

Country Girls.

Up early in the morning,
Just at the peep of day,
Straining the milk in the dairy,
Turning the cows away,
Sweeping the floor in the kitchen,
Making the beds up-stairs,
Washing the breakfast dishes,
Dusting the parlor chairs.

Brushing the crumbs from the pantry,
Hunting for eggs in the barn-yard,
Cleaning the turkeys for dinner,
Spinning the stockings yarn—
Spreading the whitening linen,
Down on the bushes below,
Ransacking every meadow,
Where the red strawberries grow.

Searching the "fixings" for Sunday,
Churning the snowy cream,
Running the pails and strainer,
Down in the running stream—
Feeding the geese and turkeys,
Making the pumpkin pies,
Joggling the little one's cradle,
Driving away the flies.

Grace in every motion,
Music in every tone,
Beauty to form and feature,
Thousands might not know—
Cheeks that rival spring roses,
Teeth the whitest of pearls,
The countenance which is worth
A score of your city girls.

TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

BY LADY GEORGINA FULLERTON.

When the bargeman was gone he began again to turn over in his mind the new strange thought which had occupied him for the last two or three hours. From the first day he had made Madame de Moldau's acquaintance he had been haunted by a fancy that he had seen her before, that her face was not new to him, when she mentioned the wife of the Czarovitch (the Princess Charlotte of Brunswick) the thought flashed through his mind that the person she reminded him of was this very princess. This idea brought with it a whole train of recollections. Some seven or eight years ago he was travelling with General Lefort, and they had stopped at a village in the West-Prussian province of Pomerania. A ball at the ducal palace. Now that he came to think of it, what an astonishing likeness there was between the lady at St. Agathe and the Czarovitch's affianced bride as he remembered her in her girlhood, a fair creature, delicate as a heron-bill, and white as a snowdrop. But it was impossible. He laughed at himself for giving a serious thought to so preposterous a conjecture, for was it not well known that that princess was dead? Had she not been carried in state to her scathed tomb?

With knightly plumes and banners all waving in the wind,
and her broken heart laid to rest under a monumental stone as hard as her fate and as silent as her misery. Can the grave give up its dead? Had she returned from the threshold of another world? Such things have been heard of. Truth is sometimes more extraordinary than fiction. He thought of the story of Romeo and Juliet, and of the young Giovanni rescued from the hands of the executioner by her Florentine lover. It is impossible to describe the state of excitement in which he spent that night—now convinced that his conjecture was a reality, now scolding it as an absurdity—sometimes hoping it might turn out false; for if the chivalrous romance of his native land made him long to see the woman he loved at once cleared from the least suspicion, and to pay that homage to her as a princess which he had instinctively rendered to the daughter of an obscure emigrant; on the other hand, if she was the Princess Charlotte of Brunswick, she was also the wedded wife of the Czarovitch, and he saw the full meaning of the words she had said on the day she had been received into a church in which the holy band of marriage is never enolosed, where neither ill-usage, nor oppression, nor crime, nor separation, annihilates the vow once uttered before the altar. Though an ocean may roll its ceaseless tides and a lifetime its revolving years between those that has united, the Catholic Church never sanctions the severance of that tie, but still reiterates the warning of John the Baptist to a guilty king, and that the Pope Clement VII., fifteen hundred years later, to a licentious monarch, "It is not lawful; it may not be."

Of one thing he felt certain. If Madame de Moldau was the Princess Charlotte, it was impossible to conceive a more extraordinary or more interesting position than hers, or one more fitted to command a disinterested allegiance and unselfish devotion from the man she had chosen with her friendship. If something so incredible could be true, every mystery would be explained—every doubt would be solved. The blood rushed to his face as he thought of the proposal of marriage he had made to one so exalted a rank, and of the feelings which it must have awakened in her breast. Perhaps, he thought to himself, "though two centuries to resent it, she may have found in those words spoken in ignorance one of the bitterest and most humiliating evidences of her fallen position;" but then he remembered the tacit avowal Madame de Moldau had made of feelings which did not imply that she was indifferent to his attachment. "Ah!" he again thought, "she may wish to withdraw not only from the man she may not wed, but from him whose presumptuous attachment was an unbecoming insult. But I am mad, quite mad," he would exclaim, "to be reasoning on so absurd an hypothesis, to be building a whole tissue of conjectures on an utter impossibility; but then M. de Chamblé's dying words returned to him—those strange incoherent expressions about a *mesalliance* and a palace, and their relations together, so unlike those of a father and a child, and yet so full of devotion on his side and of gratitude on hers.

One by one he went over all the circumstances Simonette had related. The reports at New Orleans, the sale of the jewels, the Czar's picture in her possession, the stranger's visit, her agitation when the casket was mentioned—everything tallied with his wild guess. It would have been evident had it not been incredible. As it was, he felt utterly bewildered.

