

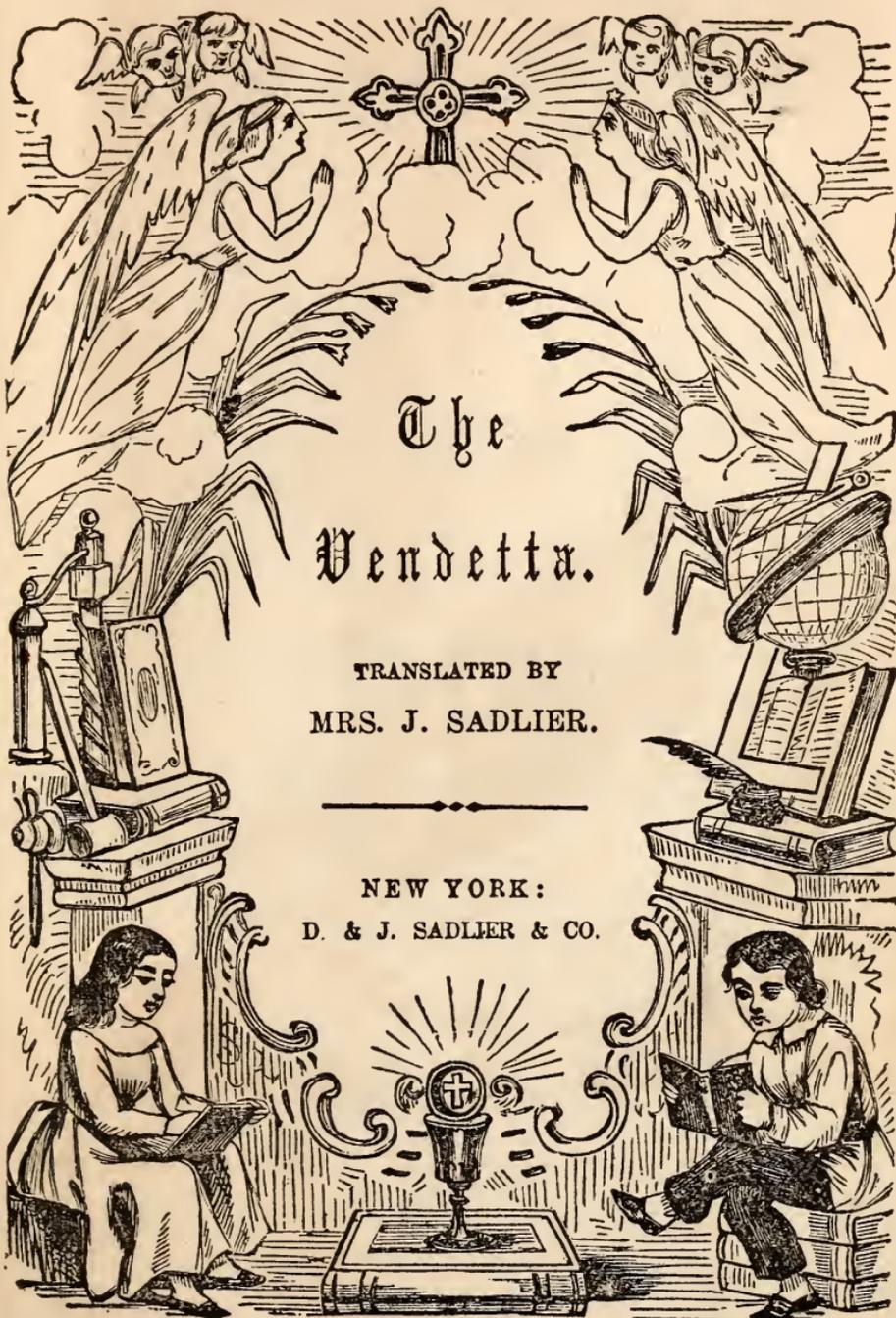
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"The kiss of eternal peace," added the monk.

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The
Vendetta.

TRANSLATED BY
MRS. J. SADLIER.

NEW YORK:
D. & J. SADLER & CO.

REPORT

1871

THE

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS

OF THE

LAND OFFICE

THE
V E N D E T T A ,

AND

OTHER TALES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY

MRS. J. SADLIER.



NEW YORK:

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THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

AND OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH

FROM THE YEAR 1660 TO 1700

BY

J. H. BURNETT

ESQ.

A VENDETTA.*

At the period of the first revolution there was at Lyons a man with a human face, but a tiger's heart, who was called Reno—he was the worthy emulator of Chalier, that other tiger who proclaimed himself the Marat of the South.

Reno was still living in 1846, when he was sometimes to be met in the evening and always alone (ferocious beasts are of solitary habits) in the neighborhood of Perrache, on the South Road, or else around the race-course; he was never seen at the Brotteaux, that vast cemetery sowed by the cannon of the Revolution—Reno was afraid of ghosts.

In the first days of the month of May in the year 18—, being at Lyons I was sitting on a bench on the

* Many of our readers, but perhaps not all, are acquainted with the stern Corsican custom called the *Vendetta*. It means, in brief, the old Jewish precept of "blood for blood." It has such hold on the southern nations of Europe—Corsica especially—that religion itself can hardly overcome it.—TRANS.

Napoleon road. There, lost in thought, I gave my imagination free scope as to the subject I should choose for a new story for a book I had commenced, when a man came and sat down beside me. It was the hour when the sun's last rays were gilding the earth. "What a magnificent sunset!" said the man addressing me directly.

I shuddered at the sound of that voice as though it were the hissing of a serpent. It was he—it was Reno—the accomplice of Collot-d'Herbois, the purveyor of the guillotine and the inventor of cruelties—I drew away from him so hastily that he perceived it.

"Young man, you are afraid of me!" he said.

"Afraid! no," I answered.

"Why then do you shrink from me so?"

"Because I regard you with horror."

"Make your mind easy," he replied, "we are not now in the twelfth century; I am neither a leper nor excommunicated."

"We are after '93."

"'93?"

"Yes, sir, '93, and you are accursed of God and man."

"Like Cain, I suppose?" and he burst out laughing.

"Yes, like Cain, because like Cain, you, too, have killed your brethren: begone!—Touch me not, for there is blood on your hands, your breath like that of the raven smells of corpses—begone, assassin!—"

"Young man," he exclaimed in a threatening tone.

“Old man, with such recollections as yours people shun the light of day—and instead of raising your voice, you ought to bite your tongue out——”

He arose as if to throw himself on me, but I stopped him with the two words——

“*Citizen Reno!*”

He was thunderstruck.

“Citizen Reno,” I continued, “remember the 25th of December and Dauteford!”

He went off muttering some words that were not intelligible to me. I had found the subject I wanted, and returned immediately to the hotel to write this story.

II.

THE first days of the Revolution found Reno under a religious habit in a convent of Lyons. Being naturally corrupt and wicked he soon exchanged the monk's habit for the odious livery of the sans-culottes, more conformable to his vicious instincts. He was soon distinguished amongst his vile associates for the impetuosity and energy of his ferocious nature, and was ever the ringleader in deeds of violence.

When Chalier brought from Paris the horrible machine that was to plough its way through the people of Lyons, Reno prostrated himself before the fatal instrument, and joining his hands as before a pious image he cried three times: “Holy, holy,

holy guillotine, blessed and ever adored be thou as the reign of the world's regeneration!"

One day he presented to Chalier a list of procriptions containing twelve hundred names. They were those of the richest and most honorable of the citizens. His advice was that their wealth was to be confiscated to the jacobins, their souls sent to the d——l, and their bodies to the fishes of the Rhone.

"It is well," said Chalier; "we shall set up the guillotine on the Pont Morand, and from the bridge to the Rhone we shall make a cascade of blood that will bear to the terrified sea the justice of the people."

The wickedness of Reno was so great, it reached so enormous a height, as to frighten his very companions in crime, and they wished to get rid of him. Being placed under arrest, he was brought before the provisory commission.

"Citizen Reno, you deserve death," cried one of his accusers.

"Why?" answered Reno.

"Because you deserve it—that's plain."

"Did I bear arms, during the siege, against the Convention?"

"No, for you are too cowardly."

"Did I pay the agents of Pitt and Coburg?"

"No, for you are too avaricious."

"Did I not trail my priestly orders through the dirt of the streets?"

"Through fear."

“Did I not break my cross?”

“For fear of being hung on it according to your deserts, thief as you were.”

“Did I not denounce my own father to the justice of the people?”

“Because he was likely to live too long for your impatience.”

“I gave up my mother who was guilty of——”

“Giving birth to such a wretch.”

“Citizen judges, it was I that gained Filion and Rameau to the cause of the Republic; were it not for the treachery I got up in the city, Precy would hold it still And who was it that proposed to blow up the prisons and the aristocrats who were in them? It was I——”

“Citizen Reno, you were a priest,” exclaimed the accuser.

“Yes, I was a priest,” answered Reno, raising his voice—“yes, I was a priest, and that title is my best diploma for citizenship.”

“You hear him, citizen judges!” added the accuser, jumping on his seat. “He dares to acknowledge it himself.”

“Not only do I acknowledge it, but I glory in it.”

A profound silence followed this announcement which was in itself a condemnation. The members of the commission were about to pronounce sentence of death, when Reno, with an air of fiendish exultation, flung this horrible apostrophe in the face of his accuser! “If I became a priest it was to dis-

honor the priesthood!" This masterly stroke of oratory elicited the most enthusiastic shouts of applause, and frantic cries of admiration. Next day the accuser of the renegade monk took the place intended for him in the fatal cart which every day, at eleven o'clock, set out for the scaffold.

Amongst the numerous crimes committed by Reno, there is one which goes beyond the last limits of the horrible. Through a miserable childish quarrel for a peg-top lent and lost, Reno had sworn an eternal hatred to young Dauteford, one of his playmates.

House-steward to the princes of Beauffremont at Scey-sur-Saone, Joseph Dauteford had resigned his situation to go share at Lyons, his native place, the dangers of his friends and townsmen. That city was then invested by the army of Dubois Crance, and defended by its heroic youth. During the sixty-three days of a siege which Marshal Kellermann compared for deeds of arms to the wonders of the siege of Troy, Joseph demeaned himself as a brave soldier. He had a horse killed under him in the brilliant affair of the 29th September, when, on the causeway of Perrache, fifteen hundred heroes repulsed a whole army already in possession of a portion of the city. Being subsequently made prisoner in the woods of Alix, after the memorable sortie of the 9th October, Dauteford was brought back in chains to Lyons, and thrown into the prisons of Saint Joseph. There it was that the jacobin Reno found him out.

Dauteford was a brave and good young man; he believed in God, he loved his country, and was loved and esteemed by all who knew him; this was more than enough to send him to the scaffold. Reno had him brought at once to trial; as a matter of course he was condemned and immediately executed.

In those days of misery and disgrace it was dangerous to play the part of a defender; the innocent victims of persecution were forced to hide themselves, for, as Reno the sans-culotte said, the knife of the guillotine shone night and day on the brow of the aristocrats; he was wont to declare that the three-cornered steel was the star of the republic.

Joseph defended himself with the courage of a soldier, and the firmness of a virtuous man. It was admirable to hear him, when he flung these words in the face of his judges, astonished at his boldness :

“ Citizens, the order of justice is subverted! assassins have thrown the revolutionary axe into the scale of Collot-d’Herbois, and by the mouth of that mountebank they have said: ‘Wo to the betrayed!’

“ Citizens, the executioners have taken the place of the victims: they accuse when they ought to be accused, they condemn when they ought to be condemned. It is not we who betray France and dishonor her in the eyes of the whole world, it is all you, men of blood, who strew with corpses the soil of our mother-country.

“Citizens, I accuse you before that posterity which will be your judge, I accuse you of high treason, and I condemn you beforehand to the maledictions of history!”

In vain would the awe-stricken judges have silenced him, Joseph went on vehemently:

“The hour of justice will strike for you, citizens! and when that hour comes, France, arising as one man, will punish you as traitors and assassins. The day is at hand when your heads, topping the bloody abyss which you have dug for us, will close the era of the revolution. Do you hear that sullen sound re-echoing all over our tottering France? It is the head of the royal victim falling from the scaffold on that dismal 21st of January! Wretches, take mine quick! I freely give it to you, for the horror of your crimes makes it weigh heavy on my shoulders!”

Reno pronounced the decree of death. Then arose from the midst of the crowd a strong, clear voice, saying: “Wo to thee, Reno! that man is innocent!”

III.

THE same day, the bloody machine reared itself open-mouthed on the Place des Terreaux. The execution of the warrants of the provisional judges was expectitious. Many men, and many more women, old men and even children pressed around the scaffold.

“Poor Dauteford!” went round amongst the crowd in a low whisper.

“To die so young! oh! what a great misfortune!”

“What was his crime?”

“They say he hid priests and nuns.”

“And saved, in his time, some Royalist Polish officers.”

“And not only heard Mass, but dared to serve it for an ex-priest.”

“The fact is, he pretended that the ex-cure Bottier was a bad priest, because he got beastly drunk with citizeness Chopinard, and that citizeness Chopinard was no better than she should be, because she got drunk with the ex-cure Bottier.”

“Oh! the rascal!”

“To speak so lightly of the goddess of reason!”

“And the ex-cure!”

“But that is not all! he maintains that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, who came on earth to redeem sinful man!”

“Oh! the fanatic!”

“He has been seen kneeling down to say his beads in honor of the Virgin Mary!”

“What a fellow!”

“He cried for certain when he heard of the king’s death!”

“Oh! the aristocrat!”

“He has been known to say that Marat was drunk with blood!”

“Oh! the blasphemer!”

Thus chatted the crowd, awaiting the hour of execution. It was a cross-fire of silly prattle, contra-

dictory suppositions, all ending, nevertheless, in this conclusion: that Joseph Dauteford was an undoubted criminal, and well worthy of death.

All at once, a violent heaving of the crowd indicated some sudden commotion: "There he is! there he is!" was cried on every side, "there is Joseph Dauteford! what a pity! he is so young, so handsome, and he seems so good!"

Soldiers, horse and foot, scattered the crowd, sword in hand, crying: "Room! room! fall back there: make room for the justice of the people: make way for the wrath of the Convention! he's an aristocrat——"

"Unhappy young man!" said the people, "see how calm his brow is! how firm his step! the wicked do not die so!"

"One would think it was going to the altar he was to meet his bride!"

"Hush! hush! you know there is no altar now but that of mother Chopinard, formerly a butcher-woman, now, by the grace of the people, goddess of reason."

"Robbers and rascals," cried a porter from the Temple-Gate——

"Arrest that man," cried a sort of police-agent; "he has blasphemed."

Meanwhile the crowd was silent: standing on tip-toe, with ears strained, and eyes fixed on the scaffold, the people were watching for the last sigh, to hear the last words of the condemned. Dauteford

ascended the steps of the guillotine without ostentation, but with a firm step, and a smiling face; he motioned with his hand that he wished to be heard. Then, slowly and distinctly, he spoke these words:

“Brethren, I believe in God. I die a Christian and a good Frenchman. Faithful to the divine precept, I forgive from my heart all those who cause my death! My last sigh for God! my last wish for my country! the king for ever! Vive la France!”

On the instant a dull sound was heard, and a head rolled on the scaffold, whilst a voice from the crowd repeated: “Wo to thee, Reno! that man was innocent!”

The people dispersed, silent and dismayed; but the instrument of death stood there ready for the morrow’s victims.

That was on the 23d of November

IV.

THE voice which first protested before the judges of the provisional commission, and again at the foot of the scaffold hurled the anathema of vengeance, that voice was a mortal defiance, a death-challenge from the brother of the victim to his murderer.

Leo Dauteford was eighteen; he loved his brother with a sort of filial affection, for Joseph had been as a father to him; so, at the first rumor of Joseph’s arrest, Leo, serving under the flag of his country, asked a six-months’ leave of his colonel and darted off on the way to Lyons.

As an officer of hussars in the Republican service he had free access to the prisons, and had never left his brother a moment except when the rules of the prison required it. By day he was with him in his cell doing all he could to comfort him and to inspire him with hopes which, unhappily, he did not feel himself; by night he wandered like a troubled spirit around the precincts of the prison. Poor Leo! he would have given his life to save that of Joseph; he would have died with him were it not that he had a mother to console, a poor mother, very old, who had no other joy in this wide world but her love for her two sons. Leo preserved his life for her.

How heart-rending was his grief that poor young brother, how terrible his rage when throwing himself into his mother's arms, she asked :

“What have they done with my son?”

“What have they done with your son,” answered Leo in a tone of desperate energy, “what have they done with Joseph,—mother, do not weep!—they have made him a martyr!”

The poor mother sobbed out, and rent the air with her cries. Calm, stern and motionless, Leo stood witnessing his mother's excruciating anguish. At last he spoke :

“Mother, do not weep—heaven has received your child; when men expelled him from this world, the angels of paradise reached their hands to him—weep not, oh! my mother! for we have a saint above who will pray to God for us—you have lost Joseph, but Leo

remains—Leo is no longer a boy—he was proclaimed a soldier on the field of battle and his name is on the roll of the brave—your Leo is now a man and a soldier; he is able to defend and protect you, and also to avenge his brother—weep not, then, oh! my mother!” And winding his arms round his mother’s neck, the strong, brave youth returned the caresses wherewith his mother had consoled his childish sorrows. He kissed away her tears whilst his own fell fast and thick, saying: “Come, mother, do not weep, we have another patron saint in heaven!”

The 2d of December, he rose earlier than usual; it was a grand festival for the jacobin Reno. That day ten priests were doomed to die on the scaffold. The head of his former preceptor, an old man of seventy, was the first to fall. Reno was sitting down to breakfast with several sans-culottes, when his servant handed him a letter marked *In haste*. expecting to find a notice of some new arrests, he hastily tore it open, and read with dismay the following lines:

“Citizen!

“I know the man who has sworn your death: I know his plans: they are irrevocably fixed, and make me tremble for you. Your days are numbered. The dagger of Brutus is suspended over your head by a hair of Dauteford’s. Be on your guard, your life is threatened, vengeance is on the watch.

“At ten o’clock I will be at the Brotteaux: there

I will expect you with ten thousand francs in exchange for the man whom I pledge myself to deliver into your hands."

"Health and fraternity!

"LEO,

Lieutenant 4th Hussars."

"I do not know this officer," said Reno crumpling the letter between his hands: "he may be laying a snare for me; no matter, I will go to the place appointed."

He would fain have finished his breakfast but his appetite was gone; the fear of death had seized him; he rose and walked up and down with long and rapid strides, and raising his voice after the manner of cowards who sing loud to make themselves appear courageous, he repeated: "Certainly, I will go to the place appointed."

