

VOL. XIV. -----

THE SECRET.

Translated from the French.

CHAPTER I .- THE THREE FRIENDS.

Charles Dars, Rudolphe Deliaunnoy, and Alfred Servais had, from their early childnood, been so devotedly attached to each other that their friend-hip had become a proverb in the city of F., which was their native place. The three young men were inseparably united, and no petty feeling of jealousy arose to diminish the ardor of their attachment. Each seemed to live but for one object, and that object was the happiness of the other two. In short, it was a friendship almost without a parailel, even among the most illustrious examples of antiquity.

The young men occupied different positions in society, but this circumstance, far from diminishing, seemed but to heighten their affection for each other. Chailes Dars had been left an orphan at a very early age. Possessed of a large fortune, he employed his means alike in solacing the miseries of his poorer fellow-creatures, and in ministering to his own fastes which were expensive and luxurious ; h . was fond of pleasure, and scarcely formed a wish, till he sought to gratily it.

Rudolphe Delaunnoy, whose father had been a merchant, was also destined to a commercial life and now occupied the position of chief clerk in one of the most influential business houses in the city. Rudolphe was also one of pleasure's votaries and was always willing to assist Charles in forming plans for their employment.

Altred Servais, though young, was already a distinguished member of the bar in his native city. Possessing brilliant talents, and a decided taste for study, he sometimes declined accompanying Charles and Rudolphe to the places of anusement so often frequented by them.

Widely different in character were the three young men, but that very difference strengthened the ties which united the hearts of Charles, Rudolphe and Alfred. And yet something was wanting to perfect this attachinent Some one was wanting to this trio, apparently so firmly united. That something was Faith ; that some One was God. In the Imitation of Christ' do we not find the following beautifully expressed sentence :--

"Upon God alone should our affections be placed; all friendship, of watch He is not the

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JULY 22, 1864.

cussion, the bystanders imagined that something unfortunate Charles, who had been well known had occurred to disturb the harmony for which and much loved for his many excellent qualities. the conversations of three friends had always An immense crowd, which increased every mobeen cited as an example. " Come,' said Charles, at length, in an abrupt

tone, . I am tired of this discussion ; let us contique our play.'

Rudoluhe assented, and slowly moved a pawn ; Charles moved in his turn ; they played with the greatest attention for awhile, but after several moves, Charles permitted his attention to wander for a moment, and Rudolphe profiting by a careless move of his adversary, checkmated him.

'You took advantage of my negligence,' exclauned Charles, with mingled surprise and impatience, ' that was not very generous.' "I warned you that your queen was in dan-

ger,' answered his friend, ' but you played with accustomed imprudence."

"And you, Rudolphe, have won the game by your accustomed began Charles and then remained silent.

" What do you mean, Charles ?"

• Nothing .?

" Will you not explain yourself ?"

'No,' said Charles. 'I demond an explynation,' said Rudolphe, warmiy.

'Ol if you demand, you shall have satisfaction as soon as you please."

These words, uttered in a loud tone of voice, attracted the attention of several persons, who awaited with anxiety the result of the dispute .---The two young men many sted a great deal of irritation. Rudolphe, este stally, seemed unable to restrain his anger. He rose from the table, and walked with rapid pice up and down the avenue, while every one marked his pale countenance and agitated manner. Charles, with a sullen and indifferent air. smoked a cigar ; when he had fimshed he rose and sauntered slowly away. As soon as Rudolphe perceived his departure, he precipitately followed hun, while the bystanders remarked to each other,

" What a miracle ! those two have quarrelled. They will have an explanation and none of the quietest either."

