MADAME GROSJEAN

(By H. M. Palmer.)

When the July sun turned our blue Adirondack lake into a sheet of blinding, glittering light, I remembered how stifling hot it must be in the little house on Lafayette street where Ma'am Grosjean lived with her married daughter, and wrote to ask her to come up to me in the mountains. The next day she was there.

Disdaining the offer of help, she climbed lightly down from the high wagon and turned to greet me. "Tiens, la belle maitresse! You don't forget Ma'am Grosjean, no! She's been mos' creze since you go away, such a heat an' such a noise! Eh, mon Dieu, zoze childrens! Zey'se nice childrens, but zey cry, zey cry!"

Ma'am Grosjean lifted expressive eye-brows to Heaven and then looked smilingly about her. Her slim, slender form was draped in decent black, neatly fashioned and put on with care; the black straw hat which she always wore was newly trimmed, or at least the ribbons had been washed and re-arranged, and on the veil fluttered a bit of crape, a tribute to the memory of Monsieur Grosjean, who having left her to face the world with six small children had staggered back, after nearly twenty years' absence and had been found dead in a snow-drift almost at her door.

"You're goin' to t'ink I'm more big foo! zan you didn't t'ink before. What you t'ink I do now, Mees Helene?" she asked, leaning forward on the piazza chair where she was perched, and looking out over the fields that stretched up the hill back of the house. "You see all zoze little heaps of sticks?"

"Yes." I made them out, dotting the grass here and there.

"I can't never take 'em home, I know. Hit's just ze ol' woman's fool way, but zey look so nice. Such a lot of nice little sticks—enough to make fire all winter. I go along an' I pick up one here, I pick up one zere; first t'ing I know I 'ave a pile. Hein! ze nice pile, I can't bear to leave him! You t'ink I'm crezee, eh?" And she leaned forward, laughing, so pat my knee.

There was wood everywhere, little branches, big branches, great fallen trees—wood enough to last a lifetime. And there were flowers and herbs and berries to be had for the picking, and fish in the brook and the lake only waiting to be caught. Ma'am Grosjean's imagination caught fire at all this plenty and she laughed and talked from morning till night. The young girls in the kitchen flew about their tasks under her lively orders—Ma'am Grosjean was a famous worker—and when evening came, Amable with his fiddle tucked under his arm, and little Jean and big swarthy Angus Pete, pushed their boat in among the lily pads and slouched up the path to the back piazza where Adele and Sophie and Josette were laughing at Ma'am Grosjean's tales.

They were very gay on the back piazza; the high voices of the girls, supported by the deep hoarse bass of the men, caught up the tunes that the fiddle started; and when they were tired of singing Amable broke into a quicker measure, and the sharp patting of feet on the board floor, broken by an occasional burst of applause, told of "pigeon wings" deftly cut. One evening there was such loud and prolonged clapping that I ventured to round the corner and join the spectators. Adele saw me and cried "Come, Miss Helene, come quick, it is Ma'am Grosjean. Tiens, can she dance!"

Ma'am Grosjean snapped her fingers and set to it again; Amabale played louder and faster than ever; and the girls and men kept time with hands and feet. The color had risen to her cheeks, her eyes were shining, and light as an autumn leaf whirling on the wind she matched her steps to the turning of the tune.

Suddenly she stopped, and with a mockery of dismay hid her face in both her hands. "For what you make the ol' woman play such a fool trick?" she panted, plaintively, looking deep reproach at Amable; and then darting a triumphant glance at me, challenged, "She can dance, hein? Ma'am Grosjean ain't forgot that time she was Euphrosine Valette of Hochelaga!"

"Bagosh! she can danse!" came in a deep, hoarse voice from the shadow outside. We all peered into the darkness, and saw that it was Pierre Trudelle of the Owlee-Out who had approached unheard under cover of the music. Finding himself observed, Pierre detached his long, angular from from the post against which he had been leaning, and, coming into the light, addressed himself to me.

