

BALIN-BALANT

He freed one hand, to make sure of the jingle of coin in his pocket.

"Four thousand francs!" she repeated in a low voice, but did not yet believe.

"Shall I tell you why?" he cried exultantly. "It was because I would dig that well. Did you ever know my luck to fail? Eh, then, the well turns out to be the ruins of a temple to some heathen god—*negre-de-Dieu*, I forget the name, but I believe it was a woman! And so it was all bought up by a great wise man,—an antiquary, if you know what that is—he told me. And his name—you shall see that on the cheque to-morrow; but he is a *chevalier d'honneur*, so you need have no doubts of his money. But if you had, and they were just, and this paper were nothing, I could get more, now that I have you and would set my mind to it, my pretty little hedge-queen."

"I shall be a hedge-queen sure enough when all this is spent," said she, but with surprisingly little distress. And she even reached up and clasped him about the neck.

"But how shall I ever forgive myself," she continued plaintively, "for running away like this—?"

"Forgive yourself?" said he. "With Father Gougoulin's letter of recommendation here in my pocket? Forgive yourself? When here is his permission as safe and as fast as you yourself? Rest with that, and to-morrow you shall know more."

Thereupon she classed the whole affair among miracles of a high order, and broke down and wept with joy.

"Look now," said he, when he thought it time for her to stop. "Have you nothing more to ask?"