

—him upon whom depended the happiness of two families, the very existence of his own?

"Ernest," began Madame Pottier in a low, broken voice, "my child may soon lose the protection of her mother. Remain here and guard her in the troubles and perils that may beset her. Here we are all assembled; your brother will draw out the contract of marriage on the spot; it shall be signed to-night, and to-morrow my Therese will have a protector."

"To-morrow," murmured Ernest; "to marry Therese to-morrow; oh, my dear belle mere, you tempt me sorely. But my comrades who wait in the forest?"

"I own that I forgot for a moment the claims of honour and patriotism. I thought only of the dear mother deceased, recalled only her dying words confiding the much-loved son to my charge."

"Remain here, Ernest," I cried; "remain here and live for our sakes. In the name of our dead parents I bid you remain; your comrades shall be warned."

"But I am their leader," he said; "without me they are lost. Tell me, my friends, can any asylum be found for them in this place?"

"We looked at each other, but felt that it was impossible to rescue them. With every house occupied by soldiers, and a strict watch kept upon all, to attempt to harbour this little band would be only to lead them to destruction, and uselessly to bring severities upon the peaceable inhabitants of the town. Ernest we could save, but the rest must save themselves. He saw the answer in our faces."

"Then I must go," he cried.

"Speak to him, Therese," I said to the young girl; "remind him of the rights that you have over him. Forbid him for your sake to throw away his life."

"I watched her face anxiously, the ingenuous face of a maiden who had hardly left her mother's side since infancy, who had known no world except that of the affections, and whose softly-dawning passion had been engrossed by one alone. He was all the future to her now, this bright young lover, as her parents had been all her past. Surely, the mother's voice would find an echo in her. She, too, would bid him to stay. How could he resist her voice, the gentle appeal of her tears? for tears ran unheeded down her cheeks, while her soft, swimming eyes fixed upon him. A sob quivered in her slender throat, and her lip trembled like that of a child in deep tribulation. But her voice was clear and firm as she clasped her hands on his shoulder and said, leaning against his breast:

"You must go, dear Ernest. If I have the right over you, as they say, still I must bid you go; it is better to die with honour than live disgraced."

"We all wept like children, for we felt that the girl was right, and yet it seemed to be sending him forth to certain death."

"The merry music from below now broke out in wild mocking strains, and the house shook as the waltzers whirled swiftly round. Ah, how our enemies rejoiced, while we gathered stealthily together and in silence and grief devoted our youngest and best to death and sorrowful separation!"

"That night I lay in bed, but not asleep—with my clothes on, indeed, and a cloak beside me, ready to throw over my shoulders. It was a cruel night—real wolf-cold, and I thought bitterly of poor Ernest in his miserable bivouac awaiting the approach of the hour that was to bring release or death. At three o'clock the tide would be at the lowest, and that was the hour fixed for the attempt to steal through the Prussian lines. As the clock struck three I rose and went to my window, an upper window which commanded the river. The fog had cleared away and the stars were shining brightly. The frost had congealed the vapour, and everything was covered with a white shroud. By the soft diffused light the landscape was visible in a faint, filmy way, but I strained my eyes in vain to make out the point where I knew the light-house to be. I could see nothing distinctly, although the frozen part of the river showed all ghastly white with a dark channel of deep water winding through it."

"Then I heard a shot—a second followed a moment afterward, and then a rattling fusillade all along the line, fearfully distinct in the still night, and rolling back from the hills in thunderous echoes. A trumpet rang out a call to arms. My inmates were at once on the move, and in a few moments were off at the double to the place of assembly. The town was now astir, every house gave forth its complement of soldiers, and the peaceful inhabitants, aroused from their slumbers, peered cautiously out from behind shutters and blinds at the gathering troops. Something had happened, and hope whispered fondly, something wrong for the Prussians—an evacuation, perhaps, following some crushing disaster. We dreamed of such things then—of armies breaking through our iron bonds, of victorious legends issuing forth from Paris—we dreamed of such things, to awake to realities of fresh woe and disaster."

"After awhile the excitement subsided, the troops returned to quarters. Also came back my two inmates. They did not go to their room. They stopped at my door and knocked gently. With a swift presentiment of misfortune I opened to them. 'What is the matter?' I asked."

"Nothing, we hope. A small band of your countrymen tried to break through our lines and cross the river. One was shot by a man of our company, who, hastily searching him, found this map."

