if hunger had not forced me to wait for supper, the preparations for which caused an unusual delay. Meanwhile I amused myself

by entering into conversation with the landlord's daughter, who was a girl of remarkable beauty and good manners. I was surprised at the proofs of education and polish which she displayed, and felt the more interested by an appearance of reserve and melancholy which seemed to have taken deep root in her young and innocent heart. I was afraid to give her pain by rash questions, but prolonged the discourse in hopes of learning the cause of this grief, or being able to guess at her misfortunes, till her mother came and called me to supper. This was speedily despatched, and fatigue and want of sleep soon drove me to my bedroom, which was on the second floor. The frightful rushing of the wind through the neighbouring fir-trees, the beating of the rain on the casements, and the gloomy *tout ensemble* of the whole habitation, brought my mind into a strange mood, which, though I am no coward, was nearly allied to terror. That my host and hostess were not to be numbered among honest people, I was thoroughly persuaded; but whether they were so bad as to rob and murder their guests, was a question which I could not determine. The longer I thought on this subject, the more I was inclined to believe that my life was by no means safe under their care, and many stories crowded on my remembrance of secret murders, from which the best organized police in the world cannot afford protection.

At length I heard the outward doors of the house groaning on their hinges, and violently closed for the night. It seemed to me, thereupon, as if I were quite shut out from all the world, and thrown into a den of murderers. I even went to the window to examine whether, in case of need, I might not venture to leap from it; an expedient however which, on account of the height, I found quite out of the question. All I could do, therefore, was carefully to shut the door, to pile up

some chairs against it, that in the event of any one entering, I might be awakened by their fall; and to lay my loaded pistols within reach so as to be able at once to defend myself. With these precautions, and commending myself to the protection of Heaven, I betook myself to rest.

Weariness soon overpowered all other sensations, and I fell fast asleep. I might have slumbered perhaps about an hour, when I was awoke by a noise which seemed to be in my chamber. I raised myself from the pillow;—but what language can describe my horror, when, by the glimmering starlight, I beheld a figure robed in white,—a phantom as it seemed, wrapt in a shroud,—that stationed itself opposite my bed! My hair now stood on end, my teeth chattered, and for a while I lost all self-possession. At length I summoned up resolution and grasped one of my pistols. The figure, however, did not seem in the slightest degree discomposed or intimidated; but, raising one arm in a threatening attitude, it exclaimed in a hollow tone, "Be not afraid, for I come only to warn you. Go not again to the house of Douville, if you value your existence, for you will never come alive from under his roof." For a few moments the figure stood motionless—then added, "Hast thou understood me?" and when, in a trembling voice, I answered "Yes," it instantly disappeared.

I remained for a long while as if petrified, and stared at the place where the apparition had been, without being able to alter my position;—at last, I rubbed the cold sweat from my forehead, and, by a vehement effort, roused myself from this trance. I was perfectly convinced that what I had witnessed had been no dream! I had never believed in ghosts, nor indeed troubled myself much with speculations as to their existence or non-existence; but now, what was I to think? What living being could be suspected of such

a trick? The innkeeper could never have caused this scene by stratagem, nor would have thought of doing so, for he himself had advised me earnestly to take the road that led through Douville's farm, and to pass the night there. And who but the innkeeper could know anything of my plans, or wish to interfere with them?

What danger, moreover, I could possibly incur at my friend's house, was to me a new riddle; and I kept awake debating this point long after my terror of the apparition had subsided. I firmly resolved, however, to follow its admonitions, by way of at least acting on the safe side. Towards morning I fell fast asleep, and did not awake until a loud knocking at my door disturbed me. This noise was made by the innkeeper, who had been alarmed at my non-appearance, and who inquired whether I were unwell? I started up immediately, dressed myself in great haste, swallowed some breakfast, paid my bill for refreshments, and rode away as fast as I could, to make up for the time that had been lost.

About midday I began to feel hungry, and was fortunate enough to find a pleasant inn on the road-side, where I was supplied with an excellent dinner. As I must, according to the injunctions of my midnight visitor, choose a different route from that with which I was acquainted, I made inquiries of my host, and obtained from him the necessary directions. He was a good-humoured loquacious man, and seemed very willing to enter into conversation on whatever subject I started. I inquired, therefore, whether he was acquainted with my friend Douville, who lived in that neighbourhood? At this question the man's cheerful countenance became immediately clouded—he looked at me suspiciously—was silent a few moments—and then answered drily, that he certainly did know the man of whom I spoke. I wished to hear more, and begged him to say what was his opinion of Douville;

what character he bore in the country, and whether he had been successful in his farming occupations? My host shook his head; assured me that he was quite unprepared to enter into those particulars; and, for a long while, I could not obtain from him any satisfactory reply. At last he said, that, from his own knowledge, he could not vouch for any action good or bad of my friend Douville; however, that his mode of life was considered by almost every one quite inexplicable; for the produce of the fields always turned out so miserable a crop, that it could not pay the farm-servants' labour; yet, notwithstanding this, the man continued to maintain a numerous household, and it was said that they all lived well. For the rest, he did not associate with any person of his own rank, never appeared with his family at church, and the members of his establishment were so reserved and shy, even of the daylight, that scarcely any neighbour could boast of having spoken with one among them. This intelligence was very perplexing to me; it seemed so inconsistent with the former disposition of my friend, who could scarce ever have enough of society! At all events, the change proved nothing in his favour, and I was by this means the more confirmed in my determination of not going to his house. The innkeeper, to whom I mentioned what had been my intentions, approved highly of this caution, and begged urgently that I would adhere to my present resolution, adding, "There are many strange stories of the forests in these parts;" but as to the ground of these allusions, I could not obtain from him any adequate explanation.

I was obliged to hasten onwards, that the night might not overtake me; for on that day I had still a long way to travel. Besides, there were dark clouds on the horizon, and it was easy to foretell that ere long a formidable tempest would come on. I rode, therefore, as hard as it was possible to do, without

absolutely foundering my horse. The recollection of the nocturnal apparition, of the doubtful expressions of my landlord as to the character of Douville, by turns occupied my attention, and beguiled the way, though certainly not in a manner the most agreeable. Meanwhile, the night drew on apace, and it was evident that the darkness, aided by the gathering clouds, would be quite impenetrable. There was a distant rolling of thunder, which reverberated through the forest; pale lightning quivered at intervals through the clouds, and the gloom continued to increase. It seemed as if the woods never would have an end. I made my horse exert himself to the very utmost, in order to reach some place of shelter; but at length I was obliged to pull him up; for the road became gradually more narrow, and the branches of the trees gave me such proofs of the necessity of riding cautiously, that I was obliged to yield to them. My situation was certainly in the utmost degree vexatious,—more especially as I knew not even whether or not I was on the right road. The darkness, which had by this time grown quite dense, obliged me to dismount, and lead my horse by the bridle, in order to avoid the branches, from which I had already received many severe blows. In this manner, my progress was of course very slow, and my hopes of reaching any habitation became always fainter. At last, however, I found myself once more on the clear level ground; I felt then as if I had just escaped from a prison; I could again mount my horse and ride along, without dreading every moment to have my head knocked off my shoulders by a tree.

