

THE EMIGRANT'S NIECE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY J. J. PROCTER.

CHAPTER III.

In one of those small streets that open on the Quay de la Fosse, that part of the town so beautiful and animated when business is active, but so sad and gloomy at the era of which I write, stood a second-hand clothes shop, well known to the sailors who frequented the harbor of Nantes. It was here that those who were on the point of starting on "the long voyage" came to provide themselves with woollen shirts, belts, canvas trousers, and those coats of thick warm cloth called Nor-westers by the Breton sailors, because they generally serve to keep off the cold damp winds of the North-west—in a word, with all the articles necessary to the complete outfit of a sailor, according to the seas he has to sail in. Here also on their return from sea the mariners resorted to sell, at a cheap rate, the clothes and other articles of which they stood in no need. This shop had been kept for upwards of twenty years by Brunel and his wife, honest folks, who dealt fairly in their little business, and contented themselves with light profits; a circumstance that did not hinder them from frequently rendering important services to their customers. Many a time had they completely fitted out some poor sailor who found himself without the means of paying for the indispensable purchases he was obliged to make, at the very moment of setting out for some distant clime. "You will pay us back when you return," they said; and rarely had they to complain of the bad faith of those to whom they made such advances, though more than once the sea had swallowed up debtor and debt together. These misfortunes did not, however, hinder them from rendering

similar good offices when the next opportunity presented itself. These things, which were well known to the sailors who frequented the port, had spread the good name of the Brunels far and wide. Everyone spoke of the portliness, the good nature, and the honesty of old Brunel, whom the sailors had nick-named Father Nor-wester, either because he generally wore one of those garments, or because his shop furnished the best kit, and at the lowest prices. As for his wife, Mother Marie Jeanne, she showed a truly motherly care for those "poor boys" who were going to confront the storms of the ocean; she gave them the most touching advice, and the most salutary counsels, entreating them to clear their consciences before they embarked, and never to omit their morning and evening prayers. On their return, and during their stay on land, she visited the sick, brought them aid and comfort, took care of them, as if she had been a Sister of Charity, in such wise that the sailors called her "the Tar's mother."

In spite of the losses that they experienced from time to time, in spite of their frequent disinterested acts, and the humble profits with which they were satisfied, the little fortune of the Brunels had gradually increased. Without being absolutely rich, they had put by a sum sufficient to enable them to retire from business and live at their ease; and in this they followed the advice they had frequently received: "You have no children; what use is there in killing yourselves with toil for distant relations, who will not even thank you for it? Would it not be better to take your ease, and in a peaceful and quiet life enjoy the property you have acquired?"

It was indeed true that they had no