

## BYRON'S FAREWELL TO HIS WIFE.

Fare thee well, and if for ever,  
Still for ever fare thee well,—  
Even though unforgiven, never  
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bare before thee,  
Where thy head so oft has lain,  
While that placid sleep came o'er thee,  
Which thou ne'er canst know again;

Would that breast by thee glanc'd over,  
Every inmost thought could show,  
Then thou wouldst at last discover  
'Twas not well to spurn it so.

Though the world, for this, commend thee,  
Though it smile upon the blow,  
Even its praises must offend thee,  
Founded on another's woe.

Though my many faults defaced me,  
Could no other arm be found—  
Than the one which once embraced me,  
To inflict a cureless wound!

Yet—oh, yet—thyself deceive not—  
Love may sink by cold decay,  
But by sudden wrench believe not  
Hearts can thus be torn away.

Still thine own life retaineth—  
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat,  
And the undying thought which paineth,  
Is—that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow  
Than the wail above the dead;  
Both shall live, but every morrow  
Wake us from a widow'd bed.

And, when thou wouldst solace gather—  
When our child's first accents flow—  
Wilt thou teach her to say—father!  
Though his care she must forego.

When her little hands shall press thee;  
When her lip to thine is press'd—  
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,  
Think of him thy love had bless'd.

Should her lineaments resemble  
Those they never more mayst see—  
Then thy heart would softly tremble  
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults, perchance, thou knowest—  
All my madness none can know—  
All my hopes were e'er thou goest—  
Thither yet with thee they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken;  
Pride—which not a world could bow—  
Bows to thee—by thee forsaken,  
Even my soul forsakes me now.

But 'tis done—all words are idle—  
Words from me are vainlier still;  
But the thoughts we cannot bridle  
Force their way without the will.

Fare thee well—thus disunited,  
Torn from every nearer tie—  
Seared in heart, and lone—and blighted—  
More than this I scarce can die.

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## PUBLICANS and SINNERS

## A LIFE PICTURE.

BY MISS M. E. BRADDON,

Author of "Lady Audley's Secret," "To The Bitter End," "The Outcasts," &c., &c.

## BOOK THE LAST.

## CHAPTER I.

AT ROUEN.

It was still quite early in the day when Lucius entered Rouen, but the bustle of commerce had begun upon the quays. Shrill voices bawled to each other among the shipping, and it seemed as if a small slice of the West India Docks had been transferred to this bluer stream. The bustle of business here was a very small matter compared with the press and clamor of the Shadrack-Basin district. Still the town had a prosperous progressive air. lofty stone-fronted mansions and lofty stone-fronted ware-houses glared whitely in the sunshine, some finished and occupied, but more in process of construction. This mushroom growth of modern commerce seemed to have risen all at once, to overshadow the quaint old city where the warrior-maid was martyred. Lucius, who had not seen the place for some years, looked round him aghast. This broad lime-white boulevard, these tall lime-white buildings, were as new as Aladdin's palace.

"What has become of my Rouen?" he asked himself dejectedly. The city had pleased him five years ago, when he and Geoffrey passed

through it during a long vacation excursion, but the queer old gabled houses, older than the Fronde—nay, many of them ancient as the famous Joan herself—the archways, the curious nooks and corners, the narrow streets and inconvenient footways, in a word, all that had made the city at once delightful to the tourist and unwholesome for its inhabitants, seemed to be extinguished by those new boulevards and huge houses.

A quarter of an hour's exploration, however, showed Lucius that much that was interesting in his Rouen still remained. There was the narrow street and its famous sweetmeat shops, once the chief thoroughfare; yonder the noble old cathedral; there St. Ouen, that grandest and purest of Gothic churches. Modern improvement had not touched these, save to renovate their olden splendor.

The traveller did not even stop to refresh himself, but went straight to the Rue Jeanne d'Arques, a narrow quiet street in an out-of-the-way corner, behind the Palais de Justice; so quiet, indeed, that it was difficult to imagine, in the gray stillness of this retreat, that the busy, prosperous, Napoleonicised or Haussmanised city was near at hand.