"Francois, that's my baby, he's sick, an' I tho't mebbe you can tell me what to do."

A question or two convinced me that Francois needed more skilful aid than his father could give, so I packed my medicine chest, prepared to visit the log house up the inlet, reinforced by Ma'am Grosjean, whose experience I knew, was worth far more than my science.

Silently Pierre held his heavy broad boat to the landing while we stepped in, then he seated himself, curling one long leg under the seat, and with short powerful strokes rowed swiftly across the bay. A lantern glimmered at the landing in the sandy cove; Maurice, a tall half-grown lad, was waiting for us and silently led the way up the steep bank through a winding path bordered by long grass drenched with dew.

Pretty little Francois was tossing on his bed, watched by his sister Marie, the little twelve-year-old girl who had kept the house and cared for Francois since the mother died three or four years gone by.. I prepared the simple remedies needed, and was about to give Marie some final instructions when Ma'am Grosjean touched my arm.

"I know, Mees Helene, no need to tell me; an' I'm goin' to stay. Cette pauvre petite, she's all worn out. Now you go right on home."

In five minutes more Ma'am Grosjean had taken possession of the household. Francois had been made comfortable, Marie sent to her well-earned rest, and I was on my way home again.

"Ma'am Gosjean is an excellent nurse, Pierre," said I.

"Bagosh, yes," assured Pierre, shaking his head wisely while the gold hoops in his ears glittered in the rays the lantern cast, and then, after a long pause, he added with a chuckle, "Bagosh! she can dase, too."

In a day or two Francois was up again, and Pierre brought Ma'am Grosjean home. I saw their parting at the boat. She jumped out like a girl, and made a feint to box his ears when he attempted some clumsy compliment. Then she became serious, giving him last directions as to Francois. But he was still shaking his broad shoulders over her joke as he pulled away, and when I passed him in my canoe that afternoon where he was lying at Paul's Rock, waiting for a rise, he burst into a hoarse chuckle and shouted, "Bagosh! she's good wan!" and I knew he meant Ma'am Grosjean.

"I feex zem up pretty good, Mees Helene," said she, "an' zat's good little girl, zat p'tite Marie, ver' pious, an' ver' polite. Her mother teach her her religion, I guess, but she can't do like a hole 'ead."

"No," I assented, "Pierre needs someone there; he is a good man, a little slow, but kind and honest, and owns his house and quite a piece of land down the road."

"Zat little Francois is spoil for sure," said Ma'am Grosjean severely, casting a suspicious glance at me.

That evening at dusk a white shape glimmered among the trees, and on drawing near revealed the sharp outline of Pierre's old mare. Sitting far back on her haunches was her master, his long legs dangling near the ground his body thrown back and his broad, bony frame swaying to the motion of the beast, in all the abandon of lordly ease. Pierre was "lookin' fur his cacws," as he did six nights out of seven. But he was not too busy to stop and look and listen in the direction of the kitchen door. All was quiet to-night; there was no fiddle squeaking, and he went on, followed by a twitter of suppressed laughter as Ma'am Grosjean and the girls emerged from behind the kitchen door.

Pierre gave no sign, but he felt the rebuff, for next day I learned that he was going to take his family to the "Rock" berrying a full week earlier than he generally went. The "Rock" was a good twenty miles away, but there was never any hurry at Pierre Trudelle's and the night was cool for traveling; so I was not surprised when the little caravan passed my door an hour or two before midnight. The old horse came jogging along with drooping head, and drawing a wagon which consisted of one long plank chained to the wheels. The chain drooped below the plank, making a footrest for Pierre, and Maurice, but the other children strung along the plank—for Pierre had given a lift to two or three youngsters besides his own—dangled there loosely, clutching the plank and a bundle of blankets was tied on at one end. The children peered up at us timidly, in the dim light of the fading moon. With their bare brown legs and tangled hair they looked like gnomes, and Pierre's strongly marked face, his heavy eyebrows and long black hair, streaked with white wore an almost tragic aspect, as he towered above his little company.

