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THE STORY OF A PIN.

(Continued.)

'Take the trouble to sit down, sir,' said Dame Blanchemain. I believe we will have a storm. But it cannot do any harm here; it is good for the vines, and there is great need of a plentiful year. I have a little garden on the side of Marcell, which will be superb, and the wine is not bad. It is not a high wine, but it can still be drunk with water. It is a wine which bears water very well. Would the gentleman like to refresh himself?' George made a deprecatory gesture, and she proceeded without interruption. 'Well, now—you will be satisfied with the work of those ladies, whether it is for sale, or for lessons, or both. Here we always say those ladies; it is a custom; but it should be those young ladies. Ah, yes, and so wise, and sensible, and all that, and always contented, and with what? nothing. Well, now—they have a perfect right to be contented, the poor angels! for they are contented with themselves. But it is not necessary to say anything; there, they are coming down. I will tell you now—but do you want much of their work? for they have plenty on hand. They are always at work, but the sales are not very rapid in this season. And such pretty flowers as that little Jeanne paints. She is so skillful! But you are about to see them all now; say nothing.'

'Mademoiselle,' said George, 'it is impossible to pay for bouquets like these less than fifty francs apiece, or one hundred francs for the pair. In ordering a dozen of you, you will perhaps let me have them at that price.' 'But, sir, you are mistaken,' said Jeanne, after a moment of reflection, 'you offer twice as much as I ask you.' 'It is the price fixed by the one for whom I am executing this commission,' said George, 'and I am not at liberty to change it. This bargain may, perhaps, lead to others, so I shall prevail upon you to accept it.'

life, and said simply, that, under certain circumstances, he had met the picture at Munich.—Jeanne appeared thoughtful. Anna was fearful of her sister's becoming interested in some new story. Madame Blanchemain bore all the burden of the conversation. George, seeing the reserve maintained by the young ladies, comprehended that it was time to depart. 'Mademoiselle,' said he to Anna, 'we have made a bargain.' And he offered her his hand. Anna cautiously extended her own. 'Ah, well, for myself,' said Madame Blanchemain, 'I will not give you my white hand, (this was one of her pleasantries) but I must embrace you; for it is God who sent you here: and, well, now—it was time.'

George did not delay longer at Paris. He hastened to take advantage of the few days which had been granted to him, to go and see his good mother, from whom he had been separated for some years. She lived in a little town in Normandy, and passed in quiet and prayer the last years of a life full of struggles and crossed by the rudest trials. After having provided, by her unaided energy, for the establishment of her numerous family, she had felt the need of retirement to collect her thoughts. Her daughters, married and established in a neighboring town, frequently came to keep her company in the summer, and an unexpected inheritance had brought to her old age that ease and prosperity which she had never known before. George found her alone. He had left the paternal house while still very young, and since then he had but rarely visited it. Necessity, that wise counsellor, had given him a precocious maturity, and it was a man who now re-entered under the maternal roof. The old servant who had nursed him was still there, was most happy to announce his return. The house was cheerful and finely situated.—All within and around it breathed calmness, order, method and simplicity. He found his mother kneeling in her oratory; he aided her to arise, for she was feeble and old. But in this advanced age, her features had preserved the dignity and nobleness which were the expression of her soul. She received him warmly. 'I was thinking of you, my dear son, and I was thanking God for having blessed my old age in giving me such consolations after the troubles of my life. Left to your own guidance, you have committed no errors; your religious sentiments and filial piety have led you in the right path. I have sometimes regretted that I cannot pass my last years near you. But I feel that I am too old to lay plans; my destiny is to remain here, where your sisters surround me with every attention. Your letters do me so much good, and aid me still to live. Monsieur Wolff has himself written to me how fortunate he is at having you with him. Therefore, blessings upon you, my son, for having gladdened the closing days of your mother.'

your lips seems to come directly from my heart. Why is it that the wife which you wish for me is also the same which I dream of as a worthy companion of my days? It is because I have lived in your life, because I have been instructed with you pious words, because I have learned from you to love the good, the beautiful and the true. I consider wealth as something which can bring a certain degree of happiness; but I prefer that it should be my own labor of which I should demand these blessings, and not to the one whose supporter and protector I should wish to become. You must have read my mind, as you could do so well when I was a child, when you looked upon my forehead, my most secret thoughts; yes, you have spoken truly. 'To-day your life is quiet, you have no more need of my assistance. My instincts lead me to devote myself, to help, to be useful. I sometimes ask myself to what avail is all my labor if it benefits no one who relies upon this assistance? Of what use are my watchings, if they do not serve to guard the sleep of those who repose? Of what account is my life, if I live only for myself?' 'Dear son, when we delight in these reflections, which are not always free from danger, we have almost found the one whom Providence has reserved for us, and perhaps even we have already met that one.'

XVII.—A MOTHER.

XVIII.—ALREADY!