

## The Rockwood Review.

narrow street, a travelling carriage, which was passing through, lost one of its wheels, and the occupants were obliged to remain at the inn whilst waiting for it to be repaired. Then, upon the darkness, came the voice of that unquiet music once again, rising and falling in that self-same melody that had vexed the simple souls of the peasants ten long years ago.

Some of the more daring amongst them gathered round the uncurtained window to watch and listen, and beheld, in the centre of the room, a face and figure which all remembered, though none loved; but before him, with tender limbs, curled up within a big arm-chair, lay, half asleep, a lovely boy.

Suddenly, the violin was laid aside, and Gaspard bent over the child till his black head was touching the soft flushed cheek.

"Art thou tired, Rene?"

"So tired," murmured the little one, plaintively, clasping the arms round the father's neck.

"We will to roost, then, petit oiseau," he answered, in tones that none had heard save only his boy and one other.

The wind howled, and the rain dashed against the glass, and the watchers looked in each others faces and went home marvelling.

Said Jean to Mere Barbot—

"Gaspard has prospered, then; thy prophecy has not come to pass."

"It will come to pass," croaked the old woman, spreading out her wrinkled hands towards the blaze.

In the inn the child slept peacefully upon his father's breast, and in the morning the horses were ordered, and they went their way to Paris, where Gaspard was already the idol of the theatre goers, more especially of the women. Perhaps this was chiefly because he was so cold; not the fairest among them could boast of having won from him more than his habitual graceful courtesy. A few who had seen his

love for his boy, sought to please him by loading the child with caresses and bonbons, but this was one of those rare masculine natures which are not easily moved, yet, having once loved, remain always faithful, though it be only to a memory.

One cold, grey morning, when the breath of a sharp east wind was stealing in through every crack and keyhole, Rene, who had been coughing for a few days, complained of a pain in his chest, and his father sat by his bedside all day, trying to soothe and amuse him. Towards evening the pain abated, and when the hour came for Gaspard to go to the theatre, was so much better, that he went away feeling quite at ease about him, "Thou wilt come home early, wilt thou not, mon pere."

"Yes, truly, and I will bring sweet flowers to cheer thee," bending down to kiss the tender lips.

The brilliant theatre rang with applause as Gaspard made his appearance on the platform; there was a flash of many diamonds on white necks and an under-current of soft exclamations, then perfect stillness, as he played the opening bars of an Allegro like the dancing of summer rain upon the leaves. Next came an Adagio, broad and grave, yet with a martial ring in it, as might beseem a party of old-time knights setting forth for the Holy Land. One could almost hear the prancing of the horses and see the pennons waving in the breeze. Once more the Allegro dances out on winged feet and flits into the very hearts of the listeners, then dies away softly and slumbrously like an autumn twilight.

They beseech him to play again, and this time, with a strange smile upon his face, he raises his violin, and with long-drawn bows, breathes that wild, weird melody that thrills all present with mingled dread and sorrow.