

ciplined class, that hang (especially in mountain districts) about the frontiers of foreign countries. They were contrabandists or smugglers, who contracted for a certain profit, to carry French goods over the Spanish border without paying duty; and this was often done by large parties on a great scale, in spite of the vigilance of revenue officers, whom they did not scruple to attack and fight in case of surprise. These two men and their families were old offenders and experienced hands. Being too well known at their former station, and having observed, in the neighbourhood of Mont-Marie, passes comparatively but slightly guarded, in consequence of the honesty of the peasantry, they had determined to turn the circumstance to their advantage, and came to settle in that neighbourhood. But to succeed, they saw it was necessary to get some one to join them, who was well acquainted with every nook and track among the crags and mountains; and, having taken some time to pick up acquaintance with the characters of their neighbours, they fixed upon poor Pierrot as their victim, not only because he was an expert mountaineer, but because his very gentleness of character, the result of his virtue, would enable them, could they but once corrupt him, to keep him more completely under their power, than one of a rougher and sterner cast.

They began, therefore, artfully to insinuate themselves into his familiarity and friendship, by expressing an interest in him and his family, and their pity at seeing him toiling all day for a paltry pittance, when by commercial undertakings, sure of success, he could soon put himself in far better circumstances. Pierrot listened at first with indifference, and then with curiosity, which soon grew up into eagerness to their tempting suggestions. At length they unfolded their schemes more openly, and he was startled. But for this they were prepared; and after the first shock was over, they began to remove his scruples. They told him speciously, that they were French subjects, and consequently not bound by the Spanish laws, which alone forbade the introduction of goods across the boundary; that, consequently, with them, this could not be wrong, but was merely a commercial speculation, attended with risk of seizure; just like a venture in time of war, or a ship's freight sent through the boisterous ocean in winter.

Pierrot was at last engaged to join in one of their expeditions; they took care that it should be a safe, easy, and pleasant one; and he received as his share of profit the purse which he threw on the table of his cottage. Although his conscience was ill at ease, the love of money had now struck root in his heart, and he was soon so surrounded with toils of his artful seducers, that he had no longer

strength to disentangle himself or to break through. Such is the history of many a good but weak mind, that has but listened to the arts of a deceiver. Its very goodness makes it an unequal match for well-trained cunning and daring profligacy. After its first fall, its powers are broken, and it allows itself to be led by the will of its ensnarer.

After Pierrot's visit, described above, to the Sanctuary of Mont-Marie, his companions, afraid of his escape from them, and of his betraying them, determined to involve him still deeper in crime. First, when they had again prevailed on him to join them, they took him upon a more venturesome expedition, which as they had foreseen, led to an encounter with the revenue guard; shots were fired, blows were struck, and the pass was forced by sheer violence. A few days after, placards were posted in all the neighbouring villages, offering rewards for the discovery of the offenders, with free pardon to accomplices who should betray them. Pierrot's tyrants showed him these, and threatened on his first attempt to dispute their will, to carry him over the frontier, and deliver him to the authorities.

He was now their victim, their tool in any wicked enterprise. He had no longer a will of his own; he seemed to have surrendered his very soul into their hands, and there was no extent of crime (short of murder), to which they did not lead him at their pleasure. They had at length ventured to unveil to him their real characters, as outlaws and banditti. They made him join them in their midnight robberies; but he sickened at the very thought of polluting his once happy dwelling with the fruit of his villainies; he refused a share in the spoils, and whenever he returned home, it was only with more haggard looks, more tortured conscience, and an empty purse.

[To be continued.]

THE DANGER OF THE ALE-HOUSE.

The little village of A——, which stood in a quiet and secluded spot of one of our midland counties, could only boast of thirty families, ignorant of luxury and its fictitious wants. They had preserved among them a spirit of probity and disinterestedness, and when a stranger happened to wander in that direction, he had reason to be pleased with their hospitality.

At the time my history commences the miller's son had just been married to a young girl, whom the lady of the manor had educated from her childhood, and who was possessed of every qualification for rendering an honest man happy—pretty, sweet-tempered, industrious, and pious. Ned might, and did, think himself a very happy man. His old father, Joseph, was very much pleased also, and