

"Yes father," replied Dominique, with a sad and thoughtful air.

"In what?" asked the cooper.

"To have fine clothes," said the plebeian child, his blue eyes brightening.

At this moment the three interlocutors were interrupted by several valets crossing the parlour, saying amongst themselves, in an undertone, "Yes! there has been another theft!"

"Nonsense! It's only report."

"But I tell you that young Lucian has lost a crown piece of six livres; and little Voltaire, whose mother only yesterday sent him thirty livres, found his purse empty this morning. And I, who tell you this" (continued he, who was speaking), *I* "myself miss a piece of twelve sous."

"Thieves?—What! do you mean to say there are thieves here?" cried the fat cooper.

"Yes, sir, for some time," replied the man; "and very disagreeable for those who are honest."

"Thieves!" repeated old Cartouche, "there is nothing I abominate more than thieves. I love my son, and would die for him; but if he were a thief, I'd wring his neck for him. Never steal, Dominique, for thou knowest my temper, eh?"

"You need not fear that of your son, Monsieur Cartouche," said the little marquis; "Dominique is the best pupil in the college, —good, courageous, and devoted. You see how delicate I am, Monsieur Cartouche; well, then, when any one attacks me, Dominique defends me;—if I cannot study long, its Dominique who writes my exercises for me;—in short we are never apart, and are called the 'inseparable.'" "And have you never lost any money?" asked Cartouche, hesitatingly, and with apparent anxiety.

"How should I know? Do you think I ever count the money I put into my pocket?" said the marquis carelessly. "And even if I did, do you suppose I should suspect either of my companions?"

"Take these few sous as pocket-money, and be careful of them," said the elder Cartouche, embracing his son. "Monsieur le Marquis, I have the honour of wishing you

good day;" and the father Cartouche respectfully retired from the parlour.

CHAPTER 11.—THE LONGING DESIRE FOR THE BOX.

"What is that box they have given thee?" asked Dominique of the marquis, as they returned to the school-room.

"Oh, nothing—only a hundred francs that my father has sent me."

"A hundred francs nothing? How you talk!" replied Dominique.

At this moment Comtois entered, and giving his young master the key of his room, said:—

"I have placed the box on the wardrobe of the marquis, as I was desired."

"Very well," said Charles, putting the key into the pocket opposite the side where Cartouche stood.

The cooper's son did not take his eyes from the pocket which contained the key, but it was not easy to abstract it. Several times he essayed to pass his hand before his companion, under pretence of getting a book or a pen, until Charles remarked it.

"What is the matter with thee?" he asked; "one would imagine thou could'st not sit still."

"It is so gloomy, I cannot see," said Cartouche, embarrassed.

"Let us change desks, then," said the little marquis, unsuspectingly.

Having changed positions, Cartouche could the more easily obtain possession of the key.

"What art thou doing there?" he kept saying every moment to Charles, leaning on him to see what he was writing, and each time touching lightly, either with his body or his hand, the pocket of his friend. At length, at a moment when the marquis was correcting his exercise, Cartouche managed to draw the key from his friend's pocket, and place it in his own feigning indisposition, obtained permission to retire, and quitted the room.

Cartouche had scarcely left the room when he met Comtois, who said he was about to go for his master.

"Very well," replied Dominique; "do not hurry, and I will take your place near Charles in your absence."