

race as they. Luckily she is not allowed much latitude of mischief-making, and is properly chaffed by her worthy spouse, who dubs himself 'baron of thistles and lord of screech-owls,' though all the while a little elated in secret over his acquisition.

Then we have their son Henri, a man who could not be produced under any other style or method of bringing up, than that of the French. He has committed follies while studying at Paris, not on account of any excess of passion or emotion in his nature, but because it is the fashion to do so. Returning home to see his old love Miette, to whom he has been half betrothed for years, without seeing her while he was away, he is much agitated—at what? Lest he should 'find her no longer as charming as she had appeared at eighteen.' We rejoice to say that this insufferable young prig is properly served out, for he finds her more beautiful than ever, but not nearly so kind, and he is moreover plunged into pangs of jealousy over a mysterious person who is concealed in Miette's house. Now Miette is an orphan, and lives alone on her own property, her brother Jacques being away at his property of Champgousse. How then can a stranger be in the house without such a shock to the moral perceptions of this extremely proper young lady as could never be endured with safety? This is the problem of which master Henri chews the cud, and arrives at no conclusion. Miette is described as 'calm, pure, decided, and sincere, the personification of integrity, goodness, and courage;' and our general impression of her at the end of the book is, that though we can't find fault with a single thing she has done, said, or thought, we should have loved her much more if she had not been *quite* so angelic and proper. She is admirably adapted for the cool and sagacious Henri, and their reconciliation in the last chapter, when he puts on a white apron and helps her cook the dinner on a sudden emergency ('he, so aristocratic!' as his mother exclaims, in dire alarm on hearing of it) is prophetic of a long humdrum provincial life, full of prosaic respectability, and capable of instilling the extract of all the (French) virtues into the next generation.

Jacques is a pleasanter study. He is more of an animal, but withal more lovable than the calculating Henri. Although not thirty, 'he was growing very stout, his complexion once as fair as a girl's, had taken a purplish lustre in contrast with his silver blonde hair. *He had one of those faces that one sees afar off.*' Henri said of him, and in Henri's mouth the expression depicts both the describer and the person he describes, 'He is a buffoon, still young and good.' The author portrays Jacques and his lady-love with great power, but as the mystery

of the tale centres round them it would be unfair to tell it in advance. If the reader is interested, let him consult M. Chantabel, who will unravel the whole secret to him; for with the slightly overdrawn cleverness of the stage-detective, he contrives to make himself the master of every one's hidden clue of action.

Two very unpleasant persons complete the list of actors. The Countess de Nives, M. Chantabel's last client, is a peculiarly objectionable woman, of really villainous character. At the grand dinner, cooked by Miette, when all the family are gathered after the *dénouement*, the author contrives to find means, even in the mode of their eating, to delineate their varying traits of disposition. Mde de Nives, with her extreme thinness and her pock-marked complexion, has the robust appetite of avaricious persons who dine at other people's expense. The great Jacques swallows everything cheerfully, with a sincere and hearty flow of spirits; but this angular person, with her closed mouth and handsome, straight nose, too flat underneath, appeared to be carefully storing a supply of provisions in her stomach, as certain animals do in their nests at the approach of winter.

Several annoying slips in grammar occur in the translation, but not enough to disfigure the work, which is a very pleasing and powerful specimen of the style of the author, who, next to George Elliot, has done most to redeem the modern novel from decaying along with the modern drama.

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