As soon as light dawned he rode to the village. There he heard that Hans had gone away in the night with a party of *coursers des bois*. He breakfasted with Father Maret, and all the time was wondering if, supposing Madame de

Moldau was the princess, he was aware of it. She said she had told him everything about herself, so he supposed he did. This thought inspired him with a sort of embarrassment, and, though longing to speak of what his mind was full of, he did not mention her name. As soon as the meal was over he returned to St. Agathe, where he had business to transact with Madame de Moldau. He found her sitting at a table in the verandah looking over the map of the concession. She raised her eyes, so full in their blue depths of a soft and dreamy beauty, to greet him as he approached, and he felt sure at that moment that they were the eyes of the royal maiden of seventeen years of age with whom he had danced one night in her father's palace. He sat down with her as usual, and they began talking of business; but he was, for the first time perhaps in his life, absent and inattentive to the subject before him. He was reverting to one of those trifling circumstances which remain impressed on a person's memory, and which just then flashed back into his mind. When the young princess was dancing with him she had mentioned that the lady opposite to them had undergone a painful operation to improve the beauty of her features. "I do not think it worth while," she said; and then, pointing to a mole on her own arm, he added—"I have been sometimes advised to have this mole burnt off, but I never would."

He remembered as well as possible where that mole was—a little higher than the wrist, between the hand and the elbow of the left arm. Could he but see the arm, which was resting near him on the table covered by a lace sleeve, all doubt would be an end. He could not take his eyes off it, and watched her hand which was taking pencil notes of what he was saying. At that moment a small spider crept out of a bunch of flowers on the table, and then towards the sleeve so anxiously watched. D'Auban noticed its progress with the same anxiety with which Robert Bruce must have observed that of the insect whose perseverance decided his own. The creature passed from the lace edging to the white arm. Madame de Moldau gave a little scream and pulled up the sleeve. D'Auban noticed the insect, and saw the mole in the very spot where he remembered it. He carried away the spider and laid it on the grass. His heart was beating like the pendulum of a clock; he did not understand a word she was saying. He could only look at her with speechless emotion.

"Sit down again, M. de d'Auban," she said, "and let me know where you want to build those huts."

He hesitated, made as if he was going to do as she desired, but, suddenly sinking down on one knee by her side, he took her hand and raised it with the deepest respect to his lips. She turned round, surprised at this action, and she saw that his eyes were full of tears.

"What has happened?—what is the matter?" she exclaimed.

"Nothing, Princess, only I know every thing now. Forgive, forget the past, and allow me henceforward to be your servant."

"You! my servant! God forbid! But, good heavens! who has told you of M. d'Auban, I have promised never to reveal this secret."

"You have kept your promise, Princess; nothing but accidental circumstances have made it known to me. Do not look so scared. What have you to fear?"

"Oh! if you knew what a strange feeling it is to be known, to be addressed in that old way again. It agitates me, and yet I have had it all along, that is, since I have been sweetened in it. But how did you discover this incredible fact?"

"It is a long story, Princess. I saw you some years ago at Wolfenbuttel; but it is only since yesterday that I have connected that recollection with the impression of the Imperial Highness, who was not meeting for the first time here."

"Have you indeed had that feeling, M. d'Auban? So have I; but I thought it must be fancy. Did we meet in Russia?"

"No; I left St. Petersburg before your Imperial Highness was born. It was at the Palace of Wolfenbuttel that I saw you, a few months before your marriage. I was there with General Lefort."

"Is it possible! I feel as if I was dreaming. Is it really I who am talking of my own self and of my former name, and as quietly as if it was a matter of course? But how extraordinary it is that you should have suddenly recollected where you had seen me! What led to it?"

"Simonette's suspicions about some jewels and a picture in your possession, and as quietly as if it was a matter of course? But how extraordinary it is that you should have suddenly recollected where you had seen me! What led to it?"

"Oh, kindest and best of friends, believe me when I say, that it is the wedded wife, not the Imperial Highness, who feels herself obliged to forego what has been a blessing, but what might become a temptation. In your conduct there has been nothing but goodness and generosity. Would I could say the same of mine. My only excuse is that my destiny was so unexplained that I deemed myself bound by no ordinary rules. I fancied neither God nor man would call me to account for its driftless course. I should have let you know at once that there were reasons of every sort why we could never be anything more than friends to each other. In those days I never looked into my own heart, or into the future at all. Bewildered by the peculiarity of my fate, I felt as if every tie was broken, every link with the past at an end, save the only one which never dissolved—a mother's love for her child. I applied to the work of the Bible, 'Free amongst the dead?' for I had passed through the portals of the grave. It seems to me as if I had survived my former self, and that I had buried myself in the grave on which my name is inscribed. I lived in a state that can hardly be conceived. It was like groping amongst shadows. Nothing seemed real in or around me. You raised me from that death-like despondency, that

cold and silent despair. You made me understand that it was worth while to live and to struggle."

She paused as if to collect her thoughts, and then said with a melancholy smile: "Then you know who I am?"

"Yes, Princess; and in that knowledge there is both sadness and joy."

"I ought to have told you long ago that I was married."

"Forgive me, Princess for having dared."

"I have nothing to forgive. On the contrary, my gratitude for what you have done for me is too deep, too vast, for words. I do not know how to explain it. You showed me there could be happiness in the world, even for me. And then you taught me, by your example, still more than by your words, that there is something better and higher than earthly happiness. You made me believe in the religion which bids me part from you, and which gives me the strength to do so."

"Thank God we have met and not met in vain," d'Auban answered, with the deepest feeling. "I thank God for the sufferings of a separation more bitter than death, if we do but meet at last where the wretched cease from troubling."

"But you have always had faith—you cannot perhaps conceive the feelings of those who once were blind and now see. You don't know what it is to have lived half a lifetime in darkness, and then to feel the glorious light breaking in upon your soul and flooding it with sunshine."

"D'Auban, the most solitary being that ever wandered on the face of the earth seeking a spot wherein to hide and die, I feel happy—Can you understand this, M. d'Auban?"

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