

table proved that this establishment was capable of rising to the level of circumstances. Beside the heavy, sodden-looking potato-salad was delicate lettuce or fresh red cabbage; close to the livid cheese, the odor of which, *sui generis*, betrayed its quality, a superb basket of fruit awaited those who were equal to the expense of a dainty meal.

Among the tables, pots and kettles moved an extraordinary figure who seemed in perfect accordance with her sinister surroundings. It was a woman scarcely three feet high and apparently some fifty odd years of age. Her head was disproportionately large, her face sullen and dark in expression, enlivened ever and anon by a gleam of cold malice. Her grey hair, too abundant to be held in check by the red plaid handkerchief which covered it, hung loose upon her shoulders; in her great ears, which stood far out from her head, she wore a pair of ear-rings, such as might have belonged to some Norman peasant and so long that they touched her shoulders. The upper portion of this singular creature was of the usual proportions of a woman, but her lower limbs were unnaturally small. She had the appearance of a human trunk attached to a pair of broad flat feet. This horribly deformed being was dressed in a Brandenburg or hussar jacket, a faded blue skirt and shoes made from a pair of boots whence the uppers had been cut off.

How Methusalem and this dwarfish creature had become acquainted, and why this singular pair, similar in vice, continued to remain together no one could tell. If Methusalem were the head of the house, La Naine* was undoubtedly its right arm, and her influence upon the dealer in questionable commodities was very great.

The Naine was Methusalem's factotum. She went to

* Naine signifies a female dwarf.