Night had wrapped the city in her sombre mantle, and a soleinn silence reigned throughout the deserted streets. At intervals the stillness was disturbed by the low rumbling of distant thunder, which gave token of an approaching storm, while from time to time vivid floshes of lightning illumined the importable darkness .---Soon a violent storm broke in all its lury over the city. Throughout the night were heard loud peuls of thunder, mingled with the clatter ing noise of the falling hail and the torrents of rain which indulated the streets and overflowed rivers. Morning dawned, bright and beautiful, as if nature wished to make amends for the furious tempest, which had awakened and terrified the slumbering inhabitants. The peasants, on their way to the market place, were sud denly arrested, and almost petrified with horror on perceiving the body of a man lying, with no appearance of life, upon the sniewalk. His face was turned towards the earth, one aim was rigidly extended, and the hand firmly clenched. They knew not if he were famting or dead, and sone of the terrified group dared much the body, till the arrival of the justice of the peace, for whom they had immediately sent. By order of the officer, they lifted the body ; it was cold and rigid-the eyes were fixed and glassy.

meat, followed the hastily constructed litter, upon which were placed the disfigured remains of Charles Dars-and many were the conjectures

formed as to the cause of this most mysterious murder. They bore the corpse to the dwelling of the young man, which he had left on the preceding evening full of life and enjoyment-little dreaming, noor Charles! that death and treason were lucking nigh, and that ere another moment he would be their unhappy victim.

CHAPTER III .- THE JUDICIAL INQUIRY. The most active measures were immediately taken by the court of justice to discover the author of the crime which had caused so much excitement in the city of F. The district attorsey inquired into the habits of the late Mr. Dars, and endeavored to obtain information on the most trilling particulars. Charles had been of a lively, perhaps even trivolous disposition, but of regular habits, while his gentle and yielding character precluded the idea of his having been murdered by an enemy. His purse, as well as ins time, had always been at the service of others, and all were unanimous in praise of his excellent heart. As far then as the short-sighted wisdom of man could decide, it was neither hatred or vengeance which had inspired the beart, and guided the hand of the assassin.

Still farther must the search proceed. Those persons who had been with Charles, during the last evening of his life, were assembled as witnesses, and gave their testimony as follows :---That Mr. Dars had entered the cafe with ins friend, Mr. Dellaunnoy, and that after the same of chess in which Rudolphe had been vicformus, the young men had exchanged some bitter words; that they suddenly separated in apparent irritation; that Rudolphe had become quite agitated and even angry. That Charles left the cafe without even glancing at Rudolphe, who precipitately followed tum.

The metress of the house in which Mr. Dars was a lodger, was summoned, and thus gave her evidence:-

Upon the evening of the 8th of August she retired to rest at an early hour, and was wakened at eleven o'clock by the opening of the front door. Sue heard her boarder enter the hall, ac companied by another person; she distinctly heard Mr. Dars say, ' Coine up stairs, my friend.' She then heard the sound of two voices proceed-

'Yes.' "What was your intention in so doing ?" 'To be reconciled with my friend,' said Rudolphe-to embrace hun before retiring.'

'Did you do so ?' was the next question of the lawyer.

'No,' replied Rudolphe, 'I failed to meet him."

" What road did you follow ?"

'The one leading to the house where Charles boarded."

"And yet you did not meet Mr. Dars; that is scarcely credible.'

'Nevertheless,' said Rudolphe, 'it is true. I affirm it upon my honor.'

- "D d you go to Mr. Dars' house ?"
- ' No.'
- "Why not?"

'Because, being very much agitated, I endeavored to quiet my nerves by a walk in the open air.'

" It is useless to conceal from you," said the lawyer, ' that your conduct on that evening appears to me extremely suspicious; when you returned home, your clothes were damp and soiled with mud."

"I was exposed to that heavy shower of rain," said Rudolphe. "I had walked a long distance, to the outskirts of the city."

"And those spots of blood which stained your shirt sleeves ?' "They were caused by a scratch which I re-

ceived on my hand, while going through the deep forest.'

"What ! you were there during that frightful storm ?'

"I wished to forget my trouble; the storm was of little importance to me ; indeed, it was scarcely heeded.'

