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PAULINE;

OR,

THE POISONED BOUQUET.

Pauline was an orphan adopted by some worthy citizen of the Rue St. Honore, Paris, who having brought her up to the age of sixteen, had placed her in his shop—a perfume warehouse—to dispense his goods at the counter. Women in France are almost universally the practical heads of commercial establishments. The master of the house, when he does not lounge away in a cafe, play billiards or cards half the day, or walk like one living on his means, is contented to occupy a dignified and retired position, attending, not to sales, but to wholesale purchases. But such was not the case with M. Boulard, the adopted father of Pauline. Both he and his wife shared the labors of the shop together; he keeping the books, while Pauline and Madame Boulard attended to the details. The young girl was very pretty and modest, and her presence contributed not a little to the success of the business. The good couple, having no children of their own, had manifested their intention of making Pauline their heiress, and this added to the charm which hung over the perfumer's store.

Pauline had many lovers, a great many—as young ladies who were pretty, modest, and virtuous are apt to have, especially when rich; for although the world is not half so selfish and wicked as certain persons fancy, yet a grain of interested love will always peep out among the truest suitors. Two lovers were chiefly assiduous in their attentions; the one a rich shopkeeper of the same street, the other a poor *frotteur*. Both were young, tolerably good-looking, and very devoted in their attachment; and it would have been hard to say which was most deserving. But Monsieur Alexis Laparant was rich, and Jean Prevost was poor. It will readily be understood that the parents of Pauline would not have hesitated in their choice; but they knew only of the affection of Alexis, that of Jean was concealed even from himself. Alexis came often to the house under one pretence or another, and was always favorably received. The good Boucards were highly flattered at his presence. Pauline liked his frank, open smile. The *frotteur*—one who waxes and shines by means of rubbing the wooden floors of rooms—came to the house in the exercise of his trade. He always bowed low to Pauline, and asked her how she was; and even on her *fete* day had brought a single rose, which was graciously received. Jean was also a commissioner, and ran on errands, and often came to the house to buy perfumes, soap, etc., for his employers, who, appreciating his honesty and desire for work, freely trusted him with purchases. How happy Jean was if Pauline only served him, and how gentle and respectful were his tones, and how little he concealed his happiness, if she gave him a good-natured word! Pauline could scarcely be blind to the open love of Alexis, or the concealed affection of the poor *frotteur*; but however this may be, she said nothing, and appeared to notice neither. But young Laparant had spoken to old Boulard, Boulard had spoken to his wife, and his wife to the young girl; but she kissed her adopted mother so affectionately, and said so gently that she wished not to leave home, that the worthy woman was silent, and put off a little any serious discussion on the matter.

Jean, meanwhile, became sombre and thoughtful; he dared not hope, he dared not even think of making an offer; he, a poor workman, with uncertain means of livelihood, and so far beneath the position of her he loved! Had she been an unfriended orphan, without home, he would have offered his heart, and the only fortune he had—his honest labor. While thus depressed, an event occurred which drove Pauline completely out of his thoughts.

One day he was sent for to wax the floors of a house near the Palais Royal, the apartments of which were generally devoted to the pleasure parties of the courtiers. Jean, who was well known and trusted, was told to wax the floor of every room then unoccupied. He obeyed, and soon found himself in a chamber of luxurious appearance, surrounded by pictures which told of rural love and happiness. Jean had seen them often before; but they had never affected him so much, and forgetting time, place, and his duties, he leant on the stick which held the wax, and fell into deep thought. Suddenly he was startled by voices in the next room; a horrible sentence caught his ear, and justified his listening. Pale and terrified, he hearkened to every word, and moved not, for fear of being discovered. He had discovered an awful and frightful secret; and he was a dead man if caught in that room, the ill-joined wainscot of which allowed everything in the next to be distinctly heard. "What shall I do?" thought he to himself; "to-morrow is the *fete* of St. Louis; I have no time to lose."

