

two children and the possessor of ample means. As she was still young and attractive, it was supposed she would return to France to enjoy once more the pleasures of fashionable life, but the time for such enjoyment with her was past. Dark shadows had gathered round her heart, and a deepening gloom had fallen like a pall upon her spirits. Scarcely three years had elapsed since she had shone at the French court one of its brightest meteors, but the sufferings of that short period had dimmed her beauty, leaving the marks of years on her features. This suffering was of no common nature, for the seed of remorse had taken root in her soul, but to no human ear did she breathe her anguish. Strange stories got abroad. It was said that in one room, situated in the east turret, she spent much of her time, and that no one save herself was ever permitted to enter it.

Years rolled on. Her two children grew up to girlhood. The seclusion in which they lived, and the gloomy austerity of their mother, told severely on their happiness. The eldest, Louise, a sweet tempered, gentle girl, bore meekly the evils of her home, but her sister, Hortense, was of a different character. Gay and fond of pleasure, she grew weary of being shut in from the world with her morose parent, breathing an atmosphere of gloom and restraint, and debarred from innocent enjoyments.

One morning she was missing from her seat at the breakfast-table. The foolish young girl had determined to go out into the world and pluck for herself the fragrant flowers she felt persuaded were growing along its pathways. Five years elapsed before Hortense returned to the gloomy home of her childhood. She had left it strong in health, buoyant in spirit, and full of glittering hope. She returned bowed down with disappointment and sinking into an early grave. Her tale was a sad one, but there are many such painful experiences of life. Youth needs to be early taught that its halcyon fancies are vain and that it must gird itself with patience for the life-battle. During her five years' absence from the chateau, Hortense had tasted little of the pleasures of the world, and for the last twelve months only had enjoyed the happiness of married life. Sudden death had carried off the husband of her choice and left her at the early age of twenty a widow with one child totally unprovided for, and from failing health unable to help herself. And now came the incessant yearning to return to the home she had forsaken. There she and her infant would not feel the ills of poverty, and how light seemed all other evils now in comparison with them! The fear that her mother would not receive her haunted her mind, and full of torturing anxiety she awaited her answer to the latter sent humbly begging permission to return home to die. Her daughter's flight had taught Madame St. Hilaire a useful lesson, had made her feel that the severity and coldness of her manner and the unnecessary restraint she had imposed upon her children were calculated to produce the worst results. She was therefore prepared to receive the repentant wanderer with much love, for often had her heart yearned towards this absent one. Hortense lived some years after her return home, her failing health restored by careful nursing and medical treatment, but the seed of consumption was sown in her constitution by a severe cold caught during her confinement, and death at length claimed the young mother for his own. Her child, the little Stephanie, became the idol of her grandmother, and the love which ought to have been lavished on her own children was poured out at this cherub shrine. Much of Madame St. Hilaire's gloomy melancholy vanished from the time of Hortense's return, and the asperities of her temper were in some degree softened beneath the influence which her grandchild exercised over her mind. Time passed and brought its changes. Louise St. Hilaire became the wife of Dr. Delamare, her mother not daring to oppose this union, because her daughter's happiness depended on it, although she feared her handsome son-in-law was not calculated to make her happy. Stephanie grew up the spoiled pet of the household, and it was for her that Georgina Davenant was engaged as governess at the chateau.

CHAPTER X. STEPHANIE.

It was late the morning after her arrival when Georgina awoke. She might have slept longer, but the loud ringing of a bell outside her chamber door roused her from her slumbers. A suppressed laugh was then heard and the sound of retreating footsteps. Then a door opened and a gentle voice spoke in French in expostulatory tones.

"It's time for her to get up! We have done breakfast these two hours and I want to see her!" was uttered in loud, bold accents in the same language.

Again the bell was rung not very gently. "It is that hopeful pupil of mine, I suppose," said Georgina, as she sprung out of bed, and hastily commenced the business of the toilet. "This beginning does not look very promising, I fear she will give me considerable trouble."

As soon as she was dressed she opened the door of her apartment and came suddenly face to face with a little girl who had evidently been peeping through the keyhole. She was about twelve years old, short of her age, with a figure too much inclining to embonpoint to be light or graceful in its movements. Her face was round and full and the features irregular, the nose very retroussé, yet a bright colour and fine black eyes with a merry good-natured expression made her countenance pleasing. She started back abashed on suddenly encountering Georgina, but she soon recovered her self-possession.

"Soyez la bienvenue, mademoiselle. Je suis charmée de vous voir ici," she said, with rapid pronunciation and an awkward movement intended for a courtesy.

"I do not speak French," observed Georgina.

"Se peut-il? quel dommage! cela est désagréable!"

"But you can speak English?" said the governess, smiling at the grimaces of the child.

"Pas très-bien!" she answered with a shrug of her fat shoulders. "I speak de English imparfaitement."

"I shall teach you to speak it well, if you will try to learn."

"C'est bon! Je commencerai les leçons demain. But I forget—vous ne m'entendez pas."

"You must try and not forget," urged Georgina.