"Peter."

"Citizen!"

"Here is the key of my secretary, take it and give me ten thousand livres!"

"In crowns?"

"No, in bonds——"

"There they are, citizen."

"That is well—now go fetch me a soldier."

"I'm going, citizen——"

"And make haste."

"Yes, citizen."

"Certainly I will go to meet him," repeated Reno, "for I am brave—I can sport with the designs of

my enemies. Long live the republic!" And the wretch pressed his sides as if to squeeze out a little courage. The cold sweat was oozing from every pore of his body. Passing before a glass, he perceived his pale, shrunken features, and started back, frightened at himself.

It wanted a quarter of ten by the City-Hall clock when the soldier sent for made his appearance. "Take this cloak," said Reno, "and follow me."

"Where are we going, citizen?"

"You will see that—come on!"

They crossed the Pont Morand, and at ten o'clock precisely found themselves at the appointed place.

The Brotteaux were not at that period what they are to-day, an appendage to the city of Lyon. Instead of those long straight avenues bordered on both sides with fine houses, from the Pont Morand to the Pont Guillotiere, there were only bleak, bare fields, intersected with ditches, with here and there long rows of willows. Silence and solitude reigned there unbroken. Reno was pale as a ghost. "Wait for me," said he to the soldier, "and if you hear the least cry, or call, be sure you come to me." Then turning obliquely to the right he went on a few paces, crossing a new-made heap where the recent victims of official carnage were buried, and found himself suddenly confronted by the man he had come to meet.

"Citizen Leo!" he exclaimed.

"Present," answered the soldier; "come a little

nearer that I may see you." Reno's teeth chattered between his jaws like castanets in the hand of a Spanish dancer.

"You tremble," said Leo.

"I am cold."

"You are punctual," resumed Leo, "it is well, you have preserved the good traditions of royalty: punctuality is the politeness of princes—ah pardon! citizen, masters of the day I mean."

"There are no masters now, none but free and equal men."

"Equal before the guillotine and the executioner—all fair—but let us now to business—I am in a hurry."

"I received your letter," said Reno; "what was your motive in writing it?"

"The interest of my country——"

"Mine, you mean to say?"

"Yes, citizen," and Leo added in an under tone: "That of my revenge."

"So you know a man who has sworn my death?"

"I do."

"What is his name?"

"You will soon know."

"This moment!—I command you in the name of the republic!"

"Well! the man who has sworn your death is called—but now I think of it, citizen, we are forgetting an important point in the question before us."

"What is that?"

“Where are the ten thousand livres?”

“Here they are—take them.”

“Thanks, citizen, would you wish a receipt?”

“It is unnecessary. Will you speak now?”

“Well, citizen, the man who has sworn your death is named—By the bye, citizen, I forgot to ask you, by way of preliminary, concerning a matter of great importance to you.”

“My God! what is it?”

“Do you believe in Him whose name you have just pronounced?”

“Who? God?”

“Yes, citizen.”

“I do not.”

“So much the worse.”

“Why so?”

“Because I would have advised you to commend your soul to Him, for it runs a risk of going straight to the devil.”

“That is not the question. I have kept my promise.”

“I will keep mine.”

“Who is the aristocrat that has sworn my death?”

“Well! citizen, that man’s name is—By the bye, do you remember the 23d of November?”

“That was the day I revenged myself on Joseph Dauteford.”

“Well! it is his brother that has sworn your death.”

"You promised to give him up to me."

"I will keep my word."

"When?"

"Very soon."

"Now, is it?"

"This very moment," cried Leo Dauteford, and, throwing himself on him he seized him violently by the throat. Reno would have cried out but the choking pressure on his throat prevented him from uttering a word. "The man who swore to revenge his brother, basely murdered by you, is named Leo Dauteford; and I am he. Do you now recognize the voice that cried 'Wo to thee' on the threshold of a court, at the foot of a scaffold? That voice was mine—you tremble now, but you laughed then—coward! coward! you have courage only to kill defenceless men, women and priests! Kneel down, citizen Reno, kneel down, apostate monk! kneel, and ask pardon of God, for there is a God who punishes renegades and assassins. . . . But no, I will not murder you!—rise and defend your life, for I have sworn, and must have it. Hold, here is a choice of weapons, choose your own; up now and defend yourself!"

Reno coiled himself up like a serpent and cried out for help.

"You are right," said Dauteford, "it is important that our combat be legal." He made a sign, and two of his young friends appearing suddenly behind a hedge, darted forward in advance of the tall soldier

who ran as fast as his great boots could carry him to the jacobin's assistance.

"You will oblige me much, citizen soldier," said Dauteford, "if you will act as witness for this man, for I doubt whether these gentlemen would consent to render him that service." The soldier bowed by way of assent, and said: "I would rather do that than assist as I do every day at the massacre of people who cannot defend themselves."

"Come then, citizen sans-culotte," said Leo, "our witnesses are ready—defend yourself, I say!"

Reno trembled from head to foot, his brain reeled, and every vein throbbled with fever, whilst a death like paleness overspread his face. Leo touched him with the point of his sword! "I do not want to murder you," he said, "and yet your life is in my hands; wretch, why don't you fight?" All at once he broke his sword across his knee, and flung the fragments in his face.

"I understand," said he, "the sword is too noble for you, this steel is too pure for your blood—the stick suits you better," and snatching a stake which supported the hedge, he beat him so that he left him for dead on the ground, notwithstanding the entreaties of his friends, who pleaded for the wretch, and the half-earnest expostulations of the good-natured soldier.

Next day Leo placed in the hands of a priest the sum of ten thousand francs to be distributed amongst the widows and orphans of the Lyonnese victims

Two days after he rejoined his regiment where he found a complaint lodged by the delegates and a denunciation from Reno. It was as much as General Kellermann could do to save him from expiating on the scaffold the beating he had given the apostate monk.

V.

The renegade priest, being cured of his wounds which he attributed to a fall from his horse, pursued with aggravated rage and fury the career of crime on which he had entered. He loved to see blood flow, to put his finger in the palpitating wounds, and to lay his ear on the chest of his victims to follow the pulsation of the heart that was soon to beat no more. He changed his dwelling, and established himself on the first story of a house in the Place des Terreaux, whence he could assist, without much trouble, at the daily executions.

Meanwhile Leo, our young lieutenant, went on fighting bravely in the army of the Alps. His colonel used to say that his courage was worthy of the lion, of whom his name was synonymous. More than once, forgetting in the tumult of war that he had still a mother to love, he sought in the vanguard a glorious death; but death shunned him—his hour was not yet come. Still, when time began to assuage in some degree the anguish of his heart, so that he could begin to look forward with a soothing hope to see his brother again in heaven, the re-

membrance of his mother came back in full force. He almost idolized his mother, and it broke his heart to be so far away from her who was then all the world to him. He grieved for her lonely state, and would have given worlds to be with her to say, "Mother, do not weep—I am here to defend, protect, and cherish you!" Poor Leo! how he pined for that mother's tender smile and fond caress!

One day he availed himself of a suspension of arms to ask his colonel for a month's leave of absence; he obtained it the more easily, that he had been wounded in the last encounter. He set out immediately for Lyons.

Oh! how his heart beat when his eye rested from afar on the white spire of Notre Dame de Fourvieres, the protecting beacon of that eminently holy city; how he trembled with hope and fear as he approached the house where he was born! Frightful presentiment! "I shall be there all too soon," said he to himself. "I shall see my mother no more!"

His mother's dwelling was closed; the door was sealed. "Too late! too late!" he cried, running to the house of one of his friends, who lived in the Rue St. Dominique.

"Where is my mother?" he cried, as he wrung his hand; "where is my mother?"

His friend was silent.

"Where is my mother?" repeated Leo, "I ask you, where?"

"She is safe, near mine."

“Where?”

“Where the wicked cannot reach her.”

“Then conduct me to her, I will see her—let us go!”

“Yes, let us go,” repeated Frederick, “follow me!”

They walked about twenty minutes in silence, both a prey to gloomy thought.

“Shall we never reach the place?” said Leo, as they climbed the steep hill of the Gourguillon.

“Too soon, perhaps,” answered his friend. They walked a few steps farther, when Frederick, stopping in front of a large house, knocked three times at a low door which opened before them.

Leo, pale and trembling, took hold of Frederick’s arm; they traversed several deserted chambers; descended a winding staircase, and found themselves in the cemetery of a convent. Leo blessed himself instinctively before a broken cross which lay on the ground amongst sepulchral ruins. The jacobins pursued the dead even in their graves.

“Frederick, will you tell me now where is my mother?” demanded Leo.

“There,” answered Frederick, pointing to a heap of earth.

Leo fell prostrate on the grave, but speedily rising again without so much as shedding a tear: “They murdered her,” said he, “did they not, Frederick?”

Frederick pronounced in a low voice the name of Reno.

‘The wretch!’ cried Leo, “it is he, always he!

why did I not kill him on that 2d of December when I had him at my sword's point? Farewell, Frederick! I leave my revenge in your hands," and he was going to stab himself to the heart, when his friend, arresting his arm, glanced at the grave and the broken cross hard by.

"Oh! I forgot!" said Leo, "Thanks, Frederick! for reminding me of it. I will live for my oath. My brother and my mother shall be avenged!"

For three days Leo was in a state of despair; his reason had almost abandoned him. The hope of revenge was the only motive that still bound him to life.

Frederick never left him a moment; he would, if possible, replace by his friendship, even a portion of what he had lost. He smothered the expression of his own grief to give what consolation he could to poor Leo.

"My friend," he would say to him, "The storm raised by the passions of men will soon pass over. The hand of that God whom we adore will soon open heaven to send us a ray of His divine light. Then, Leo! shall the strong, courageous man who withstood the trial rise in his might like the oak of the mountain; then will days of peace and happiness shine for us! Trust me, friend! hope is the secret of resignation!"

"Hope?" answered Leo; "hope exists no more when reality is dead. Happy days, say you? there are none for me. Destroying those I loved, the

wicked have broken the springs of my soul—my heart is dead, dead for evermore—dead to hope, dead to joy. No, Frederick! there are no more happy days for me. Yes, one there may be—that of vengeance!”

Leo, the lieutenant of hussars, had preserved amid the bustle and tumult of the camp the religious precepts and principles which his mother had implanted in his heart when a child. He wished to consecrate to a pious duty the few days that remained of his furlough. One morning he arose calmer and more resigned, he had spent a great part of the night in prayer.

“We must seek a priest, Frederick!” said he to his friend; “I wish to have some masses said for the repose of my mother’s soul.”

“We will find one,” answered Frederick. Next morning, accordingly, an old priest said a mass for the dead in a house in the Place du Platre. Some men kneeling around the temporary altar united their prayers with those of the minister of Christ.

After the celebration of the sacred mysteries the officiating priest laid aside his vestments, and putting a stole round his neck delivered a short discourse on the forgiveness of injuries. His eloquence, though simple, was most persuasive. “The forgiveness of injuries,” he said in conclusion, “know you what it is, my brethren? I will tell you. It is the surest and straightest way to heaven. From the cross of Calvary, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for-

gave the Jews of Jerusalem. From his cross of the scaffold, Louis XVI., the son of kings, forgave the Jews of the Convention. The death of the royal martyr is a lesson; the death of the crucified God is a precept: let us, then, forgive our enemies."

The sacred orator developed this thought with talent and conviction. All his hearers wept. Leo himself, notwithstanding all his efforts to resist the priest's reasoning, shed tears abundantly.

When the preacher finished his discourse, the men who had assisted at the divine office retired one by one, so as not to attract attention. Leo remained alone with the priest. "Father!" said he, laying his hand on his heart, "your words have penetrated here."

"God be praised, my son!"

"Father, I have taken two oaths: the first over a dead body, the second over a grave; would the accomplishment of these oaths, the consummation of my revenge, be a crime in the eyes of God?"

"You have heard me, my son; I mean to say, you have heard the word of truth. The Son of God dying ordained the forgiveness of injury; Jesus Christ said: 'You shall return good for evil.'"

"But know you not that a man killed my brother, and that that man still lives?"

"But you know that the Jews scourged the Man God and crowned him with thorns."

"He assassinated my kind and aged mother."

"They fastened Him to a gibbet."

“She was my mother.”

“He was the Son of God Himself.”

“Oh vengeance, father! vengeance is so sweet to the heart of the soldier!”

“Sweeter still is forgiveness to the heart of the Christian!”

“Vengeance, oh my father!”

“Pardon, I have told you, is the way to heaven.”

“I will live but for it——”

“Better live to forgive.”

“If I keep not my oath I shall be a perjurer and a villain.”

“Neither one nor the other; but if you keep it you will not be a Christian.”

“A soldier has only his word; besides, I took that oath kneeling before God.”

“Kneeling before God I can redeem the soldier’s word and absolve the oath of the son and brother; kneel, my son! kneel!”

Leo bent his knee under the priest’s hand, and when he arose, he had forgiven once and forever.

Leo rejoined his regiment, and soon in a victorious battle won a captain’s epaulettes. A few days after he embarked for Egypt. Napoleon, like General Kellermann, had early remarked him as one of the bravest officers in his army.

One evening he sent for him to his tent: “Captain,” said he, “I love your courage and esteem your military talents. I know your family misfortunes. You have acted as became a brave and

good man. It may be that you were wrong, though, in sparing the murderer of your brother."

"It would have been murder, general, he did not defend himself."

"I know, too, that you promised a priest to forgive the murderer of your mother."

"It is true, general."

"If God seconds my intention, I will one day revenge your wrongs by saving our country from the hands which have so long kept it bent under the knife of the guillotine. Meanwhile I promise you rapid promotion unless your want of ambition or a stray bullet decide it otherwise. Captain Dauteford, to-morrow's battle will either restore you to those dear ones you have lost, or make you a major."

Leo bent and stammered some thanks with a confused, embarrassed air.

Bonaparte smiled: "Faith, captain, you are a bad courtier," said he.

"What matter, general! if I am a good soldier?"

"I like that better," answered the young chief. "The courtier ruins thrones, and the soldier," he added pointedly, "the soldier sometimes raises them again." The glance of the future Emperor already penetrated the mysteries of after years.

He continued: "The news from France are sad. France is become a chaos, wherein all conflicting elements are at once let loose. Poor France! since I left it, intriguers, babblers, tyrants, and blood-

suckers have made it their prey. The Revolution is a hydra-headed monster——”

“Which requires a Hercules,” observed Leo.

By this time the night was come, the young general arose, moved some steps from his tent to accompany the captain, and stopping suddenly, pointed to the sky: “Look, captain,” said he, “see you that brilliant star over the summit of yon pyramid, which seems to serve it for a pedestal?”

“I see it, general.”

“Do you know it?”

“I am not much of an astronomer.”

“It is mine. . . . Adieu, captain, till to-morrow!”

The general re-entered his tent and threw himself, dressed as he was, on a camp-bed.

Next day, from the height of the pyramids, forty centuries looked down on two armies of heroes contending in an ocean of fire. Five squares of French infantry withstood for several hours the shock of the enemy’s cavalry, which, notwithstanding its numbers and its fiery impetuosity, was forced to abandon the field to the eagles of France.

In the heat of the contest, the young general-in-chief ran the greatest danger. Separated from his staff and surrounded by a party of Mamalukes, he would have been taken prisoner were it not for the assistance of an officer who succeeded in extricating him at the risk of his own life.

Bonaparte recognized in his deliverer Leo Daute-ford. “I was quite sure,” said he, on the evening

of the battle, "that this day would make you a major. France has paid *her* debt, one day *I* will pay that of the general whose life you have saved. Here, major, take this stiletto; it was my father's—keep it in remembrance of me. Should you ever stand in need of my influence or protection, bring it to me. I swear to grant the first favor you ask presenting it." Leo took the stiletto and raised it to his lips. The general resumed: "Remember Bonaparte. I will remember the Pyramids!"

VI.

It was six years after that. Leo Dauteford, after having made all the campaigns of Italy, returned to France. The star of the Pyramids was shining over the Palace of the Tuilleries. General Bonaparte was emperor. Leo Dauteford was colonel; the star of honor glittered on his breast.

Two or three days after his arrival in Paris, the Emperor, in a general review of his troops on the Place du Carrousel, recognized Dauteford at the head of his regiment. He shook him warmly by the hand, saying: "It is hardly fair of you, my brave, to neglect your old comrade of Egypt. . . . Come! come! since you don't think of coming to the palace, I shall be forced to go and see you at the barracks." The colonel smiled and bowed.

"By the bye," resumed Napoleon, "that uniform is a horribly bad fit: what *cobbler* was it that got it up?"

“ The master-tailor of the regiment, sire !”

“ A stupid fellow——”

“ Nevertheless, sire——”

“ He is a stupid fellow, I tell you—or rather I am, for not having sent you before now a uniform that would fit you better.”

“ Which is that, sire ?”

“ That of the cuirassiers of my guard. . . . I will send my tailor to-morrow. That is settled.”

At that time the glorious Emperor knew no bounds to his power ; he had added the Tyrol and the States of Venice to the French territory ; he had made Holland a kingdom, and placed his eldest brother on its throne. He had given Naples to another. From his hands, Westphalia had passed into those of his third brother, and to his own titles of Emperor of France and King of Italy he soon joined the pompous name of Protector of the Rhenish Confederation. Then his horses steeped their manes in the rapid waters of the German river.

Yet the invincible Emperor was not happy, notwithstanding his recent conquests. By nature fierce and restless, he found himself cramped and, as it were, straitened in his immense prosperity. More than once, returning from his perilous expeditions, mournful cries had echoed round his triumphal car ; more than once, the blood of the conspirators, who carry political fanaticism to the infamy of assassination, had flowed on the scaffold. More than once the dagger of Brutus had glittered in the dark on the

breast of the modern Cæsar, even he who had raised the glory of France so high, after having restored religion and saved society from utter destruction.

One day, Fouche's police discovered the traces of a new conspiracy. The leaders of the plot were arrested, tried, and condemned to be shot within twenty-four hours.

Next day, at five o'clock in the morning, the first regiment of the cuirassiers of the guard received orders to conduct the criminals from the jail to the plain of Grenelle, chosen for the place of execution.

Fouche, accompanied by Colonel Leo Dauteford, had the prison-door opened, and, followed by several other officers, he visited the prisoners in their cells, to ask them, at that final moment, whether they had any revelations to make.

All at once, Colonel Dauteford threw himself back and raised his hand to his forehead as if to dispel a fatal recollection. One voice had reached his ear, one man had met his eye amongst the condemned criminals. That voice! he had heard it at Lyons once upon a time. There was, there could be no doubt, that man was the murderer of his mother and brother, his own denouncer, Reno, the apostate priest.

