

He could find no written trace of those whom he sought for; but he obtained sufficient oral testimony to assure him that his brother-in-law had perished at Nantes, and that the rest of the family, his father, his sister and her children, had been drowned in the Loire. The very day on which this execution took place was given him.

When he had no longer room to doubt of his misfortune he left Nantes and proceeded to Paris, where one of his friends, the Baron de Grandpré, had urged him to come, in order to obtain a legal recognition of his status. By this the Baron, who had given in his adhesion to the new government, and enjoyed a certain influence with it, meant the recovery of his friend's hereditary estates, which had been simply sequestered, and not sold. M. de Grandpré found no difficulty in succeeding in this undertaking; so that six months after his return from England, De Lancy was reinstated in the family property, and found himself in possession of a considerable fortune. The Baron wished to push his kind offices still further; he proposed to introduce his friend to the head of the government, and obtain for him some employment about the new court; but De Lancy strenuously resisted his friend's proposal, and avowed his intention of retiring to one of his estates, where he determined to live thenceforward. The Baron remonstrated, but the Count persevered in his resolution, and shortly afterwards took up his abode on a fine property he possessed in the department of Maine-et-Loire. There he passed several years in retirement, mourning over the loss of all he held dear, and finding his only consolation in prayers and deeds of charity.

In the beginning of the spring of 1807, he was forced by business to leave his retreat, and pass a few days in Nantes. He could have wished to transact his affairs there in as short a time as possible, for that town was too full of sad recollections to induce him to make a prolonged stay, but he was compelled to remain there longer than he had at first expected.

One day, as he was returning from his lawyer's, he followed the Quay de la Fosse; and as he thought how, thirteen years be-

fore, his father and darling sister had traversed the same Quay, hurried on to death by furious monsters, his bosom heaved and deep sighs escaped him. His imagination pictured these dear beings overwhelmed by misery and suffering; his father, whom he had left still hale and vigorous, and his sister, his dear Louise, so fresh and lovely. Suddenly his meditations were interrupted, and a cry escaped him. "What do I see?" cried he; "am I the sport of an illusion, or is it indeed a reality?"

He had just perceived, at the end of a street, a young girl, thirteen or fourteen years old, whose face and figure forcibly reminded him of the cherished features of the sister whose image had been, that very moment, vividly before his mind. He halted, at the sight of this child, who continued on her way, quite unconscious of the emotion she had excited; he followed her with his eyes, and saw her enter a fruiterer's shop, where she made a few small purchases, and then came out, and directed her steps towards a small street close by. Immediately M. de Lancy entered the fruiterer's, and asked who this young person was. "The daughter of the second-hand clothesman next door," was the reply.

These words pained him, without his being able to assign a reason for it, and he could not resist the desire to go to this clothier's, and obtain another glimpse of this child, whose image haunted him in spite of himself. He arrived there almost as soon as she did, and found Mde. Brunel busied in mending a jacket.

"Madam," said he, "excuse my curiosity; when you know the reason of it, you will allow that it is pardonable. In the meantime be kind enough to answer me—Is this young girl yours?"

"Yes, sir," replied the good woman, "she is our daughter, our good and pretty Marie, whom we love dearly, and who returns our affection. Do you not, Marie?"

For answer the young girl flung her arms round her mother's neck.

"You are very fond of your mother?" said M. de Lancy to the young girl.

"Oh! yes, sir."

At the sound of her voice a thrill ran through de Lancy, and keeping his eyes