

## THE ROMANCE OF A JESUIT.

From the French of De Beugny d'Hagerne.

## CHAPTER VI.

On seeing Charles enter his study, Mons. Meynaudier exclaimed, surprised, "You here! Have you already found things out? or have you been expelled ignominiously?"

"Neither the one nor the other. I have been fortunate enough to make a few discoveries, but I am in hopes of making some far more important ones. Here are a series of letters I had addressed to you, giving you the result of my observations, and if you will take the trouble of reading them, you will see that one of the greatest obstacles to the success of my mission was my being unable to correspond with you without running the risk of letting myself be found out. I therefore thought it better to make a plausible pretext for temporarily leaving the Jesuits, so as to concoct with you a means of correspondence."

Mons. Meynaudier had to go out just then, so begged of Charles to call on him at 9 o'clock the next evening. On arriving he was shown into the drawing-room where he found the deputy himself seated before the fire; opposite to him was Elise, and near her was young Lerouttier, the banker's son. Anatole was reading near the lamp.

A certain air of embarrassment was to be detected on the part of each of those assembled in the room, and it was evident that the servant had made a mistake in not showing the visitor into the study.

For a moment he hesitated what to do, but recovering himself saluted the deputy and then bowed coldly to Mlle. Meynaudier and the two young men, as if meeting them for the first time. Elise returned his bow somewhat awkwardly, whilst Anatole, who could hardly do otherwise, stretched out his hand to his former friend and Arthur Lerouttier followed his example. Mons. Meynaudier, perceiving the false position in which they were all placed, made use of the earliest pretext for taking young Durand with him to his study, where he apologized for his servant's mistake.

Charles accepted the apology, though with not too good a grace, and Mons. Meynaudier then continued:

"I have read your letters and have found them very amusing and interesting. I have passed them on to the Minister who laughed very heartily over them, and has kept the one in which you speak of the retreats which are given to persons of the world."

"Perhaps I have somewhat enlarged on that matter, but I think good points in a speech might be made out of it."

"And what is more, terrible consequences might ensue from the practice. After such retreats men would return to their daily life perfect fanatics and ready to spread Jesuit influence far and wide. These ardent propagandists would seek disciples amid their own relations and friends, in the army they would spread their ideas among government employes, and, in fact, amongst all classes. Too soon France, all Europe even, would be in the power of Loyola's wily sons. The Minister has begged me to express his satisfaction at what you have already done, and at the same time, he begs you to pursue to its end the task you have begun so well. Now, what plan have you hit on concerning your correspondence?"

Charles, in explanation of this plan, showed Mons. Meynaudier the map he had made of the house and buildings at St. Acheul, and said he would wish to have a trustworthy member of the secret police sent every week to a certain indicated spot where he would himself manage to exchange correspondence with him. Mons. Meynaudier promised to make the necessary arrangements for the purpose, and after acceding to Charles request for a week's holiday, took leave of him, telling him to return for further instructions on the eve of his departure.

On leaving the study, Charles, instead of leaving the house, returned to the drawing room, and found Elise and Arthur still sitting and conversing together with great animation.

On perceiving him they both drew back with an air of vexation, but Charles, calm, and self possessed, advanced towards the young lady, and addressing her, said:

"Mademoiselle, I cannot leave the house without expressing

to you my satisfaction that an unforeseen circumstance has obtained for me the pleasure of seeing you once more."

Whilst the blushing Elise was stammering out some acknowledgment of his greeting, Charles Durand shook hands with Anatole and left the room without even casting a look on Arthur Lerouttier.

The three young people looked at one another in astonishment. Arthur was the first to speak. "I find the young gentleman very insolent and would have told him so had he given me time. I feel very much inclined to follow him, for he cannot have got very far away, and I would like to ask him the reason of his behaviour."

Elise begged him to remain where he was, and Anatole remarked that he should have indulgence for the poor young fellow who had been soured by misfortune, since, but for Mons. Meynaudier's timely protection he would not even have had bread to eat.

"Besides, my dear Arthur," he whispered, "he once had hopes of winning my sister, and seeing you occupy a place that formerly had been his, he could not hide his displeasure."

Arthur, however, persisted in his intention of calling Charles to account the first time he could meet him, but on Elise assuring him that by so doing he would pain her deeply and forfeit her esteem, he was reluctantly compelled to abandon his project. Mons. Meynaudier's opportune entrance put a stop to all discussion.

Arthur Lerouttier was what we now call a *dude*; that name did not exist in 1815, but though names may change, that particular species of being always exists.

As for Arthur Lerouttier, we can describe him in two words: he was the son of a self made rich man, and his only occupation was making the paternal bank-notes fly out of the window.

About eleven o'clock he left Mons. Meynaudier's, and had hardly taken a dozen steps when he found himself face to face with Charles Durand. An altercation ensued, during which Charles told the other that his, Arthur's, father had behaved to him in a way that merited a chastisement which he, Charles, could not inflict on account of the disparity of their ages, and therefore he claimed from the son the satisfaction which could not be asked of the father.

"My father's acts are not mine, and I am not disposed to give you the satisfaction you demand. Besides, since my father's supposed offence dates a year back, and it is only now that you ask satisfaction, it is evident that you have some other motive in demanding it. I know that you once aspired to marrying the lady with whom you saw me conversing this evening."

"Sir, gentlemen do not mix up a lady's name with their quarrels, and I forbid you to mention the one on your lips."

"I will take no orders from you, and do not choose to resent your insults."

"Will you or will you not give me satisfaction for the dishonesty practised on me by your infamous father?"

"Never, for I have promised not to fight with you."

"Then I must force you to do so." The next moment he had struck Lerouttier, exclaiming: "To-morrow all Paris shall know that you have been struck and yet refuse to fight."

"I no longer refuse, and your insolence shall cost you dear."

"We shall see. I shall await your witnesses at noon to-morrow, at No. 5 Rue Servandoni."

The day after the morrow at dawn, Charles Durand and two of his friends arrived in a clearing of the Bois de Boulogne, and a few minutes afterwards Arthur Lerouttier also arrived, accompanied by his witnesses. Swords were chosen as the weapons to be employed, and after the usual preliminaries the two combatants crossed swords.

Both of the young men had considerable skill with their weapons, but the advantage lay with Durand. After some giving and parrying of blows, young Lerouttier was slightly wounded in the wrist, but the witnesses found the wound so insignificant that the combat was renewed.

Charles recommenced his attack with fresh vigor, and thrusts succeeded each other rapidly. Lerouttier had evidently the worst of it when Charles' foot slipping, his arm