Jean left the room on tiptoe and with the utmost caution; then descending the stairs, feigned to leave for dinner. No sooner was he clear of the house than he made for the prefecture of the police, and entering the hotel, asked to see the lieutenant. The servants replied that he could not be seen. It was one o'clock, and the fashionable Paris dinner of that day—now six hours later. Not a valet dared disturb M. de Bellisle from his meal; but Jean insisted, stormed, implored, and at last, as they seized him by the shoulder to put him out, cried, "Do not drive me out. I must see Monsieur de Bellisle; the King's life is in danger!"

It was the eve of St. Louis, 1758, and the King was Louis XV. The servants hesitated, looked at one another, and an agent of police, struck by the man's tone, bade them pause.

"Go, repeat his words to Monsieur le Lieutenant," said he, "and show this person into his private cabinet."

Jean, recovering his breath, followed his guide, and soon found himself face to face with the magistrate, whose mien was severe and inquisitive, and even incredulous. He bade the *frotteur* sit down, and asked him his business in a somewhat petulant tone—the tone of a man disturbed in the midst of his dinner.

"I come, sir," said Jean firmly, "to inform you of a plot against the King's life."

"I am informed of such plots every day," replied the prefect, who was used to pretended denunciations from persons aiming at exciting attention and gaining money. "But let me hear the details."

Jean related all that the reader knows, and added that the attempt on the King's life was to be made that evening at the reception on the occasion of the *fete* of the eve of St. Louis, when it was usual to present the monarch with bouquets of flowers. One of these was to contain a poison so subtle that the King, on smelling it, would fall as if struck with apoplexy. Bellisle looked at Jean. His mien was agitated; he was profoundly moved. His handsome and honest features were excited, as if by deep indignation; the pallor of horror was on his countenance. But the prefect of police, remembering the pretended revelation of La Tude and others, was still not wholly convinced.

"Are you sure," he said to Jean, "that you have heard what you tell me? Be careful. If you have done this from a mere motive of cupidity, and invented a fable, you will pay dearly for it; the Bastille for life!"

"Put me to the rack, if you like," cried Prevost; "it will not alter my words. I repeat, the King is in danger. I offer my life as security for my truth!"

"Enough. I believe you. We will go together to Versailles."

It was a very short time after, when M. de Bellisle and Jean Prevost entered the royal palace of Versailles by the stairs of the *Gil de Bouf*, and arrived secretly at the King's private apartments. Every precaution was taken to conceal the presence of the minister of police from the courtiers, as thus the conspirators might guess the discovery of their atrocious plot.

Louis XV. received the lieutenant, and had with him a long and secret interview. In fact they parted only when, at eight o'clock, the monarch went into the Hall of Treaties to receive respectful homage of all the foreign ambassadors, princes and courtiers, who on this occasion were well received in state. The lieutenant of police joined Jean Prevost, guarded in a private chamber by two exempts, and sat down to a hurried meal, in which he invited the *frotteur* to join him without ceremony.

Meanwhile Louis XV. had entered the Hall of Treaties, and seated himself on his throne at the end of the apartment. Before him was the magnificent round mosaic table given to Louis le Grand by the Republic of Venice, and which was now destined to receive the splendid and rare bouquets offered on this occasion by the royal family, the grand officers of the household, and the members of the diplomatic corps, to the King. The crowd was gay and gorgeous. Every variety of costume, rich, bright and resplendent, shone beneath the blaze of light, which showed off the brilliancy of the diamonds on the women. The King, who, despite his frivolity, had great courage, and a fund of good sense, which, with other education, would have made him a different man, was by no means moved, but smiled graciously on Madame de Pompadour, and caressed her favorite spaniel, which sat upon a stool between them, and at their feet.

The ceremony commenced. The King, as was the custom, took the bouquets one by one, thanking every giver by some sprightly word. Pretending to play with the spaniel, and to repress its indiscreet caresses, he placed every bunch of flowers near the animal's nose, and then laid it down on the mosaic table. Madame de Pompadour laughed, but hid her laughter with her fan.

