

rest however till he had ascertained where she really was; and he was walking from the door with the intention of seeking her, when he met her, coming with slow and wavering steps along the street. She seemed utterly exhausted, but apparently had wandered back to the church with the faint hope that Bertrand might have returned there; and when she saw John Pemberton advancing from it, she tottered towards him, and, stretching out her hands, said in a faint voice, "Has he returned? Oh, has he come back to me?"

"Alas, no!" said Pemberton; "but I hope we shall soon find him."

She threw back her head with a gesture of despair; then her eyes closed; her lips almost unconsciously murmured, "Oh, my Bertrand!" and she sank down in a heap on the snow at John Pemberton's feet. He lifted her up, and carried her into the church, while he sent Pierron flying off to procure a carriage.

Mary's face and hands were cold as ice; and he guessed—what indeed was the case—that she had been wandering about all night in the snow, expecting each moment to find Bertrand extended somewhere on the pavement. When the cab arrived, Pemberton placed her in it, still quite insensible, and took her home to Madame Brunot's, where nurse Parry seized upon her at once, loud in lamentations. With Valerie's help, poor Mary was soon placed in the bed from which she was destined not to move for many days to come.

Meanwhile, for days, and even weeks John sought for Bertrand, but altogether in vain. Nowhere, far or near could he find any trace of him. It was well perhaps for Mary that a serious illness, the result of fatigue and exposure, rendered her for some time incapable even of knowing his ill success.

She lay helpless in her bed while the year which had been so fatal to France closed in sullen gloom, and another opened which was destined to be yet more terrible. The gleam of hope which the armistice of January had brought was again extinguished, and the siege had been renewed with double vigour. It was plain however that the cruel struggle must be ended soon, were it only for the sake of the famishing women and children. But the prospect of the bitter humiliation that awaited them had deepened if possible the deadly hatred felt by the French soldiers for their Prussian foes; and the position of the resident German tradespeople who were unable to escape from Paris before the siege was becoming extremely dangerous; they were perpetually liable to the suspicion of harbouring designs for the betrayal of the city into the hands of the enemy; and any one, even amongst the French themselves, who showed them the smallest friendliness, was in danger of being accused of complicity in their supposed treachery.

Not far from the Brunots' house was a little toyshop, kept by a quiet old man, a native of Nuremberg, who, in happier times, had been a great friend of the colporteur's children, and had often bestowed playthings upon them which they could not afford to buy. Naturally, the little ones, French, though they were, could see no reason for giving up their acquaintance with kind old Herr Klein; and it was only in obedience to John Pemberton's strong prohibition that Valerie ceased from going daily into his shop as she passed to wish him "Good morning."

One afternoon in the month of February Pemberton went as usual to Madame Brunot's, to inquire after Mary Trevelyan, and to report to her the continued failure of his endeavours to find Bertrand Lisle. She was now well enough to sit up, though

she had not yet been out of doors; and he found her in her usual position reclining in an easy chair drawn close to the window, whence she could look out on the street, as if she hoped to see him pass on whom her hopes were continually fixed.

John Pemberton was pleased to see Mary looking stronger than she had done since the dreadful night which had so nearly proved fatal to her; but he at once perceived that she as well as all the rest of the family, was in a great state of anxiety and alarm; and the cause was soon told to him.

Valerie had been sent out, early in the morning, to purchase some rice and bread, on which the household now chiefly subsisted, and had never returned. The baker's shop was at a considerable distance from the house, and they knew that she would have to wait a long time till it came to her turn to be served amongst the patient crowd who often had to pass hours at the door of the bakehouse before they could obtain their scanty supply; and, therefore, for a considerable period, even weak nervous Madame Brunot was not surprised at Valerie's non-appearance. But as the day wore on they all became very uneasy at her unaccountable absence. Mrs. Parry had gone out to look for her, and had walked about for some time without seeing any trace of the child; but she had not dared to venture far. The good woman was excessively timid, and in the present state of Paris she never voluntarily went outside the door. On the present occasion her inability to speak French, so as to make inquiries for Valerie, rendered her comparatively useless when she did go. She soon came back, and even Madame Brunot did not ask her to go again. They all relied on the hope that John Pemberton would call as he so often did; and they knew how speedily and energetically he would seek the poor child wherever there was the remotest chance of finding her.