"Don't stay long, Pierre," I called out as he passed. "I want you to help cut the hay on the Beaver Meadow, no one can mow like you, you know; besides Ma'am Grosjean is going away before long."

"Hall right! Mees Helene," he shouted in his deep voice, and presently they jogged out of sight.

"Zose poor childrens!" murmured Ma'am Grosjean over my shoulder. "I t'ink me, men ain't got much sense, for sure."

"That's the reason they all need wives," I assented while she took refuge in the house.

Three days brought him back just in time for the mowing. The sun had been beating all day upon the meadows, and was beginning to decline, sending slanting rays through the grass when we climbed the hillside, the girls carrying a pail of spring water mixed with molasses and ginger for the thirsty mowers; and Ma'am Grosjean stepping along as briskly as Adele or Josette, but pausing at every moment to admire and exclaim. Raspberries bordered the narrow path and tempted her with red clusters; she gathered and ate as she walked, pointing out to me meanwhile the herbs that are good for salads and greens.

In the meadow the men were busily at work; Pierre was leading the line of mowers, moving straight on with long, regular strides, lightly swinging his scythe. It was a pleasure to watch him and it was evident that he found pleasure in the work. When he saw me he called out gaily, "Hein! the good work, Mees Helene. I'm glad, you don't use no machine."

"Not while I can get such good mowers, Pierre," I called back; and the mowers cut a still wider swath. The mown field stretched away until it touched the sky on the crest of the hill, its windrows of sweet-smelling hay gilded by the late rays of the sun.

Presently Pierre halted. Bending over he took a handful of the thick, moist grass, wiped his scythe, and then straightened his tall form. The younger men stopped, too, and baring their heads to the little breeze that lifted the damp locks on their foreheads joined the girls, who were laughing and frolicking as they spread the grass on the farther side of the fragrant field. But Pierre came to where I was sitting in the shade with Ma'am Grosjean.

"You better cut the Inlet meadow next, Mees Helene," said he, "the timothy's ripe."

"Very well, if you advise it, Pierre," said I.

"Hit's awful purty here, ain't it?" Pierre was looking anxiously at Ma'am Grosjean. "Don't you t'ink it's nicer 'an the city is? An' it smell so sweet." He drew in long breaths of the frgarant air. His grizzled hair curled in close, wet tendrils about his strong, sun-burned face.

"Hit's nice," admitted Ma'am Grosjean, guardedly, "seems like it mus' be lonesone when winter come."

"Ha! winter, bah!" Pierre blew the winter away with a puff of contempt. "Ther's plenty of wood, hurrah, boys! pile on the log! Who care for winter when he's got plenty wood, and good soup in the pot, and children sitting round the fire, and mebbe nice woman to talk to.

"Ba, oui—to talk to—an' mebbe to make ze soup an' sweep ze house, an' sew ze cloze an' take care ze children"—Ma'am Grosjean shook a knowing head.

"Ba, well, I suppose," Pierre assented, hesitating but truthful.

I found an errand across the field, and Pierre evidently made the most of his opportunity, for their voices reached me in voluble French until Pierre picked up his scythe and resumed his place at the head of the swinging line. Ma'am Grosjean had risen, too, and seizing a fork she began to spread the newly-mown grass, calling to the girls to keep up with her if they could. They found it hard work. Her slight wiry form moved quickly and lightly across the field, and her nervous arms wielded the fork as if the task were play.

"Eh! la jeunesse!" she cried, as the round-faced Adele sank panting upon the grass. "Takes time to learn 'ow, but no need to be discouraged, hevery one get zere—affer a while."

We had the wedding at the cottage when the harvesting was over. Ma'am Grosjean strove to be sedate, but she was plainly overflowing with pride and pleasure, for she had learned to appreciate Pierre's good qualities, though her keen eyes had noted every fault and foible.