"Great God!" cried Dauteford, "the day of Thy holy justice is come at last! To me it is given to revenge on the Emperor's assassin the murder of my brother, of my mother, of all I loved on earth! Thanks! thanks! my God!"

But another remembrance passed almost immediately through his mind, and he thought of the aged priest who said the Requiem Mass for the repose of his mother's soul; he remembered his sublime words on the forgiveness of injuries; he remembered that he had in his presence renounced his hopes of revenge and sealed the pardon of his enemy. In view of that threefold remembrance he did not hesitate a single moment, but darted off as fast as his horse could gallop to the Tuilleries.

The Emperor was presiding at a council of his ministers. He had received bad news from Spain, and was walking up and down with rapid steps, his hands behind his back, according to custom.

"The whole world," said he, "has trembled under my horse's hoof; Europe has humbled herself to the dust before me, and Spain alone dares to oppose me! Five hundred thousand men, if necessary, shall cross the Pyrenees, and my eagles shall dart with lightning speed on Madrid!"

So saying, Napoleon, much excited, hurled the gilt eagle of a standard at a canvas representing the image of King Ferdinand VII. At the same moment the door opened and one of his aid-de-camps appeared before him.

"What is wanted now?" asked the Emperor with a movement of anger.

"A colonel of your guard, sire, wishes to speak with you."

"Let him go hang ——," but immediately reco-

vering himself, he added sternly out with more dignity: "Go tell that colonel that at this hour his place is at his regiment and not at the Tuilleries."

"It is enough," answered the aid-de-camp; and, bowing, he retired; but two minutes after, he returned, saying:

"Sire, this colonel must absolutely see you."

Napoleon stamped his foot, and knitting his brow: "He must, you say, *absolutely*? Who, then, is absolute here but me? Ah! because they have gold epaulettes, a steel sabre, a piece of red ribbon, all of my gift, these varlets are as insolent as pages in the regency—master aid-de-camp, go tell my *valet de chambre* to prepare my riding-boots, I will go out in an hour."

The aid-de-camp vanished. Instantly the clatter of spurs was heard in the anti-chamber outside, and Colonel Dauteford appeared in full military costume, as if for a day of battle.

Napoleon, now wholly beside himself, made three steps forward, and measured him from head to foot: "It is you, colonel?" said he.

"It is, sire."

"Since when in France have persons presented themselves thus before the Emperor without being announced?"

The colonel looked at his watch and answered coolly: "Since a quarter to six."

"Insolent!" cried the Emperor, and he threw his

glove at the colonel's face, but Dauteford, stepping aside, it passed him by without touching him.

"Thanks to you, sire, your star, betraying your intention, has saved me a great crime—take back your glove—I am only a colonel."

"I do not understand."

"The Duke d'Enghien once struck an officer of Conde's army with his glove: next day he put on a captain's uniform to offer him satisfaction."

Napoleon, angry as he was, did not forget his dignity. He placed his hand on the hilt of his sword.

"I know that weapon, sire!—it is the one you had at the Pyramids."

The coolness and composure of the colonel disarmed the Emperor, whose tone changed immediately.

"Colonel, what do you want?" he asked.

"Sire, we are not alone," answered the colonel, and he pointed to the ministers who sat round a table talking in under tones.

"You are right," said the Emperor, and taking Dauteford's arm, he walked with him to the recess of a window.

"You may speak now without reserve, colonel but make haste, for I am in a hurry."

"So am I, sire."

"Say then what you want."

"A favor, sire."

"What is it?"

“The life of Reno.”

“Pardon for the man who would have assassinated me?”

“Yes, sire.”

“Colonel, your request is a crime.”

“Sire!”

“A crime of complicity!”

“It matters not, but this man’s pardon I must and will have.”

“Colonel, I accuse you of high treason,” said the Emperor raising his voice.

“Not so loud, sire, those gentlemen might hear us.”

“What then?”

“They would not believe you.

“Give me up your sword.”

“From you I hold it, to you I give it up—there it is. Now, sire, do you know this stiletto?”

“It was my father’s!” cried Napoleon, and taking it, he hastily raised it to his lips; his anger was already but as a storm growling in the distance.

“I restore it to you, sire, it belongs no more to me.”

“Why, colonel?”

“Because one victorious day at the Pyramids you told me that you would grant me the first favor I asked, giving me this as a token.”

“But Reno attempted to assassinate me.”

“He destroyed my brother, my mother, he denounced myself.”

“The more reason why justice should take its

course; there was crime, there ought to be expiation."

"I have forgiven, sire!"

"A rigorous example must be made."

"Clemency is often better than severity."

"Clemency encourages crime."

"Rigor provokes it."

"Hence it is that we must not content ourselves with muzzling the hydra of the Revolution; we must break his teeth, so that he can bite no more."

"Your heel has crushed the Revolution."

"Yet it still raises its head."

"Sire, you told me once: Remember General Bonaparte—I will remember the Pyramids."

"General Bonaparte is no more—the Emperor Napoleon has taken his place."

"It is to General Bonaparte's memory that I now address myself to reach the Emperor Napoleon's heart."

"Bravo, colonel, bravo!" cried the Emperor brightening up at once, "you begin at last to speak like a courtier."

"Since I lost my soldier's sword."

"Receive it again, colonel, and in exchange give me a pen." Napoleon approached the table, and taking a sheet of paper he wrote the single word: "Pardon."

"For whom, sire?"

"For all, colonel!"

Dauteford bent his knee to the ground and pressed the Emperor's hand to his lips.

"Arise, my brave," said the Emperor, "to-morrow I will send you the epaulettes of a Brigadier-General."

Whilst Napoleon rejoins his ministers, Colonel Dauteford descends quickly to the court-yard; it is already late, yet he still hopes to arrive before the moment fixed for the execution. He urges on his horse with voice and spur.

Half-way he meets an orderly, who has met the fatal procession, and doubts not but it has already reached the place of execution. A discharge of musketry is heard: "My God!" cries Dauteford, "grant that I may not arrive too late," and darting off at headlong speed, he and his horse disappeared in a whirlwind of dust. A second discharge, then a third succeeded the first. "My God! my God!" cries Dauteford again, "grant that I may arrive in time!"

The mournful cortege had in fact reached the place of execution, but the firing heard by the colonel had proceeded from a regiment of infantry far off in the distance. His own regiment of cuirassiers was drawn up in battle array behind a battalion of the grenadiers of the guard. At that moment a picket formed of the senior non-commissioned officers detached themselves from the battalion and loaded their arms; the criminals immediately appeared, escorted by a detachment of soldiers, and supported by venerable

ecclesiastics, who had spent the night with them in their cells to give them the last helps and final consolations which Heaven grants to the dying. One only had rejected them, the palest, the most trembling, and doubtless the most guilty. My God! my God! the fatal hour has struck, and the colonel has not yet arrived. The drums beat in front of the troops drawn up, and the colonel has not yet arrived! The criminals, with their eyes bandaged, kneel before the priests, who, with outstretched hands and eyes raised to heaven, bestow the final benediction, when all at once the gallop of a horse is heard—a naked sword shines far off in a cloud of dust, a strong voice, a voice accustomed to command, repeats in quick succession the words: "Pardon! pardon! stop in the Emperor's name! pardon! pardon for all! stop! Vive l'Empereur!"

The wretches condemned to death were saved. Leo Dauteford shook the apostate priest by the hand, as though he were a dear friend!

"Citizen Reno," said he, "do you recognize my features?" But the coward, still pale and trembling, could not bring himself to look his liberator in the face——"

"I do not," said he.

"Then you cannot but know my voice"

"Nor that neither."

"You remember, then, the 23d of November and the 2d of December at Lyons?"

Enough, colonel," cried Reno putting his hands to his eyes, "I know you now."

"It suffices—you will henceforward know how a Christian takes his revenge."

"And you—you shall one day know the rewards that God has in store for those who forgive their enemies," cried an aged priest, pressing the generous colonel in his arms.

"Why, father, is it you?" said the latter in great surprise.

"Yes, my son, it is I, and I am pleased with you—you have kept your oath well."

The old priest who had prayed at Lyons for the victims of revolutionary fury, and taught Dauteford the secret of the Christian *vendetta*, was then almoner of the prison.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHER.

SOME years since I visited the south of France for the first time. I knew not well what to do with myself during the few hours which I had to spend in the little town of B — where I arrived the previous night. I was undoubtedly that day one of the most wearied and perhaps wearisome men in the kingdom of France and Navarre. Dinner-hour came at last, however, and I went to table fully resolved to drown my spleen in the best wine the place afforded.

My next neighbor chanced to be a good-natured jolly fellow who bore on his face and also on his tongue the title of travelling-clerk. I made him acquainted with my embarrassment, at which he laughed heartily: "Where on earth do you come from, my dear sir?" said he; "from the Celestial Empire, it must be, seeing that you feel lonely in B —, the paradise of coffee-houses and tobacco-shops. You will nowhere find more delicious Mocha or better cigars."

I replied that I never took coffee except at night, and smoked nothing but cigarettes.

Hearing this his countenance fell: "Probably you cultivate the pen or the pencil," said he; "I advise you to go and visit the chapel of the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine, which is not far from here; if you are a poet, you will find inspiration there, and if you are an artist, a panorama, of which you will give me an account this evening."

"I think the visit would be more agreeable to both, if you did me the favor of acting as cicerone——"

"I would do it willingly if there wasn't a *pool* waiting for me at a coffee-house down the street. If to-morrow will do I am entirely at your service."

"I intend to leave to-morrow."

"Then take my advice and don't put off your visit, for *man proposes but God*——you know the proverb."

Following the advice of my jolly mess mate, I sallied forth soon after dinner.

The chapel mentioned by him has nothing very striking in its interior, but seen from without nothing can be more charming. Entirely surrounded by trees, it looks like a nest in a brier-bush. A very old man was praying before the Virgin's altar. By his long black robe, dark cloak and broad-brimmed hat, I easily recognized him for one of those worthy Brothers who devote themselves with so much abnegation, so much charity to the instruction of the poorest children of the flock. Still there was that on his bald and wrinkled forehead which indicated superior intelligence, nay, even rare distinction. I knelt near him hoping to receive, as I prayed myself, a portion of his spirit. He probably understood my thought, for he glanced at me with the kindest and sweetest expression imaginable.

I arose after a few moments and proceeded to examine the portal which was pierced with several arched windows and adorned with statues curiously sculptured. I was thus engaged when the old man came out and I raised my hat as he passed: I have always loved and admired those good simple men who retire from the world's notice to live obscure and forgotten. He came to me and taking hold of my two hands pressed them between his own: "It is well," said he, "young man, you are not ashamed to salute a poor Brother, or to say a prayer before

the Virgin's altar—it is very well, young man! devotion to the blessed Mary is sure to make young people happy: love her, cling to her, and fear nothing; she will assist you in all the trials of your life, she will console you in your sorrows and shield you from every danger.”

As often happens in southern climates, a storm came suddenly on, and a fierce north-wester blew with terrific violence: great black clouds chased each other across the heavens, the lightning flashed, the thunder growled, and the birds of the air skimming the earth on rapid wing gained their nests in the foliage. Like them I sought shelter under a spreading tree from the heavy drops of rain which began to fall. The Brother of the Christian Schools took me by the arm: “Come with me, young man,” said he, “the dwelling of the poor Christian Brother will be safer for you than the dome of that oak.”

The sky became one sheet of flame, the lightning flashed unceasingly—I had never witnessed such a tempest.

To get a better view of the tremendous scene I opened the window of the Brother's small chamber, but he quickly convinced me that I was acting imprudently. At the same moment a peal of thunder louder than any we had yet heard crashed with a frightful noise just over our heads. Long snakes of fire glided before us, and the tree under which I had so lately stood was shivered to pieces.

“You see, friend,” said the good Brother with

admirable coolness, "you see the Blessed Virgin never forgets those who have confidence in her. What prayer did you address to her a little while ago in the chapel?"

"The *Memorare*."

"The *Memorare* has saved you. The storm will soon be over," continued he, "before an hour you will be able to return to the town; meanwhile, come and see my little oratory." He showed me a prie-dieu of black wood hidden in the shade of his small apartment: "Here it is," said he, "that I came to rest from the tumults and vicissitudes of life. Here it is that I await from day to day, without fear and perfectly resigned to the will of God, the hour of my final departure."

At the foot of a beautiful ivory crucifix I observed a human skull; the good Brother resumed: "That sacred image which presides over all the sorrows of life to make them available for heaven, that image it was that received the last sigh of my pious mother. That skull belonged to an old comrade who bequeathed it to me some ten years ago: it shall rest beside me in the grave till the day of general judgment."

"Would you know, young man, the end and ultimatum of human glory?—then look!" And raising the skull that lay on his prie-dieu, he showed me several crosses with ribbons of various colors. That poor Brother's chamber was a living treatise on philosophy.

“To whom did those decorations belong?” I asked. He opened an old box of black walnut, and took from it a military uniform worn thread-bare, and exhibiting traces of many noble rents. “They belonged,” said he, “to this coat which shall soon serve me for a shroud.”

I was going to take up a cavalry sabre which I saw at the bottom of the trunk. “Touch it not,” said the old man, “there is blood on it still.” Then throwing back his head with a movement of noble and laudable pride, he added: “The blood of the enemies of France!”

His face was radiant at that moment: lightning seemed to flash from his eyes; the voice of an aged veteran spoke from the mouth of a Christian friar.

“Would you see a precious autograph?” he asked. And without waiting for my answer, he slowly unrolled a sheet of paper crumpled and discolored, on which I read the single word: “*Pardon!*” and far below a signature—that of Napoleon.

“What weapon is this?” I asked in my turn, showing him a small poignard inclosed in a rich morocco sheath.

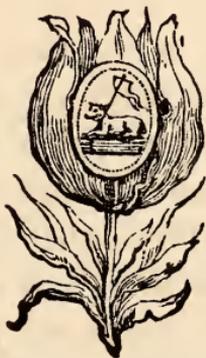
“It is a Corsican stiletto: it was given me by a general under the Pyramids of Egypt—that general was called Bonaparte.”

“And this brevet signed by the Emperor’s hand, what is it?”

“My brevet as general of brigade.”

“Now, young man,” added he, in a tone as soft as an angel’s prayer, “pardon me if I am forced to leave you, but my class-bell has just rung.”

The storm had passed—the thunder was only heard far off and at long intervals; I descended the hill, turning my head several times to take another look at the humble roof of the Christian Brother—that Brother was ex-General Leo Dauteford.



REPENTANCE AND EXPIATION.

EARLY in the month of May, in the year of Grace 1842, the author, whom we shall call Alphonse, was awoke betimes one morning by a letter brought post haste which he found conceived in the following terms:

“MY DEAREST FRIEND—

“Go hang yourself if you do not come to us. I have been looking out for you these eight days: my wife has given her orders, your room is ready to receive you, and the windows open on the park.

“The nightingale, whom you love so much, has stationed himself close by your window, in the branches of a superb lilac in full blossom. To-night he sang his sweetest song; you would have applauded were you here, for he never missed a note.

“Come, then, friend! come quick before the breeze strips the eglantine of those long white palms which you prefer to a l flowers. Come, dear

friend, the linnet sings in concert with the nightingale. To hear them in the stillness of the evening twilight, when the stars are peeping forth, you would take them for Grisi and Rubini. Then our mountains have resumed their azure tints, our woods are covered with leaves, our meadows with daisies, our hedges with perfumes. Oh! but the country is beautiful now! It is just like the morning of life.

“We have some persons whom you must have met in the world, Monsieur de Tavennes and his charming daughter, who fly with the swallows. Madam Severine de —, who tells stories so well, is here since the day before yesterday. Maurice de L—— is also with us. Lastly, Odon B——, your old college-friend, is to join us with Mina, his charming and intellectual wife. All that is very tempting, is it not? Well! something more remains: like masters of the rhetorical art, I have kept the best of all for the peroration. The brown bread was never so good, and the thick milk is delicious.

“This evening then.

“Your old friend,

“ERNEST.”

Alphonse doats on brown bread, he is crazy for thick milk, so, I ask you, how could he refuse Ernest's invitation? He set out forthwith for St. Arnaud Castle.

When he reached St. Arnaud the nightingale was singing, the lilacs and flowering hawthorns scented

his way, the smoke from the castle-chimneys was mingling with the azure hues of the hills, an excellent dinner, and better still, a perfect friend awaited him.

Never was scene prettier or more graceful than the village of Saint-Arnaud. Picturesquely situated on the banks of a charming little river, at the foot of a vine-clad hill, Saint-Arnaud would be an earthly paradise were it not inhabited by demons. It has ever been remarked for ultra-revolutionary ideas.

In '89, it burned the castles of several nobles.

In '93, it denounced its vicar and hung his curate.

In 1830, it broke the bust of Charles X. and organized a national guard, famous for its drum-major, whose arms were so long that he could put on his boots without bending his tall figure.

St. Arnaud is a village singularly advanced, the women there believe in God, the men in the devil, and the children in magic.

If you chance to meet a peasant on the road, and ask him the name of the ruins you perceive on the hill-side, he will bless himself before he answers: "Take care you don't visit them," he will then tell you, "for in those ruins ghosts and goblins have taken up their lodging, and I can tell you the place is anything but safe for good Christians." If it be evening, the peasant will go far enough out of his way to avoid that haunted mansion.

Such is the spirit of the age; it often rejects the truths of God as superstitious, and adopts as

truths the superstitions of men. I knew a celebrated lawyer who on all occasions made an open display of his atheism, and a mine of gold would not bribe him to sleep in a certain chamber that was hung round with grim old patriots.

Two days after the arrival of Alphonse, and two hours after the second breakfast, the company assembled in the drawing-room to hear the exquisite voice of Madam de ——. She sang to perfection the *Ave Maria* of Schubert, that delightful prayer which has been spoken and heard with tears.

The windows fronting on the park were half-open, giving admission to the rich fragrance from without; the envious nightingale started in her honeysuckle nest to beat her wings at the brilliant notes which fell from the mouth of Madam de —— like so many pearls and diamonds.

The same evening at eight o'clock the friendly circle was gathered around Madam Severine, the lady who told stories so delightfully. She was preparing to relate a legend promised the evening before and impatiently expected.

“It is very bold on my part,” said she, “for I ought to be afraid to tell you the doings and sayings of messieurs the devils. You see those ruined towers rising on the slope of the mountain: there my story is going to seek them; so now to commence:

THE CURSE OF GOD.