"If they feel hurt?" said she in a whisper. "It is your spaniel, countess," replied the King, gallantly.

The foreign ministers had precedence, and had presented all their bouquets. The members of the royal family came next, having courteously allowed the diplomatic corps to precede them. The King took the bouquet from the hands of the nearest of the blood-royal, who stepped back bowing. He held the flowers to the spaniel's nose, the poor brute sniffed it, reeled, and fell dead! Madame de Pompadour turned pale, and would have shrieked, but the King had warned her by a look.

"Not a word," whispered he; "it is nothing! Drop the folds of your dress over the poor animal. It has died to make true the saying, 'Son of a king—brother of a king—never king!'"

The ceremony proceeded, Louis XV. completely concealing his emotion, whilst Madame Pompadour smothered her alarm and curiosity. As soon as all was over the King retired to his chamber, and sent for the lieutenant of police, who at once was struck by his solemn manner.

"Am I to arrest the guilty, sire?"

"You were correctly informed, Bellisle. Last year the dagger of Damians; this time a bunch of flowers, and always from the same quarter. I cannot, nor ought I to punish. I order you to desist from inquiring into this mystery. Where is the man who saved me?"

"Close at hand, sire," replied the lieutenant, who knew well whence the blow came, and also that it descended from too exalted a hand and too near a relative to be noticed.

"Bring him to me."

Bertin de Bellisle went out, and returned leading the *frotteur* by the hand. Jean Prevost—bold, stout fellow though he was—trembled, held down his head, and turned and twisted his cap in his hands, quite unaware that he was pulling it all to pieces.

"Embrace your King," cried Louis XV., with a grateful tear in his eye; "that is your first reward."

"Sire," said Jean, falling on his knees, "I ask no reward but the feeling of having saved your Majesty."

"What can I do for you?" asked Louis XV., who was capable of every good emotion.

"If your Majesty could give me Pauline," whispered Jean Prevost.

"Oh, oh!" laughed Louis XV., once more himself again, "a love affair. Come, the *frotteur* shall sup to-night with the King, whose life he has saved, and tell his story. Bellisle, send a coach for him in the morning, or rather come yourself. I will give you further instructions about this matter. But silence, my friend, not a word."

The lieutenant of police retired, and Louis XV., who was always delighted at novelty and an unexpected amusement, took the *frotteur*, just as he was, to the *Trianon*, where he was to sup with Madame de Pompadour; and there, in the presence of the beautiful court favorite, made him tell his story, which Jean did with a naive, truth and sincerity, which deeply interested the King, used wholly to another atmosphere. Next morning Louis, after shaking Jean warmly by the hand, and holding a private conference with Bellisle, said:

"You shall have a house in the park, my friend, near the *Trianon*. You shall be honorary head gardener, with a hundred louis a month for your salary, and every morning you shall bring me a bouquet. I shall thus never forget you, nor the cause which compels my everlasting gratitude."

Next morning, at an early hour, before the business of the day commenced, and while a porter was taking down the shutters of the shop, M. Boulard called his wife and Pauline into his little office. The good man's air was grave, and little annoyed. He had gone out the previous evening, and returned at a late hour. Pauline had long since retired to rest, but M. Boulard had held a long conference with his wife. The excellent citizen spoke with animation, and not without a little anger,

but finally cooled down before the soothing of his wife.

"Besides," said he triumphantly, "she can never hesitate. Bah! prefer a wretched *frotteur* to a substantial citizen—never!"

"Pauline," began M. Boulard, in the morning, "I have to speak seriously to you. It seems your marriage must be decided on at once since high people have troubled themselves about it. But that I have spoken myself with the minister of police—I should think—never mind; I am not a fool. But, of course, I should be wrong. Well, Pauline, you must this morning decide. Two lovers are at your feet—Alexis; and, you will never believe it, Jean Prevost, the *frotteur*; isn't it ridiculous?"