The thunder clouds, however, had come nearer and nearer; the lightning dazzled me with its quivering flashes; the wind rose through the neighbouring wood in strange fitful blasts, which again were followed by a mysterious stillness, which augmented

still more the terrors of the hour. My hopes were at last revived by a light glimmering in the distance, although, in order to approach it, I durst not spur my horse, for the thunder startled him, and I was obliged to use every precaution to avoid being unseated by a sudden plunge.

I had by degrees come so near the light, that I could discern, by its aid, the building from which it emanated, but, to my great consternation, I perceived that I had gone quite astray, and was now on the property—close to the very threshold of Douville. What was now to be done? Should I enter his house, or not? My horse was tired,—the storm raged unrelentingly,—and I felt myself so much in want of that repose to which the hospitable mansion of an old friend appeared to invite me; while on the other hand were the most alarming, even apparently supernatural warnings that *here*, of all places in the world, I must not risk my personal safety. Perhaps, however, my extreme want of food and rest would have made me decide on braving all dangers, if my horse had not shown a violent disinclination to proceed any further, and even turned sharp round. This trifling circumstance put an end to my debate, and I resolved that I would rather pass the night in the forest than trust myself with a man whose character and mode of life appeared to be so questionable.

Accordingly, I took my way back towards the woods, leaving it to chance to bring me on the high-road; or, if that might not be, I hoped to find some cottage, or other place, where I could at least obtain shelter from the rain, which now began to fall in large drops. I was glad when I reached the trees, which would afford me some protection; but new difficulties awaited me, for, on the outskirts of the forest, I did not think myself sufficiently secure, and the thickets were so dense and entangled, that my horse could not

be led through them. I forced a passage through the branches, however, but at every step these became more closely interwoven, and the ground was more uneven. Several times I had fallen over the roots of trees; my face and hands bled from the scratches I had received, and my strength was nearly exhausted. At last, I heard a rushing noise of water as from a mill-race, whence I concluded that I was near to some habitation, and redoubled my exertions to reach it if possible; but as it was in vain to think of bringing my horse any further, I tied him by the bridle to a tree, took off the portmanteau, which I threw across my shoulders, and fastened by the straps round my neck. My route was now very hazardous. I had to clamber over great trunks of trees and fragments of rock—had to struggle through deep places, where I was often so hemmed in by thickets of brushwood that I could neither get backwards nor forwards. Add to these hindrances the frightful thunderstorm, and the terror that I might be struck down by lightning, attracted by the steel clasps of my portmanteau. My condition was indeed dreadful, and I had nearly lost all courage, but after long and persevering labour, I came at last to the edge of a declivity under which the rivulet rushed. I followed its course, not without imminent danger of tumbling in headlong, and found my conjectures confirmed that there was a mill close by. A gleam of lightning showed me a large building of that description, but the ruinous sluice, over which the water now played idly, proved that it was in disuse; probably, therefore, there were no inhabitants. On further search, I discovered an old tottering bridge, leading across the mill-race; which I passed, and ran towards the building for shelter, while the rain fell in torrents. Suddenly it occurred to me that this place might be the resort of robbers, in which case I should absolutely throw myself into

their hands; but my fatigue was so great that it overbalanced my apprehension. I found the door open—(a sign that no one lived there)—I groped about with great caution in the darkness, and advanced till I touched the platform of the inner mill-wheel. Quite worn out, yet terrified by the thoughts of falling perhaps through a hole in the floor, or stumbling over some murdered victim, I seated myself in a corner, and resolved to wait patiently for daylight.

Scarcely had I composed myself for rest, when a most overpowering sense of horror came over me. What could be the real history of this building, which stood so desolate and forsaken? If robbers, as it seemed probable, haunted the place, would I not certainly be found out and murdered? These, and other harassing thoughts, forced themselves on my mind; and I was the less able to combat them, when, reclining on the floor, I became sensible of a most detestable odour, as if from a charnel-house, which became at last so insupportable, that I would have left my hiding-place, if my fears had not rendered me powerless. After I had remained for about an hour in this state, voices were audible at the door; and as I had no doubt that the new comers were banditti, my death seemed now irrevocably decreed. I could hear that there was some wrangling among them as to the cause of the door being found open, after which four men came in with a lantern, bearing a sack that was filled evidently with some cumbrous and heavy load. They drew near without observing me, lifted up some boards in the flooring, and opened the sack. It contained the dead body of a man, which they threw down under the floor, closing up the aperture as before.

My hair now stood on end. I shook as in an ague fit, and nearly fainted; for, in addition to the other terrors of this scene, I recognised Douville's eldest son among the murderers.

"So much for that fellow!" said he, when they had thrown down the body; "if we had met with G——," (here he mentioned my name,) "and disposed of him in like manner, it would have been better worth our trouble."

"I am afraid," said another, "we have no chance of seeing him to-night."

"Well," answered a third, "if he comes not to-night, he will to-morrow; at all events, he shall not escape us."

Perhaps I had unconsciously made some noise; for one of the ruffians remarked,—

"The door was left open; let us search the house, that we may be sure no one is watching us."

The rest, however, were afraid; they alleged that it was no place to remain in longer than necessity required; and it was impossible that any one would venture to watch there, unless it were some revengeful ghost. This cowardice saved my life; for if, in reality, they had searched the building, I must have been discovered, and my death was certain. At last they quitted this den of murder, and carefully locked the door.

My feelings at that moment baffle every attempt to describe them. How near I had been to destruction! I had just seen one murdered victim secreted, and heard that a like fate was destined for me. Even now I was by no means safe, for if by chance they discovered my horse, this would doubtless excite their suspicions, and they would then come back and make a determined search.

