

"Only a Soldier."

AN INCIDENT. By Agnes Macdonnell. This incident is narrated by a lady who was living in Moscow when it took place. Unarmed and unattended walks the Czar. Through Moscow's busy street one winter's day. The crowd unconcerned as he faces the Emperor. "God greet the Czar!" they say. Along his path, there moved a funeral. Gray spectacle of poverty and woe. A wretched sledge, dragged by one weary man. Slowly across the snow. And on the sledge, blown by the winter wind. Lay a poor coffin, very rude and bare. And he who drew it bent before his load. With dull and sullen air. The Emperor stopped and beckoned to the man. "Who is that nearest to the grave?" he said. "Only a soldier, sire," the short reply. "Only a soldier, dead."

"Only a soldier!" musing, said the Czar; "only a Russian, who was poor and brave. Move on. I follow. Such an one goes not unhonored to his grave."

He bent his head and silent raised his cap: The Czar of all the Russias, pacing slow. Following the coffin, as it went, slowly across the snow.

The passers of the street, all wondering. Looked on that sight, then followed silently: Peasant and prince, and artisan and clerk. All in one company. Still as they went, the crowd grew evermore. Till thousands stood around the friendless grave. Led by that princely heart, who royal was. Honored the poor and brave. March 2, 1880. London Spectator.

TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

BY LADY GEORGINA FULLERTON.

D'Auban was very near saying, "What were you made for?" but he checked the sneering thought. In the prime of life and full enjoyment of a vigorous intellect, he had been tempted to despise the feeble fidgety old man before him, forgetting that the race is not always to the swift or the battle to the strong. We sometimes wonder what part some particular person is sent to fulfil on earth. He or she seems to our short-sighted view so insignificant, so incapable, so devoid of the qualities we most admire, and all the while, perhaps, what appears to us his deficiencies, are qualifications for the task or the position assigned to them by Providence. There are uses for weak frames, weak frames, and broken hearts, little dreamed of by those who, in the pride of health and mental vigor, know little of their value.

Some further conversation took place between the neighbors, which ended by d'Auban's promise to draw up an agreement based on M. de Chambelle's proposal. It was further decided that they would take this paper to the Mission of St. Francis, and request Father Maret and another French habitant to witness its signature. A day or two afterwards this was accordingly done. M. de Chambelle rubbed his hands in a transport of delight, and complimented Father Maret on the beauty of his church, in which he had never set his foot. The missionary was amused at hearing himself called M. l'Abbe, and took an opportunity to say to his guest what fitting to his rose-bushes like a supernumerated butterfly, to ask d'Auban for the history of his new partner.

"I am almost ashamed to own how little I know of him," was his answer. And then he gave a brief account of the arrival of these strangers—the purchase of St. Agathe, and M. de Chambelle's total inability to manage the concession. When Father Maret had heard the particulars, he smiled and said, "This partnership, then, an act of charity. But take care, my dear friend, how you involve yourself with these people. I strongly advise you to be prudent. We have hitherto been out of the reach of adventures, but there seems to me something a little suspicious in the apparent helplessness of this gentleman. Do not let pity or kindness throw you off your guard."

"If he were to turn out a rogue, which I hardly can believe possible, he could not do me any harm. You see he leaves everything in my hands. I might cheat him, but he cannot injure me. I shall feel to understand him better when I have seen his daughter. Is it not strange her shutting herself up so entirely?"

"There seems to me something strange about the whole affair. Have you sent his cheque to New Orleans?"

"Yes, and took the opportunity of asking M. Dumont what he knew about him; but months may elapse, as you know, before I get an answer."

"The daughter is, to my mind, the most doubtful feature in the case. It is not often that European women of good character come out to the colonies. Who knows what this one may be? It is most impossible that all this hiding is only a trick by which she hopes to pique your curiosity, and interest your feelings. But here comes your friend. Poor old man! He certainly does not look like an impostor."

The partners took their leave. As they walked away, it was impossible not to be struck by the contrast presented by d'Auban's tall figure and firm step, and his companion's ungraceful form and shuffling gait, or to see the latter's admiring, confiding manner towards his companion and doubt its sincerity. The priest could not, however, divert himself of a vague apprehension as to the character and designs of the strangers. Experience had taught him sad lessons with regard to colonial speculators, and his fatherly glance for d'Auban made him suspicious of their designs. It was in Russia that the intimacy between these two men had begun, and in America it had deepened into friendship. There was a difference of at least twenty years between their ages. Father Maret was bent with age, and his countenance bore the traces of a life of labour and privations. When at rest, melancholy was its characteristic expression, as if continual contact with sin and sorrow had left its impress upon it; but when he conversed with others, it was with a bright and gracious smile. His step, though heavy, was rapid, as that of a man who, weary and exhausted, yet hastens on in the service of God. His head fell slightly forward on his breast, and his hair was

thin and gray, but in his eyes there was a fire, and in his manner and language an energy which did not betoken decay of body or mind.

