

"Look at Monsieur le Cure, he has gone to sleep."

"Oh, dear! it is my fault."

"What! Your fault?" asked Mrs. Scott in the same low tone.

"Yes, my godfather rises early in the morning, and goes to bed very early; he charged me not to let him go to sleep. Very often, dining with Madame Longueval, he took a nap; and you have given him such a charming welcome, that he has gone back to his old habits."

"And he is quite right—" said Bettina; "do not make a noise, we will not waken him."

"You are so kind, mademoiselle, but the evening is growing a little cold. Wait, I will go and fetch a wrap."

"I think, mademoiselle, that it would be better to try and waken him, so adroitly that he will not suspect that have seen him asleep."

"Leave it to me," said Bettina. "Suzie, let us sing together, very low at first, and then gradually raise our voices. Let us sing."

"Willingly, but what shall we sing?"

"Something childish. The words are of no consequence."

Suzie and Bettina began to sing: "I had but two little wings"

"And were a little featherly bird," etc.

Their voices fell, exquisitely sweet and clear, on the deep silence.

The abbe heard nothing, he did not stir. Charmed with the little concert, Jean said to himself:

"It is to be hoped that my godfather will not wake up too soon!"

The voice rose clearer and louder; "But in my sleep to you I fly;"

"I'm always with in my sleep!" etc.

And still the abbe did not yield.

"How he sleeps," said Suzie, "it is a sin to a waken him."

"But we must! Louder Suzie, still louder!"

The full harmony of their voices now burst forth unrestrained:

"Sleep stays not though monarch bids"

"So I love to wake at break of day," etc.

The cure awoke with a start. After a short moment of alarm, he breathed free. Evidently no one had been asleep. Very carefully and slowly he drew himself up straight again. He was saved!

A quarter of an hour afterwards, the two sisters, accompanied the cure and Jean to a little park gate, which opened into the village, not far from the parsonage. As they approached the gate Bettina suddenly said to Jean:

"Ah! monsieur, for three hours I have had a question to ask you. This morning, on our arrival, we met on the road a slender young man, with a blonde moustache; he was riding a black horse; he bowed to us as we met."

"It is Paul de Lavanders, one of my friends. He has already had the honor of being presented to you—but quite casually. So he has a great desire to be presented again."

"Ah! well! you can bring him some day," said Mrs. Scott.

"Not before the 25th," cried Bettina, "not before! not before! Until then we do not wish to see anyone, except you Monsieur Jean. But you—it is very strange, and I do not know why it is—you are no longer anyone, for us. The compliment is not very well turned, perhaps; but do not make a mistake, it is a compliment just the same. It is my intention, in saying it, to be exceedingly agreeable to you."

"And so you are, mademoiselle."

"So much more if I could make myself understood. Au revoir, Monsieur Jean, et a demain."

Mrs. Scott and Miss Percival went slowly back to the chateau:

"And, now, Suzie," said Bettina, "scold me, scold me well; I expect it; I deserve it."

"Scold you! For what?"

"I am sure you are going to say that I was too free with that young man."

"No, I shall not tell you so. That young man has impressed me very favorably, from the first. He inspires me with perfect confidence."

"And me, too."  
"I am convinced that it will be well for us both to make him our friend."  
"With all my heart, so far as I am concerned. And all the more, Suzie, that I have seen so many young men since we came to France; oh, yes, I have seen so many; and this is the first, positively the first, in whose eyes I have not clearly read this sentence: 'How glad I would be to marry the millions of this little person!' It was directly written in the eyes of all the others, but not in his eyes. And now let us go in. Good-night, Suzie."

Mrs. Scott went to see her children, and kiss them in their sleep.

Bettina stood a long time, leaning on her elbow on the balcony.

"It seems to me," she said to herself; "that I am going to like the country."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



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