" Say rather,' said the lawyer, as if anxious to draw the examination to a close, " that you had committed a crime, and that you sought, amid the confusion of the elements, to silence the accusings of a guilty conscience."

'I commit a crime !' said Rudolphe, upon whom the truth appeared only now to flash. "1 -good heavens! can you entertain such a susnicion ?

"A suspicion, which has become such a certainty that from this moment you are arrested for the murder of Charles Dars.'

At these terrible words, Rudolphe trembled. the blood forscok his countenance; he fainted. When the unhappy young man recovered his bench. He sat there, apparently neither seekanimation he was alone, in a little cell, the only furniture of which consisted of an iron bedstead, a table and a chair. The only window was near the ceiling, and secured by bars of tron. The door was firmly bolted, and in its centre was a small window, also closely barred with iron; through this window, or more properly, aperture, Rudolphe could see the sentitel, who walked with measured pace, up and down the vast corridor. The agonizing truth forced itself upon hun; he was in prison, abandoned-execra ed by all as the murderer of his beloved friend. A second examination took place in the afternoon, and towards evening the accused was con fronted with the corpse of the victur. When Rudolphe found hunself in the apartment of hus triend-that anartment so well known and so en deared by the recollections of the happy hours -pent within its walls, his agration was excessive, but when he held the companion of his infancy lying motionless upon the funeral couch, when he regarded those lips which never more would address him by the sweet name of riend-when he gazed on those eyes, forever closed to the bright and beautiful things of earth -when he contemplated those beloved features deprived alike of the animated expressions of lite, and the matestic renose of death-when the terrible mandate of justice brought him in contest with those disfigured remains, Rudolphe could answer nothing to the interrogatories which were put to him. He threw himself upon the feet of the cornse, embraced them again and again, and cried with consulsive sobs-Ob, Charles, oh, my friend, awaken, and tell me once more that you love me-tell me that you forgive me. Had it not been for our unhappy dispute, this would never have bappened. You must live, you must speak to me that I may die in peace. Charles, Charles P

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One lay assassinated, in his collin-another, a criminal retained by justice under the bolts of a prison. One a victum, the other a murderer, while the third followed the remains of his friendto their narrow home. All eyes were directed. towards Alfred Servais; he followed the coffia in company with the nearest relations of the deceased. The corpse which lay in that coffin wasnot paler than he; blinded by his tears, trembling, almost fainting, he accepted the supporting arm of a priest who was at his side, while he appeared to be utterly unconscious of what he wasdoing. During the recitation of the ' office ofthe dead,' the grief of Alfred became perfectly uncontrollable; his tears and sobs mingled with the voices of the priests, and at times interrupt-ing them; he was kneeling, his face concealed. in his hands; a convulsive shudder at times agitated his body. The sight of the open grave appeared to augment his anguish, and he turned away his head, that he might not see the coffin asit was lowered into its final resting place. When the first shovel full of earth fell with a hollow sound upon the coffin lid, Alfred ins matirely recoiled with a movement of horror, while he repeated the name of ' Charles.' This profound. sorrow inspired the spectators with pity; the victim was almost forgotten for the friend whe mourned him so bilterly. They led Alfred from the cemetery; every one united in weeping for him and Charles, and m execrating the unfortunate Rudolphe.

Some days later Alfred received the followingnote-+-

"I wish to employ you as my lawyer-you, who know me so well -know that 1 am incapable of committing the crime, for which Llanguishin a glooiny prison cell. Come, then, my friend. hear me ; defend me ; you can believe that alter the ordeal through which I have passed, my life. is of little value to me; but I value my honor, and in your hands 1 place it.

RUDOLPHE.?

CHAPTER IV .- THE TRIAL.