“There was once, in place of those ruins, a strong castle surrounded by deep ditches, flanked with towers, protected by high walls and still more by a position naturally impregnable. Its owner the Baron de Leuffroi was a rough old warrior, a hard rider and a formidable man amongst his neighbors.

“No baron or duke in all the land could handle his weapon more expertly whether battle-axe, dirk or rapier; none bore him more bravely under a coat of mail or a velvet doublet; none better knew how to defend a castle or attack a fortress. But as ill luck would have it he was a Lutheran and a born-devil to boot.

“Well! there came a time when Louis the Great, by the grace of God king of France, thought fit to rovoke the edict of Nantes. Most of the partisans of the new faith retired then, some to foreign countries, others to the mountains of the Cevennes some few made their abjuration and returned to the fold of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church; of this number was the Baron de Leuffroi.

“‘Bah!’ said he one day to his wife, a zealous Huguenot, ‘*one you know* said that Paris was worth a mass; it is my opinion that the castle of my ancestors is well worth a sign of the cross.’

“It was at Lyons, in the Cathedral Church of St. John, in the presence of knights and nobles, that he made his abjuration before the Archbishop, swear-

ing on the Holy Gospel to bring up his offspring, both male and female, in the faith of the Church which is one and infallible.

“But all this was no more than a stratagem, and done with ill intent, as you will soon see. On the instigation, most likely, of Master Satan, the new convert had a chapel constructed in his castle; he had a chaplain, a sacristan and all the rest; then every Sunday and holyday he assisted devoutly, to all appearance, at the Holy Mass, making any number of crossings and genuflexions; all of which were damnable sins, for in the bottom of his heart he remained a fervent Huguenot and a sworn enemy of Catholics.

“He had trained up a great Newfoundland dog in the hatred of our holy religion. A Huguenot like his master, the animal could distinguish by scent a Lutheran from a Catholic, caressing and fawning on the one, biting and snarling at the other. He had taught him to howl in imitation of the monks singing vespers and matins, all in mockery and derision; and, worse still, he gave him blessed bread to eat and made him drink from a trough which he had placed at the chapel-door instead of a font. These things did the Baron de Leuffroi.

“To the great scandal of all good Catholics, he likewise pretended that the prayers addressed to the Saints were paternosters without rhyme or reason. He had no faith in the miracles of Master St. Peter, the infallibility of our holy father the Pope,

or the immaculate purity of the Blessed Virgin which he scoffed and jeered most unmercifully. Besides, he ate meat like a dog on Fridays and Saturdays and all through the holy time of Lent, and drank like a fish every day that came, keeping high wassail all the year round.

“ But all this wickedness was not to go without condign punishment. One day when he had cursed and blasphemed even more than usual, a fit of indigestion brought him to the jaws of death. Then repulsing with a tremendous oath the good offices of the chaplain, who was anxious to save his soul, he sent for his son, and having him stand beside his bed, he said to him in a feeble, husky voice : ‘ Son of the most high, most noble and most worthy Baron de Leuffroi, your father has but few moments to live ; lend an attentive ear, then, to his last words ; hear his last will. I die in the bosom of the reformed religion, to which, notwithstanding my show of Catholicity, I am heart and soul attached. That being so, hearken, my son, to what I tell you : I do will and ordain that all my descendants, from father to son, shall live as I have lived, and am going to die, good and loyal Huguenots. Son of Baron Leuffroi, will you promise me so to do ?’

“ ‘ Father, I promise.’

“ ‘ Swear it on this Bible.’

“ ‘ I swear.’

“ ‘ So be it. Now may the devil have mercy on my soul !’

“ ‘ You mean to say *God*, father ?’

“ ‘ What matter, son, what matter?—do you hear nothing? It seems to me that they are laughing strangely in this room,—all around,—in my ears.’

“ ‘ Nought hear I but the prayers that Catholics chant on All-Souls Day.’ It was the Newfoundland dog howling the chant of the *De Profundis*.

“ The dog ceased, the baron gave one mighty groan, closed his eyes, and died at the eleventh hour on Saturday night, being the 1st of November.

“ At the same moment the castle of Leuffroi appeared all on fire. The walls creaked to their foundations, a long and heavy moan was heard dying away in the distance, and there was seen on the top of the highest tower a phantom in black and red armed at all points in the position of a knight keeping the vigil of arms.

“ Next day the priests from the neighboring castles and villages came with great pomp to remove the body; when the coffin was lifted to be lowered to the funeral vault it was found to be empty: the devil had carried off the blasphemer body and soul at the moment of death.

“ From that time forward the new baron did in all things as his father had done before him. A Catholic in appearance, he lived a red-hot Huguenot, notwithstanding all the prodigies and marvels that took place from one time to another, as if for warnings, in the old mansion.

“ Very often, too often indeed, for always on the

eve of some great calamity, the castle of Leuffroi again appeared on fire. Then there was heard a wild uproar in the chamber where the old baron died as though the fiends were there keeping high holiday. Hideous cries, the clanking of chains, the rattling of arms and armor, savage yells, mocking laughter, the ringing of bells, the singing of psalms, profane songs, litanies parodied, then groans and sobs of anguish, then horrible oaths and the wailing of women. Ah! it was a dismal din to hear!

“When the fatal hour of midnight sounded, the principal court of the castle was lit up as if for a festival. Then hideous spectres with human heads and goats’ bodies whirled around a phantom coffin in unearthly gambols, holding each other by the tail. This hideous dance over, the imps took to aping the funeral ceremonies of our holy religion, using sorcerers’ brooms by way of sprinklers; then on they marched in procession with banners flying, singing ‘*Marlbrough goes to war*,’* to the air of *Dies iræ*, and ‘*I have good tobacco*’ (*J’ai du bon tabac*), to that of the *Miserere mei*. Oh! it was frightful to see!

“So it was that prodigies and apparitions succeeded each other at irregular intervals for the space of a hundred years. Yet did the descendants of the Baron de Leuffroi, in defiance of all these mysterious warnings, persist in adhering to the tenets of Lutheranism whilst making a sorry show of Catholicity.

* An old French song of the Huguenot times. “*Marlbrough s’en va-t-en guerre.*”

“But it happened that bad seasons came on; the frost, the hail or the drought destroyed the crops in the neighborhood of Leuffroi, whilst those of the adjoining villages were full and plenteous. The ruined and despairing peasants attributed this disaster to the wrath of God, and they began to murmur against their lord who, without law or license, hung some of them in order to impose silence on the others. But those who remained, far from giving up their cause, had recourse to the powers of heaven. They commenced a novena in honor of the Blessed Virgin to obtain the conversion of their lord, and by that means to appease the divine justice. During the first nights of the novena, the fiends made a horrible din, and it was easy to see that they were grievously vexed.

“The ninth day being come, the parish-church of the commune was adorned as for a high festival. The priest wore his best vestments, the choir gave forth its best music, and the peasants hastened in crowds to sing the Alleluia, for their venerable pastor had promised them in God’s name that their prayers would not be in vain. They were following the prayers of the Mass with pious recollection, when just as the priest raised the sacred Host, a loud peal of thunder was heard, and a dazzling light immediately spread through the Church. The castle of Leuffroi was on fire, and the country far and near was covered with the lurid glare of the flames. It was impossible, they say, to stop the

conflagration. Angels armed with fiery swords like those who were placed by God at the gate of the terrestrial paradise, repulsed all those who attempted to extinguish the flames. At the bidding of the angels, the devils themselves stirred up the walls, the ramparts, the roofs, the towers, as they toppled with a hideous crash into the infernal furnace, sending a smell of pitch and sulphur all the way to Lyons, so the story goes.

“The castle was soon but a heap of ruins and rubbish. The molten lead and iron rolled along as in the bed of a torrent, like the lava of Vesuvius. The Baron de Leuffroi and all that belonged to him disappeared forever in that fiery tempest, but ever and anon a voice was heard crying: “*Give way, give way, give way before the justice of God!*”

Madam Severine had hardly finished her story when loud cries arose in the court-yard of Ernest's castle. Men, women and children were there pale with terror, crying: “My God! my God! it is he himself—he is back again! Some great misfortune threatens us—the cholera—a flood, the drought, the famine—my God! my God! have mercy on Thy poor people!” So said the crowd; and nought was heard in the court-yard but prayers and lamentations. The ghost from the ruins of Leuffroi was actually walking abroad through the country.

Alphonse had always a great desire to see a ghost, were it only for the novelty of the thing. He has met devils and wicked devils, too, in his

time, but never ghosts or goblins. The present opportunity was too inviting to be let pass without an attempt to gratify his whim; he accordingly proposed to his friend that the whole party should proceed in a body to the ruins of Leuffroi to pay a visit to their mysterious guest. His proposal was unanimously adopted. Nevertheless Ernest suggested by way of amendment that due attention should be paid to the approved customs of the other world, and the visit consequently postponed till a more advanced hour, seeing that the spirits only make their appearance by starlight when midnight is drawing on. As this opinion appeared judicious, the company agreed to wait very politely for the hour marked out by ghostly etiquette.

They had not long to wait. "To the road!" cried Ernest when the town-clock of St. Arnaud struck twelve—"to the road!" and they all set out. To have seen the gay party of adventurous youngsters gliding through the shades of night, and stopping now and then to look round and listen, one would have taken them for guerillas in time of war or a party of marauding freebooters. They were soon in sight of the principal entrance of the dismantled fortress. Till then they had perceived nothing but great tall trees shaking their long arms like giants in the darkness, they had heard nothing save the plaintive cry of birds wailing like troubled spirits. No rattling of chains, no groans or lamentations, no dark phantoms nor ghastly spectres to

obstruct their passage and defend the entrance of the draw-bridge beyond which lay the grand saloon, the only apartment that could still shelter a human being. Nevertheless, for the first time in many years, the door of that room was closed.

“God forgive us!” cried Ernest, “it appears the devils decline receiving our visit!”

“We must exorcise them,” answered Foulques.

“Let us try.”

“*Vade retro, Satanas.*”

“Your exorcism is of no use, master harlequin, seeing that Satan does not appear——”

“Let us ask him politely to open the door——”

“The bell, if you please——”

At that moment a rustling was heard amongst the bushes and a great black cat darted through between Ernest’s legs.

“You see,” replied Foulques, “that my *vade retro* has had its effect.”

“But the door does not open.”

“Suppose we break it in?”

“A lucky thought——”

“Well! come along, and mind, no quarter!”

The door opened immediately of itself, and a man, or rather the shadow of a man, appeared pale, emaciated, ghostly.

“Young men, what want ye here?” he asked in a sepulchral voice.

“You ought to know,” answered Ernest.

“What brings ye here? a vain curiosity, doubtless?”

“Perhaps so.”

“Why come ye at this hour to disturb the repose of the sleeper, the grief of the watcher?”

The shadow advanced some paces farther, it was an old man. Long gray hair fell on his shoulders, bent with age; his figure was above the middle height, and there was something icy cold in his look and gesture—a shaggy white beard concealed the lower extremity of his face. “What do you want?” he repeated.

“To see a ghost.”

“Even so,” muttered the old man, “now, as of old, the young are not content with truth—they must have phantoms. A ghost!” he continued, well! there is one now before you.”

Deep silence reigned between us and him; he was the first to speak, striking his breast as he did so:

“I was dead, really dead; like Lazarus in the Scripture, I was buried in a winding-sheet; but at the voice of Christ I arose; I came back to life. My eyes were closed in the darkness of falsehood and iniquity, but they are re-opened to the sun of grace and truth—I had torn my robe of innocence to fling its fragments in the face of heaven, but the Lord my God has clothed me again with the haircloth of repentance—I had effaced from my brow and defiled in my heart the Christian’s sign, but I have raised

mine eyes to heaven, and Jesus Christ heard my prayer. You see I am indeed a ghost.

“Then I have drank of the water of the torrent, and I have hidden my head—see if I have not come forth from the grave of damnation—you laugh, young men—you take me for a fool, a madman—insult not the erring who repent and humble themselves. Back!—back, I tell you if you would not have the ghost throw the dust of his shroud on you!”

The young men retired silent and amazed, wholly unable to account for what they had just seen and heard.

“The spirit of the ruins,” said Ernest as they returned to the castle, “can be nothing else, in my opinion, than an unhappy maniac.”

Next day the ladies pretended to doubt the whole story, at which, however, they laughed heartily.

All day long there was nothing heard of in the village or the castle of St. Arnaud but ghosts and phantoms. Many tapers burned before the Virgin’s altar, many prayers were addressed to God for the expulsion of evil spirits.

In the evening, the conversation in the drawing-room naturally turned on the great events of the previous night.

After a thousand conjectures more or less probable, the ladies agreed that the ghost must either be a madman, an impostor, a smuggler, or else a coiner.

“I think you are mistaken, ladies!” said Al-

phonse; "the apparition at Leuffroi does not seem to me to justify any of your suppositions."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"What proofs?"

"Certain proofs."

"Will you let us hear them?"

"Assuredly."

"Now?"

"No."

"When then?"

"On the eve of my departure?"

"Not before?"

"Impossible."

"Well, then, by way of compensation, tell us a story."

As Alphonse was always willing to oblige, he related that of the *Vendetta*. The character of Reno made them all afraid.

Next day was a day of speculations in the castle. It was found in the morning that the narrator of the previous night had been out hours before any of the others were stirring. It was unanimously agreed, therefore, that Alphonse had been paying the ghost a visit.

* . . . *

The succeeding days and nights were more calm; the apparitions had totally disappeared, Alphonse was no longer stirring with the dawn. The weather was even and very fine. One morning at breakfast

Alphonse announced his intention of leaving on the morrow.

“And your promise?” cried the ladies—“your promise?”

“I have not forgotten it.”

“You will keep it?”

“Assuredly.”

Just then a servant brought a letter addressed to Alphonse. The envelope was remarkable for its fantastic shape.

“Do you know, my dear Mr. Alphonse,” said the wife of his friend Ernest, handing it to him, “do you know it is my opinion that you correspond with the people of the other world.”

“Perhaps so, my dear madam.”

“Not a doubt of it,” said she; and she added laughing: “Here, here—take the missive! it smells of brimstone, and, God save us all! it scorches my fingers!”

All eyes were fixed on Alphonse while he read the mysterious dispatch.

“Well!” they cried, when he had finished the reading, “what have they sent you from the other world?”

“The proofs I expected.”

“So that letter is——”

“A letter from the ghost in the ruins of Leuffroi.”

In vain they all insisted on having an immediate explanation. Prayers, entreaties, reproaches, all

were of no avail, even the proverb: *What woman wills.*

“This evening,” cried Alphonse, escaping by the door leading to the garden, “this evening I will meet you in the parlor.”

Evening being come, the whole circle was assembled in the place appointed, each more impatient than the other to hear the great secret. The ladies especially were in a perfect fever. It must be owned that Alphonse had left nothing undone to excite their curiosity. Frequent absences from the castle, long walks by moonlight under the tall trees of the park, a whole fortnight spent away from the castle, a mysterious and reserved air, were all well adapted to stimulate the fairest, but most curious half of the human family.

At length the hour of revelation being come, a pin might have been heard falling in the parlor, when Alphonse, in a slow and solemn voice, commenced the reading of the dispatch received that morning :

“SIR—

“You were right in saying that the unhappy being who has taken up his abode for some time in the ruined castle of Leuffroi is not a wretched maniac, still less a seeker of adventures, or an impostor. He is a great criminal, overwhelmed with sorrow and remorse; a great and pitiable sinner; a miserable outcast from the Christian world.

“Shall I tell you, sir, you who have been kind to

me, you who have taken me by the hand when others avoided the sight of me—shall I tell you the story of my crimes and abominations? Oh! no, you would shudder with horror and disgust. If I did the lines you read would turn blood-red under your eye, and you would cast this letter from you as a thing accursed. I prefer to tell you the story of my repentance and conversion.

“Alas! I long resisted grace! long, poor fool! did I struggle under the hand of Providence, long did I close my ear to the voice of conscience incessantly crying to me: ‘Return, return to God!’—my heart was bronze or brass; I was under the magnetic fluid of an infernal thought. The sight of a priest was odious to me. A church-door open at the hour of any divine office made me furious; the sight of a cross planted on the squares threw me into a fever; the sound of the bell vibrating on the air like a call from God, was to me like a viper raising its head and hissing amongst the briers of the ruins. Forgive me, O my God! many a time I have cursed and blasphemed Thy holy name! many a time I have raised my hand against Thy image! pardon, O my God, and may Thy thrice holy name be ever blessed on earth as it is in heaven! But a day came at last when I could no longer resist the divine impulse, urging me back to the centre of truth. I was prostrated, overcome.

“It was last Lent! every evening I went to St. Nizier’s Church to hear the ravishing eloquence

poured from the pulpit by the Abbe Combalot to an audience of four or five thousand people who listened entranced to his all-persuading voice.

“Thither I went, but not with religious ideas or pious intentions: curiosity, the pleasure of hearing a great orator, had alone overcome my repugnance to enter a church.

“The end of Lent was drawing near: the zeal of the eloquent preacher, far from relaxing, seemed to gather fresh strength and energy. The brilliant thunders which he launched forth every evening stirred the souls of all who heard him; the confessionals were crowded; penitent men yielded themselves up to the impulse of divine grace and hastened to the tribunal of expiation. One Friday, I think it was, I found myself right in front of the pulpit, leaning against a pillar in the grand aisle.

“The Abbe Combalot related to us the touching story of the Prodigal Son. By comparison, he told us of the incomprehensible mercies of God, those infinite mercies, which rise above even the greatest iniquities when the heart is penitent and contrite; he showed us the divine goodness undulating over the ages and traversing space to arrive in the fullness of pardon at the sinner’s soul.

“Oh! how magnificent he was then, the preacher who thus spoke! He was the very angel of consolation. Like manna from heaven his words fell and penetrated all hearts. Tears rolled from every eye; a moment I felt myself softened, and all at once like

the heavy drops of rain that fall after a long drought, the big tears ran down my cheeks. My chest heaved with sobs. But when the Abbe Combalot, turning to the altar, cried with force :

“Behold, O all you who have suffered much! behold, O all you prodigal sons who have sinned much—do you see nothing?”

“Day after day the father ascended a high mountain to watch for his son’s return; thence he held out his arms, showed his loving heart and said in a voice of tender pity: “Return to me, O my son, return to me, and I will forgive thee all—return and I will replace the rags of the miser by a robe of dazzling whiteness.” The son returned to his father—and the father forgave his son.’

