



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XVI. MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1865. No. 19.

DRAK, THE FARFADET.

In the last century there lived in the village of Gaillac in Languedoc, a young merchant, who, on arriving at manhood, bethought him to look round for a wife.

At length, he heard of a young maiden, who lived at Lavaur, endowed with every quality that could adorn the sex, and possessing a dowry of twenty thousand crowns.

Indeed, Michael dreaded the coming ordeal so much, that his resolution wavered every step he advanced.

To keep him company he drew forth the contents of his holsters, which he placed between his knees, and his reflections were occasionally interrupted by a draught of brandy or substantial slices of cake.

His reflections and potations combined, produced a wonderful effect upon him; he concluded by discovering in himself a number of excellent qualities of mind and person, which he felt sure would make him the choice of the heiress and her friends.

These little folks surrounded the traveller, with a thousand testimonies of friendship, and as many expressions of welcome.

Notwithstanding their great number each had a share except Drak, who had arrived when it had all disappeared.

Tambourinet then wished to try the brandy, and the flask passed from hand to hand until it came to poor Drak, who, finding it empty, threw it away angrily.

'Tis but just, my little man,' said he to the clown, 'to those who arrive too late, regret is all that remains.'

'I'll make you remember your words, sir,' exclaimed Drak, angrily.

'How so?' inquired he ironically, 'you don't think you are big enough to revenge yourself, do you?'

The little fellow disappeared without replying, and Michael remounted his horse after taking leave of Tambourinet.

He had not gone a hundred paces, when the saddle turned, and landed him most unceremoniously in the middle of the dusty road.

And in this manner he entered Lavaur, to the great amusement of the people.

'Laugh! laugh away, you silly people!' muttered our unfortunate friend, 'it's a great wonder, isn't it, to see a man carrying his saddle when it cannot carry him?'

He at length reached the village inn, where he alighted and asked for a room in order to change his clothes.

His first thought was of his head, and the great question was, whether he should powder it white or flaxen.

Michael, stupefied, hastily combed the powder out, being in too great a hurry to seek the cause of his misfortune, and extending his hand towards the roll of satin-ribbon, it slipped from his fingers and fell to the floor.

Furious from so many disappointments; he again drew on his old travelling boots, as the only resource; then was about to take his velvet pantaloons from the bed, when lo! the pantaloons jumped to the floor and gambolled about in the most provoking manner.

Pale with terror he leaned against the window. But at that moment his dancing image turned towards him, and from under the three cornered hat, peered the mischievous face of Drak, grinning at him in the most tantalizing manner.

Michael screamed! 'Ah! you wicked dwarf! 'tis you, is it?' he exclaimed; 'by my faith, I'll make you repent of your insolence, if you don't give me my clothes this instant.'

So saying, he darted towards the figure; but Drak turned quickly, and in a moment was at the further end of the apartment.

Michael, beside himself with despair and impatience, made another attempt to catch the elfy, but this time he beheld it springing up the stairs; he followed it to the garret, where, after playing a variety of tricks, it took a fancy to escape by a window.

'You see my good friend,' said he laughing, 'you have made me spoil your nice ball suit, on the moss and dirt of the roofs, but fortunately, I see a wash-boiler down the chimney here, so they'll be all right again.'

With these words, Drak shook the velvet pantaloons over the flue of the chimney and silently dropped them.

'What are you doing, you rascal?' cried Michael.

'I am sending your clothes to the wash,' said the dwarf.

And vest, coat, and hat, followed the pantaloons.

The young gallant threw himself on the roof with a most despairing groan; but, arising almost immediately, he exclaimed resolutely,

'Well, it don't matter! I'll go the ball in my travelling suit.'

'Listen, listen,' interrupted the dwarf on the chimney.

A sound fell upon his ear, the neighboring clock told the midnight hour. Michael counted

the strokes between hope and despair, but when the twelfth sounded, he was completely overcome, and could not restrain an exclamation of despair.

'Unhappy man that I am; when I shall arrive, it will be all over, and I shall be the laughing-stock of the company.'

'And that will be right, my big man,' replied Drak, sarcastically, 'for you once said yourself, to those who arrive too late, regret is all that remains. This, I hope, will teach you not to rail at the weak; for henceforth, you will remember that the very smallest persons are tall enough to revenge themselves.'

THE TWO PATHS.

(From the French of Madame Bourdon.)

The sun had risen without a cloud in a beautiful valley situated in the northern extremity of Bretagne; it had scarcely been above the horizon more than half an hour, and every leaf and blade of grass was still so wet with dew as to have somewhat the crystallised appearance of ice-plants.

On the same day, and almost at the same hour, another babe was born: the scene of its birth was a humble cot, the dwelling of John Philibert, a poor gardener; its birth likewise was hailed with joy, although it was his sixth child.

