

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

ABBOTTSFORD.

'Tis ho! for a halcyon home,
Just under Yamaska's steep sides,
On which, whereso'er I may roam,
Each deeper emotion abides.

In summer, the pure mountain breeze
Still eddies incessantly sweet;
In winter, the rocks and the trees
Are beauty, shelter, and heat.

The violet, lily and rose,
Uncultured enamel the ground;
While the flowery apple-tree snows
Its soft petalled blossoms around.

The lucerne undyingly yields
Its leaves to the deep-uddered kine,
While the worst of the weeds of the field
Escape from a garden's confine.

But what of the Oreads' grace
Who haunts these elysian bowers,
But faintly to whisper her praise
Surpasses all poeisis powers.

She's fresh as the pure mountain air,
And sings as the birds of its grove,
Like the flowers of the lea she is fair,
And chaster than all in her love.

* * * * *
The town you may praise,
But let me end my days
In this valley secluded from strife,
And to crown all my bliss,
An occasional kiss
From a sweet mountain maiden—my wife.
MRS. C. G.

[We may explain that in one place 3 miles from Yamaska the wind never ceases to blow owing to some mountain eddy. Here alone in the Township is the lucerne cultivated and with great profit. The worst weed is the yellow snap-dragon—a garden flower. There has been no lawsuit among the (therefore) prosperous farmers here for eighteen years, we believe. The chief flower of the place is the carduus or the urtica venenata and the common birds are the cornix garrula and the noctua stridens.—EDITOR CAN. ILL. NEWS.]

CLOCHETTE.

OR, LOVE AND WAR.

FROM THE FRENCH.

The following events occurred some sixty odd years ago, when Napoleon Bonaparte was Emperor of France, at the time when her sons were marching to victory after victory, each one of them but only too happy to be converted into food for powder and shot, in order to win perhaps a pair of epaulettes or a ribbon of the Legion of Honour, or perchance a few words of praise from the lips of his Imperial Majesty.

What mattered it? The Little Corporal, whom they loved, had called them his children, so they shouted "Vive l'Empereur!" and followed him and his eagles, and tasted of more victory and more glory, and were content to march on and march on, and saturate the soil of Germany and Austria with their blood, and leave their bones bleaching on the scorching plains of Egypt.

Yet, what of that? The tricolour waved triumphantly over Berlin and Vienna; the Pope was forced from his authority in Rome; Russia was in state of collapse; while all Europe rang with the deeds of Napoleon and the triumphs of the French arms.

Still the Emperor's unbounded cravings for power were not satisfied. He had issued his bulletins from the palaces of Berlin and Vienna; now he must do likewise from Moscow, for which purpose more victims must be immolated on the shrine of glory.

So it was that fresh conscriptions were enforced all over France, and thousands more of her brave sons were marched away, and sent in search of glory on the far-off steppes of Russia.

Of course, the conscription found its way, amongst other places, to the old picturesque town of Avranches, in Normandy; and it was this levy which laid the foundation for this story.

Of course it has a heroine—a simple little Normandy maiden, whose name was Clochette Viardot, and whose father kept the cabaret of "Le Cerf Agile," the principal one in the town, near the market-place.

Although more than sixty years have winged their flight since then, the memory of Clochette is still preserved amongst the inhabitants, who had the tale handed down to them from their grandfathers and grandmothers.

According to these accounts—the trustworthiness of which I see no reason to doubt—Clochette must have been a very charming little maiden, and the source of no end of distraction to the heads of the youthful portion of the male population of Avranches at that time, for not only they, but everybody else, declared and agreed that she was the prettiest girl in the whole department.

She had laughing black eyes, which flashed brilliant-like from their silken lashes, and long, curling purple black hair, glossy as the raven's wing, which would persist in dancing over her pretty neck and dimpled shoulders in that provoking, tempting manner which makes one long to take the bewitching possessor of such delightful natural adornments into one's arms, and forthwith smother her with kisses.

Add to these undeniable attractions, two pouting red lips as full of colour as ripe cherries; a perfect little nose—no, it wasn't perfect either, it was just the least shade *retroussé*; and a dainty little rounded figure.

Now, have the goodness to imagine her attired in her coquettish Normandy dress, with its high cap, and the clattering *sabots*, which could not hide from display the beauty of her slim little foot and ankle, and I am quite sure you will agree with me that she must have looked and been a very bewitching little creature.