The night passed, however, without anything happening, and as the grey light of morning began to gleam through the broken roof, my hopes revived that I might be able to make my escape. As soon as I could clearly distinguish objects, I went to the door, but it was so strongly secured that all my efforts to

force it open were in vain. In searching through the building for some other outlet, I stumbled on the entrance to the pit-fall, into which the last victim had been thrown; I lifted up the boards, and, with indescribable abhorrence, beheld a number of dead bodies, many of them already in the most frightful stage of corruption; among these I was to have been deposited, and might be so still, if I did not succeed in gaining my liberty. After much trouble I found another door, which yielded to a vehement effort; it led into a room in which there were many bloody dresses hung up against the wall. This apartment was lighted by a small window, of which I instantly broke the casement, and, though at the risk of my neck, leapt out.

Now then I was at liberty; but still I had not my horse; nor, if he were found, did I know in what direction I should ride in order to escape from those assassins. I retraced, as nearly as I could guess at it, my course of the preceding night, and having now the advantage of daylight to guide me through the thickets, discovered my faithful steed sooner than I could have expected. A beaten cart-road also presented itself; I mounted and trotted away with the utmost expedition.

Though the scenes were quite new to me, and I could not tell whither I went, yet Providence favoured my purpose; for, after riding about two miles, I reached a post-station. Here, as soon as I had obtained some refreshment, I took a carriage with extra horses, and drove off as rapidly as possible. I reached home the same day, and, on my arrival, had recourse to the director of police, before whom I made a circumstantial declaration of my adventures, whereupon he ordered a proper legal inquiry to be commenced, and the same evening despatched one of his officers with a band of soldiers to Douville's residence.

My sufferings from that terrible night were not yet complete. I was attacked by a fever, which ended in very serious illness. My strength had been so severely tried by the excitement I had undergone, that extreme weakness and relaxation followed, and I must have perished, but for the constant attention of a skilful physician, under whose management, after being six weeks confined, I felt myself once more in a condition to leave my room.

As soon as my health allowed of any exertion, I made a visit to the prison in which Douville was now secured. Notwithstanding his crimes, and the attack which he would doubtless have made on my life, I could not help looking on him with some degree of compassion, and wished to alleviate his sufferings as far as the law would permit. However, no sooner had I made my appearance, than he began to rave like a madman, and broke out into the most horrible imprecations, as if he were determined to prove how undeserving he was of that interest which I took in his fate. In a few minutes I was obliged to leave him with aversion and disgust, but I begged the gaoler to obtain for me an interview with his younger son, from whom I hoped to extract some information as to his father's crimes. The young man, when he saw me, was moved even to tears, and answered my inquiries with such candour, that, on my return home, I was able to set on paper what here follows, and which corresponds exactly with the records of the criminal court.

Francis Douville, at his commencement in trade, was exceedingly active and prosperous. His income was competent; he lived within it, so that his fortune augmented, slowly indeed, but securely, and his credit rose every year. After a time, however, circumstances altered. He strained his credit to the utmost, and entered into speculations, which brought with

them a tumult and whirl of business, quite beyond his strength to support. In the confusion thus induced, he overlooked the necessary precautions; his reputation for punctuality was impaired, and the fall of his house seemed inevitable.

The thoughts of being reduced to poverty through those very exertions which were intended to make him rich, were to Douville so insupportable, that he took the resolution of ending his sufferings by suicide. With this weight on his mind, he wandered about restlessly for some time, till the very day had arrived which he had fixed on for the execution of his purpose; and he was traversing the fields near a country house which he then rented. Quite absorbed in his own gloom and despondency, he was insensible to all that passed around him, till he felt himself pulled by the sleeve, and saw a boy about sixteen years of age, who inquired of him the way to the house of a merchant, who was said to live in that neighbourhood, and for whom he had a packet of letters. This merchant was no other than Douville himself; and on inquiry, he found that the boy was the son of one of his own country correspondents, who sent not letters only, but a considerable sum of ready money, which was to be appropriated to certain specified purposes. The boy had come with the diligence, but had left it at the last station, in order to enjoy a walk in fine weather through the pleasant gardens that surround the city. Douville, as if the devil had been there present to inspire him, was seized with a horrid and overpowering impulse, which he was the less disposed to combat, as his whole soul had just before been possessed by the idea of self-murder. He led the boy by circuitous paths, where he would escape observation; and said that he was going himself to town, where the merchant then was, with whom he was well acquainted, but must first call at his own country

house. He brought his unsuspecting victim into a retired apartment, without being seen by any mortal;—there put him to death, and thus became possessed of a large sum, partly in paper, but mostly in gold, which the unfortunate lad had carried in a huntsman's leather bag.

He had just completed this atrocious deed, when the door unexpectedly opened, and his wife with her two sons entered the room. At first their astonishment and abhorrence were unbounded; however, when he had explained his desperate circumstances, from which only this crime could have relieved him, their detestation of his guilt was gradually lost in terror of the consequences which might else have awaited him and the whole family. Thus he threw the disastrous load of his own wickedness on the conscience of his wife and of his children; after which disclosure they became gradually more and more accustomed to a life of suspense, misery, and deception. They were obliged to assist him in that first adventure, to conceal the body of his murdered victim, and, in order more effectually to avoid all suspicion, he appeared with his wife and sons at a large party, to which they had been invited for that day. Aided by the money thus obtained, he upheld his sinking credit, but the conscious guilt which weighed on his heart left him not a moment's peace of mind. He could not endure the ordinary restraints of society; by degrees he withdrew himself from trade, and purchased that landed property on which I found him.

Being quite ignorant of husbandry, he soon discovered that it would be impossible for him to live by this farm,—which, even under the best management, would have yielded but a very narrow income,—and was on the point of being reduced to abject poverty; when one stormy night a traveller made his appearance, and begged earnestly for shelter and refresh-

ment. The stranger's dress and appearance betokened opulent circumstances; his heavy saddle-bags (for he was on horseback) seemed full of money, so that the demon of avarice was once more roused in the heart of Douville. He received his guest with the most specious courtesy; and within the next hour he had entered into an agreement with his wife and sons that the man should be murdered, and his property seized. The deed soon followed; and, with a view to concealment in this instance, he prepared a deep grave in a thicket of the neighbouring forest, to which, with the help of his eldest son, he carried the body. Here, however, it happened that he was discovered. A passenger, who had watched him occupied in this abominable task, came up boldly and questioned him what was the matter. Douville, in order to screen himself effectually, would instantly have murdered this intruder, but the latter, being well armed, was provided against any such attack. He assured the criminal, nevertheless, that, if allowed to share in the booty, he would henceforth preserve inviolable secrecy as to what he had then witnessed. Douville was, of course, under the necessity of assenting, and the bribed villain soon made it known that he also was by no means disinclined to such exploits, if only the spoils were sufficient to counterbalance the risk and trouble. This person was the landlord of that inn where I had seen the nocturnal apparition. In a short time, the two miscreants were on confidential terms with each other; and not only did the innkeeper assist Douville with servants, who were bound on oath, and on pain of death, to conceal whatever might occur, but came personally on the field when the *corps* of his worthy partner was not sufficiently effective. To prevent discovery, he took special care never to make his own inn the scene of action, but for the most part served as a watchful spy, and gave notice

when travellers were on the road who had with them any large sum of money. The innkeeper's wife was also an accomplice, but his daughter, who had been educated in the family of a worthy and conscientious aunt, was wholly innocent of these atrocities.

