

was seated upon the old Mar-
bouring chateau
of the valley,
of the poplars
they were both
gone by, for
inated by that
remembrance,
marquise and the
te period. At
sounded by the
guis de Fresnes
go with his wife
the borders of
protest against
France and to
uis an authen-
votedness. M.
company them.
pened to these
how these little
uted at first as
e most part in
three compan-
prompt return,
unds enough to
these resources
the, the triquets
gained Nurem-
ere installed in
oncern was to
de Valtravers
d. So, as it al-
who showed
courage, and of
answered Mme.
o friends, who
t remained for
efully with the
er, she gave lea-
er beauty, her
more than her
a short time a
ele. The two
did by declaring
their voices at
ended, will or
were passably
anything, and
marquise that, as
t the water to
and no occupa-
comprehended
ded arms was
and dignity.
he find for his
could he apply
me to him to
of preliminary
s fine project.
all projects in

his own mind, the chevalier was at last obliged humbly to confess that he was good for nothing but to go and get himself killed in the army of the Conde. He, therefore, prepared seriously, but without enthusiasm, for this, when one day he was wandering sadly enough through the streets, he stopped mechanically before the toy-shop window in which he saw, among other little objects of turned wood, jumping-jacks very artistically worked, and a good number of those spinning tops,—delights of childhood and glory of Nuremberg. It might seem that for a gentleman emigrant, utterly ruined, and having long passed the period of jumping-jacks and German tops, this spectacle would have had nothing that could exalt the imagination and inspire an intellectual transport. Nevertheless, it happened that after a few minutes of silent contemplation, M. de Valtravers appeared to undergo something of that emotion which Christopher Columbus suddenly experienced when he saw rise upon the bosom of the ocean the shores of the New World; and Galileo, when he felt our little terrestrial globe, stopped by ignorance and kept motionless for six thousand years in space, moving and circling around the sun.

M. de Valtravers was born in 1760. Now, thanks to the Emile of Rousseau, it was the custom at that period, among the upper classes of French society, to complete every education by apprenticeship at some trade. The precedent came from above. In 1780, the King of France, who was the most honourable man in his realm, was also the best locksmith. It was intended that the great nobles should be acquainted with some mechanical art, likewise that the great dames should themselves nurse their own children. Generally this was practised without foresight and without seriousness; these played at work, those at maternity; the latter yielded to the caprice of the day rather than to the demands of nature; the former did not suspect, in using the file or the plane, that the hour was approaching when young noblemen would be obliged to become workmen, and that it was acting prudently in thinking immediately of creating for themselves plebeian titles.

At the sight of these toys, before which chance, or rather the instinct of a mysterious vocation, had just conducted him, M. de Valtravers remembered that he had learned to turn ebony and ivory. Three months later, he passed at Nuremberg as the Benvenuto Cellini of turned woodwork. In fact, in less than three months his skill in fashioning wood was unrivalled. He excelled in making toys; his tops were generally very tasty; but what shall be said of his nut-

crackers, which, from their delicacy and finish of details, were absolutely miracles of design! He manufactured in ivory what were regarded as genuine ornaments. Fashion had something to do with it, and, as the paintings of Mme. de Fresnes enjoyed already an unparalleled popularity, it was found, during two years in the old German city, every individual of good birth must pose before the marquise, and that nobody could eat a filbert without the intervention of a French emigrant.

It may be believed that, quite different from certain people, our two artists did not take their success seriously; if they set their talents in public at a high price, they made great progress in friendship. Having worked apart, they reunited at evening, and there were then, between her and him, scenes of insane gaiety, when she showed upon her easel the broad face of some huge Nuremberger, while he drew from his pocket a half-dozen nut-crackers that he had turned during the day. They laughed like children, and did not perceive that it was to the work that they owed their gaiety—to the work, which had already rendered them better and happier than they had ever been in the happiest time of their prosperity. As to the marquise, he deemed to earn one's bread the act of the rabble, and that a gentleman who respected himself would rather die like the Roman Senators in their curule chairs, than stoop to live like beggars, by work. He expostulated privately with his wife, regarded the chevalier with sovereign contempt, and did not trouble himself to conceal it. That which especially exasperated him was to find them occupied and in good humour all day, while he was literally dying from that gloomy and profound ennui which is a never-failing concomitant of inaction. Notwithstanding all this, he ate with great appetite, appropriating without scruple the profits of the association, and showed himself in many things as puerile, as futile and more exacting than if he had still been in his chateau on the banks of the Vienne. It was at the dinner hour that his bile was most freely exhaled.

'Well! marquise,' cried sometimes the chevalier, 'do us the favour to tell us where you would be without the portraits of the marquise?'

'And without the nut-crackers of our friend?' added the marquise laughing. M. de Fresnes shrugged his shoulders, spoke of soiling his escutcheon, asked forgiveness for his wife from the shades of his ancestors, and lamented at not seeing Bordeaux wine upon his table.

At length, when they were assured of their