

The Abbe Constantin.

BY LUDOVIC HALEVY.

CHAPTER II.—(CONTINUED.)

At this moment, a tinkling as of little bells was heard. A carriage was approaching and the old iron work rattled. The abbe's little garden was separated from the road only by a low hedge, breast-high, with a little open gate in the middle of it.

All three looked up and saw an old fashioned livery carriage coming, drawn by two big white horses, and driven by an old coachman in a blouse. By the side of the coachman sat a servant in the severest and most perfect of liveries.

Inside the carriage were two young women, both in traveling dress, very elegant, but very simple.

When the carriage reached the garden hedge, the driver stopped his horses, and addressing the abbe:

"Monsieur le Cure," said he, "here are some ladies who want to see you." Then turning to his passengers, he added:

"This is Monsieur le Cure, of Longueval."

The Abbe Constantin had approached and opened the little gate. The travelers alighted. Their attention was immediately drawn, not without some surprise, to the young officer, who to his great embarrassment, stood with his straw hat in one hand and in the other a big salad bowl heaped up with endive.

The two ladies entered the garden, and the elder—she seemed to be about twenty-five—said with a slightly foreign accent, quite unusual and peculiar:

"I must introduce myself, Monsieur le Cure, Madame Scott. I am the Madame Scott who bought the chateau, yesterday, and the farms and all the rest. I hope I do not disturb you, and that you can spare me a few minutes."

Then pointing to her traveling companion:

"Miss Bettina Percival—my sister—you have surmised it already, I think. We are so alike, are we not? Ah! Bettina, we have left our little bags in the carriage, and we want them."

"I will go and get them." And as Miss Percival started for the two bags, Jean said:

"Allow me, mademoiselle, I beg of you."

"I am very sorry, Monsieur, to give you so much trouble. The servant will hand them to you—they are under the front seat."

She had the same accent as her sister, the same large black eyes, laughing and bright, and the same hair—not red—but blonde with golden lights, where the sunlight played softly through it. She bowed to Jean, with a pretty smile, and he, giving the bowl of endive to Pauline, went to get the little bags.

Meanwhile, the Abbe Constantin, very much agitated and embarrassed, was conducting the new chatelaine of Longueval into the parsonage.

CHAPTER III.

The parsonage of Longueval was not a palace. The same room on the ground floor, served for a salon, and for a dining-room, communicating directly with the kitchen by a door, that was always wide open; this room was provided with the scantiest amount of furniture: two old arm chairs, six straw chairs, a side-board, and a round table. Pauline had already laid the cloth for two, the Abbe and Jean.

Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival went in and out, examining the cure's residence with a sort of childish curiosity.

"The garden, the house, everything is charming," said Mrs. Scott.

Together they boldly entered the kitchen. The Abbe Constantin followed them, astonished, stupefied, horrified

at this abrupt and unexpected American invasion.

Old Pauline looked at the two foreigners with a disturbed and sullen air.

"Look at them," she said to herself, "these heretics, these hateful people."

And with trembling hands she went on mechanically picking over her salad.

"I congratulate you," said Bettina to her, "your little kitchen is so well kept! Look, Suzie, is it not just your idea of a parsonage?"

"And the cure, too," said Mrs. Scott, "Ah! yes, Monsieur le Cure, won't you let me tell you so? If you know how glad I am that you are just what you are! What did I tell you on the train this morning, Bettina? and just now again in the carriage?"

"My sister said, Monsieur le Cure, that what she desired most of all was a cure, not young, not gloomy, not severe—a cure with white hair, and a kind and pleasant disposition."

"And you are just exactly that, Monsieur le Cure—exactly. No, we could not be better pleased. Excuse me, I beg of you, for speaking so to you. Parisians know how to turn their phrases in a skillful, delicate manner. As for us, I do not know how, and I would have great difficulty in keeping out of trouble, in speaking French, if I did not say things simply, foolishly, just as they came. In short, I am pleased, very much pleased; and I hope you are too, Monsieur le Cure, that you are pleased, very much pleased, with your new parishioners."

"My parishioners!" said the cure, finding speech, motion, life, everything which, for a few minutes had completely deserted him. "My parishioners! Pardon me, madame, mademoiselle—I am so overcome! You could be—you are Catholics!"

"Why, yes, we are Catholics." "Catholics! Catholics!" repeated the cure.

"Catholics! Catholics!" cried old Pauline, who appeared, beaming, radiant, her hands uplifted, in the doorway of the kitchen.

Mrs. Scott looked at the cure, and looked at Pauline, very much astonished to have produced such an effect with a single word. And, to complete the picture, Jean appeared, carrying the two little travelling bags. The cure and Pauline greeted him in the same words:

"Catholics! Catholics!"

"Ah! I understand," said Mrs. Scott, laughing, "it is our name, our country! You thought we were Protestants. Not at all; our mother was a Canadian, of French and Catholic origin. That is the way that my sister and I come to speak French, with an accent, it is true, and with a certain American manner; but at least so that we can say almost anything that we want to say. My husband is a Protestant, but he leaves me perfect liberty; and my two children are Catholics. This is why, Monsieur l'Abbe, we have wanted, from the first day, to come to see you."

"For that," continued Bettina, "and for something else; but for this something else, we must have our little bags."

"Here they are, mademoiselle," said Jean.

"This one is mine."

"And this is mine."

While the little bags were passing from the officer's hands to the hands of Mrs. Scott and Bettina, the cure presented Jean to the two Americans; but he was still in such a state of emotion, that the presentation was not entirely according to rule. The cure forgot only one thing, but a very essential thing in an introduction, Jean's surname.