It was proved that, in a course of eight or ten years, more than fifty people had been assassinated by these outlaws. The ruinous building in which I spent the night had been possessed and occupied by a certain miller; a man of good character, of whose voluntary connivance at such transactions there was no hope;—he was therefore looked on by this gang as a very troublesome neighbour, and, in order to be rid of him, they contrived, by various stratagems, to make it appear that his house was haunted. The loneliness of its situation favoured this undertaking, and by degrees they terrified the poor man so much, that, being completely tired of this residence, he sold his lease of the mill to Douville for a mere trifle; and the stories of ghosts were henceforth so industriously spread through the neighbourhood, that nobody wondered that the building was left deserted and in disuse.

For my escape from the fate that otherwise awaited me, I was indebted to Douville's younger son. This youth had never taken any active share in his father's crimes, though he had been bound by a solemn oath, like the others, to preserve secrecy. Towards me as his godfather, he cherished, from earliest youth, some feelings of attachment and respect, which were increased by my well-intended offer to take him into my house as a clerk. He had been aware of the plot laid against my life, but could not, without betraying his father, give me any direct information. With the innkeeper's house, however, he was well acquainted; and as there existed an attachment betwixt him and the girl whom I have already mentioned, he

happened to be there at the time of my arrival, and afterwards made use of a private door, which I had not discovered, in order to appear like a ghost, and warn me against trusting again to Douville's hospitality. With the same view, also, he had made use of the opportunity, when I was in the landlord's room, to enter mine, and draw the slugs from my pistols, so that, if I had fired at the intruder, he would not have sustained any injury. Thus he was my protector from otherwise inevitable destruction; and became, in consequence, the cause of his father's guilt being duly punished.

It was impossible that Douville could deny or extenuate the many proofs that were brought against him; and circumstances came to light of a description so horrible, that every one shuddered at the bare idea of such enormities. On account of many additional witnesses, and other instances of persons who had mysteriously disappeared in the forest, the trial was lengthened out, and it was not till a year had passed over, that judgment was finally pronounced. Douville, with his wife and elder son, as well as the innkeeper and his wife and servants, were executed. As for the young girl, she was of course pronounced innocent; but her lover, though by silence only he had rendered himself an accomplice, was awarded ten years' imprisonment, a sentence which, in consideration of his having saved my life, was afterwards changed into two years' confinement.

CANDELARIA.

CANDELARIA.

At the beginning of 1817, I was sub-lieutenant in a regiment of cavalry then in garrison in the principal town of one of the southern departments of France. I was sixteen years of age, as was the rule under the old dynasty, and I fancied that I should be a very unfinished personage if I did not add to the qualities natural to youth, the defects generally found in my profession. I was, then, mischievous as a page, giddy as a musketeer of 1750, and in order to unite the past with the present, as it is expressed in the charter, I gave myself, with the aid of an enormous pipe, the air and importance of a grumbler, which contrasted well with my schoolboy appearance. I was the amusement of my comrades when they saw me stroking the down on my lips, in the vain hope of hastening a moustache, or when, to show off more soldierlike manners, they heard me imitate the unpolished jargon that the bird, immortalized by Gresset, belonging to the Nuns of the Visitation, had acquired on his voyage on the Loire; and being very fond of bon-bons, my uniform being orange and green, and my nose bearing considerable resemblance to a parrot's beak, the first lieutenant of the squadron had nicknamed me Verdant Green, a joke so good that no one disputed it.

Well! after all, I was the happiest and most petted officer in the army. And, indeed, why should they not like a good-natured fellow, who was willing to ride the first horse that came; who did his own duty very negligently, but was always ready to do that of another; who paid for the punch that every one but himself drank; and who had gallantly fought with a burgess of the town, to avenge an affront which he had not received, but of which he was only convinced after they had crossed swords?

Our garrison, the name of which I shall not mention, because I have not the same fighting disposition I once had, was really one of the most out-of-the-way places imaginable. Figure to yourself a small town of eight thousand inhabitants, built on the southern side of a barren hill, under which flowed a capricious river that inundated our barracks ten times during the winter, but whose waters, in the summer, were insufficient to refresh our poor horses. No pleasant walks in the neighbourhood, only dusty roads, without even a tree to protect one from the sun's rays; and no society, excepting what was to be found once a-week at the Prefecture, which having seen once you felt little inclined to mix with again. This being the case, our society was confined to ourselves, which I certainly did not regret, for at this period I had not tasted the pleasures of the world, and I was still in the first fervour of my thoughts on friendship;—delightful illusions, which nothing is so likely to foster as a military life. I divided my time between the duties, badly fulfilled, of my profession, reading romances which had found no place in my father's library, and long sittings in the café belonging to the garrison, where, with my long pipe in my mouth, I listened to the old officers of the Empire relating in a melancholy way their glorious campaigns.

I enjoyed for about six months this state of things,

pleasant enough in spite of its monotony, when we learned that the French Government, upon the representations of Ferdinand the Seventh, had just ordered that a dépôt of Spanish refugees, old partisans of King Joseph, should be transferred from Pau, where they were considered to be too near the Pyrenees, to the little town where we were quartered. This was quite an event to poor idlers like ourselves, and, to say the truth, many a silly hope owed its origin to this news, for we knew that many of these refugees had their families with them.

One evening we were, according to custom, sitting on the benches of our esplanade, beneath which lay the road leading from Pau, when we perceived in the distance a long file of carriages of various forms, which advanced slowly towards us. Some men wearing long brown mantles marched at the head of the cavalcade, which bore a sad and mournful appearance.

"These are the refugees," said our major; "they told me they were to arrive to-day."