“Look, O brethren, and see—your father who is in heaven is also seated on a high mountain, even that of Redemption, to watch for your return. Behold, O brethren, he is high on the cross, he calls you, he holds out his arms to you, he opens his heart to you—he prepares for your sin-defiled souls the white robe of his mercy—go, my brethren, go to Him—go, He awaits you, and I will delay you no longer.’

“And I went, rushing through the crowd who were in my way, and ran to kneel before the high altar—and I thought I could see through its crape covering one of the Saviour’s hands detach itself from the cross to show me the way to the sacristy and thither I bent my steps—I went to cast myself

at the feet of the minister of Christ, crying like the Prodigal Son: "Father, forgive me!" And the Abbe Combalot, raising me up, pressed me to his heart; he smoothed down my white hair, he mingled his tears with mine, and never left my side till I had received from his hands the pledge of eternal reconciliation.'

* * * * *

"When the Abbe Combalot had departed on his mission of mercy, I resolved to retire from the world to live in solitude and oblivion; but my sojourn in the ruins of Leuffroi has shown me the impracticability of such a project. There are now no solitudes in France so remote as to hide the repenting sinner with his grief and his penance. You know the rest.

"But I am near the venerable brother Ambrose: what a man!—not an ordinary man, but a saint; I am edified by his virtues, and endeavor to profit by his example. Farewell, sir, pray for me—pray for the most miserable of sinners!"

More than once during the reading of this epistle. Alphonse was interrupted by exclamations of pity from his auditors.

"How!" cried they when he had finished; "was the ghost of Leuffroi, then, citizen Reno?"

"He himself," replied Alphonse.

"The apostate priest?"

"The same, but the most sincere of penitents!"

A STORY TO WHICH READERS MAY GIVE
WHAT TITLE THEY PLEASE.

ONE night there was a ball in the Faubourg St. Germain ; all Paris was represented in the saloons of the Countess de V—— by the illustrious persons of every class who raised the glory of France so high. The army elbowed the finance, the aristocracy of money fraternized with the aristocracy of birth, which itself gave the hand to the aristocracy of intelligence. To reach those gilt and perfumed saloons one had to pass between two hedge-rows of odoriferous flowers placed on the white marble steps of the mansion. At two o'clock in the morning, Julien, the then fashionable leader of the orchestra, held suspended by his magic wand all that scented crowd, wearisome or wearied, dancing to shake off reflection, and beating their sides to bring out what in the language of the privileged of the world is conventionally called *happiness*.

At that hour I espied the Baroness de —— all

alone, a thing that was quite unusual. I had often had occasion to remark the originality of her mind; she was fair to see and good to hear, especially when she indulged in sallies of critical observation; I approached her and said:

“You are causing much regret, madam!”

“Why?” she asked.

“You do not dance.”

“I have refused all invitations.”

“Why, then, did you come to the ball?”

“I came to meditate—you would never guess on what subject. If I were Madame de Sevigne, I would give you a hundred.”

“Tell me at a word, to make it short.”

“On death.”

“That is too dark a thought to bring to the ball.”

“Have you never happened of an evening in church, listening to the preaching of Father de Ravignan, or the eloquent Dominican, Father Lacordaire—have you never happened, I say, to fall a thinking on the nothingness of the things of this world, on the emptiness or on the futility of human joys which pass and leave nothing behind? why should I not here this night, in a ball room, with all those factitious joys around me, meditate on death, that great truth?”

Wishing to change the current of her gloomy reflections, I spoke to her of a festival to be given next day in the Winter Garden (Jardin d'Hiver) for the benefit of the Civil List. People spoke of it in

raptures: and the whole fashionable world was to be there responsive to the call of charity. "Shall we see you there, madam?" said I—the Baroness de — made no answer to this question, but persisting in the order of her sinister ideas, she continued thus:

"Look well: Does it not seem as if one saw shadows gliding over the floor amid all those lights, all those flowers, all those joys, all those follies? Does it not seem as if one saw at the bottom of all those things skeletons, bones fitted together and covered with velvet and satin?"

"Madam," I replied, "your voice sounds like a *De Profundis*. You are stern as a shroud." The baroness went on:

"Those lustrous jewels, do they not appear to you a jest, an epigram on those men and women's skulls balancing themselves to the music like poppy-heads to the north wind."

The oddness of the comparison made me smile.

"You laugh," she resumed, "you laugh, but death is there, notwithstanding; believe me it is; it is there near you, near me, it is on those benches where every face wears a smile, where every eye is full of meaning; it is on those fair shoulders, those necks encircled by pearls and diamonds; it is in those golden cups filled with icy water; death, I tell you, is everywhere. It glides along, invisible to the dancers, setting its seal on the brow of some happy mortal who thinks not of it. Death, like the infernal gods

of antiquity, will have its victims gaily decorated. Believe me, poet," she added, crushing between her fingers the camelias of her bouquet and scattering them at her feet: "like those flowers which hide the rosace of that floor, some withered leaves spared till now by winter shall cover to-morrow some new-made graves, yours, perhaps, or mine!——"

I was engaged for the first waltz; at this moment the orchestra struck up the introduction to *la Rosa*; I was taking leave of the baroness, she held me by the arm: "And you, too," said she, "poor young fool, are you not afraid of dancing on graves? Think as you waltz of what I have just been saying, so that my words may not fall in the desert!"

The waltz commenced, soon it became rapid, precipitate. Then I know not what passed within me—my brow turned icy cold, the veins of my temples throbbed as though they would burst their covering, my mind whirled in a fiery circle; I was dragged, as it were, by an invisible hand to worlds unknown. Still the waltz whirled on. Unintelligible sounds buzzed in my ears: I thought I heard a funeral chant. The voice of the spiritual being I had left mingled prophetic in all these sounds; strange figures appeared on the painted walls of the saloon; the saloon itself seemed hung with black as if for a funeral solemnity. I thought I saw a coffin at my feet, and near that coffin the flowers of the Baroness de ——'s bouquet changed into cypress branches. All at once the lights were extinguished,

the music ceased, an icy veil overspread my eyes—nothing more—I fell senseless on the floor.

THE HOSPITAL.

When I came to myself next day in a spacious house in the Faubourg St. Denis, 112, and found myself transported, by I know not who, to a large room in the corners of which were four beds with white curtains: “Where am I?” I cried, “my God! where am I?” “In M. Dubois’ Royal House of Health,” answered two well-known and well-loved voices in a breath. I then recognized my excellent friends, Adolphe Gauthier and Anatole d’Auvergne; the former, a very good young man, was, alas! to give up his soul to God before me—the latter, living still, cultivates with equal success arts and letters—the pen and the pencil. These two kind friends were sitting by my bed. Some moments after, De Balzac and Frederic Soulie, who were both destined to leave this world before me, came to see me and offer their services. They had learned the terrible accident which had thrown me from a ball-room into an hospital. A blood-vessel had broken in my chest.

The state of my health alarmed the physicians; and as I did not deceive myself on the danger of my position, I recalled instinctively the prophetic observations of the Baroness. “Death is there,” said she; “it glides amongst us, gaily

adorned, to mark the brow of some victim; death is everywhere; it may open a grave under rose-leaves as under cypress-boughs."

A painful sleep, heavy as lead, took possession of me—I raved all day, and was bled several times without perceiving it. Late in the evening I recovered my consciousness, and found Adolphe still by my side—he had never left me a moment, poor dear friend! Then by the light of a lamp which resembled those brazen vases that we see hanging in funeral vaults, I perceived a pale but still handsome face emaciated by long suffering; it was one of those faces which artists love to look on. It lay on a pillow in front of me. The eyes, fed by a burning fever, shone like two stars. A long fair beard gave a certain air of nobleness to the white face.

The poor patient addressed me in familiar terms. people get acquainted in an hospital as fast as in a stage-coach. Is not the hospital a public conveyance in which the first traveller may take his place to roll over the human highway that leads directly to the cemetery?

"Ah ha!" said he, "my dear companion in misfortune, you are unlucky."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it, for you occupy a bed that has no chance."

"How is that?"

"A poor devil left it this morning with arms and baggage to rejoin his predecessor of last night in a

place where I rather think you and I too shall soon meet."

"I hope you are mistaken," I answered.

"'Tis all the same," continued he smiling, "your bed is a bad bed, a fatal bed, upon my honor it is! Since I have been fastened to this of mine, I have seen four dramas played out in that of yours."

"And how did they end?" I asked, endeavoring to force a smile in keeping with his.

"They ended like all the dramas known in the romantic year of Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo."

"In death?"

"You have said it."

He asked my name; I gave it in exchange for his. I knew him by reputation, and had even applauded him some months before in one of his works played at the Gymnasium. Clodion was undoubtedly one of the most promising young writers of the day.

My second night was still worse than the first. My friends came to see me early in the morning. I saw by the dejection of their faces that the thermometer of my health had fallen prodigiously. I even overheard Anatole d'Auvergne saying to Eugene Bourgeois: "I fear I shall have to finish his portrait from memory." When they were gone, I began to look back on my past life: I dared not think of the future.

Then I remembered that I had commenced my studies in the College of Arc, at Dole, an excellent

institution which had been swept away by the revolutionary storm in the first days of the Restoration. I further remembered that I had finished them under the paternal care of able professors in the house of the Friars Minors at Lyons. I recalled the wise lessons, the pious teachings of those dear good fathers when I was about to enter the world.

“Boys,” they used often to tell us, “in your studies, your walks, your visits, your recreations, love God above all things, because He loves you. Never forget Him that He may not forget you in your last hour. Whatever your weaknesses and wanderings may be, return always to Him that He may return to you. Love your neighbor as yourselves; do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you. Return good for evil.”

“Boys,” would they say again, “love the Blessed Virgin, that good mother, who never forsakes those that invoke her aid and have confidence in her intercession !”

Alas ! since my departure from Dole and my leaving the Minors, it had too often happened, I confess it with shame, that I had not a prayer to give to God. But I had always cherished, I may say with equal candor, a certain devotion for the Mother of Christ, a devotion that never failed me.

Recalling the sublime teachings of Catholic faith in the wise counsels of my learned and pious preceptors, I sent immediately for Madam Lesueur, matron of the Royal Hospital. That worthy lady, dead

herself since then, hastened to answer the summons.

‘Madam,’ said I, “is there a priest in this house?”

“No, sir,” she answered, “but the pastor of the Church of St. Lawrence acts as our almoner; I will send for him—if you wish.”

“As soon as you possibly can, madam,” replied I, “for death will not wait.”

The young priest sent for was soon at my side. Some moments after, my passport for the other world was duly made out; a worthy priest had signed it with the cross, and confirmed it with absolution. The night following this act of religion was better than the two former. I enjoyed a calmer and more refreshing sleep. The doctors, when they came on their morning round, failed not to attribute the improvement which they saw in me to the efficacy of the pills left for me the previous night. They were still in the drawer of my night-table.

THE POETS.

The man of letters whom I had for a neighbor and room-companion, was dying of consumption. Within the last few days, the malady had reached its worst stage and made such rapid progress that the doctors themselves wondered he could live so long. The poor patient himself was fully aware of his condition. “I am lost!” he said to me several times—“I am lost! it is a sad thing to die at thirty, in the prime of life.”

He had been terrified at the black robe of the priest who visited me the evening before; he told me so with the frankness of a child who had been frightened with tales of Raw-head and Bloody-bones. I did my best to re-assure him.

“The very sight of a priest,” said I, “is often remedy for those that suffer; it is always a consolation for those that weep. Sometimes more effectual than the prescriptions of the learned Faculty, it completely restores the health of the body by securing that of the soul.”

“You think so?”

“It is often seen, dear comrade.”

“With all that I am not the man to try the experiment.”

“I regret it for your own sake.”

There was a dead pause, a moment of silence and reflection which he was the first to interrupt.

“You are very happy in believing,” he resumed with animation. “Oh! yes, very happy!” And he added in a lower voice, as though fearful of being heard: “Oh! if I could believe like you!”

The expression of this wish was itself a step towards belief, and must inevitably lead to that end.

The poor young man had a vague intuitive notion of the Divinity, he was too intelligent not to recognize a being superior to man; he believed explicitly in the immortality of the soul, and by a strange inconsistency, he rejected as things absurd and contrary to reason, the eternity of punishment, the end-

less duration of heavenly rewards. He had fabricated for his devotion a sort of convenient God, whom he had all his life worshipped glass in hand, amongst boon companions as happily oblivious as himself of the truths of faith.

“My God! my God! if I could only believe!” he repeated again.

“There is nothing in the world easier,” I replied; “to do that, there is but one thing necessary.”

“What is that?”

“The will.”

“You think so?”

“I am quite certain of it. . . . Try. . . . A sign of the cross, an invocation, a prayer, will first open your eyes—a confession and a good act of contrition will afterwards open your heart.”

“Confession! what a thing to think of! I could never dare!”

“I dared then,—yesterday, before your eyes!”

“Ah you! that is very different——”

“What difference do you see?”

“In your childhood, in your youth, in your studies, in your family, everywhere in short, you were spoken to of God and of religion—is it not true?”

“The same must have been your own case, as it is the general practice for all.”

“For me, say you? Never.”

“Impossible.”

“Nothing more true.”

“Did you never know your mother, then?”

“I knew and loved her well.”

“Did she never speak to you of a future life?”

“One day, one single day! it was that of her death—her lips murmured a prayer, her eyes directed mine to heaven, and that was all.”

“But your father?”

“Ah! my father—must I tell you? and when I have told you, will you not repulse me with disgust, if not with horror?”

“I will pity and console you—speak!”

“Well! then, learn that—my father is—a former priest—do you understand me? a priest married during the Revolution — knowing that, you can easily imagine how it was that the name of the God he had denied was never imprinted on my soul! why it never passed to my lips or to my heart from lips that ought to teach it to me. I am ignorant of the first elements of that holy religion, which, according to you, consoles and strengthens. No one ever spoke to me of confession except to turn it into ridicule. The graces of communion are unknown to me. Look here, friend! the sweat that precedes the agony already bedews my brow, yet I know not whether that brow has ever received the water of baptism! You see, friend! how I am to be pitied. Oh! if I could only believe! My God my God!”

I clasped my hands and prayed for poor Clodion. That very moment the pastor of St Lawrence’s, who

came to see me twice a day, entered our chamber and came straight to my bed. By a look I directed his attention to that of my neighbor. There was there moral suffering to be healed—still more, there was a soul to save; the young priest understood me.

Clodion did not repulse the cure when he took him by the hand and spoke to him with evangelical sweetness those words of consolation suitable for the dying; the poet heard him with gratitude. The soil was prepared, only the seed was wanting. The priest and the poet were scarce twenty minutes talking together when the white curtains of the bed fell over them. The light broke on my companion, the hour of grace was come, and I still prayed and thanked God.

When the priest left, saying to Clodion: "I will return in an hour," Clodion no longer said: "my God! my God! if I could believe!" His eyes were opened to the truth, he did believe. Then when at the appointed time the priest returned, he said to him: "I am ready, father!" and he finished his confession full of sincere compunction.

"Do you think, father," said he, after receiving absolution, "do you think God has forgiven me? Will my sins be indeed remitted? I am so great a sinner, so great a criminal, that I cannot help doubting the divine mercy in my regard."

"The divine mercy," answered the priest, "is as infinite as the power of God. Doubt it not, your sins are forgiven."

The poet resumed: "Alas, father! my life was a long chain of faults and errors, the first link being one of iniquity. As a boy, I became a disciple of the impious and perverse doctrines which I met in theatrical works, in romances and in general literature, and in the columns of the newspapers. As a young man I became their apostle. Then I prostituted my pen and my intellect to the propagation of those licentious doctrines which have ruined society; I became the evangelist of falsehood; father, will God forgive me? Can God, omnipotent though He be, absolve the accursed beings who employ the intelligence He gave them in instilling poison into the minds of the simple and the weak? Can He grant pardon to licentious writers who make their heart a laboratory of the vilest passions? Ah! I now see how monstrously wicked they are, men who thus prostitute genius! And then, father! how many times have I not plotted the overthrow of society, moral and religious, to reconstruct on its ruins a nondescript order of things! How many paradoxes did I not hurl against that poor society already so disordered and enfeebled! Once more, father! do you think God is good enough to forget my sins? Think you that God is merciful enough to pardon all the evil I have wrought?"

Thus spoke the repenting poet, and he struck his breast; the priest answered by his tears, and consoled him with the tenderest affection. "Oh! yes,"

he said, "doubt it not—God will forgive you, my child! I will answer for the salvation of your soul!" and he spoke of St. Paul and St. Augustine; he cited the example of St. Mary Magdalen, that splendid proof of the divine mercy; he repeated to him those consoling words of St. Augustine: "*The bridge is a long way from the river*;" he showed him that heaven where the elect find incomparable happiness, bliss everlasting and unalloyed. He told him also of the joy which the angels feel when they bear on their wings to God the soul of the converted sinner; he told them of the *Gloria Deum* which the Saints do sing when the sinner's soul takes its place amongst them in the glory of eternal blessedness.

The poor invalid listened in tears, he hung on the burning words of the confessor, and followed with delight the very motion of his lips. "Oh, speak on," said he, "speak on, it does me good to hear you; your words give strength and comfort to my soul."

The scene was touching, and, like the priest, I was so affected myself that I could not help shedding tears. The priest, seeing this, came to me: "Weep not for him," said he, "he will die the death of the saints!"

The poet knew that I was very ill; he was aware that the doctors despaired of my cure; persuaded, therefore, that I was to die before him, he turned to me, in the middle of a prayer he had been reciting, and said:

“As you are likely, my dear companion, to go to heaven before me, I should like to give you a commission.”

“Let me hear it, I shall do it willingly.”

“Promise me, then, to beg of God and His Holy Mother that I may have a place near you when I get there.”

I promised him, though hoping, I must own, that I would not be under the necessity of keeping my word.

In the middle of the day, the poet, finding himself much better, manifested a desire to write a farewell letter to his family. I caused the nurse to give him some letter-paper which I had in a little valise at the foot of my bed. On the first sheet there chanced to be the title of a drama. He smiled on seeing it:

“A drama! I, too, have written some!—well! at this moment I would give dramas, crowns, applause, and triumph, all—all for a single prayer well made.” He took the second sheet, and wrote with a tolerably firm hand the following note:

“MY DEAREST FATHER—

“When you receive this—your son will have ceased to exist. But God exists, father, doubt it not. He has revealed Himself to me at my last hour, He has relieved my suffering, consoled me in my agony. One of His priests will close my eyes. I die contrite and humbled, but full of faith and hope. I humbly ask your pardon for what-

ever grief I may have caused you in the course of my life. Adieu, father, adieu; see that death which separates us in time, may one day unite us again in eternity.

“Your most respectful son,

“A. CLODION.”