"The chart was there before me—the chart

that I had given my brother the night before! It was all too clear. The poor boy had fallen. I turned away that our enemies might not see my grief."

"A moment; we notice that your name is stamped on one corner. You lent it to a friend, perhaps."

"To my brother—my only brother—whom you have killed."

"The two murmured some sympathetic sentences, with looks that seemed to say, 'Do not think us to blame.' Then the older went on to say: 'The map we must deliver up to our superiors; but the name upon it, leading to the inference that it had been lent by the owner to one of these irregular soldiers—would it not be an act of common prudence to cut it off? See, here is a knife; we will turn away.'

"No, I would not avail myself of the chance. It was not for me to disown my brother in his hour of death. Let them do what they liked with me. Still, I was touched with the good feeling of these two young fellows, who perhaps risked a good deal to serve me. We even shook hands, a thing I had never thought to do. 'They were brave fellows,' they whispered; 'whatever happens, do not blame us. Let us part friends.'

"I slept after this, quite worn out, a heavy, unrefreshing slumber, broken just at daybreak by a tramping of feet past my window. A detachment of Prussians was hurrying past, and in the midst a stretcher borne upon men's shoulders, the burden hastily covered with a soldier's great coat; but showing the rigid lines of a corpse. Was it Ernest? I hastily prepared to go out and see."

"Just as I was going out there was a loud knocking at the great door. I opened, and there stood a sub-officer with a guard of soldiers. They hurried me away with scant ceremony, and in spite of my protests at thus being made a victim of barbarous force. People who were going to work, looked back at the procession and murmured: 'Ah, there goes poor M. Brunet. May the bon Dieu be merciful to him!' just as if it were my funeral. And this I felt it to be."

"I was marched into the large hall of the Mairie, and there I found the maire, dragged from a sick bed; also the worthy Pottier and the rest of the municipal council, each under an escort of bayonets. It was then, by the way, as we waited in silence and suspense our fate, that I intrusted to my brave friend the secret of the exact spot where my strong box was buried. Soon after a fierce, white-headed general appeared, and snapped out a rude address in his native tongue; rude and malevolent we felt it to be, and even when softened by translation into our own language, it appeared sufficiently truculent. Last night, or early this morning rather, it seemed that a sentry had been killed at his post. This culprit must be found, and handed over to the military authorities with sufficient evidence to justify his being shot. Disperse and use every effort to discover the doer of this dreadful crime, and meet me here at noon with the culprit, or by Him in heaven one of you shall die for it—settle among you which."

"This was the conclusion of the address, and we looked at each other in wonder and dismay. Then we were marched out into the ante-room to view the body of the dead sentry. There he lay, stiff and stark, a fine tall soldier, killed by a knife driven into his heart. The knife lay by his side—one of the pieces of evidence—and I recognized it in a moment as my own—the silver-mounted dagger that Ernest had appropriated."

"Man of peace as I am, a book-worm to whom arms are hateful, I felt a fierce throb of joy as I saw this proof of my brother's prowess. He had not died altogether in vain, and it was now for me to justify the deed, and take the burden of it."

"Tell your general," I said, turning to the officer who had us in charge, "that I know the man who did the deed; he was my brother, but it was no assassination, but a fair blow struck for the lives of five good Frenchmen. The knife that did the deed is mine, and if another victim is required—"

"No," cried the brave Pottier, "he was mine, my son; it is my right to suffer for him."

"Settle it among you," cried the officer roughly.

"And we were thrust into the street, with orders to come back at noon precisely. Pottier walked back with me to my house. There we saw two female figures, in deep mourning, and closely veiled, waiting for us in the passage. Madame Pottier had risen from a bed of sickness to bring her daughter down to visit the body of her fiancé, which, owing to the kindness of my German friends, had been brought to my house."

"You will be glad to hear, dear brother," whispered Therese, who bore up with a fortitude quite marvellous in one so young, "that poor Ernest did not sacrifice himself in vain. The five others got safely across the river, and were seen to plunge into the forest beyond."

"They had disposed the glorious tri-colour about the body, and some one had laid a sprig of laurel across the breast. I went reverently to uncover the face of the corpse. It was not Ernest's—the face of a brave man sternly compressed, and yet composed, in death, but not Ernest's."