"If you had not come soon I must have gone out myself," said Mary anxiously; "it would have done no good for nurse Parry to have gone again."

"You do not look very fit for such an expedition," he said with a smile; "but I shall go to the bakehouse at once, and I hope I shall bring her back with me. I trust that it may only be that she has had to wait longer than usual."

"You always bring us so much comfort," said Mary, looking up at him gratefully. "What a friend you have been! You will have a great blessing I am sure for the kindness you have shown us."

"It has been by special mercy that I have been allowed to be of any use," he answered humbly; "but dear Mary you can repay me a thousand times any little help I have been able to give you if you will sometimes remember me when you speak to our Father in heaven, and ask for me that when my hour shall strike I may be permitted to go swift and straight to the feet of Him through whom alone I hope for pardon."

"I think you may be very sure that it will be so," said Mary, "though not perhaps for many years to come."

"Many years!" said John, looking up thoughtfully into the blue cloudless sky; "sometimes I feel as if I could not wait many hours, I long so inexpressibly for the vision of that Divine One, the only Pure and True." Then he coloured violently at having been betrayed into an expression of feeling on so sacred a subject, and pressing her hand he went hastily out on his mission. Never while Mary Trevelyan lived did she forget those words, or the yearning look in John Pemberton's eyes as he uttered them.

The young man hurried along the street, much more seriously uneasy about Valerie Brunot than he had cared to let her friends see. He went in the direction of the bakehouse, looking carefully on either side as he advanced; when he reached the shop he found himself at the end of a long string of persons who were waiting to be served, and saw at once that Valerie was not among them. It was in vain to ask the busy men in the shop if, amongst such a crowd of applicants they remembered one little girl; and he was turning away more anxious than ever when he observed a small figure crouching under an archway at the opposite side of the street, which he recognized at once as the lost child; and the moment she saw him Valerie bounded towards him, and flung herself into his arms sobbing hysterically, and clinging to him in evident terror.

"My dear child," he said soothing her, "I see you have somehow been very much frightened; but we had better go home as fast as we can, and then you will tell us all that has happened."

"Oh no, no!" she exclaimed; "I must tell you first. I am so frightened I dare not go near our house. I should have stayed out all night if you had not come."

"Let us go in here then," he said, drawing her within the portico of a church which stood near; "we can sit down on the bench here while you tell me."

She obeyed, nestling close to him, and clasping her hands round his arm while she told her story.

"It is poor Herr Klein that has done it all," she said; "but he could not help it. You know that little house near ours which was thrown into ruins by a great shell bursting on the roof?"

"You mean the cottage that is uninhabited now, with only part of it left standing?"

"Yes; I was just passing it, on my way to the baker's shop, when I heard a most dreadful noise of shouting and screaming, and people calling out that they were betrayed, as they always do when they want to kill somebody. I was frightened; and ran inside the doorway of the little house (for there is no door on it now); and I had hardly done so when I saw Herr Klein come flying down the street, without his hat, and his face all white, with a red streak across his forehead, and he came dashing into the little house where I was, and went down on his hands and knees on the ground behind me, and said, 'Valerie, stand in the doorway for Heaven's sake, and hide me!' And I did, though I was dreadfully afraid, for there came a crowd of soldiers next, rushing along with their swords drawn and their guns on their shoulders, and they were calling out, 'Death to the Prussian spy! death to the Prussian traitor!' I suppose they never thought at first that Herr Klein was hiding in the ruined house, and they went on past it. But, your know, a little way further down they could see down the long boulevard, and in a minute they could tell that he had not gone that way; and so they all came storming back into the house where I was, saying, 'He must be here;' but that very moment Herr Klein had crept through a window at the back, and was gone; and so then they caught hold of me, and asked if he had been there. I could not tell a lie, you know, so I said, 'Yes,' and then they demanded where he had gone, and I said I did not know. Then one of them called out, 'She is an accomplice, the little viper! I know her: it is the fillette Brunot; I have seen her in his shop. He uses her as a spy. Let us crush the little serpent! let us kill her!' And another said, 'We must make her tell where he is, first; but we can get