

## Choice Literature.

JOSEPHINE FOUGERE.

AN ALPINE STORY.

CHAPTER X.—DENNIS'S ADVICE.

The winter cold is going away, the violet has come up under the dead leaves, the grass is greener every day, and the sap begins to rise in the heart of the oak trees. The buds are growing red. Spring is coming! One feels it already, one breathes it before seeing it. The birds sing, the bees buzz and the insects hum; everything in nature is joyous. The sky is clear, the sun is bright, and still James Tristan is not happy.

How thoughtful he looks as he walks in front of his fine team of red oxen with their long horns! Their powerful heads make the yokes creak, while the heavy plough, guided by Dennis, cuts through the ground. James is absorbed in some grave thought; he hardly speaks to the animals, and not at all to his servant, yet he is his oldest friend and he loves him. For a long time the faithful Dennis has been troubled by his master's careworn, silent air. At last, when this silence had lasted many days, Dennis ventured to speak. "Has my master any pain in his body or in his heart that he is hiding from his old servant?" he asked with humble affection.

James was startled as if he had been suddenly waked from a dream, and answered quickly, "The pain is not in my body, no. It is with pain in the heart that I suffer."

"I am sorry for that, master. Why do you not tell me your troubles sometimes?"

James shook his head sadly, without answering.

"You are truly very much troubled," continued Dennis, "and I won't move from here till you tell me why. I am afraid, master, that bad thoughts haunt you."

"No, it is not a bad thought," said James half aloud, as if speaking to himself. "She is indeed the best and holiest girl who ever breathed the air of Fierbois."

"Whom, then, do you think so good and worthy?"

"There is only one: that is Josephine."

At these words Dennis's face brightened and a smile spread over his grave face. "It is true, master; you have judged rightly. She is fresher than a rose that is just opening. Her soul is purer, whiter, than a lily. Her mother was the pearl of the village. Take the daughter of a good mother; that is my advice."

"Be quiet, Dennis; you don't know what you're saying; she could never want me. Her father has been very cool to me since Scolastique's evil words. No, I tell you, I am too old for this young girl; she would never want me."

"How do you know, master? She has not told you. What would be the harm in asking her?"

"But, my friend, she is so young, would she want to manage all our household?"

"Don't be afraid, master. What she has done and endured for her father, who abused her, shows well what she could do for one who loved her."

"Do you really think that she would be willing to come and light up our home with her good, sweet face?"

"Yes, master; why not? Hers is small and poor enough: the roof is falling in and the walls are full of chinks, and yet each time that I went there to see our Benedicte the house seemed better than ours because of Josephine's gracious presence. He who marries her will be always rich, though he were the poorest man in the parish. See what she did for Benedicte. How can she refuse you when you would give the child whom she loves back to her?"

"Ah, my good Dennis, you make me thrill with joy when you tell me that perhaps I may please her. Go back to the plough; let me think about it until evening, and perhaps I shall decide to follow your advice."

All through the day Tristan turned the idea over and over in his mind, and when evening came he had decided. "I will speak to my little girl about it," he said to himself, "and I will do what the child tells me to do."

"Have you no more remembrance of your good friend of last year, since you never speak of her?" he said to Benedicte after supper, when the servants had gone out.

The child was seated beside her father at the end of the long, white table, her thoughtful head bent down. But when she heard these words she started, and flushing up to her hair, she straightened herself and said: "I think always of her. Father, I think so much that my heart aches with the wish to see her again. But Scolastique"—she dropped her head as she pronounced the name—"so sternly forbade me ever to speak of her that I have not dared to yet, though Scolastique is dead. She told me that Fougère wanted to kill me, and that Josephine hated me, but I didn't believe that; also that the great René had forbidden Josephine to come near me again; that I believed. I have asked God every day since to make you friends again and to give me back my Josephine."

"You did well, darling."

"Oh, Father, you do not dislike her, then? How happy I am! But why do you never speak of her?"

"Do not be too quick to rejoice, darling. Wait until to-morrow and ask God to take away Fougère's enmity and to turn his daughter's heart towards us."

"I shall never believe that Josephine wishes you anything else but good," she said, with an air of assurance. "But if you are not angry with her why do you not go and get her and bring her here?"

At first James did not answer. "We shall see, my Benedicte," he said at last. "You really think that Josephine wishes me well?"

"Oh, yes, Father," said the little girl with a more decided air. "But it is not late. why do you not go at once and find my dear friend?"

"But isn't it late?"

"It is never too late to do a good action. Oh, papa, don't wait; go quickly, I beg you."

At last decided, James started, but as he came near Fou-

gère's house his courage failed. "What will they say to see coming like a thief in the night to surprise them?"

The little lamp in the cottage shone in the shadow of the old ruin like a glow worm among the leaves. Softly he went to look in at the tiny panes of Josephine's window, but through the thick, blurred glass he could see nothing—nothing but the young girl's head as she bent over the lamp; this was enough for him.