It would have been difficult for him to write more respectfully to a father whose guilty life he deplored. Having sealed that letter he wrote another to his sister. I regret my inability to render it faithfully in all its picturesque beauty of expression, with the religious and poetical tone which pervaded it throughout. It was, indeed, a master-piece of such composition. These are the principal thoughts:

“DEARLY BELOVED SISTER—

“Rejoice with me! The happiness which, for fifteen years, I have vainly sought in the joys of this world, that happiness which I hoped to find in the foaming cup of pleasure—that happiness in pursuit of which I have unravelled one by one all my illusions, for which I have blanched and blighted all my hopes, I have only now met, on the horizon of my life, on the threshold of my sepulchre.

“Yes, sister, I am dying; my hours are numbered—death is there awaiting me, and yet, I tell you again to rejoice, my sister! rejoice! For through the sweat of my agony, and the wheezing

of my broken chest, a thought of God has glided into my soul.

“God, my beloved sister! do you comprehend the immensity of that word? have you ever sounded its depths? God! have you ever learned to know Him, love Him and serve Him?”

“In your childish joys and sorrows did you never raise your heart to Him? From the earth where all is doubt and darkness did you never direct the aspirations of your soul to the heaven where all is light and certainty? They tell you true, my sister, who say that earth is a place of exile—heaven our home!

“God! oh my sister, if you only knew how great is His goodness! how infinite His mercy! If you only knew how many graces and consolations are bestowed on those who give themselves freely to Him! If you knew how the darkness that surrounds us is dispelled by the torch of death, you would return sincerely to divine faith. You would return—what do I say? you never abandoned it, for like myself, poor child! you never knew it. Oh! how fervently I will beseech that God of goodness and mercy that your heart and soul may be opened to the treasures of His unfathomable love!

“Wanting the thought of God, my sister! life is pale, sad, discolored! wanting a religious belief, the ways of the world are hard and arid, its foliage dark and sombre, and its joys very bitter! You are still young, poor girl! Scarcely have your wishes

sought the hopes of life, when perhaps you have already experienced its deceptions and its disappointments. Yes, my loved sister, an inward voice tells me that your bosom has already heaved with sighs, that tears have already bedewed your cheeks—that clouds have already dimmed the brightness of your girlish face! Who was there to console you in your afflictions? Our father? Alas! there are sorrows over which the most tender affection has no power, there are sufferings which nothing can combat successfully, not even the heart of a mother. God alone can heal them.

“My sister, in the name of that mother who loved us so much! by the fraternal tenderness which has always united us, by all the happiness which I desire and beg of God for you, promise me to commence a new life in the Catholic faith, the centre of all light, the seat of all truth. Promise me that you will wholly devote yourself to that thought of God without which all here below is falsehood, weakness and misfortune. You will promise me, will you not? Could you reject the prayer of your dying brother?”

“Henceforward, O my sister! let the remembrance of God preside over every action of your life! Pray to Him morning and evening, that all your thoughts may tend to Him; be ever faithful to His divine precepts.

“Take your place frequently at the holy table, there it is that you will find strength for your weak-

ness and virginal purity of heart. Once more, my sister, love God! love God above all things, so that we may love each other forever in the heavenly Jerusalem.

“I embrace you at the foot of the Cross.

“Your loving brother,

“A. CLODION.”

He had just sealed these two letters, when the priest entered. Clodion held out his hand and gave them to him. “When I am no more,” said he, “you will have the goodness to see them delivered according to their address . . . One is for my father, the other for my sister. . . . Oh! if I dared,” he added with a sweet smile of resignation, “I would ask yet another favôr of you!”

“You may dare, my friend,” answered the priest, “and I promise you beforehand to grant your request whatever it be.”

“Then, permit me to choose you for the executor of my last will.” As if fully assured of his confessor’s consent, he then took from a small box which he had brought to him, a good-sized portfolio which he opened and said to the priest:

“Here are some bills on the Bank of France, and here are also some notes due to my creditors. I shall be infinitely obliged to you to have the bills cashed and pay the notes. I paid the house-steward here this morning a fortnight in advance—he will stand indebted to me, I think, for most of the sum

I paid him. If so, the balance in his hands will probably suffice for my funeral expenses."

He was interrupted by an unusually severe turn—we thought he was going—it was not so,—for, a moment after, recovering his speech, he asked where he had left off. "At my burial, I think—yes, I remember—I wish it to be as simple as possible, as becomes a poor miserable sinner. Two tapers on the altar—no drapery round the Church—the poor-pall on my coffin, a wooden cross over my grave, some friends and you, father, to accompany me to the cemetery—that is all."

He took a pencil and working out an arithmetical calculation, he added :

"There will be from eight to nine hundred francs remaining for us in the Bank of France. . . . My sister is rich enough, so I do her no wrong in disposing of this money. Father, will you accept it?—I give it to you, that you may distribute it amongst the poor of your parish." The good priest took his hand and turned away to hide the tears that were in his eyes; he was choking with emotion.

"That is not all," resumed the poet, "pray give me some paper." And with a firm hand he traced these few lines, taking care to leave a blank space for the date :

"Died in the Royal Hospital, Faubourg St. Denis, on this — day of —, A. Clodion, poet, aged thirty years. Full of repentance for the faults of his past life, but full of confidence in Him who forgives the

contrite sinner returning to Him, he asks pardon of his friends and his enemies for all the bad example, all the bad advice which he may have given them.

“Kneeling before God and in the hands of the priest who attended him in his last moments, he retracts fully and willingly, with his whole heart, the plays, poems, articles and books which he has published against the laws of morality and religion.

“Pray for him.

“A. CLODION.”

When he had signed this touching farewell letter he indicated to his confessor the names of some friends to whom he wished it addressed. “Now, father,” added he with great satisfaction, “now that I have done with the things of earth, let us busy ourselves with those of heaven.” He bent his head under the uplifted hand of the priest and received a final absolution.

THE DEATH OF AN IMPENITENT SINNER.

It was late—the great clock of the Royal Hospital had struck six. The priest rose to retire. . . . The poet detained him saying: “This night will be hard on me—perhaps fatal—and you will not be here to support me, to speak to me of God and heaven, to give me those words of hope which make one sorry not to suffer more in expiation of their sins and for Christ’s sake. . . . Oh father! give me a crucifix that I may lay it on my bosom that it

may imprint forever in my heart the words of life you have spoken to me." The priest opened his soutan, and taking a small silver crucifix from his neck he hung it round that of his penitent and went away.

* * * * *

I had just disposed myself for sleep under the divine protection, when the door of our room was hastily thrown open and a new companion in suffering brought in. He was a hideous old man, horrible to see, more hideous, more horrible still to hear. His body was all over sores, and every word that came from his mouth was an imprecation—the unhappy man was seventy-five.

"A priest going from here!" cried he in a rage; "a priest went out through that door—I met him on the stairs—which of you sent for him?"

The impertinence of this question, and the tone in which it was put, aroused my natural vivacity.

"What matter to you who it was?" I answered quickly.

"I want to know——"

"It was I, then."

"When men abandon us," added the poet with that calmness and resignation which never left him a moment, "when men abandon us, and the earth is flitting from us, the priest of Jesus Christ comes to us; heaven then opens over our heads, and the angels stretch out their arms to receive us."

"Priest! heaven! fiddlesticks and nonsense!"

cried the old man with still increasing fury. "The earth don't want me any more, I know; but I'd have heaven to know that *I* don't want *it*."

The poet was praying with his eyes lovingly fixed on the crucifix which lay on his breast. The old man perceived it.

"A cross! a cross!" he cried in a storm of indignation; "a cross! oh! my twenty years, where are you? who will give me back my twenty years? and you, my old companions, what is become of you all? That priest raises his head to heaven, and yours are all low in the grave! Voltaire is conquered—Loyola prevails!"

His voice failed him as he muttered the words *Conciergerie* and *September*. His mind was full of the bloody scenes of the revolution.

The poet still prayed—what a scene! There were two men dying—one the death of a saint, the other that of the wicked! The former still young, the latter already very old—the first calm and resigned, the second foaming with rage and fury—on one side touching aspirations, on the other horrible blasphemies broke the silence of the death-bed—what a scene, O my God! The light of the lamp seemed to form a glory round the brow of the elect—it fell with a lurid glare on the ghastly visage of the reprobate.

"Heaven for me!" said the poet.

"Hell for me!" echoed the cross-breaker.

"Lord have mercy on me!"

“ Away with the priest—down with the cross !”

“ Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray for me !”

“ Who will give me back my twenty years and the fine times of the revolution ?”

The poet pressed the crucifix to his lips ; the reprobate rolled in his bed gnashing his teeth ; his eyes were starting from their sockets, the foam of impiety was on his lips, and the fury of despair in his heart. He could shout no more, but still he vociferated those horrible words : “ Who will give me another throne to upset, altars to break down, crosses to trample on !”

“ O thrice holy Marat ! arise in your grave and look : the shrine of superstition has resumed its empire over reason ; the people crawl again under the sceptre of tyrants ; France calls herself free, but the cross is standing wherever one looks ; the men of the Revolution are passing away, the slaves of monarchy triumph, cowards have replaced the strong—up, then, comrades ! there are still kings to kill and priests to——”

He could not finish—Death seized him by the throat ; he wheezed out another imprecation and fell back lifeless on his pillow.

The wretch died as Voltaire had died before him.

The poet prayed still, his brow calm and serene—he prayed for the priest-killer, the cross-breaker. I heard him murmur softly : “ Have mercy on him,

my God! he knows not what he says; have mercy on his soul, he knows not what he does!"

This horrible scene had done me great harm; I passed a bad night; the voice of the reprobate sounded ever in my ear. His aspect was ever before my eyes. Oh! how terrible is the death of the sinner! Oh! how dreadful must that agony be which has no repentance for the past, no hope for the future!

THE POET'S DEATH.

Next morning at five o'clock, a little before the customary visit of the doctors, the priest returned to us. Coming in he glanced anxiously at the poet's bed: he had feared to find it empty.

"It is you, father," said Clodion—"I was waiting for you to die—come quick, I beg of you, for I feel it will not be long—this day will be the day of deliverance."

At six o'clock the doctors came—we saw by their looks as they left the poet's bed, that death was not far off.

At half-past six some of our friends came to see us; Clodion knew them still, and said to them in a voice of touching sweetness: "Friends, forgive me all the scandal I have given you, and receive the example of my death in expiation—let my repentance be a lesson to you! How pitiable is the state of a writer at the hour of death, when the voice of conscience cries ever: 'What hast thou done with the

genius which God gave thee to guide and enlighten thy brethren? What hast thou done with the intelligence He gave thee to do good?" Oh yes, very unhappy then is that man whose genius and intelligence have produced only fatal and pernicious works, or at best worthless trash! Through the mists of his agony he sees his bad books gliding before him to bear witness against him at the judgment-seat of God. Oh! brothers, be advised by me, and write no more bad books; rather cut off the hand that would be tempted to wield a pen in elaborating those monstrous poisons which nourish human passions, enervate bodies and kill souls.

"Literature, as the corrupt spirit of the age has made it, is a field enamelled with flowers under which serpents distil a poison all the more dangerous for being hidden."

At seven o'clock the poet said to the priest: "I feel that death is drawing near."

Our friends knelt down, and the priest in a faltering voice commenced the prayers for the dying. The poet followed them with recollection, he was still fully conscious. When the prayers were ended he asked for the nurses who were praying and weeping in a corner; he thanked them for their care and attention during the course of his long illness; then, addressing his confessor, he said: "As to you, father, I do not thank you for having saved my soul—God will do that at the day of judgment."

He then bade us all a last farewell; we were all

in tears, he alone was calm: he wondered even to see us weep. His pale lips murmured prayers full of fervor. His glazing eyes were raised to heaven as though seeking to explore the path his soul was so soon to follow. Happy mortal! no feeling of regret still bound him to earth, his heart was soaring to heaven on the wings of hope.

His feet were icy cold; they tried to heat them with warm cloths, but he did not even feel the action of the heat. "Death takes liberties," he said to us with a sweet smile, "it wants to play the ghost, and take me by the feet before midnight comes."

The mustard plasters applied were without effect.

A moment after, his hands became numb and cold; he called our attention to the fact, saying: "Death is creeping up;" and he added: "Speak to me of God, father! and you, my friends, weep not thus—it grieves me to look at you. Rather sing the hymn of deliverance for me: if I have strength I will join you, if not my heart will accompany you."

A moment yet and his hands lost the sense of feeling; the crucifix which they held dropped on his breast. "Ah!" said the poet still jesting, "death has just given me a squeeze; he has taken me by the hand! take the crucifix, father! and lay it on my lips: to it my last look, for it my last kiss."

This scene was at once heart-rending and sublime. Oh! how sweet, how soothing it is to die in the peace of the Lord!

The dying man spoke again: "My God! my God!

I see no more—a veil overspreads my eyes—do not leave me, father!—give me your hand; lay the crucifix on my eyes that they may open in the light of eternal bliss! Oh! how I suffer! my God!” he murmured; “my chest is tearing asunder. But I would suffer more even than that for Thy sake, O Lord! and for the remission of my sins!”

Suddenly his voice became broken and husky—he distinctly pronounced the names of Jesus and Mary, and laid his head gently on the priest’s shoulder. The clock struck eight—he was dead.

CONCLUSION.

A month after I was quite convalescent; the doctors themselves were surprised at my recovery, which they had by no means expected; they advised me to spend some time in the country. The evening before my departure I went to the Cemetery of Pere-Lachaise to pay a farewell visit.

After a long search through that sumptuous city of the dead I succeeded in finding out a new-made grave, shaded by a modest cross of black wood, and on that cross a single name: **CLODION.**

I knelt and prayed, not for him that slept in peace beneath the venerated symbol of salvation, but for him who was still on the watch, for his friend who, rising from a bed of sickness which had nearly been his last, was now about to go forth again on the rugged road of life, to start on a fresh career of trial and vicissitude.

Having acquitted myself of this sad yet pleasing duty, I went straight from Pere-Lachaise to the dwelling of the pastor of St. Lawrence's, to discharge a debt of gratitude to him who, during my long illness, had done everything for me that the most tender charity could dictate.

I found him sitting at a small table on which several letters lay open. The one he had just been reading he handed to me without saying a word. His silence was more expressive than any words could have been. I took the letter and hastily glanced over the following lines written in a small feminine hand :

“ REVEREND SIR—

“ We have received the letter which you did us the honor to write, announcing the death of my poor brother ; the first shock was dreadful. At present, our grief, though still very great, is more calm ; shall I tell you, that it is no longer without consolation ? My beloved brother has left the earth where all is suffering, to go to heaven where all is joy and bliss.

“ How I thank you, sir, for having aided and sustained that poor young man in his last moments ! How I thank you for having closed his eyes after death ! My whole life will not be long enough to bless you.

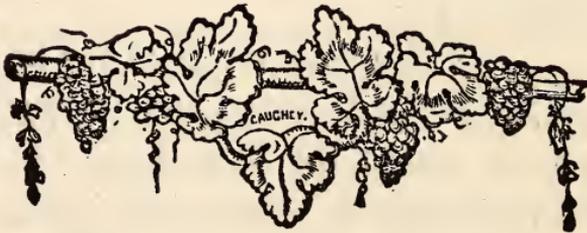
“ My father desires me to convey to you the ex-

pression of his gratitude; mine I will reserve for the happy moment when I shall approach that table to which my brother invited me. To-morrow is the day of my first communion.

“Farewell, dear and reverend sir! pray for my father, pray for

“Your very humble servant,

“ELISA CLODION”



THE BRIDE OF BURGOS.

AN EPISODE IN THE WARS OF THE EMPIRE.

LAST year, during vacation, a select circle of friends happened to meet at the Castle of La Ferte, a charming residence, far amongst the poetic mountains of Franche-Comte. Every day there were hunting-parties in the neighboring forest, and every morning the hunter's horn awoke the slumbering echoes of the mountains. Fishing succeeding the chase, at times, supplied the castle-larder with trout not unworthy a place near the game brought down the previous day by the fowler's lead. Walks in the vineyard were not disdained, for the rich, golden grapes seemed to invite the pencil of a Saint-Jean* to transmit them to posterity. At evening the whole company assembled in the great parlor to close, in pleasant chat and elegant amusement, the day commenced in noisy and hilarious bustle. Now it was music that occupied the general attention,

* An eminent French painter chiefly famous for his fruit-pieces.

again it was charades or enigmas, but oftener still when the weather was bad, the night dark, and the windows rattling under the pelting rain or hail, some of the guests related in subdued tones a tale of wonder or of terror that made the circle gather closer round the spacious hearth on which burned the trunk of a tree entire.

Nothing is more delightful than those evenings in the country where all is easy, genial, and home-life, stripped of the hollow ceremony of city-life; delicious evenings, full of candor and sincerity, where the look is never a study, the smile a hypocrisy, or the speech a diplomatic sound. Perfect happiness, if it exist on earth, is found, to our thinking, in such country-life.

Amongst the numerous friends and guests of the lord of the manor, there was a former Colonel of the Empire who had retired comparatively young from the service on account of the numerous wounds he had received on fields of battle. Still tall and erect, notwithstanding the weight of years, usually hearing more than he spoke, the Baron de Romeald hid, under a cold exterior, a warm and generous heart. Of an even, uniform temper, kind and indulgent to all, and willing to oblige every one, forgetting himself at need for the entertainment of all, his will was a musical tone always in harmony with that of others, at least in what tended to repress evil and do good.

One day, however, he refused to go out on a hunt-

ing-party got up expressly at his own request; he refused in a manner so positive and so blunt that further solicitation would clearly have been in bad taste if not highly improper. It was the 21st of October. That morning, at cock-crow, the ladies were all stationed on the antique steps of the hall-door waiting to salute the huntsmen at their departure and wish them good success. The horses stood neighing in the court-yard ready saddled; the horns blew their cheeriest strain and the deep-mouthed dogs made answer; the morning sun was rising over the horizon in that fulness of splendor which denotes a glorious day. The lord of the manor, as an old comrade of the colonel's, was fain to make a last effort to shake his resolution.

"I say, colonel! unless you make up your mind to come with us there shall be no hunt to-day."

"So much the worse for these gentlemen, and the better for the deer you were to bring home this evening," answered the colonel.

"The *worse* and *better* is, my old lad! that you have got to choose between the disappointment of our friends and the satisfaction of the deer in question."

"My choice is made."

"Will you come, then?"

"No, I remain."

"In that case, Dominique, François, Baptiste!" cried the host, "unsaddle the horses; huntsmen, put up the pack! Gentlemen, the hunt is postponed."