"I turned to Therese, who had followed me into the darkened room. 'It is not he! he lives; he has escaped!'

"Therese fell fainting into my arms. I gave her to her mother's care and left the house. My task seemed easy now; I could picture to myself

the future. Ernest and his wife—their children clustered about them, as he tells them the story of the good old uncle who was killed by the Prussians. The sacrifice was not so hard, after all; but I thought a little regretfully of the unfinished monograph—how it would be one day swept up among the rubbish of my library and consigned to perdition. And I wandered out to my favourite spot just below the Villa Pottier, where a sweet panorama of hills and broad plains and winding river gleamed softly under a ray of winter sunshine. Farewell to all this!"

"At noon I presented myself at the Mairie, passed through a file of soldiers to the grand salon, and found that my colleagues of the municipal council—all except Pottier—were already assembled. My resolution to offer myself as a victim, if one were demanded, was generally applauded, and a resolution accepting it passed without a dissenting voice. It was promised that my name should be inscribed on the records of the town as one of its noblest citizens. All very well, no doubt, in its way."

"There was a general crash of arms as the general entered the salon, accompanied by an officer whom I recognized as the Prince L. Pottier, at the same moment, slipped in behind us and gave my arm a reassuring squeeze."

"There was no victim to be offered up, after all. Pottier had appealed to his distinguished guest, Prince L., telling him the whole affair, and the prince had spoken to the general, and the latter now announced in somewhat surly, disappointed accents—'That the penalty of death to a municipal councillor was commuted into a fine on the commune of twenty-five thousand francs.'

"Soon after we had news of the armistice, and in a little while Ernest was once more among us. Lucky fellow, to have a Therese to welcome him home and set him as the greatest hero of the war! They were married soon after, and removed to Paris, where Ernest is now practising at the bar. It seems that it was not Ernest himself who killed the sentry, but the brave fellow who was shot, to whom Ernest intrusted the chart and the knife. Ernest would have done the same, he says, had he been in the way of it; but I think Therese is rather glad that it was not so. I hope I shall never see my two German friends again, although we parted on excellent terms. They accepted from me a case of champagne as a memorial—which I did not care should be too lasting—of their occupation of my humble dwelling; and the other day I had in return sundry bottles of the veritable Kirschwasser of the Black Forest, which, I hope, is to your taste, and now let us talk about the exposition."

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES

A woman is never too busy to step in next door to see how a new carpet looks.

THE man who, wanting a servant, advertised for a "middle-aged single woman," doesn't understand why he has received no applications for the position.

CARLYLE'S niece is to marry a cousin and bring her husband home to live with her uncle, which must be several degrees worse than the most terrible case of mother-in-law.

A HUSBAND'S farewell: "Dear Sal, the doctor tells me our baby's tooth won't be through for three weeks yet; till then, good-bye; you always said you loved it more than I did."

SOME wretchedly belated family were moving up Main street last night. Moving by daylight is condensed woe, but going through the painful operation after dark must be the very cellar kitchen of wretchedness.

WE saw a lovely family party taking the air on the common yesterday. The wife bore in her arms a plump, happy, twenty-pound youngster, and the husband carried the youngster's doll.

A MARRIED couple in Wellesley, Mass., can take the prize for large families. The lady is 47 years old, and is the mother of twenty-three children by one father, of whom nineteen are living. They were all single births, not a twin among them.

A LITTLE boy once called out to his father, who had mounted his horse for a journey.—"Good-bye, papa; I love you thirty miles long." A little sister quickly added: "Good-bye, dear papa; you will never ride to the end of my love."

A FEMALE member of a church choir tried to "shoo" a hen over a high stone wall in North Wheeling, yesterday, and the people for four blocks around turned out, thinking that a circus steam calliope was out on parade.

THEY were engaged in archery, and her attitude was very fine as she let fly the feathered arrow from the twanging bow. "William, are you hit," she softly murmured. "Shot through the heart," he answered. "Do, William," she pleaded, "do William Tell," and thus it is that history repeats itself.

Andrews' Bazar is responsible for this: "My darling," wrote a husband to his wife, "I shall not be home till very late this evening. Do not wait up for me. It's for thy dear sake I work by the light of the pale, effulgent moon, as if it were the bright, dazzling sunshine." She didn't wait; she went and got a detective and hunted him up.