"This is Jean, my godson," said he, "lieutenant in the artillery regiment, stationed at Souvigny. He is one of the family."

Jean made two immense bows; the Americans, two little ones; after which they began to look into their

bags, and each took out a roll of a thousand francs, daintily inclosed in green leather boxes hooped with gold.

"I have brought you this for your poor people, Monsieur le Cure," said Mrs. Scott.

"And I this," said Bettina. They slipped their offerings delicately into the right hand and into the left hand of the old cure, and he, looking first at his right hand and then at his left, said to himself:

"What are these two little things. They are very heavy. There must be gold in them. Yes; how much! how much!"

The Abbe Constantin was sixty-two years old, and a good deal of money had passed through his hands—not to stay long, it is true; but that money had come to him in little sums, and the idea of such a present had never entered his head. Two thousand francs! He had never had two thousand francs in his possession, never over a thousand.

Then, not knowing what they had given him, the cure did not know how to thank them.

"I am very grateful to you, madame; you are very good, mademoiselle," he faltered.

After all, he did not thank them enough. Jean thought it was time to interfere.

"Godfather, these ladies have just given you two thousand francs."

Then, overcome with emotion and gratitude, the cure cried:

"Two thousand francs! Two thousand francs for my poor!"

Pauline suddenly made a fresh appearance.

"Two thousand francs! Two thousand francs!"

"So it appears," said the cure, "so it appears. Here, Pauline, lock up this money, and take care of it."

Old Pauline was servant, cook, apothecary, treasurer—in short, all sorts of things at the parsonage.

With trembling hands she respectfully received the two little rolls of gold pieces, which represented so much suffering relieved, so many sorrows softened.

"That is not all," said Mrs. Scott. "I will give you five hundred francs every month."

"And I will give the same as my sister."

"A thousand francs a month! But there will no longer be any poor."

"That is just what we want. I am rich, very rich—and my sister, too! She is even richer than I; because a young girl does not have so many expenses, while I—Ah! I—I spend all I can; all that I can. When one has a good deal of money, too much money; if one has really more than is right: say, Monsieur l'Cure, is there any other way to get pardon for such a sin, than to have open hands and give, give, give as much as possible, and as well as possible? Besides, you are going to give me something."

And, addressing Pauline, "Will you be so good as to give me a glass of water? No, nothing else—just a glass of water. I am dying of thirst."

"And I," said Bettina, laughing, while Pauline ran to bring a glass of water, "I am dying of something else. I am dying with hunger. Monsieur le Cure, I know it is awfully impolite, but I see that your table is laid. Couldn't you ask us to dinner?"

"Bettina!" said Mrs. Scott.

"Be still, Suzie, be still. You want us, do you not, Monsieur le Cure?"

The old cure could not reply. He no longer knew anything—even where he was. They took his parsonage by assault. They were Catholics! They had brought him two thousand francs! They promised him a thousand francs a month! And they wanted to dine with him! That was a climax. He was dismayed at the idea of doing the honors—of his leg of mutton and his dish of eggs, *au lait*—to these two rich Americans, who were accustomed to be

served with the daintiest, rarest, most extraordinary dishes. He murmured: "To dine! to dine! You would dine here!"

Jean was obliged to interfere a second time:

"My godfather will be only too happy," said he, "if you will consent; I see what troubles him. We expected to dine alone, the two of us; and so you must not expect a banquet, ladies. You will make allowances."

"Yes, yes; all allowances," said Bettina.

Then, addressing her sister:

"Now, Suzie, do not frown at me because I have been a little goose; you know that I am always a little goose. Let us stay, will you? It will rest us so much to spend an hour here quietly. We have had such a tiresome day on the railway, in the carriage, in the dust, in the heat! We had such a frightful breakfast this morning in such a frightful hotel. We would have to go back to that same hotel to dine at half-past seven, so that we could take the train back to Paris. It will be much nicer to dine here. You won't say no? Ah! dear Suzie, you are so good."

She kissed her sister, so coaxingly, so tenderly, then turning to the cure:

"If you only know, Monsieur le Cure, how good she is."

"Bettina! Bettina!"

"Come," said Jean, "hurry, Pauline! Two more plates. I will help you."

"And I, too," cried Bettina, "I, too. I am going to help you. Let me, I beg of you, it will please so much. Only, Monsieur le Cure, you must let me make myself at home a little."

TO BE CONTINUED.



James E. Nicholson.

CANCER ON THE LIP

CURED BY

AYER'S Sarsaparilla

"I consulted doctors who prescribed for me, but to no purpose. I suffered in agony seven long years. Finally, I began taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla. In a week or two, I noticed a decided improvement. Encouraged by this result, I persevered, until in a month or so the sore began to heal, and, after using the Sarsaparilla for six months, the last trace of the cancer disappeared." JAMES E. NICHOLSON, Florenceville, N. B.

Ayer's The Only Sarsaparilla

Admitted at the World's Fair.

AYER'S PILLS Regulate the Bowels.



We shall be pleased to forward Catalogues on application, if goods required are mentioned, and should you require anything in the music line, whether it be

SHEET MUSIC, MUSIC BOOKS,

—OR—

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

Prices the lowest.

WHALEY, ROYCE & Co.,

155 Yonge St., Toronto, Ont.

\$3 A DAY SURE Read as your address and we will show you how to make \$3 a day, absolutely sure, for the work and each you find you work in the locality where you live. Send us your address and we will explain the business fully, reasonable and guarantee a clear profit of \$3 for every day a week, absolutely sure. Don't fall for the lies today. INTERNAL SILVERWARE CO., Box 64 Windsor, Ont.