These words were scarcely uttered, when we went and placed ourselves at the edge of the esplanade in a serious and respectful attitude: curiosity had given place to a feeling of interest. I, for my part, recalled to mind that my father was formerly an emigrant, and that the first bread I had tasted had been that of an exile. As the procession passed us we took off our hats; the men, who were on foot, returned our salute with an expression of gratitude replete with dignity; as for the women, they were inside the carriages: no indiscreet eyes sought to penetrate their retirement. Afterwards, we all returned to our quarters, our hearts filled with unusual emotions. We thought of all the difficulties which surrounded these poor victims of proscription, who had arrived without introduction, perhaps without resources, to stay for

a short time in a place from whence, without doubt, they would be again driven as soon as they were settled and had gained friends. I occupied the first floor of a pretty little house opposite the barracks, which were situated in the lower part of the town: the ground floor was inhabited by the proprietor and his wife, excellent people, who treated me with as much kindness as if I had been their son instead of their lodger. The husband took me out hunting; the wife, when I was under arrest, came with her knitting into my room, and related for my amusement the munificent charities of Monseigneur d'A ——, the last Archbishop before the revolution; both confided their affairs to me, and never questioned me on mine, which indeed was not very necessary, for I never made a mystery of them; they remembered that I was a sub-lieutenant, and only seventeen. When I returned home, I found Madame Delpech standing at her door enjoying the air. She saluted me with a friendly "good evening," adding,—

"As you have returned so early this evening, Sir, is it possible that you can be under arrest?"

This "Is it possible?" addressed to me, was, no doubt, said ironically; but it did not annoy me, and I answered,—

"No, madame, I am not under arrest; I return early, for my heart is sad at witnessing the arrival of these poor Spanish refugees."

"Ah! then you have seen them? Well! My husband is gone to the Town Hall to offer them his services. You know we have that building to let at the bottom of the garden? It might suit some family."

"Perhaps you would ask a high rent for it?"

"That depends upon circumstances; if the persons are poor who take a fancy to it, they will pay accordingly. You know that M. Delpech and I are not avaricious: Almighty God, in giving us riches, and

depriving us of the happiness of having children, no doubt intended that we should be useful to those who are not so well off as ourselves."

"In the meantime you have given me much pleasure, for you have spoken like a good aunt of mine, whom I greatly loved. Good night, Madame Delpech."

Soon after this conversation, a carriage stopped at the door, and I heard the voice of my worthy landlord calling his wife. Afterwards it appeared to me they were unloading some boxes in the street, and that there was an unusual commotion in the little garden that led to the building before-mentioned. I concluded that M. Delpech had attained his object, and I was glad of it on his account. I went to sleep with this thought in my mind as soon as the noise ceased, which, however, was not till late at night. The next morning, when my servant called me to go to parade, he informed me that the house was let to an old Spanish General, who had taken possession of it with his daughter.

"Have you seen them?" I asked.

"Yes, Sir, for I helped to unload the carriage. They are very unfortunate. Only imagine—the father is blind, and the daughter dumb."

"Do everything that you can for them without waiting for them to ask you," said I. "Then, should they offer you any return, accept it: the poor think themselves rich when they have the opportunity of being generous; we must not deprive them of this pleasure."

Having said this, I mounted my horse, and went to take my place at the head of my troop. I was sure that my servant would do all that I had suggested to him. On my return, I inquired of Madame Delpech about my neighbours. She confirmed what my servant had previously told me of the exiles; and added that, fatigued with their journey, and with the

various arrangements of their new abode, they had retired to take some hours' repose. Madame Delpech appeared to feel much for their situation, and had already taken means to improve it. Worthy woman, if she be still living, and these pages should by chance fall into her hands, she will at least see that I have neither forgotten her virtues, nor the remembrance of her kindness.

My lodging in her house consisted of two rooms; the one which I used as a bedroom, was towards the street; the other, which I called my drawing-room, looked upon the little garden which communicated with the other house. This little garden was planted in the English style, with much taste, and though separating the two houses, was common to both, thus giving to all an opportunity of meeting.

Several days passed without my seeing anything of my new neighbours. It is true, that I avoided going to the window, and they, fearing to intrude upon me, did not walk in the garden. As soon as I was informed of this circumstance, I begged Madame Delpech to assure them that I was quite grieved at their reserve, and that it would give me real pleasure if they would act without restraint. They replied that they had acted in that manner towards me simply because I had done so to them; but that they would gladly act otherwise, provided I would set them the example by first walking as usual in the garden. An hour after this reply reached me, with my pipe in my mouth and a volume under my arm, I seated myself under the shade of a woodbine, which grew nearly in the middle of the garden. I remained there some time to show my desire of being on friendly terms, and then joined my comrades in the Coffee-house. Here I found some of my most intimate friends seated round a bowl of "bishop." Two

Spanish officers of the refugees were with them, to whom I was introduced.

Nothing could be more interesting than the position of these men, nor more noble than their conduct. It was in obedience to the command of their lawful Sovereign, that they had taken the oath of fidelity to King Joseph: a feeling of honour kept them true to their oath; though at the same time they hated him, and were devoted to the prisoner of Valençay. Thus the return of the latter to his dominions was hailed by them with enthusiasm, which, however, did not prevent their being driven into exile. They owed the joy of revisiting their country to a revolution which they detested; and then, an event which ought to have been the occasion of happiness to them, fate decreed should be otherwise.

They related these facts to us, without, however, introducing one word of bitterness against a sovereign who had exiled them simply because they had obeyed him. I still remember the emotion that their conversation caused me.

A feeling of confidence being thus established between us, I spoke to them of the old General who was living in my neighbourhood, and I asked them if it were true, that he was blind, and that his daughter was dumb. "It is not his daughter who is with him," they replied, "it is an angel from heaven, for no one knows from whence she comes. At all events, the poor man has more need of one than any one else, for he is the most wretched amongst us: none of his countrymen will see him."

"Why this double proscription?" we all asked.

"It is a terrible history, and we avoid relating it as much as possible; but, if you are very anxious to know, we will make an exception in your favour."

We formed a circle round the two Spaniards; the

elder one spoke, and related to us the following history:—

"The Chevalier de Colombres, Commanding Officer of the Walloon Guards, was Governor of Tolosa, when the army commanded by the Grand-duke of Berg invaded Spain. Having, or believing that he had, cause to complain of some acts of injustice, he was one of the first to give in his adhesion to the new Government, and instead of serving it with regret, he devoted himself to it with all the zealous ardour of a renegade from conviction. As he was a brave man, and had the gift of gaining the hearts of others, his example was followed by a number of men, principally foreigners, who had been at different times under his command; he was thus enabled to form a formidable guerilla force, at the head of which he soon made himself the terror of Guipuscoa. Become thus an object of horror to his fellow-citizens, and obliged from time to time to give proofs of his fidelity to the French military authorities, he acquired in the opposite camp, a renown equal to that of our most famous partisans. Our indomitable population, who had not quailed before the soldiers of the greatest and most fortunate captain of the age, shuddered even at the name of him, whom they would have adored, had his talents been employed in their defence. The night would not be long enough, were we to relate all the bold adventures and terrible acts of vengeance of this man whom Spain curses to this day. I will choose, then, that one deed which has above all others rendered him an object of execration to us, his companions in exile.