Whether you do or not, I am positive she was; and I maintain that Jacques Dideau, the only son of old farmer Dideau, was very much to be envied, for Clochette was in love with him; and if it had not been for the conscription, and a certain Pierre Norval, I daresay all would have gone on well and comfortably enough; they would have married, and lived happy ever afterwards, in the usual orthodox manner of true lovers.

I daresay you will all wonder who this Pierre Norval was who destroyed with his fell hand the cup of Clochette's happiness, and blighted for ever the course of her pure young affection.

He was the son of a weaver, who, some years before the commencement of my story, entering the town of Avranches a perfect stranger, had selected it for the home of himself and wife. So he hired a small house, and set up his loom.

It was murmured about at the time that Norval and his wife had seen better days, but nothing subsequently transpired to confirm that report.

The weaver and his wife were both industrious and were held in high respect amongst the townspeople. Pierre was the only son, and was, of course, as is the case with most only sons, dreadfully spoiled and indulged.

He grew up a fine young fellow enough, but the worst of it was, he was never taught anything by which he might earn an honest livelihood in after life. He could not even weave, which was a remarkable fact, considering he was brought up under the very sound of the shuttles; in short he had never done what one might call a hard day's work in his life, so you may imagine he set a very bad example altogether to the youths of Avranches, which, like all other bad examples, would doubtless had been universally copied if all their parents had been as indulgent as Pierre's.

Very much alike in some respects, yet very unlike in others, to Pierre Norval was Jacques Dideau, the beloved of pretty Clochette Viardot.

Like Pierre, he was a bright, manly young fellow, full of spirits and activity, but he had been reared in a very different manner.

He was the son of a neighbouring farmer, who from a small beginning had grown to be the proprietor of a large farm, and now enjoyed the privilege of cultivating his own land. Being a very industrious man himself, he had taken care that his son Jacques should embrace the same principles.

Now, although Pierre and Jacques had each been brought up so differently, they had been very great friends indeed until they both fell head over ears in love with bright-eyed Clochette Viardot. Still, even then, whilst they were rivals, their friendship was not broken by any serious rupture until the following event occurred.

It took place at a rustic *fête* given in celebration of the Emperor's victory at Jena.

Hither flocked everybody both old and young in the neighbourhood of Avranches, each and all of them bent on enjoying themselves in feasting and making merry in honour of the fresh triumph of their beloved Emperor.

It so happened, whilst all were in the very midst of their enjoyment, that a large mastiff, belonging to one of the farmers in the neighbourhood, and who had been in a furious state for days previous, broke loose, and rushed into the very midst of the merry-makers.

The panic-stricken people scattered on all sides and in all directions; for the dog, in his quiet state, was the terror of the surrounding locality; and now, when they beheld him as he dashed into their midst, like a hungry beast of prey, with glaring, glassy eyes and foaming fangs, the good people of Avranches fled here and there, like a startled covey of partridges, they knew not whither.

The enraged dog stood stock-still for a moment gazing at the consternation he had caused, and as if considering which of the frightened merry-makers to attack; then, suddenly, his great, fierce, red eyes lighted on Clochette Viardot, who was standing but a short distance from him, stupefied and motionless with fear.

With a frightful howl and a maddened bound, the savage mastiff sprang towards his trembling victim, who stood there as though spellbound at her approaching fate.

But he never reached her.

For Jacques, who had been dancing with her, and who had been looking around for a weapon, snatched up a heavy stick, which an old man, who had used it as a crutch, had dropped in his flight, sprang in between Clochette and her brute assailant, and struck him so violent a blow on the skull as to stretch him gasping and lifeless to the ground.

What could Clochette do—the spell which bound her being broken—but rush into Jacques's arms for further protection? Not that she needed it; for the dog, after a few convulsive struggles, was now stiff and stark in death.

The blow had broken his skull, and dashed out his brains.

And what could Jacques do but clasp Clochette tightly to his breast, and—well, under the circumstances it was quite excusable—press those ripe ruby lips of hers to his own?

It was perfectly natural that Clochette, who had known Jacques all her life, should not offer any resistance; but, like a grateful, sensible little girl as she was, return it.

Neither it is a matter for exceeding wonderment, that, as they were walking home together that soft summer moonlight night, they should sit down to rest for awhile on a rustic seat beneath the branches of an old tree; nor is it to be mar-

velled at that Jacques's arm should steal round Clochette's slender waist, as her raven curls fell over his shoulder, whilst her head nestled close to his breast. And also, taking all circumstances into consideration, it is not very surprising they spoke on a delicate subject.