“It is nothing of the kind, gentlemen!” cried the colonel quickly, and he added in a tone of command: “the hunt shall go on.” Then turning to his former brother in arms, he said in a low voice: “Do you not know, then, that this is the 21st of October?”

“Truly I never thought of it, but what if it be? are not the days which the good God made all alike, whether they pass in sorrow or in joy?”

“You forget, then, that the 21st of October is a fatal date in my memory, an anniversary of woe to me?”

“Why, you never told me so——”

“Well! I tell you now, so insist no farther. The 21st of October is one of the worst days in my life; it is marked with blood in a page of my existence; but this evening I will tell you all—go, now, go!”

“Gentlemen,” said the host turning to his impatient guests, “mount and away to the hunt! As for you, ladies! you will see that the colonel meets you in the parlor at eight this evening.”

II.

At eight o'clock precisely, the huntsmen, notwithstanding the fatigues of a day signalized by the death of a magnificent deer, were all assembled in the parlor as agreed upon in the morning. Colonel de Romeald, standing with his arms resting on the mantel-piece in front of a circle of ladies rare and fair as a basket of animated flowers, thus began his story:

“Of all the wars of the Empire, the most disastrous, the most fatal for us was that of Spain. It was in that struggle of people with people that France lost the most blood,—that gigantic war fought city with man, armies with guerillas, when the sun of the Cid shone over our heads and the earth shook beneath our feet, when every tree became a redoubt, every bush hid an ambush, every house became a fortress, and every battle a regular reaping of men. I was out through that war when all Spain, flying to arms, rose against us as one man, I followed it through all its phases, I assisted in all its glories, I underwent all its disasters. I was one of the first to cross the Pyrenees; I was at Espinosa, at Tudela, at Cabascelos, at Ucles; I had two horses killed under me at Benavento; I was struck down by a shot at Corunna; I was left for dead at Sema-Sierra; I was at the siege of Saragossa, that Iliad in which every combatant was a hero; I walked over many corpses, and over many ruins; I have been the witness of many horrors; I have listened to many divers sounds, sounds of combat and of despair, sounds of triumph and of anguish, sounds of thrones and palaces and old cathedrals vanishing before the consuming torch, the levelling cannon; a terrible history is that of the Spanish war! a history, a drama, a tragedy which ought to be written in blood and told in sighs.

“On the 21st of October, the division to which I belonged was ordered to rejoin Marshal Victor’s

corps advancing in column on Madrid. It was immediately put in motion. The regiment which I commanded, preceded by a choice company of lancers, formed the vanguard. Suddenly some shots were heard: the lancers fell back. The enemy, in superior numbers, had taken a position on some heights that lay before us; protected by the advantage of the ground and twenty pieces of cannon, he appeared disposed to dispute our passage.

“The attack was immediate and terrible; no less heroic was the defence; three times did we scale the heights at the bayonet’s point, three times were we repulsed; and when, at the fourth charge, through two rows of dead bodies, we carried the position, there were but three or four hundred braves before us. A young man was at their head. Death who, to strike the surer at last, had halted for two hours at his side, had successively cleared for him all the grades of military rank. He was not twenty!—poor lad! he had left his mother, and, it might be, some fair betrothed one, to weep and pray for him. Oh! I shall never, never forget him as he stood in majesty before me. His head, like one of Michael-Angelo’s noble creations, was bare, and long black silken hair fell over his shoulders. The green sash of his uniform was torn to tatters, saturated with blood, and his hands were black with powder.

“‘Your sword, young man!’ cried I, throwing myself between him and my soldiers who were rush-

ing on him. Quarter was no longer thought of on either side. Oh! what a horrible thing is war!

“‘My sword!’ cried the young man laughing with rage, ‘my sword, there it is, colonel! since you came to take it!’ and darting on me, he struck me full in the chest.”

Here the colonel turned away, doubtless to conceal his emotion, and walking to the further end of the room, he opened a window looking out on the park. “The sky is dark,” said he; “how unlike that of Spain! How pale the stars are! do the stars, then, change their light?” Then returning to his place in the chimney-corner, he resumed:

“Some time after I found myself, I know not how, in a poor cabin, stretched on a heap of straw covered over with a long white cloth. I was hot and I was cold; consumed by fever, I suffered from my wound and from burning thirst; I thought I was going to die: I recommended my soul to God, to God whom I had never ceased to invoke and to supplicate through all the tumult of war. I thought of my home, my beautiful mountain-home in Franche-Comte, my aged father whom I was never to behold again, and I thought, too, of the last words of my tender mother—words full of love, of resignation, and of hope. My failing memory reverted to the joys of my early years, my daring adventures in the mountains, the wild fruits gathered in the hedges, the white spire of my village, the good instructions of my pastor, my first communion, my sports on

the velvet sward, the tales of the long winter evenings, the night-prayers said in common—oh! how lovely does life appear to us when we are about to lose it!

“Whilst tossing about in the restlessness of fever I rolled over a motionless bulk which appeared to be a human body, I thought I could even feel in it the icy cold of a corpse—a thrill of horror ran through me—I closed my eyes so as to see nothing in the shades of a dark night, my ears so as to hear nothing in the silence of my anticipated grave. Shall I own it, friends! I was afraid, yes, I was afraid, I a soldier who had been marching to death but a little while ago over the still warm bodies of my fallen comrades.

“A groan was heard at my very side——

“‘Who is there?’ I cried with all the strength I could throw into my voice; ‘who is there?’ I thought I heard another groan—then nothing more—I slept or rather raved, for there was more fever than sleep in the momentary repose of my being.

“Raving thus, I had horrible visions. The spire of my village had disappeared, the death-bell was ringing, my native mountains were clad in mourning, the phantoms of the legends that had soothed my childhood passed and repassed before me—then these spectres disappearing in their turn, I found myself in the Cathedral of Burgos. A priest, beautiful as an angel, was at the altar praying. The altar was radiant with lights and flowers; at the

foot of the altar a fair young girl, robed in white and crowned with orange-blossoms, received from a noble Castilian the golden ring, the precious emblem of a union blessed by religion. I listened entranced to the voice of the priest, the hymns of praise that were echoing around, and the merry peal of the marriage-bell, when all at once like a clap of thunder the terrible cry 'To arms! to arms!' rang through the vaulted arches of the old basilica, and I saw a whole people rise in answer to the call. No more priest then, no more holy hymns, no more flower-decked altars, no more bride, or groom, nothing, nothing but the death-cry and men armed against each other. The banner of war had replaced the cross of peace, the soldier had taken the place of the priest, the temple was become a battle-field, the wedding-robcs were changed into mourning garments, the altar itself was transformed into a vast tomb. I found myself on heights strewn with the wrecks of men and cannons, I saw again before me the young girl of the Cathedral of Burgos with cypress instead of white flowers wreathing her locks, and a poignard instead of the bunch of orange-blossoms in the girdle of her bridal dress. I recognized in her features those of the young officer who, refusing to give up his sword, told me '*Here it is, colonel, since you came to take it!*' Quick as lightning on a stormy day, she darted on me, and I felt a death-cold weight on my breast—with a piercing cry I awoke.

“It was broad day when I recovered my consciousness in that poor cabin, the hospital provided by an old monk, who was then on his knees reciting the prayers for the dying. A man was lying near me—it was the unhappy wounded soldier whom I had taken during the night for a dead body. Incoherent words were heard now and then from his parched lips: ‘Antonio! Spain! my mother! liberty! Spain! my mother! oh, my mother! Antonio!’ these were the sounds that every moment died on his colorless lips, already cold in the chill of the agony.

“‘Who are you?’ I asked at a moment when he appeared somewhat calm.

“‘A Spaniard,’ he proudly answered, ‘and you?’

“‘A Frenchman.’

“‘A Frenchman!’ cried he, striking his brow and rising on his knees; ‘a Frenchman! and I did not kill you? my God! my God! who will give me my sword!’ but falling back immediately on the straw that served him for a bed, he added in a feeble voice: ‘Forgive me—foes as we were yesterday on the field of battle, are we not brothers to-day before death? brother, forgive me—let us embrace!’ and he dragged himself towards me till he pressed me to his heart.

“The Spanish monk, standing before us, observed this touching scene with strong emotion. ‘Happy are they,’ said he, ‘who forgive at their last hour, for much will be forgiven them.’ The young officer had just pressed his burning lips to my brow.

“‘That is the farewell kiss,’ said I.

“‘No, brother, it is the kiss of reconciliation,’ answered the Spaniard.

“‘The kiss of eternal peace,’ added the monk.

“The young officer suddenly exclaimed in the plaintive accents of despair: ‘Antonio! Antonio! give me back my Antonio! or if he is dead, let me die!’

“‘Call not on death, young man,’ said the monk, ‘it will come in its own time: rather invoke the mercy of Him who rules and measures time for men of good will. It is God who comes to us when all abandon us here below; pray to God, my child! beg of Him to restore to you the life of this world, or grant you, amongst the elect, the peace of life everlasting.’

“‘May His holy will be done!—father, give me your blessing!’

“‘I will do more, I will absolve you of your sins that you may present your soul in the state of grace to Him who gave it.’

“After a confession which lasted no more than two minutes, so pure and so innocent had been the poor fellow’s life, the holy old man gave him absolution in the name of the mighty God who gave him power to bind and loose.

“At this moment, still burning with fever, I exclaimed: ‘My God! how I thirst!’

“‘You thirst; here, then, brother!’ said the Spaniard, ‘take this gourd, and drink; I filled it yes

terday in a pool on the battle-field where we met for the first and last time. 'Take it.'

"I took the gourd and raised it greedily to my lips; the water it contained was reddish and smelled of powder. I would have given it back to him.

"'No, keep it,' said he, 'keep it—it is no more use to me.'

"I felt better, then, much better; this nameless drink had refreshed me; and the cold of the night had stiffened my wound. I suffered less and my thirst was gone. Just at that moment, as though a frightful vision passed before my eyes, I recognized in the features of the dying man those of the brave officer I had met the day before on the heights carried by our bayonets. It was indeed he. At the sight I felt my heart sink and my wound open again. 'Is it you,' I asked, 'brave Spaniard, you who were the last in command yesterday on the field of battle?'

"'I!' he repeated, pressing his hand on his heart as if to seek a recollection; 'yes, brother, I remember—yesterday the altar was dressed, I had flowers on my brow and joy in my heart—yesterday the priest was going to unite us—yesterday Spain was happy and free—the stranger had not yet come to tell her: "Mine, land of the Cid, mine are thy balmy gardens, mine thine azure fountains, mine thy wealth, mine Madrid, mine Grenada, mine thy Alhambra, mine thy soil and thy sky—all mine!"'

Yesterday a fatal cry, the awful call to arms, had not yet rang from the top of the Pyrenees—yesterday the eagles of France had not seized in their conquering claws the throne of our king! Yesterday, say you? oh yes, I remember! Antonio was there below, you were there, too, colonel! as I was myself! But what became of my companions in arms? They are dead, are they not? all dead. But, answer me, colonel——’

“ ‘They *are* dead—they died as heroes, as soldiers worthy of Spain, their beautiful country.’

“ ‘Then I may die to-day since there is nothing now to bind me to earth—poor Antonio! poor Spain!’

“ ‘Brother,’ said I taking his hand.

“ ‘What would you?’

“ ‘Your name.’

“ ‘What good, colonel? What would you do hereafter with a name which you would call and there be none to answer, a name which death must efface and the grave inclose to-morrow with the body that bore it?’

“ ‘I will invoke it in my evil days that it may teach me the secret of resignation.’

“ ‘It is the name of God alone that must be invoked when evil days come.’

“ ‘I will cherish it in memory as long as life remains.’

“ ‘Then you wish to have a memento of me, colonel; well! as often as the rolling year brings round the 21st day of October, remember the battle-field

where two beings made to love each other found themselves face to face hatred in heart and sword in hand;—remember the cabin where after the battle you found me again dying, the kiss of peace I gave you in pledge of reconciliation, then, colonel, remember me—look at your breast—you will see the scar of a wound—then, think of me, colonel of France, for it was I, poor child of Spain, it was I that gave it!

“Finishing these words, pronounced with effort, the Spaniard was magnificent! his voice, his eyes, his gesture, all breathed a gloomy energy—he was sublime;—all at once he met the stern eye of the monk, the humble minister of that God who wills that we should forgive all that He may forgive us. In the attitude of the religious, and his cold, calm silence there was an exhortation which the Spaniard well understood.

“‘You are right, father!’ exclaimed the youth, as if in answer to the monk—‘you are right. The forgetting of hatred is the surest way to gain that heaven where all is love. Once more, colonel!’ he added turning to me, ‘give me your hand, I forgive and love you.’

“I raised his icy hand to my lips—who knows if mine was not the hand that struck him?

“I asked him how long he had been at the trade of war.

“‘Since the day of my marriage—five months and five days.’

“‘How old was he?

“‘I would have been seventeen at the *first lilacs*.’

“Thinking of this tender flower cut down in the spring of life, I cursed the fatality of war. I saw by his short and difficult breathing, the heaving of his chest, the paleness of his brow, and the sweat that oozed from it in large drops, that he was drawing near his end. The monk knelt beside him to receive and bless his last sigh—to unite with him in his last prayer and then to close his eyes. At that final moment I could freely have shared with him the number of days still allotted to me; I would willingly have given the half of my existence to preserve his. My grief was manifested by tears. The Spaniard perceived it.

“‘You weep, brother,’ said he, ‘you weep, perhaps for me. Oh! do not do so—it is not he who sets out for heaven that is to be pitied. More unhappy is he who remains when he is left alone in the world. Death is welcome, colonel! as you may one day know, to him who dies for his country. . . . Death is sweet, oh! how sweet, when it reunites us to the dear ones whom we loved more than ourselves.’

“‘Listen,’ continued he, hurrying out his words, listen, brother, while I can speak, for I feel it will not be long. I was young, life appears long at seventeen—I had an illustrious name, a place near the royalty of Spain, a mother whom I tenderly loved—I left all to follow in the chances of war the

threatened flag of my country and Antonio Zumalacarreguy, one of its bravest defenders.'

"Then as his speech became fainter and his voice shorter still, he made a sign for me to approach. I placed my ear close to his lips and he resumed :

" 'If the Brigadier Antonio Zumalacarreguy—is not dead—seek him, colonel—and give him—this gold cross—that my mother gave me—on the day—of my first communion. If the Brigadier Zumalacarreguy—has fallen in the struggle—keep the cross—I give it to you—for a parting keepsake.' "

Here Colonel de Romeald stopped again and raised his hand to his forehead, as if struggling to overcome his emotion—it was in vain: big tears gathered in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks: the colonel looked fine, at that moment, very fine, I assure you—he resumed :

"Next day when my companions in arms, remembering that during the fight they had left some of the wounded in a poor cabin, came to seek them to fill up some of the vacancies which death had left in the ambulances, they found me under the care of the monk who had been doing everything he could for me—near us lay a young Spaniard, dead—that Spaniard was—a woman—I saw it all then; that woman was the bride of Burgos, the beloved wife of the Brigadier Antonio Zumalacarreguy.

"The same day there was found amongst the dead with whom the heights were covered, the body of the Spanish brigadier. One grave received the

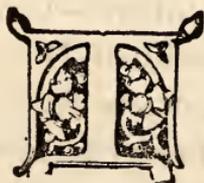
mortal remains of the young couple whom death would not sever.

“ ‘ You now understand, gentlemen,’ said the colonel, ‘ why it was that I refused to follow the hunt this morning. To-day is the twenty-first of October, and that fatal date, as I told you, is a bloody mark in my life. On that day I retire into myself, I meditate in the loneliness of grief and raise an altar in my heart to the memory of *the young Spaniard* who followed her husband to heaven.’ ”

Colonel de Romeald ceased to speak, but people still listened—they could have listened all night.

“ Is the story ended, colonel ? ” was asked on every side.

“ It soon will—‘ you will think of me,’ said the bride of Burgos, ‘ when you see the scar of a wound on your breast.’ Here it is,” said Colonel de Romeald, opening the blue military frock which he still wore in memory of his former profession, and near a large scar, we saw a gold cross suspended by a black ribbon.



WHAT THERE IS IN THE SMOKE OF A CIGAR.

LAST year, in the month of October, I happened to be in the castle of Trablaine with my friend, Odon Bouvier, an excellent young man whom I love as a brother, but had never seen since the day we left college, he to make a fortune in trade, I to wear away my life in pursuit of literary fame. There was quite a number of guests that day at Trablaine, and Alexina, the lovely and intellectual wife of my friend, did the honors with charming ease and grace. Besides the members of his own family, Odon had gathered together all those of his college friends who were near enough to answer the call of friendship. Amongst them was Francisque Ribollet, the witty singer of the Minors, and the most vigorous snorer I ever heard either in a college dormitory or a citizen-soldier's guard-room.

It was so long since we had met, that one day was far from being enough for the retrospective view of our early years; it would have taken a whole week for that labor of the heart, and God knows how rapidly

the days glided by at Trablaine! The hours ought to have been doubled there.

On the eve of our departure, and on leaving the table where our host had given us a good three hours' sitting at the expense of his cellar and his blue ribbon, we, gentlemen, all adjourned to the smoking-room. There, luxuriously reclined, some in arm-chairs, others on silken divans, we enjoyed the *dolce far niente* of the smoker who, away from the tumults of the word, lets his thoughts wander in the gray fantastic clouds formed by the smoke of the Havana or the fine Regalia. "I have always compared an extinguished cigar to a beautiful dream," said one of our friends—"both leaving nothing behind but smoke."

"What you tell us is nothing new," said Ribollet, "it is simply the story of life."

I was just finishing an excellent *prensados*. "It is your turn now, poet!" said Odon to me, "tell us what you see in the smoke of your cigar."

My mind, silently absorbed in a sense of comfort which my troubled life had seldom known before, was fixed, far away from the scene around me, on a stay I had made two years before in Naples. Many sweet recollections were associated with that thought. I recalled with soothing satisfaction the kindness I had received from the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX. at Paris; from Ferdinand II. of Naples, at Caserta.

"What do you see in the smoke of your cigar?" repeated Odon.

"There is in that smoke," I replied, "a story which to me, at least, is not without a certain degree of interest."

"Let us be the judges, then."

I was just preparing to commence my recital when Madame Odon, suddenly making her appearance, insisted that the story should be told before the ladies who were sitting under the trees in the garden. We immediately joined them, and, without any further solicitation, I began:

"If there is anything that seems to guarantee a future for the monarchy of the House of Savoy it is that the dynasty of that noble house, made illustrious by the courage of the soldier and the virtue of the Christian, has many of its members in Heaven whom the Catholic Church has placed on her altars and venerates as saints. It counts fourteen already, and the infallible decree of the Sovereign Pontiff has recently bestowed on Maria Christina, daughter of Victor Emmanuel, and Queen of Naples, the highest honors that religion can award to those of her children whose sanctity appears to her certain.