A YOUNG woman who had never learned the gentle art of cookery, being desirous of impressing her husband with her knowledge and diligence, manages to have her kitchen door ajar

on the day after their return from the bridal trip, and just as her lord comes in from the office, exclaims loudly: "Hurry up, Eliza, do! Haven't you washed the lettuce yet? Here, give it to me; where's the soap?"

MRS. WHITEFLOUR had company. Now, if there was one thing more than another on which Mrs. Whiteflour prided herself it was her cooking. "Will you try some of my sponge cake, Mrs. Tattletongue?" said she; "it isn't very good, to be sure; I never had such poor luck in my life as I had in making it." "Why, ma!" cried Johnny, in amazement, "you said yesterday that was the best sponge cake you ever made!" Tableau.

No man can ever tell just how much money a widow is worth until he marries her for it. It is one of those cases where you have to take your chances.

LORD bless the girl whose golden curls
Are not what they do seem,
But at the close of day on the bureau lay,
While the owners sweetly dream.

"SEE the moon," said a lady to her nephew, a bright little boy of five, as they sat looking out the window the other day. "The moon!" said the little man; "you can't see the moon in the daytime." "Yes, you can," continued his aunt; "there it is over the trees." The little fellow had to admit that he saw it, but added, "Tain't lighted up, any way."

To religion I'm no foe,
My faith it is undiminished.
I wish you, sir, to know
To religion I'm no foe;
Next Sunday to church I'll go—
That is, if my dress is finished.
To religion I'm no foe,
My faith it is undiminished.

THE newest thing in high art, girls, is to paint your brother's clay pipe a delicate sky blue with a cluster of lilies of the valley on the bowl. If you haven't got a brother's clay pipe, some other girl's brother's clay pipe will do as well, or perhaps better.

Two lovers at the gate;
They linger, linger, linger;
He binds the ring of fate—
The ring of love and fate—
With a kiss upon her finger.

WHAT SHE SAID.

One lover at the gate;
She lingers, lingers, lingers;
"Heigho! this ring of fate,"
She says, "I've seen of late
Upon six other fingers."

QUEEN VICTORIA is said to object seriously to the fashion of wearing the hair in fringe across the forehead. It is stated further that she instructed the bridesmaids, who appeared at the recent wedding of her son, that they would not be permitted to wear their locks in that fashion, nor to don high-heeled boots, nor to wear tied-back gowns. Last year, it is reported, one young lady who came to a drawing-room with her hair over her eyes, was informed by the lord chamberlain that until her hair had grown she need not attend any more at the palace.

How much truth there is in this:

The mother's life is full of prose,
From early dawn to daylight's close;
But oft, amid her household cares,
Some little poem, unawares,
Is written down within her heart,
And of her life becomes a part.

Some loving words a child may say,
A golden curl long put away,
A half-worn shoe upon the floor,
An outgrown dress the baby wore,
A broken toy or faded flower,
May touch the heart-string any hour.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

CHICAGO is to have a theatre under canvas the coming summer.

MR. J. L. TOOLE has secured in the Strand a site for a theatre, which he will call, American style, "Toole's Theatre."

IF Mr. Alfred Tennyson's new play is ever produced at the London Lyceum Theatre it will have to be cut. As written it would consume five hours in its representation.

THE original autograph score of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, has been sold by auction for £55. It wanted two pages to complete it.

MR. CHARLES FECHTER, the actor, is writing a new play, based upon the domestic life of the First Napoleon. He proposes to enact the character of the great Corsican himself.

HERR VICTOR NESSLER, an Alsatian composer, has produced with success at Leipzig an opera on the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," a legend forming the subject of one of Mr. Browning's short poems.

"ROMEO AND JULIET" has been translated into Hindoo, and published at Bombay. The hero and heroine bear the euphonious names of "Ajaysantha" and "Vilasvati."

THE Duchess of Edinburgh is going in for the gaiety of life. Nearly every evening during the past fortnight she has been at the theatre, and her round of pleasure is even not yet exhausted. She is passing round from theatre to theatre, so as to have a complete command of the English stage.

THE performance of *Claude Melnotte* by Henry Irving in the Lyceum Theatre, London, is generally conceded to be clever, forcible and original, but is not likely to be popular, as he is but an indifferent stage lover. He has made several innovations in the manner of dressing the part, and in the latter acts makes himself up in imitation of the first Napoleon.