"I will try, mademoiselle, mais c'est très-difficile. Now, you want de déjeuner. Permettez moi to lead you to the salle à manger."

"What a hopeful task to teach this French child," said the governess, wearily, as she followed her young companion down the dark oak staircase, their steps echoing in the silence pervading this gloomy dwelling. Crossing the hall below they entered an antiquely furnished apartment where, on a table, was placed a tray of massive silver containing a breakfast set of exquisite old china. An ivory time-piece struck ten as they seated themselves at the breakfast table.

"Mademoiselle does not rise de bonne heure," observed Stephanie, with an arch gleam in her black eyes. "If you sleep toujours jusqu'à dix heures—ah, par exemple, I speak de French too much. But if you sleep so late tous les jours, dere will be little time for study before mid."

"I shall never be able to get on with this child," thought Georgina. "If she only had a little of the *raisonnée* bon sens natural to children."

Stephanie seemed to read her thoughts from the expression of her countenance.

"You think me one little girl très-mauvaise. You say she will give me beaucoup de peine; but I will not. Je vous assure I love you infiniment. Faisse les belles dames, and you are beautiful comme un ange. Grandmère say I might have holiday and not learn leçons jusqu'à demain, c'est pourquoi, let us begood friend aujourd'hui and don't put on de cross face à présent."

Georgina laughed at this strange mixture of both languages.—Whenever Stephanie was at a loss for an English word to express her meaning she substituted one in her native tongue.—She felt that the only way to govern this strange child was by the influence of kindness, and seeing that she had taken a fancy to herself, she determined to improve this advantage.

"I hope I shall never have cause to put on a cross face," she said kindly. "You will be very good, I am sure, but you have not yet told me your name. What must I call you?"

"Stephanie. Je me nomme Stephanie de Clair."

"Are you named after your mamma?"

"No, after grandmère."

"And your mamma is dead, I believe?"

"Ah, oui! ou plutôt maman! and a sad look passed over the child's joyous face. She was très-jolie. Venez! I will make you see maman. And with her usual *empressment* she led the way into an adjoining room hung round with family portraits.

(To be continued.)

VARIETIES.

A disconsolate Hoosier explains that he has just lost his wife "by death." It was important, says the New York Express, to state particularly that the grim destroyer death had a hand in the job, as there are so many ways now by which a man may lose his wife.

Tying a line on the end of which is a fish hook, to a large rocket, hitching the hook to a man's hat and then getting him to fire off the rocket, is the latest form of practical joking in Troy. It works to the intense astonishment of the victim and the intense amusement of the jokers.

Old Judge W., of —, in the Old Dominion, is a character. He was a lawyer, legislator, judge and leading politician among the old time Whigs of blessed memory; but, alas! like them, his glory departed, and, like many others of his confreres, has gone 'where the woodbine twineth.' 'Notwithstanding the loss of property, and the too free use of apple-jack,' he maintained the dignity of ex-judge, dressed neatly, carried a gold-headed cane, and when he had taken more than his usual allowance of the favourite beverage, he was very pious at such times, always attending church, and sitting near the stand as erectly as circumstances would admit, and responding fervently.

On one occasion a Baptist brother was holding forth with energy and unction on the evils of the times, and in one of his flights exclaimed:

"Show me a drunkard!"

The judge arose to his feet, and unsteadily balancing himself on his cane, said solemnly:

"Here I am, sir, here I am!"

The elder, though a good deal nonplussed by the unexpected response, managed to go on with his discourse, and soon warming up to his work, again called out:

"Show me a hypocrite! Show me a hypocrite! Show me a hypocrite!"

Judge W. again rose, and reached forward across a seat which intervened, touched Deacon D. on the shoulder with his cane, and said:

"Deacon D., why don't you respond, sir? Why don't you respond? I did when they called me!"

Squire Johnson was a model lawyer, as the following anecdote will show:

Jones once rushed into the Squire's office in a great passion, and said:

"That infernal scoundrel of a cobbler, Smith, has sued me for five dollars I owe him for a pair of boots."

"Then you owe him five dollars?"

"To be sure I do, but he's gone and sued me—sued me!"

"Then why don't you pay him, if you owe him?"

"Because he's sued me, and when a man does that I'll never pay till it costs him more than he gets. I want you to make it cost him all you can."

"But it will cost you something, too."

"I don't care for that. What do you charge to begin with?"

"Ten dollars, and more if there's much extra trouble."

"All right! There's the X. Now go ahead."

No sooner was his client gone than Squire Johnson stepped across to his neighbour Smith, and offered to pay the bill on condition that the suit should be withdrawn. The shoemaker gladly acceded—all he wanted was his pay. The lawyer retained the other five for his fee, and as the case was not troublesome he made no demand upon his client.

Ten days after Jones came to see how his case was getting on.

"All right," said the lawyer; "you won't have any trouble about that. I put it to Smith so strongly that he was glad to withdraw the suit altogether."

"Capital!" cried the exulting Jones.

"You've done it up brown! You shall have all my business hereafter."

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