"I have been longing to tell thee something this whole afternoon," said Jacques, tremulously pressing her hand.

"Hast thou indeed, Jacques?—what can it be?" whispered Clochette, with that pretty assumption of innocent ignorance so natural to the sex in these situations.

"Canst thou not guess?"

"No. How should I?"

"Well then, I have been longing to tell thee, Clochette, how—how much I love thee!"

"Is it so, Jacques? Well, tell me how much?"

"But I can't."

"Why not, Jacques?"

"Because, Clochette," answered Jacques, gaining fresh courage, "I love thee so much, it is impossible to tell thee how much!"

"Well, then, Jacques, if thou canst not tell me how much, I must try and guess."

And here, gentle reader, ensued an osculatory interval.

Still further encouraged by this, Jacques continued.

"But wilt thou try and love me, Clochette?"

"Try and love thee, Jacques!—that is not so very difficult. Didst thou not save me from that terrible great dog? But for that, I might have—"

And here Clochette shivered with such a charming expression of terror, that Jacques felt it necessary to press her still closer to him, and repeat the osculatory process.

Then he looked round with so ferocious an air, that it would have scared away a whole multitude of mad dogs, had they been encompassed by them; but as Jacques saw nothing but the bright moon smiling pleasantly down upon him as if to encourage him, he continued.

"And wilt thou always love me, Clochette?"

"Always Jacques! For ever!"

"Then thou dost not love Pierre Norval?"

"Love Pierre Norval?—oh, no! Pierre is such a merry, lively fellow, and makes one laugh so with his pleasant jokes, that one cannot help liking him; but I do not love him."

And here again the youthful lovers' lips met; and, in fact, so much were they wrapped up in one another, that they noticed not the sound of a suppressed groan, which seemed to come from the other side of the tree. Another person had stayed to rest awhile beneath its branches.

That other was Pierre Norval.

At first, he had been an uninterested listener, but catching a few scattered scraps of conversation, and recognising the voices, he had become an interested eavesdropper; and when he heard the last sentence confessed by Clochette, he knew that the death-blow had been given to his hopes. In his despair, he forgot his proximity to the lovers, and groaned aloud.

Yet they heard him not; they were so much engaged in confessing their mutual joy and love.

At length, Jacques and Clochette arose, and wandered slowly away, with their arms entwined around each other, leaving Pierre Norval there, with despair in his heart, and a feeling of growing hatred towards his old friend, Jacques Dideau.

Then it was that Clochette handed over her own little heart to the safe keeping of Jacques Dideau; which was, by the way, the very wisest proceeding she could have adopted under any circumstances; for Pierre Norval was of too careless and volatile a disposition ever to have made her so happy as she deserved.

And thus it was that the friendship of Pierre and Jacques changed to bitter enmity.

Every day the gap grew deeper and deeper.

Yet perhaps, after all, it might not have ended so badly, if it had not been for this conscription coming in the way.

Then Pierre began to cherish ideas of ultimately winning Clochette, if Jacques drew an unlucky number, and was sent away to the war. She would soon forget him, more especially if Jacques never returned, for it was quite possible he might be killed.

His premature plans were, however, frustrated; it did not occur to him at the time that they would both draw unlucky numbers, but so it was—his was 15, and Jacques's 23. And Nos. 15 and 23 being found fit for service, one metre fifty-six centimetres in height, and both sound of wind and limb, they were ordered with others to join the many thousands who were to accompany the Emperor in his search of glory in the far-off land of the Muscovite.

And poor little Clochette having nearly cried out her pretty bright eyes at thus having her lover torn away from her in the very midst of their happiness, gave her Jacques a tress of her raven hair, tied with a true lovers' knot for a keepsake, bade him farewell with many and many a passionate little kiss, then went up to her window to see him march past with his comrades.

She kissed her hand again and again to him as they marched by; she waved her handkerchief to him until he was out of sight, and waited at her window till the music of the "Marseillaise" and the tramping of their feet had died away in the distance; then sat herself down to cry, poor little girl, and wonder, woman-like, if her Jacques would ever come back to her; and if he did, whether he would return as he had departed, with the usual number of legs and arms with which nature had provided him.

