

he got into bad habits, squandered a great deal of money, and so incensed M. de Guercheville that he denied him the house. Another story is that Estelle's proud father, noticing that there was an attachment growing up between the young man and his daughter, so insulted Raoul that he left the Château never to return. It is impossible to gather the truth—nobody ever talks of him at the Château. None of us believe he ever did anything wrong—he was always a kind, well-behaved lad—I don't think even the city could change his character as some declare."

I had an idea, as I listened to the old man, that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell. However, as it was already late, I returned to the pleasant room which good Dame Marmontel had prepared for me, whilst I was listening to her husband.

Next morning the Abbé called, and at about eleven we visited the Château. Whilst on the way I questioned him with respect to Raoul, in whom I began to feel somewhat interested—chiefly because there appeared to be some mystery connected with him.

"Ah, I see, my old friend Marmontel has been talking about him," replied my companion; "it is perfectly true the doors of the Château are closed against him. M. de Guercheville believes he has been deeply wronged by one in whom he had placed unlimited confidence. I am not at liberty to state the circumstances, for it is M. de Guercheville's wish that they should be kept secret. Raoul has spoken also to me on the subject and positively declares he is innocent of what he has been accused. It is true the young man was extravagant, but I cannot believe he is what M. de Guercheville (who is very obstinate in his opinions) pronounces him to be. The Curé, who has known him from his childhood, believes that the truth will be revealed sooner or later, and that it will be in favour of his pupil. The letter you saw the young man hand me when we started was for his old tutor."

We had now reached the entrance to the Château which was fronted by a high stone wall, and passed up an avenue of fine maples, beeches and elms. A well kept lawn lay directly in front of the house, and a small conservatory at one side. Over the door we saw the date of the building—A. D. 1746—and some words which I could not decipher, but which the Abbé said was the motto of the family:

*Retinens Vestigia Famæ.*

We went through a large hall, with a stone floor, and oak-stained walls, into the library—a handsome, airy room. M. de Guercheville received us with much courtesy and introduced me to his daughter, an exceedingly charming girl, with dark blue eyes, and very regular features. Her smile was remarkably sweet, and she wore her hair in coils twisted round her well turned head. The *Seigneur* himself was a small, wiry man, with keen eyes which were deeply set in his head; and with a chin and mouth indicating a strong will. M. de Guercheville pressed me very strongly to remain at the Château.

"Sir," he said, "if you knew the gratification you would afford us by remaining, you would not continue to refuse. We lead a very quiet