

her this, but the ringing of the doorbell interrupted. The maid announced a lady to see Mr. Street.

He stepped to the hall and exclaimed, "Why Fanny!" Then, "You remember Mrs. Street?"

The two women greeted very frankly and the caller sat down. In her hat and jacket she looked older and stouter. She turned to him with the old sweet-tempered manner.

"I've been thinking over what you said, Frank. I don't know that I can see it as you do; but since you do see it that way I feel bound to respect your decision. At any rate, it seems to me you and I ought not to have a quarrel. I wouldn't mind, only the mine was left for the children, you know, and I ought to do something with it. It seemed to me the best way would be to come to you and see if you could dispose of it some way, or get it worked."

"It's just what we were speaking of!" Mrs. Street exclaimed. She was beaming with happiness.

"Why, of course it's worth something,"

said Street. "It might be worked, too. I'll tell you, I've got some properties down there. We can find a way to take in the Lazarus, and get you, probably, as much out of it that way as you expected. Suppose you pick out a sort of referee, you know, and I'll let him say what's fair—let him pass on my offer."

She laughed. "I don't know that we need any referee. I'd be perfectly willing to take your judgment. We've known each other a long time," she added to Mrs. Street.

They talked a while and Street rejoiced to see how his wife warmed up to the caller. They both saw her to the door, and when she was gone Mrs. Street leaned to her husband's breast.

"It's all right, dear! It's all right! I'm so glad, dear!" The joy shone in her face.

"She is nice!" Mrs. Street declared. "Nice as she can be! And so much older-looking than I thought—and isn't she getting fat?"

Street was discreet enough not to laugh.

The Coat of Alpaca.

By CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS.



THREE men were sitting at one of the little tables outside a cafe on the Boulevard des Italiens. One was a professor in the Sorbonne, one an artist from the Quartier Latin, and one a veritable gentleman from the Faubourg St. Germain.

What had brought them together matters little. That they were friends is an incontestable fact. That they had been telling one another stories those at the neighboring tables could well be testified, for the voices of all were raised above normal pitch, their libations having caused them to throw vocal restraint to the four winds of Paris.

"And now it is your turn, my dear fellow," said the professor to the artist. "Can you match my tale of devotion?" "I think so," said the artist, who, in fact, had been thinking more of the story he was to tell than of the one to which he was supposed to be listening. "Yes, I have a tale of devotion that will bring the tears to my eyes when I tell it."

"Let us have it, my friend," said the gentleman. "I would like to see you cry. Here, waiter, more absinthe!"

"In the year 1877," said the artist, tracing the figures with his finger in some spilled absinthe, "there were living in opposite apartments on the Rue des Batignolles a young clerk, Alphonse Poissy, and a young woman of perfect respectability, named Heloise Pericourt."

Alphonse was city-born and city-bred, well meaning and honest, but not of a type likely to rise above its environment. Heloise had come from Chatillon, a little town near Bordeaux, and there was something in the freshness of her country manners that appealed to the Parisian lad. Many times they walked in the gardens of the Luxembourg, or took the little steamer up to Charenton, and drank to each other's health in the harmless red wine that one gets at the resorts up the Seine. Nay, more, for Alphonse asked Heloise if she would do him the pleasure to become his wife; and she replied that just as soon as he could support her, she would ask nothing better than to

make him happy."

"Positively, Henri, you talk exactly as a feuilletonist writes," said the professor. "Is it not so, Georges?"

"Don't interrupt, my dear friend; and lower your voice, that's a good fellow," said the gentleman.

"Alphonse," continued the artist, "was a clerk in the counting-room of the wholesale silk house of De Maupigny & Horsdoeuvre, at a salary of fifty francs a week, but with a good prospect of being advanced at the beginning of next year."

"When I receive sixty francs a week, then we will set up our own little menage, is it not?" said Alphonse; and a smile of assent from the beautiful and pure Heloise rewarded his question.

"Who could tell, my friend—who could tell that fate had so many evil days set apart for this innocent young pair? Not they, indeed. On the festival of Easter they went to the Cathedral of Notre Dame, heard the glad bells ringing, caught the scent of the flowers, and felt that in a year or two they would be taking a child to be christened—perhaps sooner. Love looks ahead, my friends!"

"Behold Alphonse on the Monday after Easter. He stands at his high desk wiping his red ink pen on his coat of alpaca—a coat which he has worn since he entered the house, and which he would not part for more than its worth, because it had belonged to his dear father, likewise a clerk. It was a coat to laugh at, but Alphonse never thought of laughing at it."

"The boy who was in the habit of carrying the deposits to the bank was ill this Eastern Monday, and the cashier asked the obliging Alphonse if he would go to the bank with a heavy deposit."

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