The first years he had spent in America had been very trying. Till d'Auban's arrival he had seldom been cheered by intercourse with those who could share in his interests or his anxieties, or afford him the mental relief which every educated person finds in the society of his own men. Some of the Indian Christians were models of piety and full of childlike faith and amiability; but there must always exist an intellectual gulf between minds untrained and uneducated, and those which have been used from childhood upwards to live almost as much in the past as in the present; and this is ever the case to a certain degree as regards religion. The advantage in this respect may not always be on the side of civilization and of a high amount of mental culture. There is often in persons wise unto salvation an ignorance of all else, a simplicity of faith, a clear realization of its great truths, and an unhesitating acceptance of its teachings, which may very well excite admiration and something like envy in those whom an imperfect, and therefore deceptive, knowledge misleads, and who are sometimes almost weary of the multiplicity of their own thoughts. But it is nevertheless impossible that they should not miss, in their intercourse with others, the power of association which links their religious belief with a whole chain of reminiscences, and connects it with a number of outlying regions bordering on its domain. Viewed in the light of faith, art, science, literature, history, politics, every achievement of genius, every past and present event, every discovery, every discovery, and connects it with a number of outlying regions bordering on its domain.

This continued train of thought, this kingdom of association, this region of sympathy, is the growth of centuries, and of a familiarity with it one of the greatest sacrifices which a person of intellectual habits can make. D'Auban's society and friendship had filled up this void in Father Maret's existence, and there was another far greater trial which his residence in this settlement had tended to mitigate.

In New France, as in all recently discovered countries, a missionary's chief difficulty consisted not in converting the natives, or a greater one, in keeping them from relapsing into idolatry, craft and idolatry—not in the wearisome pursuit of his scattered sheep over morasses, sluggish streams, and dreary savannahs—but in the bad example set by the European settlers. It was the hardened irreligion, the scolding spirit, the profligate lives of the emigrants, swarming on the banks of the Mississippi, taunting and polluting the forests and prairies of this new Eden with their vile passions and remorseless thirst for gold, which wrung the heart of the Christian priest, and brought a blush to his cheek when the Indians asked, "Are the white men Christians? Do they worship Jesus?"

He felt sometimes inclined to answer, "No, their god is mammon, a very hateful idol." To make his meaning clear, he used to show them a piece of gold, and to say that the gods of that metal were baptized European imperilled his immortal soul. The Indians of the Mission got into the habit of calling gold the white man's manitou, that is, his domestic idol. It became, therefore, an immense consolation to Father Maret when a Frenchman came into the neighbourhood whom he could point out to the native converts as an example of the practical results of true religion. He was wont to say that d'Auban's goodness and "Theres's" virtues made more converts than his sermons. His own example he, of course, counted for nothing. It was not, then, extraordinary that he should feel anxious about the character of the new inhabitants of St. Agathe, and their probable intimacy with his friend.

He had often regretted that one so well fitted for domestic life and social enjoyments should be cut off by circumstances from congenial society. The amount of friendly intercourse which was amply sufficient for his own need of relaxation could not be for one whose solitary existence was an accident, not a vocation. He might not be conscious of it as yet, but with advancing years the want of a home and of friends was sure to be more keenly felt. Glad, indeed, would he have been to think that his partnership, that these new acquaintances, were likely to fill up his void, and to prove a blessing to his friend. Never was a more fervent prayer breathed for another's weal than that which rose from Father Maret's heart that night for the companion of his solitude. Some few more solitary words of happiness, or more sympathetic trials of others, than those who have renounced earthly happiness themselves. There is something in their sympathy, akin to a mother's love or a guardian angel's pity.

There met the priest as he was turning back towards the village. After saluting him in the Indian fashion, she said, "The eagle spreads his wings over the nest of the white dove. The strong befriends the weak. It is good, my father."

"I hope so," the black robe kindly answered, as he led the way into the church, where the people were assembling for evening prayer.

CHAPTER III. The present had a prophetic quality in its strings. Echoes of some vague dream we have forgotten. Dim voices whisper half-remembered things. And when we pause to listen—answer not. Forchords come, we know not how or whence. Shadowing a nameless fear upon the soul, And stir within our hearts a subtler sense. That might may read, or wisdom may control.

And who can tell what secret thinks of thought. Bins' heart to heart? Unspoken things are heard. As if with this our deepest selves was brought. The soul, perhaps, of some unuttered word.

At last, M. de Chambelle, no longer the manager of a concession, trod the earth with a lighter step, and strolled through the plantations, bowing affably to the negroes and chatting with those of the labourers who spoke French or German. As to d'Auban, he applied himself to the business he had undertaken with his usual energy and intelligence—an additional amount of labour was a boon to him. He had the frame of a man and soul of fire," to

which work is as necessary as food or air. He was glad also to adopt, with regard to the slaves on the St. Agathe estate, the measures he had successfully carried out for the benefit of his own labourers. Though he had not yet seen Madame de Moldau, he had not yet seen Madame de Moldau, the very thought of a European lady such as Theres had described her living so near him, in the house he used to call a hell, he himself made a difference in his life. At all hours of the day he pictured her to himself, and tried to imagine her existence within those four walls, with no other companion than her garrulous old father, who chattered as if he could keep nothing to himself, and yet he dropped a word that threw light on her sorrow or her story, whatever it was, or gave the last clue to their past history.

One evening, as he was passing through the shrubbery, he caught sight of her on the balcony of the pavilion. Her head was thrown back as he watched her, just beginning to rise at the close of a sultry day. He stood riveted to the spot. "She is very beautiful," he said, half aloud, "Much more beautiful than I expected." She turned her head and their eyes met, which in de him start and instantly drew his eyes to catch the breeze just beginning to rise at the close of a sultry day. He stood riveted to the spot. "She is very beautiful," he said, half aloud, "Much more beautiful than I expected." She turned her head and their eyes met, which in de him start and instantly drew his eyes to catch the breeze just beginning to rise at the close of a sultry day. He stood riveted to the spot. "She is very beautiful," he said, half aloud, "Much more beautiful than I expected." 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