

François ! " he shouted in the voice that once dominated the sound of the cannon. " Wake up, sleepy heads. Bring me a broom ! "

They came, half dressed, tumbling over one another, thinking, poor souls, that at very least, the castle must be on fire.

" Bring me a broom ! "

" A broom ? " cried poor Peter, stupefied.

" Certainly ; a broom. I have been calling for one this half-hour. "

The broom was brought, and the General, snatching it from the hands of the domestic, began to sweep the crossing.

" But, General, " interposed the Curé, " don't fatigue yourself, I pray. You are not used to such work. "

" Not at all. You take one side, I will take the other. We will see who will win. It is the battle of the brooms ! "

But in ten minutes the General was forced to surrender. The perspiration stood in big drops on his forehead and he panted like a race horse. He gave his broom to the servants and bade them do their best. Turning to the Curé he bowed respectfully. " And you, Monsieur, go home and rest. All shall be in order. In the morning I will give you a proof that you have preached the best sermon of your life to-night. "

The next morning at day-break the General was in command of his domestic army. " Hurry up, " he said, " we have work to do and the *Angelus* is already ringing. "

And the three big lackeys, mounted on ladders, broke off pitilessly the most beautiful branches from the acacia, chestnut and sycamore trees ; whole trees even were sacrificed. The general had reserved for himself the lighter duties, but he worked harder than they. He had never done such damage to the enemy. The ground was carpeted with flowers and greenery as he stood with his arms crossed, like Napoleon at Waterloo.

" That will do. If the Curé is not content he will be hard to please. Here François, Nicolas, clean away the rubbish. You, Peter, will help me carry away the flowers. "

His orders were so well carried out that in a quarter of an hour the entrance to the castle was a mass of varicolored flowers, and before it was erected the most beauti-