"Is it possible," he cried, "that I shall ever see her seated as she is now at the table in our home?"

At last, taking courage, he grew bold enough to knock, but so timidly that he was not heard in the room. When he had knocked a second time, more loudly, a well-known voice called, "Come in." Tristan softly pushed open the door and stood face to face with Josephine. She was paring rosy apples beside the table; Fougère was sleeping in the chimney-corner. James stopped in front of René, who did not wake; then he looked at Josephine and his courage failed. He forgot to speak. Josephine, surprised, feared at first some bad news from Benedicte. Still, James's face did not look as though he had come to bring bad reports.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Tristan?" she said, half aloud, glancing toward her father, who seemed still asleep.

"Miss Josephine—" answered James in a trembling voice, and then stopped.

"I am not a young lady; I am Josephine Fougère. But tell me, what is the matter, Mr. Tristan? You are very pale. Is Benedicte sick?"

"No indeed, but she told me that you do not wish me any harm. Josephine, I have come to ask of your father so great and beautiful a gift that I am afraid he will refuse me, for I know that he is very angry with me. And you, Josephine, have I unfortunately offended you?"

"Offended me?" said the young girl, looking up to Benedicte's father with eyes full of surprise. "But, Mr. Tristan, it is we who have so deeply offended you that I am quite ashamed of it and beg you to excuse us. But tell me, Mr. Tristan, what is the matter?"

"Josephine Fougère," said the farmer, beginning suddenly, "I love you so much that I come to ask you—for the love of Benedicte—to become my wife."

The young girl flushed crimson as the apples she held; she dropped her eyes, folded her hands, then looked at Mr. Tristan, and, pointing to her father, said in a low, clear voice: "You do me great honour, Mr. Tristan, but I will not leave him. He is wounded and infirm. I will never leave him."

"And why must you leave him? Would not your home be his home? You shall do with my goods, as with me, what you wish. My child, whom you have twice saved, loves you so much that, out of pity for her, if not for me—"

At these words Josephine covered her scarlet face with both her hands, and all the apples rolled down with a great noise. From the depths of his corner René, who was by no means asleep, had followed the whole scene.

"I give her to you," he said in a low voice to the farmer; "and you, my daughter, tell him that you will accept him," he added, in a tone of authority. Then Josephine took her hands from her wet eyes and looked at her father, and then at Tristan as the sun looks upon the earth after an April shower. Through her tears shone forth her joy.

"Why do you say nothing?" asked Fougère.

"Because I am too happy," she answered at last.

"I am not worthy to keep her for myself alone," said René.

"Take her, James Tristan; she is a treasure." Who was happy? Benedicte. Who was surprised? everybody in the village. The poor girl whom no one had thought of became a subject of astonishment and envy for all the damsels in the country. But Josephine was not proud. She was so humble that envy was disarmed and all forgave her her good fortune.

"Josephine is very agreeable, but she has not a penny," said some.—"She's as industrious as a bee," said others, "but she hasn't a foot of land; her house is falling to pieces, and she has her good-for-nothing father on her hands."

"James loves happiness better than dollars."—"He is crazy."—"He is wise." Such were the remarks of the village people upon the engagement of James Tristan, the richest man in the parish, to Josephine, the poor spinning-girl of Fierbois.

The wedding followed soon. May flowers were still blooming when the church door opened wide as Josephine Fougère passed out leaning on James Tristan's arm. At their side walked Benedicte, clasping the hand which led her.

Among the wedding guests were the Countess of Bancey, and Leonora the beggar in new clothes. Old Dennis followed, full of joy; then Mr. Brown the miller; then all the village in line, with one heart wishing happiness for the bride.

Fougère could not yet walk with his wooden leg. He was sitting at James Tristan's fireside waiting until Josephine should come back to be mistress of the house. He had been sitting with his hands folded all the time the bells were ringing. When they reached home, Josephine and her husband went at once and knelt down before Fougère. "Bless us, father," she said.

"I cannot; I am not worthy," he answered.

"Bless us, father, I beg you."

René was so touched that his hands trembled. All the wolves of the mountains pursuing him would not have made him tremble so much. At last he placed his hands, one upon Josephine's head, the other upon James's, saying: "May the blessing of the God of Genevieve, your mother be upon you! May God be good to you, as you have been good to me, and may your husband be blessed in you!"

"Amen," answered James.

Leonora no longer begged from door to door. Her days of sorrow and trouble were ended, and when she found herself seated at Josephine's fireside she wished her "Jey, jey," with so much fervour that the gloom which Scolastique had cast about the place was for ever dispelled.

The ivy, the clematis and the brier in light festoons spread, little by little, over the deserted home of the last lord of Fierbois. The turf, silence and forgetfulness will cover the house where Josephine Fougère lived, but the simple virtues

which she practised will never perish, for "the works of mercy shall endure for ever."

