

JOHNNY'S LETTER.

BY PAUL FEVAL.

CONTINUED.

"We are glad to give our readers the enjoyment of this beautiful little story, which is a translation of the great French writer's 'Jean et sa lettre—a love gift in our dear Lady's honour for the month of May."

"Sure enough," he muttered to himself; "there's poverty, and no mistake, in this Paris of ours! What's your name, mannikin?" he added, aloud.

"John."
"John who?"
"Nothing but John."

Papa Bouin shrugged his shoulders. "And what do you want to say to your Blessed Virgin?"

"I want to tell her that mother has been asleep ever since four o'clock struck yesterday, and I want her to wake mother, if she will be so kind—for I can't."

The old soldier felt a tightening in his throat as he listened. He was afraid to understand the boy. However, he asked again, "What were you saying about soup, just now?"

"I said, that is what we want so much. Before she went to sleep, mother gave me the last bit of bread we had in the house."

"And what had your mother had to eat?"

"Nothing at all, for two days. She said she was not hungry."

"What did you do, when you tried to wake her?"

"Why, I did as I always do: I went to her and kissed her."

"Was she breathing?"

Johnny smiled. How sweet and pretty his little face looked when he smiled. "I don't know," he said. "Don't we always breathe."

Old Bouin turned away, for he felt the tears start into his eyes. Instead of answering, he said, while his voice trembled somewhat, "When you kissed her, did you notice anything?"

"Yes, she was very cold; but it is very cold in our house."

"And was she shivering at all?"

"Oh, no, she was quite still. She looks so pretty and white. Her hands are across her chest, and her head is thrown back on the bolster, so that her eyes, not quite shut, seem as if they are looking up to heaven."

Daddy Bouin thought to himself: "I have envied the rich—I, who have plenty to eat and drink—and here is one who died of hunger!"

He beckoned to the child, set him on his knee, and putting an arm around him, said, very gently: "Little one, your letter is written, and sent, and received, and answered. Take me to your mother."

"Yes," said Johnny. "But, monsieur," he added, wonderingly, "why are you crying?"

"Nonsense! I crying?" answered the old soldier, hugging the boy, while his tears fell like rain. "Do you mean to say that men cry? Ah, it is you who will cry, poor little urchin! But do you know, Jeannot, I love you as if you were my own. I don't know what's come to me, to be such a soft-hearted simpleton, unless—Well, I had a mother once, Johnny; and I can see her now as I saw her dying. 'Paul,' she said, 'be an honest man and a good Christian.' A picture of our Lady hung by her bed. Our Lady was smiling, and I loved that picture. Well, I have lived an honest man, but as for being a good Christian—why, I am nothing to boast of, that way."

He got up, still holding the boy in his arms. "Now, then, my dear old mother," he continued, "you may rest content. Comrades may laugh, if they please. Where 'you' are, 'I' mean to go too, when my time comes, and I'll see that this little lad will get there also. He shall never leave me, never! and all because this sly letter of his, which has never even got written, has 'killed two birds with one stone'—found a father, for him, and a heart for me!"

And this is all.

But that poor woman who had died of want—who was she? I know not. But there is, somewhere in Paris, a man, still young, who is an editor also, a redacteur, but not after the manner of Papa Bouin nor in a tiny shop. He writes and 'edits' many eloquent things, and his name is known to us all. Let us call him, as formerly, John—nothing but John.

Papa Bouin is a very happy old man. He is not merely the 'honest man' he has always been, but a good Christian too. He rejoices in the fame of his 'Jeannot,' as he still sometimes calls the illustrious son of his adoption; and he says (for it is he himself who told me this story without beginning or ending), I don't know what postman may carry letters of that sort; but anyway, they surely reach their address in heaven."

RIEL'S LAST WORDS.

A Translation of Riel's Last Statements on the Scaffold.

Rev. Pere Andre gives the following report of the last words of Riel before he took his position on the drop.

Riel knelt on the floor beside the door leading to the scaffold. In his hand was an ivory crucifix, silver mounted, which he frequently kissed. Father McWilliams and Pere Andre ever and again sprinkled holy water on the condemned man. Riel was pale—deadly pale—and his face looked most intellectual.

