

THE FAITHFUL AMBROSE.

Madame de Varonne was one of those who followed James the Second into exile. During the life of her husband, who was a French gentleman descended from a patrician family, she was in comfortable circumstances; but having become a widow, and being left without any protection, she had not sufficient interest to obtain from the French Court any part of the pension which her husband had enjoyed; she, however, wrote to the minister, and sent several petitions, to which they replied that she must place her demand before the King. Thus for two years she buoyed herself up with hope. At length, having renewed her demands, she received so formal and so positive a refusal, that it was no longer possible to blind herself to her fate. Her situation was deplorable; she had been compelled to part in succession with her jewellery and part of her furniture; and there now remained for her no visible means of subsistence.

Madame de Varonne, shortly after the death of her husband, had dismissed all her servants, with the exception of the cook, one other maid, and Ambrose, the principal of all, who had lived with her for twenty years. At length, the time came when she found it necessary to part with even these three. One day in the winter, Ambrose came into the room, and was about to place some wood on the fire, when Madame de Varonne said to him, "Ambrose, do you know how much I owe to the cook?"

"You owe nothing, madame, either to her, Marie, or me. You paid us our wages yesterday."

"Ah, so much the better—I had forgotten. Well, Ambrose, you must tell the cook and Marie that I no longer require their services; and you, Ambrose, must seek another place."

"Another place? and why? No; I will die in your service. I will never leave you, madame, whatever may happen."

"Ambrose, you do not know how I am situated."

"Madame, you do not know Ambrose. If they refuse you your pension, so that you have not the means of paying your servants, send away the others; but I do not deserve to be treated in the same manner; I am not mercenary."

"But, Ambrose, I am ruined, totally ruined. I have sold nearly all that I possessed, and they withhold my pension."

"Well," cried Ambrose, in a broken voice, "you shall not suffer; I can work."

"Ambrose," said madame, intercepting him, "I have never doubted your attachment, but I will not abuse it. This is what I wish you to do for me. Go and hire for me a small room; I have still a little money which will last two or three months. I will spin; find me some customers in St. Germain: this is all you can do for me."

While his mistress was speaking, Ambrose looked at her in silence; and, when she had ended, fell at her feet.

"Ah! my honoured mistress," he cried, "allow me to serve you to the end of your days. For twenty years you have clothed, fed, and made me happy. I have too often abused your patience and kindness; but if you will pardon all the faults which my bad temper has caused me to commit, I will endeavour to correct them."

He then arose, bathed in tears, and rushed from the room.

In a few minutes Ambrose returned, and, placing a little leather bag on the mantelpiece, said, "Thanks to you and my late master, I have here thirty louis. You gave me this money and it belongs to you."

"Oh, Ambrose, it is the fruit of your twenty years' saving!"

"When you had money, madame, you gave it to me; now you have none, I restore it to you. I know that this small sum cannot last long; but listen to my plan for the future. You may remember, madame, that I am the son of a brazier, and I have not forgotten my father's trade. Well, now, I will work seriously."

Madame de Varonne, incapable of expressing her gratitude in words, answered only by her tears. The next day the two female servants were dismissed. Ambrose then hired in St. Germain a small but clean and airy room on the third storey, and placed in it the small remains of furniture which his mistress yet retained.

To this room he conducted Madame de Varonne; she found there a good bed, a large and comfortable sofa, and a small table, on which was an inkstand and paper, above which were ranged her books on a small stand against the wall; a large chest, which contained her wardrobe, a quantity of thread for spinning, a silver plate, (for Ambrose would not allow her to eat off pewter), and the purse which contained the thirty louis. In a corner of the room behind the curtain was hidden the small earthen vessel in which madame was to cook.

"See," said Ambrose, "this is all I have been able to procure for the money you gave me—there is only one room; but the servant can sleep on a mattress, which is rolled up behind the bed."

"The servant, did you say?" cried Madame de Varonne.

"Certainly, madame; how can you do without a servant to cook for you, to run errands, to dress you?"

"But, Ambrose, consider."

"Oh, but this servant will not cost you much; she is only thirteen years old. You will give her no wages, and there will be plenty for her to eat from what you leave. For myself, I

have made my arrangements. Nicault, a brazier, who is a very rich and good man, and my countryman, will allow me to sleep and take my meals in his home, which is only a step from hence, and he will give me twenty sous a day. Living is now very cheap in St. Germain; and so much the better, that we have a little ready money. I did not wish to tell you all this before Susanne, your new servant; but now I will go and fetch her."

