

such a life, and what would become of the chateau should he die, for he had no heir to take it.

Ten years passed, the old man began to grow tired at last of his solitude—he listened to the voice of conscience—it reproached him with the long years of neglected duties. The first thing he did was to open the doors of his chapel. He sent for artisans and ordered it to be repaired and refitted, then he sent a messenger to the Bishop of Toulouse asking him to send a chaplain to the Chateau Regnier. The church was in those days, what she is now, the great republic of the world ; but at that time she was the only republic, the one impregnable citadel where through all the centuries that we call the Middle Ages, liberties and equality of men held their ground against hereditary right and feudal despotism. In the monastery the prior was often of lowly birth, while in the humbler brethren, whom he ruled, might be found men of patrician, even of royal lineage. Virtue and talent were the only rank acknowledged. The noble knelt and confessed his sins and received absolution from the hands of the serf. Thus beside the princely-born Bernard we see the name of Fulbert, the illustrious Bishop of Chartres, raised to the episcopal throne from poverty and obscurity, as he himself says ; “ *Sicut de stercore pauper*,” and the life-long friend and minister of Louis the Sixth, Suyer, the Abbot of St. Denis, and regent of France, was the son of a bourgeois of St. Omer. So it happened that when the baron sent to the Bishop of Toulouse for a chaplain, a priest, who was the son of a vassal of Chateau Regnier, threw himself at the prelate's feet and begged that he might be sent. The bishop looked on him with surprise and displeasure. “ Monseigneur,” said the priest “ you reproach me in your heart for what appears to you my presumption and boldness in making this request, I have a most earnest reason for the love of God in asking this ; for a very brief time do I ask to remain chaplain at the Chateau Regnier, but I do most earnestly ask it.” So he was sent. The young Pere Rudal had been in his childhood a favourite with the baron. It was the baron who had first taken notice of the bright boy and had sent him away to the great schools at Lyons to be educated ; and how, when he saw his former favourite returned to him, the old man's heart warmed again and opened to the young priest. It