THE END.

DR. STUART ROBINSON AS A PREACHER.

One secret of Dr. Robinson's eloquence lay in the strength of his convictions. A profound philosophy couches in the declaration of the Psalmist, "I believed—therefore have I spoken." The traditional belief, which rests only upon the assertions of others, will rather crumble before the opposition through which it fails to cut its way. But the truth which speaks with commanding emphasis, and proves itself

"The golden key"

That opens the palace of Eternity,"

must be first wrought into the texture of our own being. Partaking thus of our intellectual life, its utterances will be no dead word, but a living force impregnating other minds. In Dr. Robinson truth entered into the bone and sinew and muscle of his intellect and moral nature. No one entered more fully than he into the fine sentiment of Milton, that "a man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believes things only because his pastor says so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing her reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy." Not so with him of whom this paper treats. The depth of his convictions attested his loyalty to truth; and the words that were wrought in "the forge of his thought" went forth with a glow and heat that burned their impression upon all who heard. Truth is a mighty conqueror, and the man of strong convictions is her herald at arms. As with the silver trumpet at whose blast the disenchanted horsemen leaped upon their steeds, the true orator rouses men to action through the intensity of his faith, and inspires them with a zeal akin to his own.

From the vigour of his conceptions we naturally pass to the simplicity of their expressions. Dr. Robinson's force as a speaker lay, to no small extent, in the directness of his language coupled with a rare facility of illustration. It is a familiar adage, "the style is the man." In the expanded form of Fenelon, "a man's style is nearly as much a part of him as his physiognomy, his figure, the throbbing of his pulse." The thought weaves around it the dress in which it appears, reflecting the cast of mind from which it proceeds. This was pre-eminently true of the subject of this sketch. The mental attribute more obtrusive in him than any other, was its practicalness—betraying itself in what may be termed the business energy of his speech. It is a mistake to suppose that intense feeling always indulges in the language of passion. There is often a concentration of force in a word which is bloodless simply from the excess of its passion, as the water is stillest at the centre of the vortex. Dr. Robinson was too severely earnest for dalliance with the graces of rhetoric. His manner was generally calm and self-contained, sometimes approaching to nonchalance. His style was simple and direct, sometimes colloquial—and even slipping into negligence, when a touch of carelessness would secure the confidence he sought to win. But no man knew better how to make himself understood. As he spoke always to convince, there was a pulse in his words which thrilled with the energy of his thought. A robust simplicity may be signalized as the characteristic of his style; which disdained the mere trickery of speech, in order through its own directness to lodge itself in the conviction of the hearer.

In this he was greatly assisted by an amazing fertility of illustration, lighting up the subject under discussion as with an electric splendour. Springing spontaneously to his lips in the fervour of speech, and being never prostituted to meretricious adornment, it became in his hands an instrument of logic. His illustrations were accordingly singularly happy, especially when softly suggested in a word—as when he represented the prayer in the Christian's mere desire by the hungry look of the child who pleads for what he wants in the silent, yet expressive language of the eye. This three-fold combination of vigour of conception, business energy of language, and the pictorial presentation of his thoughts, often lifted him to the sublime. It was a generous criticism of his oratory by one of his own colleagues at Danville, himself a master of the same great art, who said to the writer: "There are passages in Robinson's Discourses on Redemption which are Miltonic in their grandeur."

Reference has been made to the practicalness of Dr. Robinson's mind, as well as to the diffusive benevolence of his heart. It may not be logically distinct from these to emphasize the interest he felt in the social questions which agitated the age in which he lived. The discussion of these living issues formed a link between himself and the masses, and was most potent factor in the influence which he wielded over them. In early life his attention was arrested by those rarely forces, which, disguised under varying forms of fanaticism, were seeking the overthrow of order and government among men. He patiently exposed these disorganizing schemes, and expounded the principles upon which society must be conserved and reformed. We find just here the explanation of his especial fondness for the exposition of the historical portions of the Bible, which opened to him the opportunity of meeting these social issues ever recurring, under the pressure of similar exigencies, in the great historic drama. Whilst legitimately employed in unfolding the meaning of holy Scripture, he could deliver his ponderous blows against destructive popular errors.

His mode of discussion deserves also to be noted, as drawing him near to the public audiences he was called to address. He was no minute philosopher dealing with the abstractions of the closet, and spinning out his conclusions through fatiguing processes of the reason. He rather tapped, as by the intuition of knowledge, to the hidden principles which controlled the discussion; and his forte seemed to be in the luminous exposition of these to the clear apprehension of other minds. If the distinction may be allowed, he was not a reasoner of the schools but of the forum. It was a mistake to have looked him up for two years in a seminary of learning, except with reference to a specific work of which he there acquired the hint, and which formed the pivot of his after career. With this topic, however, the present