

ing gait, whistling a warlike tune carrying his hat high like a victorious trophy—went back to finish his absinthe.

There he sat absorbed.—But even more in the green liquor than in his thoughts.

He was greatly elated and puffed up with pride at what he had done.

Ah ! it was great... It was sublime... It was noble. He, Clotaire Pitanchard, had gone and posed before the inhabitants of Sablonnière, his native land, as the champion of human reason emancipated from the humiliating thraldom of dogmatists. He had thrown off the yoke of secular superstition by his noble and dignified conduct.

He had been the first to confront the terrible dark power and to defy it...

His action would surely cause a great sensation... It would win followers... and so his imagination grew more and more inflated until he saw himself founder of a new sect, source of a river, chief of a party...

And it was a vehement struggle with genial manœuvres... his name affectionately honored by the great voice of popularity... his deed approved and heralded broadcast by the press... finally a deputation waiting on him.

* * *

"Here, my poor man."

At those words spoken close to his ear with the gentle singing intonation characteristic of the Berryites, Clotaire lifted his head, came back to reality and saw standing before him a middle aged woman looking very handsome in her quaint old fashioned bonnet and who repeated as she handed him a little white jar :

"Here my poor man."

"But — what is it?" asked Pitanchard cautiously taking and fingering the little jar.

"Eh... It's an excellent pomade."

"Pomade." — What for?"

"Why, for your hair, my poor man."

"For my... ah ! indeed... did your imagine for a moment."

"Oh yes ! interjected the woman " I saw you a little while ago... I saw you keep your hat on during the pro-