"The religious press has recorded marvellous facts relating to this holy princess which I cannot distinguish clearly enough in the fantastic wreaths of the smoke of my cigar to relate them to you. I will simply tell you that Queen Maria Christina was a living prodigy of charity, virtue and good works. Her heart was a precious vessel overflowing with

the treasures of her royal mercy. We are not surprised, therefore, that the legend has connected that august and noble figure with that of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. St. Elizabeth changed diamonds into roses. St. Maria Christina changes roses into diamonds.

“Gratitude is not the virtue of the people, says an old proverb, the truth of which experience has long made manifest; nevertheless in defiance of the axiom, there are numerous and touching examples that might be quoted. She was a poor simple daughter of the people, that Theresina who was seen twice a day in all seasons bending her steps to the Church of Santa-Chiara to prostrate herself before the tombs of the royal family of Naples, especially that of the pious queen whom she called her protectress.

“Though Queen Maria Christina was dead, Theresina did not forget the share she had had in the royal munificence of the mother of the poor and afflicted; she never even thought of murmuring at the privations she endured from the loss of the assistance she had been wont to receive from the queen’s private purse. The tears she every day shed before a cold sepulchre had really their source in her heart, and were wholly unmixed with any feeling of personal interest. Theresina was very poor, so poor, indeed, that she was often forced to hear her two little children crying for hunger when she had nothing to give them to eat; still, she would

have given all the world, everything, in short, but her place in heaven, to look again on the adored features of the beneficent queen. She often saw them, it is true, but only in dreams, during her sleep by night or her *siesta* by day; when she stretched out her arms to seize the precious image, she found it was only a shadow, and awoke with a heavy heart.

“Theresina was so fully persuaded of the state of beatitude in which Maria Christina must be in heaven, that morning and evening, when she said her prayers with her little children, she taught them to add to the Litany of the Saints and that of the Blessed Virgin, the ejaculation: ‘*Sancta Maria Christina, regina, ora pro nobis.*’ (St. Maria Christina, queen, pray for us!)

“This pious belief gathered strength in her mind according as the late queen’s reputation for sanctity gained ground amongst the people. It even came to pass that any favor she asked of God in the name of Maria Christina was sure to be granted. It must be owned that her desires, always reasonable, never exceeded the bounds of prudence. She never once thought of asking wealth, believing the words of the Gospel that *it is harder for a rich man to enter heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of needle.*

“What she most ardently desired was a moral and religious education for her children, that they might grow up in honesty and in good health—for herself

she only coveted what was actually necessary to live and to bring up her children in the humble way to which she and they were accustomed—in the fear and love of God. The prayers she addressed with that intention to *Sancta Maria Christina, regina*, were so fervent, that without any kind of resource, she could bear up against the hardships of her daily life.

“One evening as she prayed with redoubled fervor before the tomb of her mysterious protectress, she thought she heard a voice saying :

“‘What state would you wish your children to embrace?’

“‘I would wish my son to be a soldier,’ answered Theresina.

“‘Why so?’ demanded the secret voice.

“‘Because I know of no mission more noble for a man than that of serving his king and country.’

“‘And your daughter?’

“‘I would have her be a nun.’

“‘Why?’

“‘Because I think there is no state so happy, when one is called to it, as that wherein they can serve God, away from the bustle of the world.’

“‘Well, Theresina, rejoice, for as true as I tell you, your son Jacomeo shall be a soldier, and your daughter Eva a nun.’

“The voice that Theresina thus heard or fancied she heard, was it the magnetic sound of a wish formed by an excited imagination, or was it really a

warning from beyond the grave? Theresina could not venture to decide which was the case till ten years after, when her son Jacomeo, taking his place under the fleur-de-lys of Ferdinand II., buckled on the soldier's sword, and when her daughter Eva, enrolling herself under the banner of the Cross, took the golden ring promised to the spouses of the Lord.

“Meanwhile, the days were not all equally bright for poor Theresina, for her wants increased according as Jacomeo and Eva advanced in life—a time soon came when she was so hard pushed by stern necessity that she was fain to redouble her fervent prayers to Maria Christina—God alone could assist her at that moment, for the owner of the house in which she had occupied a small room for twelve years, threatened now to turn her out unless she could pay him next day all the arrears of rent she owed him. Having no friend on earth to whom she could apply in such an emergency, Theresina, weeping for her children, rather than herself, went piously to place herself under the protection of the late queen, Maria Christina.

“It was evening, and the last rays of the setting sun formed a halo of purple and gold on the tomb where the queen slept in peace—the Church was silent and deserted. Theresina, bending her head on the stone, collected her thoughts, then finding in the excess of her grief a poetic eloquence very uncommon, even amongst the imaginative people of

Naples, she thus addressed her invisible protectress :

“ Queen of Naples, daughter of kings, you once vouchsafed to visit the humble dwelling of a poor mother whose children might have long since died of hunger were it not for your goodness. That blessed day you came between the poor woman and ruin and despair ; you not only saved a perishable life, but perhaps secured the salvation of a soul which might have been tempted to seek in death that rest which the world denied. Providence of that poor mother, you were the mother of her children. They were hungry, your royal charity gave them bread ; they were thirsty and you gave them to drink ; they were cold and you warmed them ; they were naked and you clothed them ; they were threatened, as now, with being thrown out on the cold world without a shelter from the winds of heaven, and you gave me wherewith to secure them a lodging. Oh blessed, praised and honored may you ever be !

“ Since you left your earthly kingdom to dwell forever in the glory of God, our dark days are come again—hunger has taken its place again at our little table, and the cold winter wind whistles through our desolate dwelling.

“ *St. Maria Christina*, in the name of the little angels you left here below, protect my children, grant that their feet may not be torn by the thorns of life while they walk in the way of God. Have

pity on my children! Saint Maria Christina, have pity on them! have pity on me!

“The last ray of sunlight had just faded from the earth. The haze of twilight formed a vapory and fantastic shade around the mausoleum; those faint clouds with which our imagination loves to invest benign spirits. Theresina, absorbed in prayer, thought she heard a slight noise under the tumulary stone, then a rustling of silk, then a voice of heavenly sweetness saying: ‘Theresina, I am coming.’ At the same moment, raising her head, she distinctly saw before her a tall lady dressed in white satin, her face covered with a white veil fringed with gold, and so thick that her features could not be seen. A wreath of flowers fastened this veil to the hair of the mysterious unknown, whose step was so light that she seemed rather to glide than walk.

“‘Who are you, madam?’ cried Theresina, in a trembling voice.

“‘She whom Providence has chosen to come to the assistance of the Christian woman who invoked her with love. Here, good woman, take this ring, not to preserve it in remembrance of me, but to make use of it in your hour of need.’ So saying, the tall lady, disengaging her arms which were folded on her breast, drew from the fore-finger of her left hand a rich diamond ring, placed it on Theresina’s finger, and disappeared at the moment when the latter, thinking to kiss the skirt of her robe, found at her lips a bunch of white roses, so fresh and fragrant

that no earthly garden could have produced them.

“When Theresina left the Church of Santa-Chiara it was already late, too late to take the ring she had received to a jeweller’s; but her heart being torn with the thought that her children were suffering from hunger, she hastened to the street where the court-jeweller lived. Alas! the shop was closed, as she had foreseen; she was forced to return to her poor children without anything to eat, and the sight of their pale, wasted faces went to her heart.

“‘Poor dears!’ said she, ‘all days are alike to us; one day passes after another, and finds us still the same; to-night again we must go to bed supperless—but be comforted—to-morrow we shall have plenty; you will be no longer hungry, for our good Queen Maria Christina has once more taken pity on us—to-morrow we shall be rich.’

“‘But oh! mother, I am so hungry!’ said Jacomeo.

“‘Oh! what pretty white roses you have got, mother,’ said Eva; ‘I never saw any that smell so sweet, or look so beautiful—who gave them to you?’

“‘A tall, beautiful lady, a stranger, that came to me this evening when I was praying for you in the Church of Santa-Chiara.’

“Eva took hold of the bunch of flowers, and being anxious to see, like all children, the inside of everything, she was amusing herself with examining one of the flowers that was fullest blown, when a min-

ature casket, hidden in the cup of the flower, fell at her feet. It contained a diamond worth ten gold pieces. 'Kneel down, children,' cried the good woman, 'and let us thank God, and Maria Christina, His holy messenger. It is doubtless to her intercession we owe this little fortune.'

" 'We may sup to-night, then,' said Jacomeo, after joining devoutly in the prayer of gratitude offered by his mother to the Dispenser of all graces.

"Theresina's first care next morning was to pay her landlord; her next was to go to the court-jeweller, to dispose of her diamond-ring.

"The jeweller turned pale on seeing it, and exclaimed:

" 'Where did you find this ring?'

" 'I didn't find it.'

" 'How, then, did it come into your possession?'

" 'It was given to me.'

" 'By whom?'

" 'A lady.'

" 'What is her name?'

" 'I cannot tell you.'

" 'You must.'

" 'I do not know it.'

" 'You lie——'

" 'Sir, I do not lie,' answered Theresina in a tone of noble indignation—and she added poetically. 'The hand that gives charity, sir, is not seen, it is always *gloved*.'

" 'None but the queen could have given you this

ring,' resumed the jeweller, 'and she is long lying in the tomb—besides the dead do not give alms.'

"'You are mistaken, sir, there are no alms more pleasing to God than the prayer of the elect for those who suffer—that is the alms of heaven to earth——'

"'We are not talking of that, my good woman! but of this ring.'

"'Will you buy it, yes or no?'

"'Neither one—nor the other—but I keep it till you have accounted for the possession of it—till then, it is the police that will take you in hands, and we shall see if they cannot get the information from you that you have refused to me. This ring belonged to Queen Maria Christina; I know it, for it was I that sold it. Now, as the ring cannot have been given you by her late Majesty, you must necessarily have stolen it.'

"'Be silent, sir,' cried Theresina bursting into tears at the thought of such a suspicion, 'you have no right to insult my poverty.'

"'But I have a right to hand you over to justice—there is a policeman passing.' So saying, the jeweller opened the door of his shop, called the policeman, and gave the unhappy woman into his charge on suspicion of a robbery at court.

"'She who gave me that ring,' cried Theresina with a contemptuous look at her accuser, 'will know how to prove my innocence.'

"The ring was, in fact, one of the queen's, that

which she most affected, for it was the first she had received from the hands of her royal spouse.

“Whilst this scene took place in the Rue Toledo, King Ferdinand II. found on the writing-desk in his study a letter of eccentric form with a black seal and marked *in haste*: ‘I never saw,’ cried the king hastily breaking it open, ‘a hand so like that of Queen Maria Christina;’ and with a look of deep emotion, he read:

“‘Sire,

“‘A poor woman has been arrested on suspicion of having stolen a diamond that belonged to Queen Maria Christina; that woman is innocent. Have the goodness to see that she is immediately released from prison. Whereupon, I pray God that He may have you in His holy keeping.

“‘Signed: M. C.—’

“‘The initials of my beloved wife!’ exclaimed King Ferdinand as he raised the mysterious missive to his lips; he sent at once to seek the chief of police who, unknown to the sovereign, was waiting in the adjoining apartment. The court-jeweller was with him.

“‘Can you tell me, sir,’ asked the King of the Two Sicilies without further preamble, ‘what woman is this that was arrested this morning on a charge of stealing diamonds?’

“‘Sire! the court-jeweller here can inform your Majesty better than I can, for it was he that first discovered the theft.’

“‘And the proof,’ added the jeweller, showing the ring in question.

“‘Gentlemen,’ said the king, ‘the possession of this ring cannot possibly be the consequence of a crime that would be a sacrilege, for the marble of a tomb must have been broken to obtain it. This ring, in conformity with the sovereign and last will of Queen Maria Christina, went down with her to the tomb. Let the woman be brought hither.’

* * * * *

“An hour after, Theresina, pale and trembling, but sure of her conscience, stood in the king’s presence. She told him, as we have told the reader, of her visit to the royal tomb in Santa-Chiara’s; her prayers, her tears, the appearance of the tall and beautiful lady, her consoling words, her bunch of white roses, the mysterious little box and the gift of the ring which procured for her the honor of seeing his Majesty.

“‘It is well, my good woman,’ said the king; ‘where is this ring?’

“‘That gentleman took it from me,’ answered Theresina, pointing with her finger to the court-jeweller.

“‘Sir,’ said the king, addressing the jeweller ‘give her back the ring, it honestly belongs to her. Now, madam, how much will you sell it for?’

“‘Whatever you please to give, Sire,’ said Theresina boldly laying the precious ring at his Majesty’s feet.

“‘I accept it,’ said the king with much kindness, but on one condition.’

“‘What is that, Sire?’

“‘That you will permit me to continue for you and your children the work so well commenced by the queen.’

* * * * *

“The legend tells that every month a white rose of the mysterious bouquet left by the tall and lovely lady in Santa-Chiara’s, opens and drops from its calix a little box containing a diamond of price. This bouquet, placed in a China vase in Theresina’s parlor (for Theresina is now rich) is the rose-tree which prayer and charity fructify in heaven from month to month.

* * * * *

“‘The story you found in the smoke of your cigar is a charming one,’ said my friends of Trablaine; ‘it has but one fault, that of being too short.’

“‘But it is not finished,’ answered I; ‘listen: The pious Queen Maria Christina has left in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies so high an opinion of her virtue, that after giving her when alive the title of the *good Queen*, the people gave her the title of *Saint* after her death. The voice of the people, which is often the voice of God: *Vox populi, vox Dei*—demanded that her precious relics should be exposed to public veneration. The government of his Majesty King Ferdinand II. acceded to the wish of the people.’

“The day when the pious queen’s coffin was opened in presence of the whole court was a day of joy for Naples. The body of Maria Christina was untouched; her lips had preserved in death the ineffable smile that graced them in life, reflecting the sweetness and purity of her soul—she looked as though she were asleep. The king, her august husband, bent over her coffin, looked long and lovingly, and, with religious veneration, on the mortal remains of his sainted spouse. At his side the humble Theresina wept silent tears of mingled joy and sorrow. All persons admitted to this pious ceremony remarked that there was not a single ring on the queen’s hands.

“Ferdinand II. knelt a second time before the remains of his first august companion; he presently raised her hand stiffened by death, and, placing a ring on one of the fingers, said in a voice of deep emotion: ‘Take it—I restore it to you as the visible sign of a love which, now disengaged from earthly ties, is changed into the veneration we owe to the Saints.’

“That evening the whole city of Naples was illuminated.”



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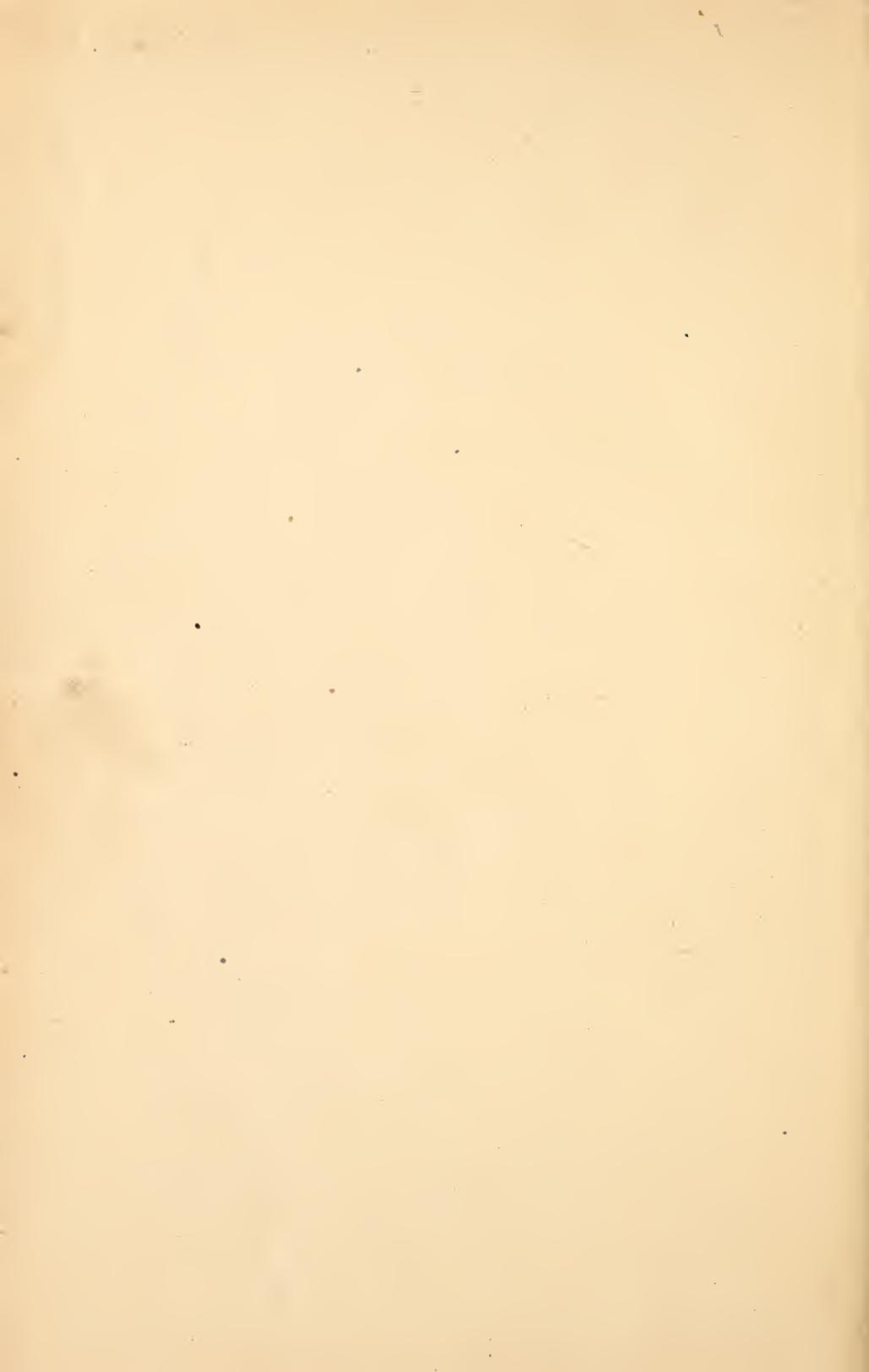
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