The rapid fight of time brought around too quickly, the day appointed for the trial of Radolphe. The announcement of the trial attracted a large number of persons to P---, and the spacious nall of justice was found almost too small to contain the immense crowd which filled its limits. A shudder ran through the assembled multitude when Rudolphe appeared in the court room and look his sear upon the criminals by to avoid nor to attract the gaze of the curious; buried in his thoughts and overwhelmed with grief, no one could recognise in him the fively unthinking Rudolphe of former days. In his place appeared a man, pale and bent with whitening hair, and upon whom the last few days had weighed as so many years.

foundation, will be neither pure nor lasting."

Alas ! the three friends thought but seldom of that all-wise and loving Creator, to whose goodness they were indebted for their pleasures, their friendship, and eve: their very existence. Morning dawned, and the deep blue vault of heaven was tinged with rosy light, but in the hearts of Alfred, Charles and Ru tolphe, no sentiment of love was awakened towards God, who had guarded them during the dangers of the night Twilight threw her misty veil over bill and date ;the 'queen of night' arose in calm and secone loveliness, while millions of brilliant stars followed in her train, as she bathed the silent earth in floods of silvery light, but the sight of so much beauty failed to elevate the hearts of our young friends,

From Nature Up to Nature's God-'

up to Him who alone can preserve earthly friend. ships from the moth and the rust,' and who alone can prevent their yielding to the influence of time, of passion, or of interest.

For several days, Charles, Rudolphe, and Alfred had been separated. It was the first time for many years, and they were quite sad .---Alfred yielding to the entreaties of an aged relation, was spending some weeks with him at his country seat. During the absence of Alfred, Charles and Rudolphe generally passed their evenings at a certain cafe, which was much frequented by the gay and pleasure-loving youth of the city. There the two friends often remained till night was far advanced, retained by the absorbing interest of their favorite game - chess : both loved the pacific evolutions of the munic battalions, and both were not a little proud of their skill, in playing that difficult game.

CHAPTER II .- THE DISPUTE.

It was a suffry evening in August ; the day had been excessively warm, and though it was now some hours after sugget, the heat had scarcely diminished. A warm south wind, which perbaps had fauned, the burning summits of Atlas, stooping to pick up a beautiful little cane, which bore on its breezes a sickening sensation of heat, torturing alke to brain and nerves, causing feverisli agitation, an oppressive laugor to all who inhated the evening atmosphere.

Churles and Rudolphe were seated at a table, in the garden of the cafe ; the chess board was upon the table, but they had ceased playing, and great excitement in the political world. Whe- weapon.' ther it was that they yielded to the enervating become too much excited in their political dis- man was moved to tears as he gazed upon the lowed Mr. Dars out of the garden of

The unfortunate man nad, to all appearance. been dead for some hours. Upon his forenead and the back part of his head, were the marks of a terrible wound, inflicted, without doubt, by the hand of an assassin; the hair and clothes of the unhappy victim were saturated with his blood.

. It is Mr. Charles Dars !' exclaimed the justice, his voice trembling with emotion. Unfor tunate young man; why can have committed this cruel deed ?'

· He was known to be wealthy, and was perhaps murdered by thieves,' said a voice from the crowd.

'No,' replied the justice, ' here are his watch and chain, and his purse, the contents of which are untouched; his death appears to have been the work of a moment. Most probably he was knocked down, and, unable to defend hunself, brutally murdered.'

"And here is the weapon with which the deed was committed,' said one of the police officers, was lying at his feel.

It was one of that kind generally known as sword canes.' Eagerly seiz og it, the justice exclaimed -

• It is the cane of the noor young man; here are his mitials upon the handle, and some of his loved friend has rendered it irreparable.' brown hair is attached to the cliasing of the were talking of a recent event which had caused handle. He has been assassmated with his own

A mournful silence reigned throughout the

ing from Mr. Dars' room: it appeared to her that they were disputing ; she did not recognise the second voice. In a short time some one left the house; which of the disputants it was Ma dame Jeannot could not say. Then the front door was opened and shut violently, and she presum d that Mr. Dars had bastened out in pur--up of the person who had just left.

From that moment the fate of Charles Dars was enveloped in invitery, but from the appearance of the body it was conjectured that the murder had been committed at the instant of Charles' departure from the house.

