

## A YOUTHFUL REMORSE.

From the French of Jean Sigaux.

BY THEOPHIL D'ADRI.

Is the little dining-room, plain, but bright under the vigorously scrubbing of his old housekeeper, old Mr. Rondelet, usually calm, was pacing back and forth in agitation. He sat down, rose up, circled around the table, tapping the chairs as he went and whistling an accompaniment with his thin lips. On his wrinkled head, from which hung a few grayish locks which time had forgotten, the cap of the retired hosier trembled, as tho' moved by the anxiety and restlessness surging under it. The good man checked the perspiration running from his brow.

The stairs were creaking. The door of the ante-room opened. He rushed that way.

"Received?" he asked, eagerly.

"Yes, father."

"Well done, George!"

And the old man, arming with enthusiastic joy, stood on tip-toe to throw his arms round the neck of his son—a tall youth of eighteen years—who was obliged to stoop to bring his fair head and fresh cheeks within reach of the paternal lips.

Received—received at the Polytechnic! Mr. Rondelet was not himself yet, altho' he had never really doubted of success. Had not his George always been among the first five of his class and had not his Bachelor's degree been accorded without the slightest objection?"

No matter; it was well to be sure, to be able to say: "Now it's all right!" And it was all right!

"Does Annette know it?"

Annette was the old servant who had raised the child, who had, alas! buried the mother, and followed the remainder of the family when they left the ground-floor in the Saint Denis for the small rooms in the fourth story.

"Annette! Why, no," replied George.

"How! Don't she know it? Here, Annette! Annette!" Annette came on the run, out of breath.

"Oh, if your poor mother was only living!" She could not say more, and carried the corner of her apron to her eyes.

"This is not all, said Mr. Rondelet, after his effusions were ended; "we must think of the uniform."

At this word, uttered with tremulous voice, his eyes brightened.

"First, I would like it of fine cloth, embroidered on all the seams."

"With beautiful shoulder-straps," put in Annette.

Turning to George, and looking him straight in the eyes:

"My son!" cried the old man in a shrill tone, "listen to what I'm going to say."

After a pause, a solemn moment in which the old housekeeper bowed her head and listened with respectful attention, he continued gravely.

"My son, I am satisfied with you."

George flushed, then turned pale. A shade of sadness, of uneasiness, appeared on his rosy cheeks and in his brown eyes. But the old man could see nothing in his son's face but the reflection of his own happiness.

"Come," said he, gaily, "I'm going to put on my best coat to do you honor, and take you to the restaurant to dine."

"With Annette?" inquired George.

"With Annette? What are you thinking of?" said Father Rondelet in a whisper. "Take a domestic! That would never do."

"Yes, yes, with Annette," repeated George, firmly. "I stick to it."

"That's all right," cried the old woman; "You're not proud. But I'm too old now and will stay here. Your restaurants are full of fine people and put me out of countenance. I like my corner in the kitchen better. It's all the same," she added, on moving away; "Heaven will bless you, my son, because you are not ashamed of poor people."

"Well, well," stammered George, sensibly embarrassed by this last eulogy.

George, in truth, was not proud, and not only did old

Annette, but his father, especially, like to give him credit for it.

Good-looking and of fine proportions, always faultless in dress, as though he had come out of a bandbox, he appeared to have no greater pleasure, in intervals of recreation, than to walk on the boulevard with the diminutive old father, notwithstanding his threadbare coat and faltering step.

If in these promenades he happened to meet one of the numerous friends he had already made in fashionable life, one of those youngsters who carry the head high and the mustache well curled in the simple and charming imperiousness of early youth, his first care was to direct the fine stripling toward the humble old man, who drew back with unaffected reserve.

Not proud! No indeed! A querulous mind might have found some exaggeration in the generous sentiment which this young man obeyed, at least some affectation in the rule which he seemed to have prescribed to himself, of selecting for his walks with his father the most elegant quarters of Paris.

The querulous mind that might have reasoned thus would not have been altogether wrong.

For ten years George had lived under the besetting memory of a sin, almost a crime, committed in his childhood. Like a criminal dragging a ball and chain by his foot, he had for ten years carried a load on his conscience.

## II.

Mr. Rondelet, early left a widower, had never had, outside of the daily cares of his little business, any absorbing thought beyond this child, gifted with an attractive face, an intelligent mind and a good heart. So, George had not completed his eight years when the hosier, between the calls of customers, was thinking seriously about his future; and this future appeared to him bright as a spring morning, rosy and splendid as the setting sun. George, a soldier, physician, or in any of the learned professions, could not fail to be a great man. As to training him for a hosier, father Rondelet would have looked daggers at the weakling who might have suggested such a thing.

The lycéums. In them society was much mixed. He had known hosiers like himself who had sent their sons there. No; he would not be satisfied with a lyceum.

After much search and inquiry, the information received from the best sources decided him to place George as a boarder at Stanislas. That would cost a good deal. What mattered it? He would retrench in his table, already not over well supplied; in his clothing, which was quite plain; in his other expenses, in which he was always economical. He would cut down everything; but George should receive the education which a boy so well endowed in mind ought to receive.

Besides, he had read on the *palmares* of Stanislas many names which, even in a republic, are only pronounced with respectful admiration; and he reasoned sagely with himself that college friendships are not always unfaithful.

He was served to his wish. George, as soon as entered, inquired about his school companions.

On his right was a little, thin plain face; it was Louis De Mauval, son of an old councillor of State. On his left, a tall boy, with low forehead and sunken black eyes, Lucien De Ruber, son of the general of that name. Before him was the young Duke De Sallasta, and behind him Joseph De Foubelle, whose father had been a senator under the Empire.

These young magnates, seeing a Rondelet straying in among them, cried out:

"Who are you?"

"What does your father do?"

George, notwithstanding his frankness, was embarrassed for an answer. He guessed in a moment what ridicule and impertinence he would have to endure. His guess, however, was not altogether correct; and he found on the next day, by the welcome of his companions, that a winning face and a happy disposition are also titles of nobleness. Before the end of a week young Rondelet and young Sallasta were the best friends in the world.

However, when he was called to the parlor the first Sunday