No sooner did the Countess, who was a most virtuous and benevolent person, hear of the confinement of her poor neighbor, than she resolved to testify her gratitude to Heaven for the blessing she had just received by showing every possible kindness to one who was less favored by fortune than herself.

The babes were taken together on the same day to the village church to be christened, and both received the name of Anna Maria. Had a stranger been present at the ceremony, he would most certainly have supposed them to be sisters, from their great likeness to one another.

Little Anna of the cottage did not return home alone, but was accompanied by a large basket, containing a beautiful and complete baby's trousseau, the gift of her god-father: and an ample stock of wine and other useful articles, given by the mother of Anna Vanvres to the mother of Anna Philibert.

In order that all around might share in her feelings of joy, the Countess presented each poor family, in the name of her new-born daughter, with a thick winter coat for the father, a cloak for the mother, a warm dress for the boys; to this was added a few bottles of wine in case of sickness, and a large bit of beef to be cooked and eaten, for the occasion.

that day for the welfare both of mother and child.

The childhood of the two little girls was in a great measure similar to the day we have just described. They were born at the same hour, although placed in such different positions, and they were brought up very much together—perhaps not exactly in the same manner, but in the same place,—and their amusements and occupations were similar.

These were happy days, and Madame de Vanvres was charmed at the innocent friendship which existed between these children, whose cradles were thus separated and united by the hand of destiny, and she endeavored to increase the intimacy.

'I should like much better, god-mother, to churn, or weed the garden, than to go on looking at these little black letters; they are so very hard to learn.'

'When you know how to read, Nancy, you will be able to say your prayers better; and I will give you a book, that you may follow the Mass and other services of the Church.'

'Oh, then, I will do my very best, and try to learn my spelling, although it is so difficult.'

She then renewed her efforts, although often unsuccessfully; but no sooner did Madame de Vanvres begin to relate the histories of the patriarchs and prophets, or the lives of the Saints,—those servants of God who have loved Him so truly,—or, above all, to speak of the Child Jesus and His Divine Mother, of that most interesting of narratives, the Crib of Bethlehem, or to portray the heart-rending scene of Calvary,—then Nancy's attention was riveted her eyes sparkled with delight, and her heart made her understand everything.

Anna likewise took pleasure in hearing the Bible stories, because they are in themselves so interesting and novel to children; but it was easy to perceive that her heart was not touched like Nancy's, and that, notwithstanding her great superiority in point of memory and understanding, she did not feel that ingenuous enthusiasm which brought tears into the eyes of the little country girl when she listened to the account of the faith and obedience of Abraham and Isaac, the brotherly love of Joseph, the noble conduct of

Moses the friend of God, the virtue of young Samuel, the filial love of Ruth, the sublime repentance of David, the heroic sufferings of the Machabees, the fortitude of the martyrs, the solitary lives led by the hermits and the high degree of prayer to which they were raised, the sacrifice of all the world holds most dear which was—and is—made by virgins dedicated to the Lord.

Anna was very different, although much more advanced and far more talented than her little companion; the thoughts of God, His law, and the divine mysteries of religion, gave her little pleasure, and made but small impression on her heart.

On one occasion only did Anna succeed in rousing her enthusiasm; and this was by the history of Godfrey of Bouillon, who refused to wear an earthly crown in the place where his Saviour wore a crown of thorns; this trait raised him in her estimation almost to an equality with her beloved saints.

The childhood of Anna and Nancy glided away in this manner, and the period of their First Communion approached. Both prepared for it with innocent hearts; but the faith of Nancy was both deep and lively, and her young heart was perfectly overflowing with fervor during the instructions given by Madame de Vanvres.

'To receive God? she often exclaimed; 'I, a poor country girl! Is it possible, O Lord?'

Anna was not wanting in faith; but she did not feel that overwhelming sensation of love and gratitude with which the whole soul of Nancy was inundated. She found the religious instructions wearisome, and was rather put out at the interruption to her other studies.

Madame de Vanvres sometimes drew a deep sigh when she contemplated the piety and feelings of delight with which she was filled, and contrasted it with the coldness and tepidity of her own child, and exclaimed, 'Happy are those who bear the yoke of the Lord from their youth!'

The important day arrived. The two young girls knelt side by side, and received the Sacred Host,—that mysterious pledge of God's love for His creatures. Even Anna was affected; she felt that interior sensation of happiness which is always bestowed on the innocent when He Who is at the door knocking enters the heart; but no one could help seeing, by the attitude of Nancy, and by the tears she shed, that something more than words can express took place in the interior of her heart.

The Countess of Vanvres was present at the touching ceremony of their First Communion, for which she had been so anxious to prepare them; but it was her last appearance in public, as her life was fast drawing to a close. She bore all the sufferings attendant on the fatal disorder which was about to terminate her mortal career with angelic patience and resignation; she grieved only for those whom she left behind. Her constant thought was her daughter, whom she loved with such intense affection; her eyes constantly sought those of this poor child, and