"The Chevalier de Colombres had an elder brother, deputy to the Cortez, like himself a talented and resolute officer. The Junta established at Cadiz, thought that in sending the Count de Colombres into Guipuscoa, with a commission to collect together

the loyal Spaniards, they should render the position of the Chevalier so unpleasant, that he would be obliged to retire to another province, where he would have less personal influence, and where, consequently, his band would be more easily destroyed. This plan was put in execution, but the result was very different to what they anticipated. The Count succeeded in raising a guerilla force; but the Chevalier remained at the head of his, and the two brothers fought with an animosity and perseverance unexampled in this war, in which were displayed crimes of the blackest dye, as well as acts of truest heroism. After many encounters, in which the fortune of war favoured sometimes one, sometimes the other, the Chevalier was on the point of being conquered, when a stratagem, contrived with infernal ability, delivered his brother into his hands. 'What would you do if I were your prisoner?' said Joseph's general to Ferdinand's. 'I would have you hung as a traitor to your country,' replied he. 'I will be more humane,' said the other, with equal ferocity, 'for you shall die as a soldier.' Five minutes after this dreadful dialogue, a dozen Walloon foot soldiers shot the Count de Colombres behind a hedge, twenty paces from his brother."

A movement of horror, which we could not restrain, interrupted the Spaniard: he resumed in these words:—

"After this event, the French army retired from Spain, and in a short time the Chevalier was obliged to expatriate himself for ever. I am, and indeed we all are, ignorant of what became of him, during the first two years of his exile; but when we met him at Pau, at the beginning of 1816, he was then blind, and his life a most miserable one. Too poor to have a servant, and too much hated by his companions in misfortune, for them to take pity on his infirmity, he had been obliged to enter a military hospital, whither

the report of his crime had preceded him. He existed there several months completely neglected, when the chaplain came to tell him that a dumb young woman requested to share his lot, and begged that they would inform him, that she had resources that she wished to place at his disposal. No one knew who this young woman was, nor from whence she came, and Colombres, in accepting her services, was obliged to submit to remain in ignorance like the rest of the world. She has been with him nearly a year, and we much admire the judgment and tenderness displayed in her care of him; and thanks to her, not only is the poor blind man no longer alone, but he is no longer poor. You see, gentlemen, that we have good cause to say that this young woman is an angel."

"Yes," exclaimed I, with vehemence; "but this Chevalier de Colombres is a monster! I am vexed now that I am in the same house with him; however, I will never see him."

"Do not say so, young man," said an old captain of my regiment, in a serious tone. This old man had been in the service from the time of the first insurrection in La Vendée. "When I was serjeant-major," he continued, "in the famous army of Mayence, I set fire to my own village, and yet, for all that, I was not a villain. But you see, there is something so terrible in political animosities, that they warp the conscience, and then the greatest crimes appear in the light of duties,—obstinacy even takes the high-sounding title of honour. Let us, then, ask of God to spare us the pain of witnessing other revolutions, and, in order to soften the memory of those that are past, let us forgive, that we may hope to be forgiven. When I returned to my home after the peace, I met with an old royalist, who said to me,—'You burnt down my house; as for me, I

killed your father: let us embrace each other,'—and we did so, crying out, 'Vive la France!' Then we compared notes with respect to our wounds; he had twenty, and I eighteen. When the balance is so nearly even, it is not difficult to be reconciled."

"That is all very well, my dear Captain," replied I, half convinced; "but then, to shoot a brother!"

"You quite forget that if the brother had been the conqueror, he would have hung the Chevalier."

"Well, but at least you must agree, that it was a fine opportunity for the display of mercy!"

"Very true, my friend; I quite agree with your observations. As for you, detest him if you feel that it is right to do so; to pity him would be better: but do not despise him."

These words made a considerable impression on me; nevertheless, when I returned home, which I did shortly afterwards, I still held to my determination not to become acquainted with the Chevalier de Colombres; and I seated myself in my balcony to show that I relinquished to my neighbours the exclusive enjoyment of the garden.

The Spaniard's narrative had cast a gloom over my mind, and I had formed a most painful impression of this hard-hearted man, who had not hesitated to sacrifice his brother to his political opinions. I pictured him to my mind—tall, thin, and bent with age, with a scornful brow, half bald, a bilious complexion, hoarse voice, and ferocious smile; in a word, resembling some great criminal represented on the stage, to which at that time my knowledge of such characters was confined. My opinion on this subject was so completely formed, that I felt sure of recognising the Chevalier wherever I should chance to meet him. I thought I should equally recognise his young companion; the portrait I had formed of her in my imagination was a most enchanting one.

I was roused from my reverie by the noise of footsteps in the immediate neighbourhood of my room, and almost at the same moment a hand knocked gently at my door. I gave the usual invitation on such occasions, and my surprise was great on seeing two persons enter who I felt certain were my neighbours, although they did not resemble the creatures of my imagination. The Chevalier de Colombres was certainly tall, but you seldom see a man of more noble appearance, or one calculated to command greater respect. His forehead was lofty, yet calm and pensive, shaded by locks of long flowing white hair, which gave to his countenance a most captivating expression of sweetness and dignity. His eyes, which looked dim rather than quite sightless, preserved in their appearance a certain brilliancy, which gave one the impression that the light was not extinguished for ever. His mouth was large, but the strongly compressed lips denoted firmness of character, and resolution was marked on his prominent chin. These two features were the only ones that corresponded with those I had fancied in the former Governor of Tolosa.

He advanced towards me, led by a young girl, who charmed me by her simple and modest demeanour.

"Sir," said the General, addressing me in a tone, the sweetness of which made me start, so completely had I expected to find it harsh and disagreeable, "I have ventured to call upon you without permission, for I am desirous to express my gratitude for your kind consideration in my regard, and to assure you that I shall avail myself of the permission you have given me, with the same sincerity with which it has been offered."

I was somewhat embarrassed by this beginning, which upset all my plans, and still more was I disconcerted by the appearance of the Chevalier, so

different from the idea that I had formed of him. I stammered out a few polite words in reply, and at the same time placed chairs, without however too great an appearance of cordiality.

