

and if any one had, old Jerome Coulier would have asked him six times its price, and then have made faces at him. Jerome Coulier was supposed to be the last of the whole family; he was very old and morose; he lived wholly alone in his house, doing even his own house work. He was deeply pitied by his neighbors, for the story of his life was too well known by repute about there, and had been more than once confirmed from his own mouth. In an evil hour, when pressed for money, he had, for ten years more life, sold his soul to the devil in consideration of ten silver forks and a fish-slice, which he afterwards discovered to be plated.

The neighbors were very sorry when the devil took him off one windy night, because the devil's money is better than nobody's money; and in spite of his bad bargain about the silver forks and the fish-slice, he had money out at interest somewhere, and instead of keeping it to himself, he used to give it to his neighbors when they had need of it. Mrs. Nym said that that was to try and save his soul from his most unfortunate bargain. Mrs. Brough would never believe a word about the whole story, but insisted that, if old Jerome had sold himself to any one, it was to God, and not to the devil. Neighbors, however, like to talk about neighbors, and as what they say is never true, it all comes to the same thing in the end.

Jerome died, and the next day a young gentleman from Albert Gate appeared; the solicitor of the French Embassy accompanied him. Then the old man was buried, but the old house was only shut up for a few days; its new occupant was coming. He was fully inducted, and put in possession; no alteration was made in the shop, except that over the window the name Jerome Coulier was rudely painted out, and the name J. Escriot painted in its place. Of this legend one of the wags of the neighborhood at once made Judas Iscariot, the more so as the new-comer was a dark man with a large nose, consequently he was voted a Jew, though, if his neighbors had looked a little more at his facial angle and his splendid grey eyes, they might have seen that he was no Jew. He was the nephew of Jerome Coulier by a sister; he was the last of an Huguenot family in Lorraine, in a part where there was not another Protestant family of his

way of thinking. He was so poor and so lonely that he was at once glad to receive his uncle's money and to get some chance of attending the worship of his fore-fathers held in his native tongue. His uncle's money was all invested in London household property in the East end; it would not have suited him to sell it, had he been allowed by the will, but he was debarred from doing so. He came and lived on it, for the purpose of seeing after it.

He was over fifty years of age when he moved into the little ivory shop with his granddaughter Nirmette, his last surviving relation, then about ten years of age; and the two had that strange and overwhelming admiration and love for one another which one seldom sees save between the very young and the very old. Neither of them could speak a word of English when they took possession of their wealth, with all its squalid surroundings; but before long their poorer neighbors found that they had not made a bad exchange between the eccentric Jerome Coulier and the apparently equally eccentric Judas Iscariot. And the French child too was such a source of wonder and admiration among them all; so clean, so bright, so intrepid, so graceful. She could not understand a word of their language, which was fortunate for her; they knew this perfectly well, yet the worst of them would cease cursing when the innocent, smiling, dauntless little face passed among them. Conscience made cowards of them all.

Time had been when M. Escriot was a small farmer, with a large education, bent on raising the condition of the proletariat; but the Catholics disliked him because he was a Calvinist, the Calvinists because he declined to believe in the infallibility of Calvinism on eternal punishment, and the republicans of those parts because he was a Christian. He had never had a single stroke of good luck since he was born, until he came into this property; and had had but few opportunities of helping his neighbors. His theories had died out long ago; he had stood in need of assistance himself on more than one occasion, and friends had violated every law of political economy by helping him; now, therefore, that he was rich, he set to work to see what he could do for the worse than savages, by whom he was surrounded. To learn their language was the first thing, and