

FATHER DE LISLE.

By Miss Taylor

(A Tale of fact in fiction's garb).

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.
 "Did Isabel recognize you?"
 "Oh yes, and turned pale as death, then casting on me a look of deep affection, she hastened forward to take her place in the boat that was awaiting her. There was a sadness in her beauty, her eye had the wistful gaze as of those looking to something beyond and indistinct. I heard a great deal about her during my stay in London, for Rachel contrived to come to me. She told me Isabel sorrows deeply she has no children, for it is galling to her husband's pride to have no heir. The failure of a male heir in the direct line is unknown in the Beauville family, and the estates must now pass to a distant relation, one whom Beauville dislikes. Another of her sorrows is caused by her husband's neglect; to love a wife and be a favorite with the queen, is impossible in England. Lord Beauville prefers the queen's favor, and, indeed, Rachel saith he seems to have ceased to care for the beautiful creature he hath wedded while she loves him still more wildly."

"It is too much as I feared," answered Walter sadly; "for I have heard much of Lord Beauville, as Viscount Regnier, abroad; such news as would not make one imagine a woman linked to him could be happy. My poor Isabel! little did she imagine how vile a man she was wedding. But her religion, Mary—he does not oppose that, I trust; I suppose she is able to gain admission to the ambassadors' chapels?"

There was no answer.
 "Did Rachel say nothing about this?"

Mary shook like a leaf, she could not speak.

The truth flashed for an instant upon him. He started to his feet.

"Tell me quickly, Mary," said he, his voice trembling with anguish, "it is not possible she can have forsaken her faith?"

"Alas!" sobbed Mary, "I fear she hath. She attends the Protestant services, and never seeks the Sacraments; I tried for long not to believe it, for I fear me it is true."

Walter silently left the room. He shut himself up in his own chamber, and any who listened might have heard the sobs and groans that burst from a man in his agony, for if any soul was dear to the priest, how much more the one of his only sister!—the only tie he had to earth—an apostate!

Oh, awful thought! unendurable to his ardent and loving soul.

Yet, when he remembered his youth, and how once he had stood on the very brink of the precipice, Walter humbled himself exceedingly, and offered up his life as a sacrifice for this precious soul. And Walter, as he reviewed the past with the keen self-reproach of the holy, accused himself of neglect and coldness to his sister at Apswell Court. Had he kept free from that entanglement with Constance, and made Isabel the object of his affection, and resolutely broken down the icy barrier that she raised, a bond might have been cemented between them which Viscount Regnier would have no power to break. Perhaps together they might have gone abroad; perhaps to her too, might have been given a priceless gift, and at this moment in some holy cloister she might be praying for him, instead of his wrestling for her.

Many hours passed ere the household at Thoresby saw Father de Lisle again, and many a night after that was spent in vigil and in penance, to atone, as far as might be, for the fault which seemed so grievous to the purified eye of the saint.

CHAPTER XIII.

"When he stood up in court and endured the contumely of upstart fanatics, the loss of his estate, the ruin of the prospects of his family, the filthy dungeon, the rack and the gallows, rather than renounce his religion, he did an act which

the recording angel wrote down with an Alleluia on his lips.—Rambler, February, 1857.

For some weeks all went peaceably at Thoresby Hall, and Walter went backwards and forwards seeking out Catholics, and enabling them to come to the Sacraments. Oftentimes, after having said Mass at Thoresby, and ere the sun had yet risen, he would go journeys of many miles to keep strange trysts with his flock. He always took with him the little pyx in which reposed the Adorable Sacrament; and often in the midst of great woods, far away from human habitation, he would give communion to some trembling and hunted Catholic.

"Are there any Catholics in Chelmsford gaol?" inquired Walter one night.

"Only Father Gerard, that I know of," answered Sir Robert. "if indeed he still lives."

"Oh! I must see him," exclaimed Walter.

"I fear me 'tis impossible; they are most savage in this country, and we have often tried, by bribes and otherwise, to gain admission but in vain. Louth, the jailor, is a perfect brute, and his wife, a noisy sort of good-natured woman, is far too afraid of him to venture on any risk, even though she loves gold well."

"I must make the attempt," said Walter; "I shall go into Chelmsford, and reconnoitre."

"Now, beshrew thee, Giles," exclaimed Mistress Margery Louth, the good wife of the jailor of Chelmsford "thou art enough to anger an archangel. What is the use of sending 'thee' messages into the town? Did I not tell thee again and again 'twas a green kirtle I wanted, and, behold, thou hast brought me brown taffety! and there thou standest with thy great mouth wide open, staring at me as if I had made the mistake and not thou; and now 'tis too late to send thee back again."

"Mistress," began Giles, "the master told me to sweep the prisoner's yard afore ever I did thy errands. I—"

"Hold thy tongue, sirrah," cried the lady; "prating to thy master, indeed, about my errands;—but it is the last time thou shalt go; take thy wage, and depart this very day,—go back to the pigs, and a fit companion, forsooth. And what may you want, young fellow?" said the lady sternly, as she perceived a man, dressed not only in the peasant's fustian, but with garments old and patched, and bearing evident marks of poverty, loitering near.