The young woman seated the General on one of them, and she remained standing at his side.

"If you wish to retire, Candelaria," said he, "this gentleman will, I am sure, have the kindness to assist me home in a short time; that is, if I do not intrude upon him now," making a movement as if to rise.

To this I could only reply by saying that I felt myself quite honoured by his visit. Whilst making this speech, to which I really felt compelled, his young companion left us.

"Sir," replied the General, "it is not from a foolish wish to appear polite, that I have called upon you in this manner, for that would not have been a sufficient motive for my indiscretion; but I was told that you had expressed yourself as feeling much interest respecting me, and I thought it due to myself to come and disclose to you the cause of the complete abandonment in which I am left by my companions in exile."

"I know the cause, General," replied I, "and must tell you, without reserve, that it had inspired me with resolutions which are very much shaken by the noble frankness of your proceedings. Can they have calumniated you?"

"They have not calumniated me, if they told you that it was I who caused my brother's death; but they have done so, if they did not add that since that day I have not enjoyed one moment's repose."

"I could have imagined that without your having told me so."

"I thank you for your kind opinion, young man," replied the General, with emotion. "I am not come here to apologise for an act which I regarded as a duty when a soldier, but which I have wept for as

a crime since my banishment; and if I say what I think, it appears to me to be more honourable to expose myself to the aversion of mankind than to force myself upon their esteem."

Then, without giving me time to reply, he related to me most circumstantially, not only everything with respect to the terrible fact before related, but also other events in which fate had obliged him to take a part. For five years, his life had been passed in a succession of truly fatal events, which had seldom allowed him the liberty of choice. He described to me, in the most forcible manner, the most striking point in the character of these people, which is to raise revenge into a virtue, and to consider moderation as apostasy.

"One party had," said he, "and possibly with justice, declared me a traitor to my country, while the other seemed always to doubt my fidelity to the cause I had embraced. On the field of battle, the eyes of the dying cast on me looks of hatred; while under the tents of my companions in arms, I could perceive mistrust even under words of studied politeness. Shall I say all, Sir?" he exclaimed; "yes, since this was the beginning of my long penance. Well! the day following the death of my unhappy brother, I was as much the object of suspicion as I was the previous evening, and I had the grief of hearing these terrible words,—'He is a Spaniard; all this proves nothing.'"

The Chevalier's narrative continued for nearly two hours, without my attempting to interrupt him, and without a single expression being dropped by him which could betray the wish to lessen the enormity of what he called his crime. I was deeply interested by this kind of confession, and was becoming much moved when, after a moment's silence, the Chevalier resumed:—

"I wished to make you acquainted with all the circumstances, Sir, that you also might abandon the exile, if you did not judge him worthy of your pity. Now I am ready to return home," added he, rising, "will you conduct me to my door? If you do not feel disposed to do so, will you have the kindness to point out to me yours? I can then find my way by feeling the walls."

"There is another course open, General," replied I, seating him again in his arm-chair; "namely, to remain some little time longer with me; I will profit by this favour, to have some conversation with you on subjects less melancholy than those about which you have just been speaking."

His satisfaction at my remark was so evident, and at the same time so dignified, that you could perceive at once the feeling of pleasure displayed by an unhappy man receiving a favour; and the gratitude of a man of the world who accepts an invitation which is agreeable to him, and which he has every right to expect.

"You will permit me," said he, "to express myself pleased and happy at your proposal; but let me also tell you that it does not surprise me; how is it possible for one so young, not to be good?"

"Is that a reason?"

"Almost always at your age, persons suspect evil, yet, notwithstanding, excuse it; in after years they believe it, and know not how to forgive it;—they say that the only way men can atone for their own faults, is by being merciless to those of their fellows. But let us speak of yourself, as you have expressed a wish to converse on agreeable subjects."

He then asked me with great amiability, and much delicacy, a multitude of questions about my family, my country, my profession, my tastes, and in fact upon everything that could interest me.—I replied to all these questions with the frankness and thought-

lessness peculiar to my age; and in my turn made some inquiries about his young companion.

"On that subject," said he, "I know no more than you do; for I presume that those who have spoken to you about me, will have related also, that during my stay in the hospital of Pau, the chaplain of the house came to inform me that one of my countrywomen offered me the assistance of her eyes in exchange for that of my mouth: I accepted it, because I thought it was the will of God that I should be less unhappy, and the same day Candelaria came and took me to her house. Since then she has never quitted me."

"Have you made any attempts to discover who she is?"

"How could I do so? I am constantly alone with her, and she cannot reply to any of my questions. Besides, why try to penetrate the mystery of God's mercies? it is enough for me to know that I have always near me a guardian angel."

We conversed some time longer like old acquaintances, and when he rose to retire, before taking my arm, he seized my hand and pressed it warmly. I did not take him home, because Candelaria was waiting for him in the garden. You may well imagine that I returned to my room with very different ideas from those I had brought with me from the café some hours previously.

My intercourse with the Chevalier de Colombres became every day more intimate, and ultimately I devoted all my evenings to him. His conversation I found exceedingly charming; his dignity in misfortune, and the sincerity of his repentance, inspired me with an interest which insensibly changed into feelings of affection.

Candelaria was rarely with us, for she always retired when she did not think her presence necessary,

and I, like my old friend, came at last to the conclusion that she really was his guardian angel. To such a length was this carried that I often passed her without saluting her.

At the commencement of the winter, the Chevalier became ill from the effects of cold; and as I saw that he was himself very indifferent to his sufferings, I thought it my duty to bring the Surgeon-Major of my regiment to see him, without previously informing him of my intention. At first he made some objections to seeing him, but on my urging him to do so, for my own satisfaction, he consented, and the doctor was introduced.

It was evening—the room was faintly lighted by a small lamp, and the physician asked for a candle, that he might examine his patient with more accuracy. Candelaria brought one, and when she placed it before the Chevalier, the doctor and I both perceived that the light appeared to affect the sight of his eyes, which we had imagined gone for ever. Thanks to the great care of Monsieur Derivière, (that was the name of our Surgeon-Major,) my old friend recovered very quickly. When he was quite convalescent, I went one evening to beg him to come and breakfast with me the following morning; he consented in the most courteous manner imaginable; and at the hour agreed upon, I went myself to fetch him. Having asked the General's permission, I had invited Mons. Derivière to meet the Chevalier, and the breakfast passed off in the most agreeable manner. My poor friend had never appeared so calm, nor had shown himself so thoroughly amiable. His politeness induced him to appear happy at his recovery, though life to him must have been a burden. As he constantly recurred to the gratitude he felt for the kindness and attention he had received from the doctor, the latter said to him:—

"General, it is very true that I cured you of the pleurisy, and I am delighted at it; but there is something else, which would confer real honour on me, and at the same time give me infinitely more pleasure; viz. to restore your sight. I feel confident that nothing would be easier, if you would consent to submit to a slight operation, which would be unattended by danger, and cause but very little pain."