Ambrose then went out, and soon returned with a pretty little girl, whom he presented to Madame de Varonne, saying, "Here is the little girl of whom I told you, madame; her father and mother are poor, but industrious, and they have six children; and you will be doing a kind action if you will take this one into your service."

After the introduction, Ambrose, in a grave tone, exhorted Susanne to conduct herself well. He then went away to his friend Nicault's.

From this day there was a perceptible change in the conduct and manner of Ambrose; he did not appear to be the same person. His sullen temper and rough address had vanished, and he now behaved with respect and delicacy; he seemed to feel by instinct that no one can be truly generous who humiliates or embarrasses the person whom he seeks to oblige.

The day after Madame de Varonne had taken possession of her new dwelling, Ambrose remained steadily at his work; but in the evening he came in, and begging madame to send Susanne away, he drew from his pocket twenty sous wrapped in paper, and placed them on the table, saying, "This is my day's wages."

Then, without waiting for a reply, he recalled Susanne, and went away. After such a day's work, how peaceful should he sleep, and how sweet the waking!

Ambrose, faithful to the duties which he had imposed on himself, came every day to see Madame de Varonne, and placed with her the produce of his labour, only reserving, at the end of every month, the necessary sum for paying his washerwoman, and a few bottles of beer for Sundays and holidays. He did not even take this small sum as a right, but he asked it from Madame de Varonne as a gift.

In vain was madame much distressed at accepting so much from the generous Ambrose; in vain she represented that she could support herself on less. He either appeared not to hear her, or listened with such apparent pain, that she was compelled to be silent on the subject.

In the hope of procuring little more ready money for Ambrose, Madame de Varonne worked without ceasing at her spinning. Susanne helped her, and sold the work for her; but when Madame de Varonne exaggerated to Ambrose the sum she had gained from this little trade, he simply replied, "So much the better," and turned the conversation.

Time brought no change in his conduct; and during four years he never failed in a single particular. At length the moment came when Madame de Varonne was to experience the most bitter grief.

One evening, when she was expecting Ambrose, as usual, Nicault's servant entered her room. He came to tell her that Ambrose was ill, and was in bed. On hearing this, Madame de Varonne desired the servant to take her to Nicault's house, and sent Susanne for a doctor. When she arrived, Nicault (who had ever seen her before) was much astonished. She told him that she wished to be shown into Ambrose's room.

"But, madame, that is impossible."

"Why so?"

"You will have to mount a ladder to reach the loft."

"Mount a ladder? Oh, poor Ambrose, I will go; lead the way."

"But listen, madame. You will not be able to stand upright when you are there; Ambrose sleeps in such a small room."

At these words, Madame de Varonne burst into tears, and entreated Nicault to guide her. He led her to the foot of a small ladder, which she had great trouble in mounting. She found Ambrose stretched on a mattress in a corner of the wretched loft.

"Ah! Ambrose, you told me that your lodging was a good one."

The poor fellow was unable to reply to his mistress; for upwards of an hour his senses had been wandering. Susanne at length returned with a doctor. This latter was much surprised, on entering the garret, to see so well-dressed a lady standing by the mattress of a poor brazier, and appeared overwhelmed with grief. He approached the sick man, and, examining him attentively, said, "that his aid had been called too late."

Imagine the state of madame on hearing the fatal words!

"It is his own fault," said Nicault. "More than a week ago he was ill, and I wished him to leave his work, but he persisted in going on. The fact is," Nicault continued, "Ambrose undertook more work than he could manage, and that has killed him."

His words struck into the heart of Madame de Varonne. Approaching the doctor, bathed in tears, and with clasped hands, she implored him not to leave Ambrose. The doctor was a humane man, so that he was easily persuaded to pass part of the night with the sick man.

Madame de Varonne sent to her own house for some bed-clothing, and assisted Susanne to make up a bed for Ambrose, into which the doctor and Nicault carefully lifted him. Madame then threw herself on a wooden bench, and gave free vent to her tears.

