

by a noisome vapor with a musty smell. His dogs also seemed affected by the wretched weather, so dejected did they look, as, with drooping tails and reeking skins, they trotted along close behind his heels.

In the main parlor after dinner we had been playing lotto to kill time, while gusts of wind rattled the windows and on the outside made the old weathercocks spin like tops. Finding but little pleasure in the game we tried our hands at story telling, just as people are said to do in books, but no one invented anything amusing. The hunters related adventures that had occurred to them while out shooting—massacres of rabbits, while the ladies racked their brains in futile attempts to discover Scheherazade's inspiration.

We were on the point of giving up this species of entertainment also when a young lady, thoughtlessly toying with the hand of her maiden aunt, noticed on one of the old lady's fingers a small ring made of light hair. She had frequently seen this trinket, but had never before paid any attention to it.

As she gently turned the ring around her aunt's finger she asked:

"By the by, auntie, what ring is this? It looks like the hair of a child."

The old maid blushed, became pale, then, with a faltering voice, she said:

"It is so sad a story that I never like to speak of it. It was the one great misfortune of my life. I was quite young when it all happened, and yet the memory of it is so painful that I still shed tears whenever I think about it."

As a matter of course all wanted to hear the story. The old maid at first refused to tell it, but finally she yielded to our solicitations, and began as follows:

"You have often heard tell of the Santeze family. It is now extinct, but I was acquainted with the three last men of that race. They all died the same death. This ring is the hair of the last one. He was thirteen years old when he killed himself on my account. That seems very strange to you, does it not?"

Oh, they were a singular race, insane, if you wish, but the most charming lunatics, crazed by love. All, from father to son, were a prey to violent passions; to great impulses, which made them enthusiasts in all they undertook, to such an extent, that they would not have hesitated at a crime. In them this passion was what ardent devotion is in certain minds. Those who become Trappists are not of the same nature as our drawing room butterflies. In our family we used to say: "In love like a Santeze." They all had curly hair and beard, and large eyes, the light of which seemed to penetrate and disturb one's soul, though it would have been hard to say why.

The grandfather of the one of whom

this is the only souvenir I have, after many adventures and duels, at the age of 65 fell blindly in love with his farmer's daughter. I knew both of them. She was a pale blonde, of a distinguished appearance, with a soft voice, and so gentle a look that she seemed a Madonna. The old nobleman took her to his house, and became so attached to her that he could not be happy a minute unless he was in her company. His daughter and step daughter, who lived in the chateau with him, found this quite natural, so traditional had love become in the family. Nothing surprised them if passion had anything to do with the case, and if they happened to hear of broken ties, of parted lovers, even of revenge being taken after a betrayal, they both would say in the same afflicted voice: "Oh! how he (or she) must have suffered." Nothing else. They only grew tender over dramas of the heart, and never displayed any ill feeling, even when these dramas culminated in crime.

Well, one autumn M. de Gradelle, a young man who had been invited to take part in the chase, went off, taking the young girl with him.

Mr. De Santeze remained perfectly cool, as if nothing had happened; but a few mornings after he was found in his dog kennel, hanging amidst his dogs.

His son died in the same way at a hotel in Paris. While spending some time in that city in 1841 he became enamored of an opera singer. As the lady did not return his love he hanged himself.

He left behind him a son 12 years old, and a widow, my mother's sister. They came to live with us, at my father's place at Bertillon. I was at the time 17 years of age.

You cannot imagine what a remarkably precocious child this little Santeze was. It looked as if all the tenderness, all the enthusiasm of the whole race had fallen to this one, the last of the name. He always seemed to be in a dream, and for hours he would walk all alone in the long avenue of elm trees which leads from the chateau to the woods. From my window I would notice the sentimental lad stepping gravely along, his hands behind his back, his eyes cast down, now and then stopping to look up, as if he saw and understood and felt things that were beyond his years.

Often, after dinner, on moonlit nights, he would say to me: "Come, cousin, let us go out to muse." And then we would start out together through the park. He would stop abruptly in front of the glades where floated that white vapor, that light wadding with which the moon pads the opening between the trees; then he would say to me, as he pressed my hand: "See that, see. But you do not understand me; I know you don't. If you did, we would be happy. One must love to un-