

The number and the street Petit Pierre remembered was where the carriage entered. He was not mistaken. Madame de l'Escars was the "beautiful lady" of his dreams, the inspirer of his genius, the donor of the golden louis with which he had bought his first drawing materials.

Petit Pierre was not long in going to see Madame de l'Escars, and the most friendly relations were soon established between them. The frank, straightforwardness united to the great good sense of the former, met with great favour in the eyes of the latter, who, though not recognizing in the young artist the little shepherd who had served her as a model, nevertheless could not free herself from the impression that she had seen him elsewhere.

Madame de l'Escars as yet had not told Petit Pierre (as he shall be called to the end of story, not to divulge a name that became afterwards justly celebrated) that she drew, but one evening she confessed what Petit Pierre already knew very well—she had made some studies, some sketches that she would have shown him before if she had thought them worthy. She brought the album to the table, and turned the leaves more or less rapidly, as she thought them worthy or unworthy of examination. When she reached the spot where Petit Pierre and his flock were represented, she said to the young artist;

"This is the same place you depicted in the picture I brought to realize what I wanted to do. You have been at S—, then?"

"Yes, I spent some time there."

"A charming country, and full of beauties that one might seek long for elsewhere and not find. Ah! there is a blank page; will you not draw something?"

Petit Pierre sketched the valley where Madame de l'Escars was thrown from her horse. He represented the Amazon on the ground, held by the young shepherd, who bathed her temples with his handkerchief.

"What a strange coincidence!" cried Madame de l'Escars. "I was really thrown from my horse in that very spot, but there was no witness of my accident but a little shepherd, that I dimly saw in my faint condition, but I have never seen him since. Who could have told you this?"

"I am Petit Pierre, and here is the handkerchief with which I wiped the blood from your temple from a slight wound. I see you have the mark of it yet."

Madame de l'Escars held out her hand to the young artist, who imprinted on her fingers a respectful kiss. Then, in a voice tremulous from emotion, he related to her all his life, his vague aspirations, his dreams, his efforts, and at last his love. Now he read his heart plainly, and it had been the muse he had adored in Madame de l'Escars, now he loved the woman.

There is not much more to say—the end of the tale is not difficult to guess; before many months Madame de l'Escars became Madame D—, the wife of one of the rising artists of the day, and Petit Pierre had the rare good luck to marry his ideal. He loved the country, and he became a great landscapist; he loved a charming woman and he married her. But what will not a pure love and a strong will accomplish?

THE END.

HOUSES AND HOMES.

There is nothing more symbolic of the emptiness of life than the modern parlor of the average house. If you are expected to wait for anybody in the sacred precincts, life, while you wait, becomes a burden. There is such an air of "touch me not" about everything, from the tidies that entangle themselves in the buttons of your coat to the "show volumes" whose gilded edges bear no trace of use, and the worst of it is, there is generally not a book in the room. The unhappy visitor has the choice of looking at pictures which he has seen a dozen times before, or of drumming on the inevitable piano,—an amusement that can give him no pleasure and may give pain to the listeners. If the average parlor is an index of the house, then the average house is bookless. And one recoils from the imagination of a bookless existence,—an existence in which the daily paper, with its vulgarization of all which is vulgar in life, is the highest literary monitor.

The aim of every prudent mother is to keep her children around her in their times of leisure. When they begin to yawn, and to show that the home is tiresome, she would do well not to blame them, but to blame herself for not finding means to attach them to that circle with which nothing on earth can compare. But how can she do this if an almanac, a cook-book, a novel or so picked up in a railway car, or one or two "show-books," bought at Christmas, make up the library?

Young people are confronted by so many "can notes" from their directors—most of which are unhappily disregarded,—that it is a distinct gain when we can so guide their lives that a "can" or two may be added. The multiplication of innocent pleasures is the sweetener and the safeguard of life. The man who finds a new way of entertaining a group of young people, and at the same time strengthening their love for home, is greater than Sir Henry de Bracten or Blackstone or Coke, or all the analysts of what can not be done who ever lived.

A bookless home is sure to be a home of which the young grow weary. It is important that the right books should be at home, and that a taste for them should be cultivated. Give a young man good religious principles and a taste for the study and the careful reading of good books, and you have taken the fangs out of many rattlesnakes that beset his path.

It may be said that the average father or mother has little time to consider systematically how to make home pleasant. It may be said that money is necessary, and not always forthcoming, to make one's home as attractive as one's neighbor's. It may be said, too, that parents have not always the cultivation themselves to train their children's literary taste.

In the first place, if a father or mother can find no time for his children's amusement, that father or mother has no conception of his duties, and should learn them at once, lest disgrace befall his gray hairs. In the second place, it is a vulgar error, and very much a new-fashioned American error, to hold that furniture and decorations make the home, when these are only the frame of the home. A "home," in the American language, has come to mean a "house,"—as if there were not something deeper, more angelic, more beautiful in a "home" than chairs or tables or paint or wall-paper or the four walls! The New Englanders of the past had not this opinion: that money is necessary to make homes, or that no home can be complete unless it be as well-appointed as one's neighbor's. The Germans who come here seem to know what home-life is and to cherish it; therein lies their strength; for they know the value of simplicity. In the third place, if parents are so incapable of guiding their children, what has become of our boasted progress? If the average parent of '89 is no cleverer than the parent of '12, of what use are all the modern improvements in education, the newspapers, the public schools, the other things which are supposed to make us so perfect that we should be ashamed to speak to our grandfathers if we should meet them in public? Well, if this third objection is valid in some cases, the parents can at least seek advice in the choosing of a small library, without which no house can be a home.

So far as we can see, there is no reason on earth why the living place of industrious and pious people should not be a home,—should not draw the children to it "with hooks of steel." There are two requisites for making any place which is water-tight and weather-proof, in which there are the ordinary appliances for ordinary comfort,—the cultivation of cheerfulness as an art and a library of good books.

If a great abundance of money were the best thing in life, and the attainment of it the main object of life, why is it that the children of the rich do not invariably take their places among the greatest doers or thinkers? Why is it that luxury in early life generally cankers the "infants of the spring"? And why is it that the men who do the best work in life—at least in this country—have worn the yoke of comparative poverty in their youth? If riches do not help to produce good men, then riches are not worth the preoccupied days, the neglect of precious young hearts and souls, the feverish nights, the homeless lives, which too many Americans waste in their pursuit.

The question with us ought to be to make homes, not to build houses. And a home without good books, without cheerfulness, is not a real home. When a mother has to resort to threats and tears and entreaties to keep her children within precincts that should be a heaven of rest, let her look