But let us leave Clochette for awhile, and accompany Jacques and Pierre on the road to glory.

Both coming from one town, they were transferred to the same regiment; and, in the life of activity which followed, they almost forgot their enmity towards each other.

As for Jacques, his thoughts were so much occupied with the bright little girl he had left behind him, he had no time to think of anything else.

He was so happy with the idea of returning with a medal or two, perhaps his ribbon of the Legion of Honour, or perchance his epaulettes—who could tell what might not happen?—such things were occurring every day; and then wouldn't Clochette be proud of her Jacques, and would he not be the happiest man in France when settled down, with Clochette for his wife? And perhaps he would then relate to a curly-headed Jacques, seated on his knee, the story of his battles under the great Emperor, and perhaps (only perhaps this time) there might be a miniature Clochette, who, seated at his feet, would ever and anon clasp her hands with childish glee as she listened to the same recital.

Thus did Jacques dream on, and innumerable were the castles in the air he built.

True, Jacques had his misgivings as to whether he would not rather be at home at work on the farm, or whispering soft nothings to pretty Clochette; but still, there he was, on the high-road to glory, and he might just as well have his share of it as the others; and when, in the first battle that took place, the Emperor rode up in person and praised, as he only knew how, the regiment in which he (Jacques) and Pierre were recruits, for their firmness and gallant behaviour in the field, he felt as enthusiastic as the rest, and shouted "Vive l'Empereur!" till his lungs ached, and cried out with the others to be led once more against the enemy.

And Pierre, how did he get on? For a time he was reconciled to the change: the life of a soldier was exactly suited to his careless, roving disposition, but, like everything else he had attempted in the way of occupation, he soon grew tired of it; and in the fearful campaign which followed, he saw enough of privation and suffering, and suffered so much himself, that he soon grew heartily tired of it, while he wished himself many and many a time back again in France.

Then, whenever he thought of Clochette, the old evil feelings towards Jacques took possession of him, and he began to wish and almost pray that the very next cannon ball or bullet coming in that direction would put an end to the existence of his quondam friend and rival.

However, his evil wishes were not gratified, for Jacques distinguished himself greatly, and seemed to bear a charmed life.

He had already risen to the rank of corporal, and was in a fair way to further promotion, for his courageous fortitude on several occasions had brought him under the favorable notice of his colonel.

About this time, Fortune, the fickle jade, began to desert her chosen votary, Napoleon, who found his path to Moscow not quite so smooth as he had imagined. It is true he reached it; but what greeted him on his arrival!

A burning city in the very heart of a hostile country; his supplies and communications entirely cut off; inveterate enemies closing around him on every side, threatening, in the eagerness of their savage hatred towards the daring invaders, to annihilate them altogether.

Not being gifted with the nature of the salamander, Napoleon found it impossible to practice his favourite amusement of issuing bulletins from the flaming walls of the Kremlin, and he could only at length determine to do what he should have done long before—return the way he came.

It was quite clear that glory was not to be found there; so, with his ambitious hopes crushed, his haughty spirit checked, he gathered up the drooping pinions of his eagles, and reluctantly gave the order of retreat.

The particulars are so well known that it would be superfluous to recapitulate here the horrors of that fearful retreat. Every reader of history knows how thousands were starved and frozen to death, besides those slain in the numerous sanguinary battles that took place, in which remnants of the proud army, out off by the Cossacks harassing its rear, had to fight against overpowering numbers, not for victory this time, but for liberty to retreat.

Both Jacques Dideau and Pierre Norval contrived to escape alive from those perils, and were amongst the remnants of that great and powerful army once the pride and glory of France, which succeeded in cutting its way through numerous enemies and reaching their birth-land.

Scarcely had they regained their native country when they were ordered to defend it against the soldiers of Prussia and Austria, who, burning to avenge their wrongs, now saw the supreme moment of vengeance arrive, and, in alliance with the Russians, were now invading France itself.

Thus it was that Pierre and Jacques found themselves again in front of the enemy. Again life or death depended upon a mere throw.

Yet, strange to say, as though their destinies were linked inseparably together, they each escaped through the sanguinary battles of Arcis-sur-Aube and Champ Aubert, in which so many of their brave companions were slain, the ranks of their own regiment especially being decimated to a fearful extent.

But the end of all this was at hand. In the thick of the terrible battle of Montmirail, in carrying the allied position by assault, Jacques and Pierre found themselves side by side.