About four o'clock in the morning, the doctor departed, having bled his patient, promising to return at noon. You may suppose that Madame de Varonne never quitted Ambrose for a moment; she passed forty-eight hours at his bedside without receiving the smallest hope from the doctor. At length, on the third day, there was an apparent change, and in the evening he was pronounced out of danger.

I will not attempt to describe Madame de Varonne's joy on seeing Ambrose so far recovered. She wished to watch by him that night; but as he was now perfectly sensible, he would not consent to it; she therefore returned home, overwhelmed with fatigue. The doctor came to see her the next day, and she felt so grateful to him for the care and attention which he had bestowed on Ambrose, that she was determined to gratify his curiosity by relating her history.

Three days after, the good doctor, who did not usually reside at St. Germain, returned to Paris, leaving Madame de Varonne quite well, and Ambrose convalescent. The former now, however, found herself in almost as destitute a condition as before. She had expended the little ready money which she possessed, with the exception of a few sous. One evening, when she was occupied with her sad thoughts, Susanne entered breathless with haste, and told her that a lady wished to see her.

"It must be a mistake," said Madame de Varonne.

"No," said Susanne, "for she asked me, 'Does Madame de Varonne live here, in the third storey above the court?' She is come in a carriage, and I answered her, 'It is here that she lives.' She replied, 'Will you ask Madame de Varonne to allow me to have a few minutes' conversation with her?'"

Just as Susanne had ceased speaking, they heard a gentle tap at the door, and on opening it a lady advanced with a graceful air. As soon as Susanne had gone, the stranger said, "I am charmed, madame, to be able to announce to you that the King has at length been informed of your situation, and he wishes to repair the injustice with which you have been treated."

"Oh, Ambrose!" cried Madame de Varonne, raising her eyes to heaven, with the most heartfelt expression of joy and gratitude.

At this expression of feeling the stranger appeared deeply moved, and taking her hand, said, "Come, madame, let me take you to the new apartments prepared for you."

"Ah, lady! if I dared, I would ask permission. I have a benefactor; allow me to acquaint him with this joyful news."

"I will leave you at liberty to do so," said the lady; "and I will only conduct you to your carriage, which awaits at the door to take you to your new home."

"My carriage!—new home!"

"Yes, madame; but do not lose more time; let us go."

As she said this, she gave her arm to Madame de Varonne, who could hardly stand, and led her down the stairs.

When they reached the door, the stranger said to the footman who was in a tendance, "Call Madame de Varonne's servants."

The astonishment of the latter increased every moment; it seemed like a dream. Some servants dressed in grey livery approached a simple but elegant carriage. The lady accompanied her to the door, made Madame de Varonne enter it, and then proceeded to her own equipage.

Madame de Varonne's new servant then asked her where he should drive her to.

"To the house of Nicault, the brazier."

The first person she saw, on entering the shop, was Ambrose himself, still weak, but trying to work at his trade.

"Ambrose," she cried, joyfully, "follow me! Leave off work; you have no longer occasion to do it."

Ambrose, much astonished, in vain demanded an explanation, and begged to be allowed to change his working dress. Madame de Varonne was not in a condition either to listen or reply. She seized his arm, and led him into the carriage.

When the servant asked, "Will you be driven to your new house, madame?" she started, and looking at Ambrose, said, "Yes, drive us to our house."

During the drive, Madame de Varonne told Ambrose of the visit she had received. He listened with joy, mingled with doubt, for he could hardly believe in such good fortune.

At length, the carriage stopped at the entrance of a pretty little house in St. Germain. They alighted, and went into a room, where they found the stranger awaiting them.

She advanced towards Madame de Varonne, and gave her a paper saying, "Here, madame, is what the King has been pleased to present you with—it is an order for ten thousand pounds, and you are at liberty to give the half of it to any person you may wish to favour."

"Oh, how gracious of his Majesty!" cried Madame de Varonne. "Here, then, lady, is the grateful, virtuous man, who is truly worthy of your protection, and the favour of his sovereign."

At these words, Ambrose, who until now had concealed himself behind his mistress, came forward a few steps, with an embarrassed air, and in spite of his great joy, he was painfully confused on hearing himself praised in this manner; and he was vexed to appear before the lady, at his first interview in so dirty a condition, and without his wig.

The lady approached him. "Stop, Ambrose; let me look at you."