"I fear neither pain nor danger, my dear doctor," replied the Chevalier; "but I am accustomed to my infirmity, and to be deprived of sight is a subject of little regret to a poor exile like myself."

"But think," said I, "that your exile may cease at any time; and then of how much joy you will be deprived if you cannot see that country which is so dear to you!"

"I have no country! you know that well, my young friend; and it is on that account, that I am not anxious about my sight. Indeed, I should look upon it as a favour not to be permitted to return to Spain, for I had condemned myself to banishment before I knew of the existence of the law that banished me."

"I will not press it," said the doctor, "but should you change your mind, pray remember that I am aways at your service."

The General thanked him, and immediately turned the conversation. The doctor soon after left us, to pay his daily visit to the hospital.

When the Chevalier and I were alone, I asked him why he refused a thing, which, supposing him to be indifferent to it himself, would be the cause of so much pleasure to me, and would prove so great a relief to his dear Candelaria.

"Because my calamity is a punishment sent by God, and therefore it is not the province of man to endeavour to remove it. I have been blind now

nearly three years, and during that time have been quite aware that it was capable of cure, and therefore I bless Heaven who has granted me the favour of a voluntary expiation."

"General," replied I, struck with admiration at the nobleness of such repentance, and at the tenderness of such a conscience, "the trial has lasted long enough; and now that you have the advice of a physician, you ought perhaps to consult a priest, to ascertain whether your constancy to this idea may not be an abuse of the Divine mercy, or the indulgence of human pride."

"Young man," said he, with emotion, "you have brought forward arguments, which cause me much disquietude. It is true, that if God has forgiven me, I may be acting like a proud man who obstinately clings to punishment when Providence intends it otherwise."

"You should not have doubted of this pardon from the day when Providence sent you the angel whose eyes have guided and whose devotedness has consoled you."

"But suppose I were to lose her on the recovery of my sight, the deprivation of which, through her kind attentions, I have hardly perceived?"

"It would be another indication of the will of Heaven."

"Listen, my young friend," said the Chevalier, with great animation. "Heaven is my witness, that for myself I have no wish to revisit that land that I have stained with the blood of my brother. But I will consent to this test, and if it confirm you in the opinion that I ought to submit to the operation, I will no longer resist. Go for Candelaria; inform her of what the doctor has suggested, and if it appear to give her pleasure, I will do all you wish, and when you wish."

In five minutes Candelaria was at the General's side, and I narrowly observed her countenance.

"My child," said he, "the doctor who so skilfully attended me during my illness, hopes to be able to restore my sight. What do you advise me to do?"

Candelaria threw herself on her knees, her hands raised towards heaven. She opened her lips; I thought she was going to speak.

"Her countenance looks radiant," said I to the Chevalier.

"You will not leave me if they cure me?" continued he, with an anxious expression.

Candelaria seized the hands of the banished man, and covered them with kisses.

"My friend," said he to me, "inform the doctor that he may come when he pleases; I am ready."

The doctor came, and it was decided that after a preliminary treatment, the operation should be performed the following Sunday. It was then Tuesday.

The day fixed for the operation arrived: I waited for it, as you may imagine, with great impatience, and I went to the Chevalier's some moments before the hour appointed for the attendance of the physician. The General was seated in a large arm-chair placed before a window; his hands clasped, his brow more pensive than usual. His whole bearing showed that his mind was engaged in meditation and prayer. Candelaria was on her knees before him; her countenance beaming with tenderness and hope.

"This is a happy day for your friends," said I to Colombres.

He took my hand and pressed it, without uttering a word.

"You are aware," added I, "that as soon as we know that the operation has succeeded, your eyes will be covered with a bandage, which will be

lessened every day, in order that you may by degrees become accustomed to the light."

"When I have seen Candelaria, yourself, and the sun, I can be patient," said he to me, with a sweet smile.

Then his countenance suddenly changed, and placing his hand upon the head of Candelaria, who was still kneeling at his feet, continued:—

"I would much rather hear her voice than see again the light of day."

She looked at me with an expression which I could not comprehend until some time afterwards: besides, the doctor entered at the moment, and all my thoughts were fixed upon what was going to take place. The preparations for the operation having been made beforehand, Mons. Derivière placed his patient in a convenient position, and, putting into my hands some instruments which he would require, began immediately. Five or six minutes passed; they appeared to me like an age. The General did not breathe a word, nor utter a sigh.

"The operation is completed," said the doctor; "tell me if you can see."

The General cast down his eyes, met the gaze of Candelaria, made an exclamation of surprise, and fainted.

"He has recognised me," said the young girl, clasping her hands; "my God be praised!".

The doctor turned round in amazement. As for me, I could scarcely believe the evidence of my senses.

"There is a great deal of mystery in all this," said the doctor, recovering himself. "While waiting for it to be cleared up, we will now take advantage of the General's fainting fit to put on the bandage which he must wear for some days. We shall see after that what it will be necessary to do."

Whilst this was being done, the General recovered his consciousness. "Take off this bandage," said he; "I must see her again! see her, and die!"

"Be calm, General," said Mons. Derivière; "what you have seen you will see again; but if you thus agitate yourself, I cannot answer for the consequences."

"It is not an angel who is near me," said the exile, "it is a saint! it is Bernadette, my brother's only daughter! now I see that God has forgiven me..... But where are you, my child? let me press you to my heart."

"I am at your feet, where I return thanks to Heaven for having answered my prayer. Forgive me, uncle," said she, throwing her arms round his neck; "I came to you for the purpose of revenging my father; your repentance has taught me forgiveness; God is with us. I am no longer an orphan, and you are no longer exiled."

In 1822, a decree of the Cortez recalled all the refugees to their country. In 1823, at the time that King Ferdinand entered Madrid, Bernadette de Colombres demanded of him the pardon of her uncle in consideration of the services of her father.

"Ask it on account of your own virtues," replied the King. "For your sake I name your uncle Governor of Corunna."

It was in this town that the Chevalier de Colombres died a few years ago, at a very advanced age. Bernadette never left him.

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