"Ain't anybody hall right, Mees Helene," she admitted, "jus' do ze bes' we can; zat's all ze bon Dieu hask; an' I t'ink, me, no need to hask more an' He hask."

The children had grown fond of her in these last weeks when she and Pierre and Marie had worked together in all spare hours, whitewashing the log cabin in the cove, painting the doors and window casings a heavenly blue, and hanging white muslin curtains at every window. Little Francois even fought the Spear twins because they said he was going to have "a old Kanuck stepmother," though he had no idea what a stepmother was.

As for Pierre, his eyes and his mouth were smiling, and his ear-rings quivering. "Bagosh," he confided to me, "she's good wan! Ain't nossing she can't do. Make zat ol' house look like damn little palace! An' cook, an' talk!—guess no one be lonesome any more chez-nous, eh? An'—bagosh! she can danse, too!" he ended with a chuckle.

And dance she did at the wedding, standing very straight and trim in a fresh black and white muslin gown with a bunch of pinks at her waist; and piloting the bewildered but smiling Pierre skillfully and firmly through the mazes of a 'French four."

"Tiens," said the cure, looking on with a smile, "it will be a very good match."—Donahoe's Magazine.

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IT'S DARN, DARN, DARN.

The Ancient Art Revived as a Result of the Vogue of Fine Hosiery.

Darning implements are much in evidence just now and the darner's art is flourishing as a result of the vogue of fine-spun open-work stockings for every-day wear.

Elderly women who acquired the art of darning in the precise old school and regard it as ranking with delicate fancy work, have revived their accomplishments for the benefit of their schoolgirl grandchildren. Then, there has appeared a new crop of darning implements.

The costly stocking darner is of ivory with a wooden handle. Novel darners are brought out in aluminum, in nickel, silver and plated gilt. In fact, unless confronted with the imposing array of stocking darners on the notion counters and among jewellers' and novelty dealers' supplies at this time, one would not imagine that this comparatively trivial article of the sewing woman's had elicited such attention from makers.

Darning outfits in cases of suede or monkey skin are in stock at the jeweller's. The oblong case for the slim-eyed needles, the gold-handled clippers for thread cutting, the thimble and the darner are all in place, besides the contrivance for keeping the assortment of darning cottons, silk, linen and thread stright and convenient.

Of course the regular family darning basket is shown large enough to hold a week's supply of stockings and socks. There are also model darning cases in stout linen, cretonne or other appropriate goods.

DO THEIR OWN COOKING.

Very attractive and hand appliances are now brought out for the amateur cook. They are of bronze, copper and silver plate, and each may be mounted on its own spirit lamp or electrical fitting.

"Epicureanism is on the increase, and many more people are particular as to the preparation of their food than formerly," said a household goods dealer. "Fastidious people who buy the best the markets afford in food supplies have awakened to the fact that much of their care in this regard is wasted if the cooking be unintelligently done, so we are selling more and more of these individual cooking appliances.

"Many settled people, particularly, amuse themselves by amateur cooking. The health culture propaganda has also been a stimulus to the amateur cook. Food eaten under proper conditions will obviate the need of medicines or curatives and add to physical exhilaration, good looks, etc. These theories are getting strongly impressed on the public mind, and particularly on those folks who are able to indulge themselves, ro experiment in the matter and make permanent progress.

"They secure food supplies of the best grade and then seek for appliances by which they can supervise the cooking with least inconvenience, and so get the full profit of the investment. The cooking schools have tended also to make people recognize the value of delicate cookery applied to a good grade of food. Slowly but surely their maxims are being exemplified."

A SISTER OF CHARITY.

I know a woman
Who lives life with a childlike zest
And has a heart for all things human,
And well she loves the world and best
Whatever in the world is lovellest,
Yet cannot wholly scorn the rest—
Vice, dirt
And poverty and helplessness and pest.
Not hers to avert
From the prone wretch beneath the wayside palm
The virtuous Levite skirt;
She asks not, "What is his desert,"
But, "Is he hurt?"