"But my dear father I have no wish to marry."

"But, child, you must. You shall know the reasons another time. So, now child, you must speak out. Which is it to be—Alexis or Jean?"

"Then, dear papa, dear mamma, if it's all the same to you, I like Alexis!"

"I knew it!" cried the delighted Boulard. "Very well; but—I—love—Jean." And Pauline buried her pretty, blushing, pouting face in her hands.

The perfumer looked at his wife, his wife looked at him, and both cried, "I never could have thought it?"

"But," said Madame Boulard, resignedly, "perhaps it's for the best."

"Perhaps," replied Boulard, with a melancholy shake of his head. "Oh, women, women!"

A knock came to the door, and then Jean Prevost entered, so well dressed, so proudly happy, so handsome, that all started.

"I am come to know my fate," cried he; but the rogue had heard the last words of the old couple through the half-open door.

"She is yours," cried M. Boulard, with a sigh; "though what a poor *frotteur* can want with such a wife is more than I can imagine."

"I am not a poor *frotteur*," said Jean Prevost. "I am an honorary head gardener of Versailles, with a hundred louis of monthly income, and a house large enough to hold us all, if you will come and live with us, and sell your business. That you may understand my new rise, I may tell you, my new parents—but never repeat it—that I have luckily saved the King from the attempt of an obscure assassin, and that Louis XV. has shown his gratitude to the poor *frotteur*."

"Monsieur Jean—"

The young man smiled; he had never been called Monsieur before.

"Monsieur Jean, here is my hand. We accept, and are very glad, since Pauline loves you. It was for her sake we hesitated. There, take her, and may you both be as happy as we have been," and the old man looked affectionately at his wife and at the young couple, who had secretly yet looked at one another.

They were married, and they were happy. They went down to Versailles to live in the house the King gave them, and lived there after Louis XV.'s death, the place being kept for them by Louis XVI. Jean became gardener in reality; and for the eleven years that the King lived, he never wanted a bouquet of some kind when at his palace at Versailles; and far more wonderful, he never forgot the action of the *frotteur*, nor ceased to hear it in grateful and pleased remembrance. At his death there were two who shed genuine tears, and cast many a garland on his tomb—and these were Jean Prevost and Pauline his wife.

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FATHER BURKE'S LECTURE

"The Catholic Church the True Regenerator of Society."

(From the New York Irish American.)

The following lecture was delivered on Sunday, May 26th, in St. Mary's Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., by the Very Rev. Father Burke:—

MY FRIENDS,—The theme which I have chosen upon which to address you is "The Catholic Church the Only and True Regenerator of Society." The first thought that naturally comes to the mind is, that society must be sick, infirm, diseased,—rotten, if you will,—before it can require a regeneration. Reflect; to what thing we apply this word, to regenerate. When a system which was once good has degenerated, and become bad, men say, that it ought to be regenerated, which means that it ought to be reformed. When a race become demoralized, when bad blood gets into them, to weaken the intellect and heart; when they seem to be fading away, they ought to be regenerated;—that is to say they ought to get an infusion of fresh blood. So it is that we speak of society. When we speak of the regeneration of society, we must admit at once that this nature of ours, which composes human society, is a fallen nature. This must be taken for granted before we speak of that nature's regeneration. Therefore, before I come to the remedy, it is well that I should seek to describe the disease; just as when a physician is called in to attend a sick person, before he prescribes the remedy, before ever he writes the prescription or tells the persons about him what they