But who was the murderer ?

Rudolphe was brought before the tribunal of justice. His pathd consequence bore traces of he most heartfelt sorrow, while the incoherency of his replies gave evidence of his internal auguish. On being interrogated as to the events of the preceding evening, he confirmed the testimony of the first witnesses. He acknowledged with tears that he had had for the first time a discussion with Charles, which had been productive of some bitter ferings.

"Our other friend,' said he. " was absent. We were generally three together, and Alfred Servais, who is wisdom and goodness itself, always maintained good feeling among us. Charles and I were more vivacious, but the wise counsels and good example of Alfred prevented us from doing anything wrong."

· How do you account for your words to Mr. Dars, that you demanded satisfaction ? asked the 1......

'I spoke hastily,' replied Rudolpe. 'I was stung to the quick by some words that Charles addressed to me."

. You did not speak to Mr. Dars during the remainder of the evening."

· Alas l' replied Rudolphe, in a voice stiffed by sobs, "I was in the wrong to harbor malice against him. I know it only too well. My por Charles! never can I receive the sweet assurance of your forgiveness !!

. You acknowledge, then,' said the lawyer, in a tone tull of suspicion, " that your conduct was such as to merit forgiveness?

· Certainly,' replied Radulphe, ' the least offence becomes a crime, when the death of a be-The lawyer simied incredutou-ly.

"Perhaps,' sa d he to Rudolphe, ' you will be found guilty of a greater crime than that of which you accuse yourself. Let us return to

Nothing more could be obtained from Rudolphe, and he was conducted, almost dying, to prison.

The city of P-- was in mourning on the day of the funeral of Charles Dars. Many wort, as they thought of the young man, so cruelly cut down in the morning of his days. Charles had in duration - so tender in affection.' These one of these bright and happy faces, which one loves to see about them, and his face was a fitting index to his heart. But what added to the ous, which were darted at Rudolute, whose general sorrow was the thought that this triple spirit appeared to be crushed ; whose heart, apfrien ship, which every one had cited as an example to the youth of the city, was rulely se- like schence as Attred Servais rose from his seat. crowd of spectators, and more than one strong the evening of the eighth of August. You fol- vered by the referites bands of death and crime. To the horror which the crime of Rudolphie bad

"He suffers from remorse,' said a person in the audieuce.

" And not without cause,' said another. " Tokill his best friend, and that friend so good. so mild ! O, the wretch : I cannot even my him." At this moment the movement and woispering of the crowd announced an arrival of some im. portance; and in a few moments Alfried Servias made his appearance in the hall. Before taking his place, he went to Rudolphe, and after exchanging a few words with the accused, he pressed his hand with expressive sympathy. The ace of the young awyer was more animated. than usual ; his even were brithant with a feverisn lustre; he could scarcely restrain his impatience to see the trial begun, that be might wrest, from the unreleating hand of justice the life of. his unfortunate friend. At length the important moment arrived. Alter some prelimitaries had been disposed of, the Recorder read the charge, against Rudolphe, and through it was already well. known, it was listened to with the most profund. attention. The examination was begun, and the witnesses did not waver in the least from their previous testimony :- the guarrel at the cafe -the angry words-the nocturnal absence of Rudolphe-the conversation which had been held between Charles and the person addressed by mm as 'my friend'-all was related without nesitation and without concealment. Rudolnhe persisted in declaring his innocence with vehemence, while his tears attested the violence of his emotion. He asknowledged that the witnesses spoke the truth-exce, t Madame Jeannot-of whose testanony he knew nothing whatever. The district attorney, in an eloquent and,

brilliant speech, collected and dwelt upon the evidence just listened to. . What adds to the peculiar malignity of this crime,' said he, ' is the, fact that it was preceded by a friendship so long, words found an echo in every heart-and many were the looks, both reproachful and contemptupeared to be broken. Then succeeded a death-