The street was as clean as it was dull, and had a peculiar neatness of aspect, which is, as it were, the seal of respectability. A large white Angora cat purred upon one of the doorsteps—a canary chirped in an open window—a pair of mirrors attached to the sides of another case-ment, in the Belgian fashion, denoted that there were some observing eyes which did not deem even the scanty traffic of the Rue Jeanne d'Arques beneath their notice. Most of the houses were in private occupation, but there were two or three shops—one a lace-shop, another a watchmaker's, and the watchmaker's was next door to Number 17.

Lucius crossed to the opposite side of the way and inspected this Number 17—the house from which Madame Dumarques, Lucille's mother, had written to Ferdinand Sivewright. It had no originality in its physiognomy. Like the rest of the houses in the street, it was dull and clean—like them it looked eminently respectable. It inspired no curiosity in the observer—it suggested no mystery hidden among its inhabitants.

Should he pull that brightly-polished brass knob and summon the porter or portress, and ask to see the present inmates of Number 17? There might be two or three different families in the house, though it was not large. His eye wandered to the watchmaker's next door. A shop is neutral ground, and a watchmaker's trade is leisurely, and inclines its practitioners to a mild indulgence in gossiping. The watchmaker would in all probability know a good deal about Number 17, its occupants past and present.

Lucius recrossed the street and entered the watchmaker's shop. He was pleased to find that mechanic seated before the window examining the intestines of a chronometer through a magnifying glass, but with no appearance of being pressed for time. He was old and gray and small, with a patient expression which promised good nature even towards a stranger.

Lucius gave a conciliatory cough and wished him good-morning, a salutation which the watchmaker returned with brisk politeness. He gave a sigh of relief and laid down the chronometer, as if he were rather glad to be done with it for a little while.

"I regret to say that I do not come as a customer," said Lucius. The watchmaker shrugged his shoulders and smiled, as who should say, "Fate does not always favor me." "I come rather to ask your kindly assistance in my search for information about some people who may be dead long ago, for anything I know to the contrary. Have you lived any length of time in this street, sir?"

"I have lived in this street all the time that I have lived at all, sir," replied the watchmaker. "I was born in this house, and my father was born here before me. There is a little notch in yonder door which indicates my height at five years old; my father cut it in all the pride of a paternal heart, my mother looking on with maternal love. My aftergrowth did not realise the promise of that period."

Lucius tried to look interested in this small domestic episode, but failed somewhat in the endeavor; so eager was he to question the watchmaker about the subject he had at heart.

"Did you ever hear the name of Dumarques in this street?" he asked.

"Did I ever hear my own name?" exclaimed the watchmaker. "One is not more familiar to me than the other. You mean the Dumarques who lived next door."

"Yes, yes—are they there still?"

"They! They are dead. It is not every one who lives to the age of Voltaire."

"Are they all dead?" asked Lucius, disheartened. It seemed strange that an entire family should be swept away within fifteen years.

"Well, no; I believe Julie Dumarques is still living. But she left Rouen some years ago."

"Do you know where she has gone?"

"She went to Paris; but as to her address in Paris—no, I do not know that. But if it be vital to you to learn it—"

"It is vital to me."

"I might possibly put you in the way of obtaining the information, or procure it for you."

"I shall be most grateful if you can do me that favor. Any trifling recompense which I can offer you—"

"Sir, I require no reward beyond the consciousness of having performed a worthy action. I am a disciple of Jean Jacques Rousseau; I live entirely on vegetable diet; and I endeavor to assist my fellow-creatures."

"I thank you, sir, for your disinterested kindness. And now perhaps you will lay me under a farther obligation by telling me all you can about these neighbours of yours?"

"Willingly, sir."

"Were they tradespeople, or what, these Dumarques?"

"Wait a little, sir, and I will tell you everything," said Monsieur Gastin, the little watchmaker. He ushered Lucius into a neat little sitting-room, which was evidently also his bedroom, installed him in an armchair covered with bright yellow velvet, took a second yellow-velvet chair for himself, clasped his bony hands upon his angular knee, and began his story. Through the half-glass door he commanded an admirable view of his shop, and was ready to spring up at any moment, should a customer invite his attention.