have to do, he inquires, "How is this? How has this fever come? What in his disease?" So, too, he examines the symptoms; he asks the persons around him, "How long has he been sick? How long has he been illing?" and so on; until he masters the disease. Then, and only then, can he see his way directly to an efficacious remedy. Well, my dear friends, guided by the light of divine revelation, we know that, when Almighty God made man, He did not make a diseased or corrupt creature. "Dons fecit hominem recte," says the Scripture. God made man right. God made him in the integrity of his nature. God added to the integrity of that nature a higher form—the gift of divine grace. Consider what we were, my friends, when God first made us. He made man composed of a human body and an immortal soul;—the body, with all its senses, with all its inclinations, with all its necessities; and into that body—formed of the slime of the earth—Almighty God breathed a living spirit—the image of Himself. Out of the union of that clay with the spirit of that which was heavenly,—which came from the mouth of God,—out of these two arose the human being called man;—the beautiful link wherein the mere material, gross and corruptible creation of this earth is united with the spiritual and incorruptible nature: the one magnificent bond wherein matter and spirit meet. And, when the soul and body first met in man, in that moment of his creation they met, my dear children, not as enemies,—there was a perfect concord between body and soul,—perfect sympathy. The soul was created to govern the body; the soul was created to direct every desire, every impulse,—to guide and direct every passion and inclination of man. All our bodily nature, the beauty of interior man lay in this, that everything that was inferior in him bowed to the superior, as that superior itself bowed down to God: and therefore the beautiful order in which God made man lay in this: He gave to man an intelligence capable of knowing and recognizing his Maker: He filled that intelligence with the light of His own divine knowledge. He gave to man a will which was to be guided by the instinct and dictation of that enlightened and magnificent intelligence; a will which was perfectly subject to the intellect as the intellect was to God. He gave to man a heart and affections that were to be governed by that will. They were never to rebel against that will. That heart and those affections were to be perfectly submissive and subordinate to the power of the will of man. He gave to man bodily passions, inclinations, senses and desires, which were all subjected to the dictates of that pure heart. As it was controlled by a perfectly free will, there was no passion in man, no bodily inclination, no desire that rebelled for an instant, but was perfectly subjected;—the affections and will to the guidance of man's intelligence,—which in turn bowed down to God. Then, beneath man and around him, every creature of God—the lion and the tiger that roamed the forests; the mountain stag that browsed upon the hill-side,—the fishes that swam the deep—the eagle that spread out its strong pinions to wing the healthy air, until he soared amongst the clouds and gazed upon the sun;—all these were as subject to man as man's body was to his soul, and as man's soul was to God. And, consequently, unfallen man was acknowledged the lord and emperor of this earth. At the sound of his magic and imperial voice, the winding serpent came forth out of his home, no poison in his fangs. At the sound of his voice, the eagle descended from her eyrie in the summit of the mountains, fluttering like a dove to his feet. At the sound of his voice, the tiger and the lion came forth from their lair, and licked the feet of their master, man. Behold, then, the order in which God created this world—He Himself first commanding all things. The first precepts of God fell upon the intelligence of man. That acknowledged them; the very obedience brought strength to him who obeyed; and every inferior faculty of his soul, and of the corrupt and impure heart all gave way—all were subject to the intelligence as the body was subject to the soul; so that there was an infinite beauty in man. Then all things acknowledged him as their ruler and their master. Oh! would it not be grand if Adam had not sinned and destroyed the integrity of the soul,—the magnificent spirit of man, without his disease, without his infirmity! Man, not knowing what it was to shed a tear of sorrow; man, not knowing one moment's anxiety, and in the strength, in the power of his friendship with God,—the complete being; the acknowledged ruler of all things; of earth itself, even inanimate earth, impregnated with blessings, bringing forth all that was most pleasing to the eye and delightful to the senses—fulfilling the order for which it was created—well pleased to give delight to its imperial master, man. If Adam had been faithful, human society would never require a regenerator, because it would never have fallen from the high and perfect thing that God made it in the beginning. But amongst the gifts that God gave to man, there was this—He gave him a free will,—freedom of will, which God Himself respected. He said to the unfallen creature: "Before thee, oh man, are life and death; before thee are virtue and