

The Old Time.

THIRTY-SIXTH VARIATION. 1833 1888. This shroud of song you bid me bring...

A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

In Normandy, on the banks of the Seine, stands a small, picturesque chateau. An iron gateway, surmounted by a crown, gives entrance to the old-fashioned grounds which surround it.

CHAPTER II.

The youths returned to college, and M. de Claironville to Paris, where his employment kept him for many months of the year. Madame de Viniere and her granddaughter resumed their old life, and a happy life it was, though so quiet and uneventful.

CHAPTER III.

Again the years glided by. Summer roses bloomed and faded, cold winter came and went. As fair and beautiful as a rosebud was the little maiden of the Chateau d'Ande, and as cheering to the heart as the brightest summer's day.

CHAPTER IV.

Though weeks and months rolled on, no color returned to Annette's cheek. She looked thin and worn. If possible, she was more than usually kind to those around her. She would smile when Madame de Viniere was by, and try to cheer the kind and tender grandmother.

And away the children went down the long avenue, over the dead leaves, till they came to the old, gray church. The door stood open; the little ones entering hesitated for a moment before penetrating the precincts of gloom; but soon getting accustomed to the dim light...

house, or running for very joy down the long avenue behind the chateau. M. de Claironville was a devoted father; his children and their happiness were his constant thought.

seemed to have no fear of death. "All he regretted in life," he said, "was the separation from those he loved."

Beside the tall, old-fashioned chimney piece, a gentleman was standing. "This, I think," said Madame de Regnac, "is a friend of yours."

It must only be as of one far beyond him, far removed from his life and sphere. Never had he felt his poverty so keenly, never had he so regretted the fortune of his fathers and their grand ancestral home.

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This glorious landscape!" asked Henri, as she moved towards the house. "Madame de Viniere said I should find you here, and gave me permission to join you." "Oh, certainly," answered Annette, returning to the grassy seat. "Is it not truly beautiful? Do you remember Henri, how we used to play here on the lawn, and how happy we all were then? Annette could not help smiling, and wondered to herself why Henri spoke like this. "Dodgates of his heart were there, she opened now, and like a mighty stream his love gushed forth. "Yes Annette," he soon continued, "I loved you then. I loved you more, far more, when I saw you at Des Ormes. But I was poor, too poor, I thought, to aspire to your dear hand. And so I went away, meaning forever to conceal my love, to forget you if I could. But I have come back, Annette. I have come to place all my happiness at your feet. Annette could not help smiling, and wondered to herself why Henri spoke like this. "The golden light had vanished; the sun had long sunk behind the hills where Henri and Annette re-entered the chateau. "Madame de Viniere was as usual her gentle, serene. Her Annette, leaning unobtruded on her lap, and as she were on her gentle face. In an instant the young girl was at her side, and throwing her arms lovingly around his neck, she kissed her tenderly. "Bless you, my sweet one," said the grandmother, pressing the girl to her heart, and taking her a happy wife. "Bless you both, my much-loved children, and grant you every happiness!" CHAPTER VI. A few weeks later there were rejoicings among the inhabitants of Ande. One glorious morning in July, the village church was decked with flowers, children dressed in white carried baskets filled with choicest blossoms, and men and women were in holiday attire. Presently from the chateau, came the Comte de Claironville, and with his side white as a little snowdrop, and breath in orange blossoms, was a fair young bride. He led her down the broad avenue of oak, wide-spreading trees, and under the shade of the branches and gaily decorated the soft, green grass on which she trod. Birds were singing loud and merrily, as they, too, would add to the brightness of that happy day. Following the gray-haired father and his little daughter came Madame de Viniere leaning on Henri's arm. The young marquis in military dress, looking on his handsome, manly face, even the jealous villagers were forced to own he was a meet husband for their dear Mademoiselle Annette. Many fervent prayers were said, blessings from on high were invoked, the youthful couple in holiday attire knelt within the altar rails. And they were married in the name of God a Holy Church; united for life through health and sickness, through joy and sorrow, until death they should part. Once more happiness reigned supreme in the old Chateau d'Ande, and in the children's merry voices again re-echoed through its walls. Monsieur de Claironville dearly loved the boy who bore his own son's name, and the little Marquis whose sweet face reminded him of Annette's, when in long years gone by had climbed upon his knee as her little ones now did. Madame de Viniere and old Marquis spent their days in piety and in the of their new "treasures"; and peace and grateful tenderness attended their age. Thus let us leave them. Death and now will surely come a time, but the whose histories we find traced there knew how to bear the cross, and how, lifting it on high, to make it bud for bright blossoms for eternity. Ask not where all these are flown, now why the old chateau now stands closed and deserted. While earth's lowliest lights shine on the happy picture, let us cease to grieve that in our memories it may thus ever bright and fair. THE Horsford Almanac and Cook Book mailed free on application to the Rumford Chemical Works, Providence, R. I.