That found,
She pours her sunning oils into the wound
And tends the wasterel with the costliest balm.
For this she made
Herself a good Samaritan by trade.
Cloaked her large heart
And bounteous feeling
Behind the faculty and art
Of healing,
That oftentimes those whom she relieves
Give, kneeling,
Thanks for that day they fell among the thieves.

—Westminster Gazette.

AN ECONOMICAL MOTHER.

Small Katherine, who had been forbidden to touch the ink bottle, had accidentally spilled its contents not only all over her mother's desk, but on the rug, several chairs and her own apron. Her mother, on discovering the state of affairs, had expressed more surprise than pleasure. When the father of the family returned at night his little daughter met him at the door and asked:

"Papa, how much does a bottle of ink cost?"

"Oh, about five cents."

"Five cents!" exclaimed the grieved youngster in a tone of deep disgust. "And to think that mamma would make all that fuss about one little bottle of ink!"—July Lippincott's.

Religious Troubles in France

(Continued from page 6.)

Immediately the college itself was closed by orders received from Paris. In another instance two ladies of one family, after obtaining dispensations from their vows, were received into their father's house. Here in particular they began to busy themselves in works of piety, and shortly becoming known, they received a visit from a commissary of police who informed them that two excited burglars together formed a secret association and was against the institutions of the other instances could be quoted of the harsh and deliberate breach of the compact which has been entered into by members of the associated congregations. Taking these gleanings from M. Waldeck-Rousseau's defence of 1901 as correct, there were 75,000 religious to be dealt with, and the category of the unauthorized Congregations. But

MATTERS WILL NOT STOP HERE.

Religious life in France is doomed to destruction unless something unforeseen interferes to stop M. Combes' anti-clerical policy. Already the word has gone forth that the Government does not consider previous authorization by the State as anything more than an approval accorded for a period. What the State has once approved and authorized, says M. Combes, it can at some future time, if it thinks proper, declare to be non-authorized. This being so, we may at any time expect to see the members of the now authorized bodies, numbering some 55,000 religious, added to the list of the prescribed, which means that their property will be seized by the State, and that they will be cast out into the world. Nor, we may be sure, will that be the last act in the tragedy now being enacted before our eyes in France. Already it has been made clear even to those who might have had any dount previously about M. Combes' object that the suppression of the religious Orders is merely an incident in a general campaign against the Catholic Church.

Having dealt at length with this aspect of the question, Abbot Gasquet continued: What the near future will bring it would be impossible to forecast. One thing seems certain: things have to be worse before they will mend. For us the lesson should not be thrown away. We Catholics of Great Britain, I fear, suffer more or less from the disease of "apathy." We too do not always take our part in the life of our country and make our influence felt where it well might be of use. It is our duty not alone as citizens, but for the sake of our Faith and in order to have the means within our power when the time comes, as come it will, to defend the principles we hold so dear, at least in theory. And so, whilst sympathizing with all our hearts in the troubles which have befallen the Catholics of France, and whilst protesting with all our strength, in the name of freedom and liberty of conscience, at the action of the unbelieving Government of that country, let us take the lesson to heart and, throwing aside party and prejudice, stand together as Catholics, if and when the need shall arise, for the defence of Catholic principles and the protection of Catholic interests.

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TO A GOOD BOOK.

Come, friend, and sit with me,
We two are company
Who, in our calm retreat,
Need nothing from the street,
Nor opera, nor play, nor dance,
Nor club, nor dinner, to enhance
The pleasure that it is to be
Each to the other's company.
You give me everything, while I
I give you nothing, and I sigh
Because what do you say?
I love you, and no other pay
You ask for your alluring cheer?
Is that enough? It is so dear,
To love you that it seems to me
I give you nothing for your company.

William J. Lampton, in The Reader.

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