"Old André Dumarques, the father, had been in the cotton trade, when the cotton trade, like almost every other trade, was a great deal better than it is now. He had made a little money—not very much, but just enough to afford him, when judiciously invested, an income that he could manage to live upon. Another man with a family like his might not have been able to live upon André Dumarques' income; but he was a man of penurious habits, and could make five-and-twenty centimes go as far as half a franc with most people. He had married late in life, and his wife was a good deal too young and too pretty for him, and the neighbors did not fail to talk, as people do talk amongst our lively nation, about such matters. But Madame Dumarques was a good woman, and though every one knew pretty well that hers wasn't a happy marriage, still no name ever came of it. She did her duty, and slaved herself to death to make both ends meet, and keep her house neat and clean. Number seventeen was a model to the rest of the street in those days, I can assure you."

"She slaved herself to death, you say, sir? What does that mean?" inquired Lucius.

"It means that she became *peignée* when her youngest daughter—she had three daughters, but no son—was fifteen years old, and as pretty as her mother at the same age. Everybody had seen the poor woman fading gradually for the last six years, except her husband. He saw nothing, till the stamp of death was on her face, and then he went on like a madman. He spent his money freely enough then—had a doctor from Paris even to see her, because he wouldn't believe the Rouen doctors when they told him his wife couldn't live—and would have sacrificed anything to save her; but it was too late. A little rest, a little pleasure might have lengthened her life if she'd had it in time; but nothing could save her now. She died; and I shall never forget old André's face when I saw him coming out of his house the day after her funeral."

"He had been fond of her, then?"

"Yes, in his selfish way. He had treated her like a servant, and worse than any servant in a free country would submit to be treated, and he had expected her to wear like a machine. He had always been hard and tyrannical, and his grief, instead of softening him, changed him for the worse. He made his children's home so wretched, that two of his daughters—Julie, and Félicie—went out to service. Their poor mother had taught them all she could; for André Dumarques vowed he wouldn't waste his money on paying for his daughters to be made fine ladies. She had been educated at the Sacré Cœur, and was quite a lady. She taught them a good deal; but still people said they weren't accomplished enough to be governesses, so they got situations as lady's-maids, or humble companions, or something in that way."

"Was Félicie the youngest?"

"Yes, and the prettiest. She was the image of her mother. The others had too much of the father in them—thin lips, cold gray eyes, sharp noses. She was all life and sparkle and prettiness; too pretty to go out into the world among strangers at sixteen years old."

"Did she begin the world so young?"

"She did. The neighbours wondered that the father should let her go. I, who knew him, it may be, better than most people, for he made no friends, ventured to say as much. 'That is too pretty a flower to be planted in a stranger's garden,' said I. André Dumarques shrugged his shoulders. 'What would you?' he asked. 'My children must work for their living. I am too poor to keep them in idleness.' In effect, since his wife's death Dumarques had become a miser. He had been always mean. He had now but one desire; and that was to hoard his money."

"Do you know to whom Félicie went, when she began the world?"

"The poor child!—no, not precisely; not as to name and place. But it was to an English lady she went—I heard as much as that; for, as I said just now, Dumarques spoke more freely to me than to others. An elderly English lady, an invalid, was passing through Rouen with her brother, also elderly and English—she a maiden lady, he a bachelor. The lady's maid had fallen ill on the journey. They had been travelling in Italy, Switzerland, heaven knows where, and the lady was in sore want of an attendant; but she would have no common person, no peasant girl who talked loud and ate garlic; she must have a young person of some refinement, conversable—in brief, almost a lady. Her brother applied to the master of the hotel. The master of the hotel knew something of André Dumarques, and knew that he wanted to find situations for his daughters. 'I have the very thing at the ends of my fingers,' he said,

and sent his porter upon the spot with a note to Monsieur Dumarques, asking him to bring one of his daughters. Félicie, had been pining ever since her mother's death. She was most anxious to leave her home. She accompanied her father to the hotel. The old lady saw her, was delighted with her, and engaged her on the spot. That was how Félicie left Rouen."

"Did you ever see her again?"