Father Andre (in French)—Do you pardon all your enemies from the bottom of your heart?

Riel—I do, mon pere; I pardon all my enemies for the love of the good God.

Father Andre—Have you any sentiment of malice, any feeling of malice against any one?

Riel—No, my father, I forgive all.

Father Andre—Do you offer your life as a sacrifice to God?

I do, mon pere.

Father Andre—My child—the flesh is weak and the spirit strong, do you repent you all your sins of thought word and deed?

Riel: I do my father—I have committed many sins and I ask my God's pardon for them all in the name of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Father Andre: You do not wish to speak in public? You make that a sacrifice to God?

Riel—Oui mon pere. I make to my God as a sacrifice the speaking to the public in this my last hour.

Father Andre—God has been good to you my son to give you an opportunity of repenting; are you thankful for this.

Riel—I thank the good God that in his Providence He has enabled me to make my peace with him and all mankind before I go away.

The two clergymen then placed their hands on his head and pronounced the absolution.

Riel then in an effective and childlike way prayed to God to bless his mother, his wife, his brothers, his friends, and his enemies. "My father bless me," he said looking up to heaven, "according to the views of Your Providence, which are ample and without measure." Then addressing Pere Andre: "Will you bless me Father."

Father Andre blessed him, as did Father McWilliams. He then rose from his knees and was pinioned, he meanwhile praying and the clergy praying.

When he was ready to pass out to the scaffold Pere Andre said to him in French "There, go to heaven." (Bon! Allez au Ciel.) He then kissed Pere Andre on the lips, and Father McWilliams embraced him, giving him the side of each cheek. Riel then said, ere he turned to pass through the door which went into that room built of course lumber, and which, as Pere Andre said, was for him the poor dingy portals of eternal day and unending peace and blessedness:—

"I give all my life a sacrifice to God. Remerciez Madame Forget, et Monsieur Forget. O my God!" he cried still speaking in French as he went down the stairs, "you are my support. Mon Soutien C'est Dieu."

He now stood on the drop. The cord is put on his neck. He said, "Courage mon Pere."

Pere Andre in subdued tones—"Courage! Courage!"

They shook hands with him as did Dr. Jukes, and Riel preserving to the last that politeness which was so characteristic of him and which was remarked during the trial said.

"Thank you Doctor."

Then he prayed in French. "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph have mercy on me. J'espere encore. I believe still. I believe in God to the last moment."

Father McWilliams—"Pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Riel—Have mercy on me Sacred Heart of my Jesus! Have mercy on me. Jesu Marie et Joseph assistez moi dans mes derniers moments, assistez moi Jesus, Marie et Joseph!

Father McWilliams held the cross to him which he kissed.

Mr. Deputy Sheriff Gibson—Louis Riel have you anything to say why sentence should not be carried out on you?

Riel, glancing where Pere Andre stood about to ascend the staircase anxious evidently to leave the painful scene, said in French, "Shall I say something?"

Pere Andre—"No."

Riel (in French)—Then I should like to pray a little more.

Pere Andre—He asks to pray a little more.

Deputy Sheriff Gibson, (looking at his watch). "Two minutes."

Father McWilliams say "Our Father" and addressing Mr. Gibson, "when he

comes to deliver us from evil" tell him then.—

Mr. Gibson gave the directions to the hangman who now put on Riel's head the white cap.

Riel and Father McWilliams. "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, give us this day our daily bread, and deliver us"

The hangman pulled the crank and Riel fell a drop of nine feet.

An Irish railway porter, who now and then indulged in a glass too much, was accosted by a commercial traveller with: "Pat, what makes your face so red?" "Please yer honor," said Pat, "I always blush when I spakes to a gentleman."

A gentleman, who was habitually guilty of liberties with the Queen's English, was returned as member for a colonial parliament. Delighted with the importance of his new position he rose on the first chance that offered to make his maiden speech. "Gentlemen," he said, by way of introduction, "what have we before the 'ouse to-night?" "I think we have 'h' before the 'ouse, gentlemen," was the prompt reply of a witty but rude member of the opposition.

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