"Fair dame," answered the peasant, making a lowly reverence, "I am a stranger in these parts and seek for work."

"And work you shall have, friend," exclaimed the lady, greatly pleased at the respect with which she was addressed, "if you have a mind to take this idle varlet's place."

"And a precious hard one ye'll find it too," muttered Giles, moving off.

"Now, get thee gone, sirrah," vociferated Mistress Louth, "and let me have no more of thy lying tongue." And then turning to the new applicant, she tried to soften down the disagreeables of the proffered situation, having a shrewd suspicion that the stranger would suit her purpose better than any other she could get.

The office of scavenger to the Chelmsford prison was not an office over and above desired by the good Essex people, entailing as it did hard and revolting labor, scanty fare, and coarse abuse from the jailor—a man of violent passions and petty tyranny.

Good cause had Mistress Louth to be pleased with her change. Joseph, as the new servant called himself, proved the most patient, the most diligent, the most enduring, of any she ever had. After

his long hours of work he was ready to do her errands, and would execute them with a skill and patience which seemed unwearied, neither did he ever murmur at the food—scarcely fit for a dog—that was often cast to him; the sauce of content and cheerfulness seemed always ready. So rapidly did Joseph rise in his mistress's esteem and in the liking of his fellow servants, the rough turnkeys of the prison, that it came to pass that they required him, in addition to his own labors, to do part of their work, also, by going into the prisoners' cells, an office to which he seemed nothing loath.

"Joseph," cried Jack Nelgreave, the head turnkey, one day swearing, according to his wont, a loud oath, "I am going to have a quart of ale along with my mate, you can take the bread and water yonder to that old fool of a priest—an old idiot, who might do as he lists if he would only go to church, as the queen's grace doth direct, and because he must be after his popish mummery, will get himself hung. Dost hear, varlet—wilt thou go?"

"Ay, Jack," quoth Joseph; "I have my work to do first. I reckon if I go there before night it will suffice?"

"Oh, ah, any time, so long as you give him the food, but we don't want him to die like a rat, to save friend Ralph the pleasure of hanging him." And Jack strode away to his supper.

Descending from the general court of the prison was a winding flight of steps, which led to the dungeon below. Each of these cells had a satiric leading from them, so that there was no communication one with the other. These stairs were long, and when Joseph arrived at the bottom, he gasped for breath. It took some minutes to accustom himself to the foul air he encountered, the torch he carried cast its wild glare on the thick stone walls, down which the damp fell. A heavy barred door, with massive lock was the entrance.

With the key he bore Joseph unlocked the door, entered the dungeon, and carefully locked himself in. He then gazed around. The cell was about twelve feet long, and six wide. One small aperture in the roof admitted all the light and air that reached the captive. There was no flooring, save the damp ground, a little straw thrown into a corner formed his only bed, and a few stones put together, his chair and table.

The occupant of the chamber was an old man. His face bore evidence of toil and disease, his hair and beard were both of silvery whiteness. When Joseph entered, the old man was kneeling, and accustomed generally to receive a few oaths from Jack with his daily provision, he did not move, but quietly prayed on.

"Father, bless me," said Joseph, going forward, and kneeling by him.

The old man started.
 "Are you a Catholic, my son?" said he, rising to his feet.

"Yes, Father; a Catholic, and a priest; and, moreover, one you have known well—Walter de Lisle."

The sudden news was almost too much for Father Gerard. He staggered, and would have fallen, had not Walter caught him in his arms.

(To be continued.)

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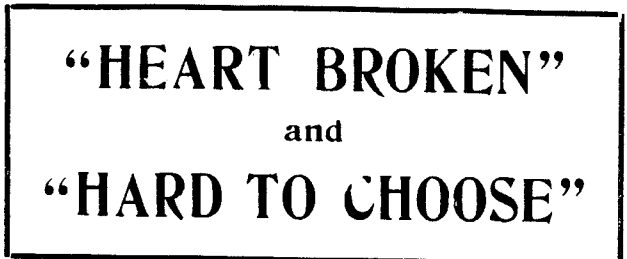
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One of the pictures is called

"Heart Broken"

We will not let the reader into the secret of what has happened, but one of the merry little companions of the woeful little maid who has broken her heart is laughing already, and the other hardly knows what has happened. Cut flowers nod reassuringly at them, and a bright bit of verdure covered wall stands in the background. There is something piquantly Watteauesque about one of the petite figures, suggesting just a touch of French influence on the artist.

The other picture presents another of the tremendous perplexities of childhood. It is called

"Hard to Choose"

As in the other picture, we will not give away the point made by the artists before the recipients analyze it for themselves. Again there are three happy girls in the picture, caught in a moment of pause in the midst of limitless hours of play. One of the little maids still holds in her arms the toy horse with which she has been playing. Flowers and butterflies color the background of this, and an arbour and a quaint old table replace the wall.

The two pictures together will people any room with six happy little girls, so glad to be alive, so care-free, so content through the sunny hours amidst their flowers and butterflies, that they must brighten the house like the throwing open of shutters on a sunny morning.

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