"Yes, and how sorely changed! It was at least six years afterwards; and I had almost forgotten that poor child's existence. André Dumarques was dead; he had died leaving a nice little fortune behind him,—the fruit of deprivations that must have rendered his life a burden, poor man,—and his eldest daughter, Hortence, kept the house. Julie had also gone into service soon after Félicie left home. Hortence had kept her father's house ever since her mother's death. She kept it still, though there was now no father for whom to keep it. She must have been very lonely, and though the house was a picture of neatness, it had a melancholy air. Mademoiselle Dumarques kept three or four cats, and one old servant who had been in the family for years; no one ever remembered her being young, not even I, who approach the age of my great countryman, Voltaire."

"And she came back—Félicie?" asked Lucius, somewhat exercised in spirit by the watchmaker's *longueur*.

"She came back; but, ah, how changed! It was more like the return of a ghost from the grave than of that bright creature I remembered six years before. I have no curiosity about my neighbours; and though I love my fellow creatures in the abstract, I rarely trouble myself about particular members of my race, unless they make some direct appeal to my sympathy. Thus, had I been left to myself, I might have remained for an indefinite period unaware of Félicie's return. But I have a housekeeper who has the faults as well as the merits of her sex. While I devote my leisure to those classic writers who have rendered my native land illustrious, she, worthy soul, gives her mind to the soup, and the affairs of her neighbours. One morning, after an autumnal night of wind and rain—a night upon which a humanitarian mind would hardly have refused shelter to a strange cur—my housekeeper handed me my omelet and poured out my wine with a more important air than usual; and I knew that she was bursting to tell me something about my neighbours. The omelet, in the preparation of which she is usually careful, was even a trifle burned."

"I hope you allowed her to relieve her mind."

"Yes, sir; I indulged the simple creature. You may hear her at this moment, in the little court without yonder window, singing as she works, not melodious but cheerful."

This was in allusion to a monotonous twanging noise, something between the Irish bagpipes and a Jew's-harp, which broke the placid stillness of the Rue Jeanne d'Arques.

"Well, Marthon, I said in my friendly way, 'what has happened?' She burst forth at once like a torrent. 'Figure to yourself then,' she exclaimed, 'that any one—a human being—would travel on such a night as last night. You might have waded ankle deep upon the pavement.' 'People must travel in all weathers, my good Marthon,' I replied philosophically. I had not been obliged to go out myself during the storm of the preceding evening, and was therefore able to approach the subject in a calmly contemplative frame of mind. Marthon shrugged her shoulders, and nodded her head vehemently, till her earrings jingled again. 'But a woman, then!' she cried; 'a young and beautiful woman, for instance!' This gave a new interest to the subject. My philanthropy was at once aroused. 'A young and beautiful woman out in the storm last night!' I exclaimed. 'She applied for shelter here, perhaps, and you accorded her request, and now fear that I shall disapprove. Marthon, I forgive you. Let me see this child of misfortune.' I was prepared to administer consolation to the homeless wanderer, in the broadly Christian spirit of the divine Jean Jacques Rousseau; but Marthon began to shake her head with incredible energy, and in effect, after much circumlocution on her part, for she is of a loquacious disposition, I obtained the following plain statement of facts."

Here the little watchmaker, proud of his happy knack of rounding a period, looked at Lucius for admiration; but seeing impatience rather than approval indicated in his visitor's countenance, he gave a brief sigh, inwardly denounced the unsympathetic temperament of the English generally, coughed, stretched out his neat little legs upon the yellow-velvet footstool, stuck his thumbs in the armpits of his waistcoat, and continued thus:

"Briefly, sir, Félicie Dumarques had returned. She had arrived during that pitiless storm in a fiacre from the station, with luggage. My housekeeper had heard the vehicle stop, and had run to the door in time to see the traveller alight and enter the next house. She had seen Félicie's face by the light of the street-lamp, which, as you may have observed, is near my door, and she told me how sadly the poor girl was changed. 'She looks as her mother did a year or two before she died,' said Marthon. 'Her cheeks are thin, and there is a feverish spot of colour on them, and her eyes are too bright. They have made her work too hard in her situation. She was evidently not expected last night, for the servant gave a scream when she saw her and seemed quite overcome with surprise. Then Mademoiselle Dumarques came down, and I saw the sisters embrace. 'Félicie!' said Hortence. 'Thou art like the dead risen from the grave!'