

own bright star ! But ! (*he looks at the clock.*) Now, that is very strange !

MME D'ERMEL.—What is strange ?

JACOBUS.—Why—is your clock right ?

MME. D'ERMEL.—To be sure.

JACOBUS.—Well, then I must say, that I was solidly built ! Would you believe it, I left home at three minutes past seven, so that at seventy, I am able to walk nearly half a mile in seven minutes ?

MME. D'ERMEL.—You are a mysterious being indeed. Time plays with you. . . Come, give me your cup, my young friend.

JACOBUS.—(*Holding out his cup.*) Real nectar,—nectar as much for its aroma, as for the divine hand that pours it out.

MME. D'ERMEL.—Any sugar, Jupiter ?

JACOBUS.—(*Settling himself comfortably in his arm chair, and stirring his coffee.*) Let the pilot with his triple-brassed heart tempt in his light skiff, the Adriatic wave ! . . . I feel quite comfortable here and shall remain. By the way, my dear lady, I have got some surprising news for you. Do you remember the two sickly orphans, the two little shrubs, whose life you despaired of, and whom you entrusted two months ago to my science and friendship ?

MME. D'ERMEL.—My camelia and cactus ? They are dead, I suppose.

JACOBUS.—Dead ? no, they are in full bloom like yourself.

MME. D'ERMEL.—Indeed ! Grand news truly. And when shall I see these two prodigies ?

JACOBUS.—No later than to-morrow ; I'll call for you, and on our way, we'll drop in at Jane Nicot's, who is sick in bed of a very dangerous fever. You know that when I cannot cure my patients, I comfort them with the promise of your presence. It is said of Hippocrates, that when he reached the end of his long career, he had but one remedy left in which he trusted ; the secret of it was lost ; but I think I found it again : it is the kindness of woman.

MME. D'ERMEL.—Oh, you flatterer ! Well,

I shall go and see Jane Nicot. But do drink your coffee, and tell me if it is good to-night. (*As the doctor is about to drink, the door opens.*)

VICTOIRE.—Monsieur le curé wishes to see Madame. (*The doctor rises, and with a frown puts his cup on the mantel.*)

(*To Victoire.*)—Ask him up stairs.

(*Victoire goes out.*)

JACOBUS.—The curé again !

MME. D'ERMEL.—The curé again ! Now that is amiable, indeed ! Since the good man took charge of the parish, eight months ago, he has only spent one evening here. He saw very well that he was in your way ; for heaven knows, there is no mistaking your feelings by your looks. Since that time, he has been discreet enough never to call after seven in the evening. When he dines here, he leaves immediately after dinner ; and in return for all this thoughtfulness, you say : “ The curé again ! ”

JACOBUS.—Pshaw ! You see he is making up for it. I just tell you that he is going to settle down here now for the rest of the evening, with his back to the fire and his cassock spread out like a fan.

VICTOIRE, (*coming back*)—The curé has but two words to say to Madame : he does not care to come up.

MME. D'ERMEL.—I'll come down. Listen to that, doctor, just listen to that, and die for shame if you can. (*She goes out.*)

JACOBUS, (*alone. He walks about a few moments in silence, then begins to grumble, and the grumbling increases in proportion as his patience decreases :—*)

Humph ! Humph ! two words only ! two words, indeed ! He is going to keep her now a whole hour in the entry—and in a draught too ! What selfish creatures these ecclesiastics are ! Two words ! The conversation has lasted long enough for a hundred. Priest's tongue, woman's tongue ! Fine word for the devil ! Now, I should like to know whether it is decent, proper, for a priest to be running the streets of a night to gossip in a hall with a lady. Suppose some poor wretch