

humble one, and that his time was divided between the raising of cattle and the tilling of the soil. He did not own even that little portion of the earth which he moistened with the "sweat of his brow" as he daily plied his weary task, for he was but a "small farmer;"—and poor, even amongst the poor inhabitants of those cantons. Sustained by Christian principles, however, he cast his whole heart into his work, that he might be enabled to procure the necessaries of life for his family.

His wife, one daughter and little Pierre were the objects of his solicitude, but his best efforts could give them nothing better than black bread, and the chestnuts which grow abundantly in that locality.

But *the soul* was amply nourished with the best of spiritual food. The child, naturally pious, had, from its very cradle, an atmosphere of virtue around it, and enjoyed, as the period of infancy passed, the good example of a family, thoroughly Christian, as indeed were all the families of ancient Perigord. When Pierre attained the proper age, he began to attend the catechetical instructions given by the clerics, or the pastor—thus beginning to taste the happiness of belonging to God by right of innocence, and to experience the fear of offending that infinite majesty by sin. From the moment that his heart was capable of feeling and loving, he realized what it was to love the Blessed Virgin, and became one of her most devoted children. A confidence which had no limit, and which never for one moment wavered, arose from this love, and was henceforth the active power of his miraculous life.

As his heart was thus steadily formed to all things holy, his understanding,

first awakened by those instructions in religion, proved itself both precocious and practical. Holy Writ promulgates the decree of labor imposed upon all mankind, and the mandate had not been passed un-noticed by this quiet and thoughtful child. As soon as he was able to be of service in the household, or to lend his little aid at harvest time by tending the cattle, his satisfaction and even joy were most charming to behold.

The years of childhood were numbered with the vanishing past, and although the constitution of the young villager was sound, his size and strength did not develop in accordance with his age, and it was evident that a life of labor in the fields would never be a life for him.

And all the while the lowly roof of their little cottage looked down upon poverty for which there seemed no relief, and privations for which the future held out no hope of change. Peter Thomas now stood upon the threshold of youth, and the uncertainty of the future began to give him very serious thoughts. Seated upon a bank of fragrant fern, under the sheltering foliage of the tall chestnut, or leaning against a stately pine tree, he would concentrate his thoughts, with a seriousness but ill according with his years, upon the solution of an important question—one which at the present day would be called the problem of nutritive labor, and remunerative activity. If nature had not dealt out physical advantages to him with a generous hand, his qualities of mind and heart more than compensated for the deficiency, and many a brave, courageous thought and noble resolve waited but the fitting opportunity to materialize. How ardently he desired it! Why, then, should he continue to