Indeed, madame," he replied, lowering his

head, "there is nothing wonderful in what I have done; it was but natural."

Here Madame de Varonne interrupted him, to relate, with much ardour all that she owed to Ambrose.

The stranger was much affected with the recital. "Adieu, madame," she said, at length. "This house and all that it contains, belong to you, and you will soon receive the first quarter of your pension." On saying this she retreated towards the door.

Hardly was she gone when the door re-opened, and the physician to whom Ambrose owed his life, entered.

They rightly suspected that it was this good man who had told everything to the King. After having gratefully thanked him for his great kindness, they questioned him about the lady, and he replied, "that she was the Queen, and that she lived at Versailles. For ten years I have been her doctor; I knew how benevolent she was, and I knew she would feel interested in your history. In short, as soon as she was acquainted with it, she bought this little house, and obtained from the King your pension."

As he finished this recital, a servant entered, and said that supper was served.

Madame de Varonne kept the doctor to this meal; and leaning on the arm of Ambrose, walked into the dining-room, and made the latter sit by her side.

The next day, Ambrose, as you may imagine, was dressed as became his new position. His apartment was furnished and arranged with as much care as taste, and Madame de Varonne shared with him all her life what she possessed; finally, she never received or saw any money that she did not recall the day when Ambrose brought her his twenty sous, saying, "This is my day's wages."

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

The talented flutist, Louis Joseph Coninx, has died in Paris, in his seventy-third year.

HERR BANDMANN is going back to Germany, and will play "Hamlet" in his native tongue, at Berlin.

THE marriage of Mdle. Albani to Mr. Ernest Gye, will take place towards the end of October.

IN Von Bulow's illness a favourable turn has taken place although he will have to give up the profession for some time to come.

THE remains of Bellini, the composer, who died at Puteaux, near Paris, in 1835, have been exhumed and conveyed to Catania, Sicily, Bellini's birth-place.

THE death is announced of M. Michel Engalbert, the oldest living French organist at the age of 96. He played the organ at Notre Dame at the coronation of Napoleon I.

MADAME ARABELLA GODDARD, after being absent from England for four years, during which she has travelled round the world, is going to make her appearance at St. James's Hall on October 12th.

A strike has taken place at the National Theatre at Prague. The female members of the chorus refused to sing because the manager had mentioned them on the bills as the "female chorus singers" instead of terming them respectfully the "ladies of the chorus."

MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN having had accepted by the Théâtre Français a piece entitled "Ami Fritz," founded on one of their novels, the Bonapartists and Monarchists have been making great efforts to prevent the performance. These intrigues have proved fruitless, for the Théâtre Français persists in accepting the piece.

At Douglas, Isle of Man, the *Amina* in the "Sonnambula," after singing the beautiful sleep song in a supposed state of somnambulism, stretched herself gently on the Count's bed; but no sooner had she done so than a loud crash was heard, and she rose from the broken couch, indignantly saying: "I will never come on this stage again."

THE arrangement on which Mr. John Raymond played Mark Twain's "Gilded Age" was that the star should pay the author 50 per cent. of the profit. The *Dramatic News* says that Mr. Raymond recently demurred to such a heavy royalty, and that he and the author each selected two arbitrators to make new terms. A mutual agreement reduces the payment to 25 per cent. of the profit.

THE statue of Bossi, the Minister of Pius IX., who was assassinated in Rome, in 1848, has been unveiled at Carrara. His death was dramatic. He had just been blessed by the Pope at the Quirinal, and was driving through the Campo de Fiori when he was bisected on the very spot where Brutus killed Caesar. A crowd pressed nearer the carriage, and a stiletto struck him in the throat, severing the carotid artery.

THE exact time occupied in the performance of Wagner's Tetralogical Trilogy was as follows:—"Das Rheingold," 2 hours; "Die Walküre," first act, 1 hour 5 minutes; second act, 1 hour 25 minutes; third, 1 hour 10 minutes; "Siegfried," first act, 1 hour 30 minutes; second act, 1 hour 10 minutes; third act, 1 hour 17 minutes; "Götterdämmerung," first act, 1 hour 55 minutes; second act, 1 hour; third act, 1 hour 15 minutes. Total—13 hours 50 minutes.

Messrs. Jarrett & Palmer N. Y., have struck another vein of gold. The spectacle of "Sardanapalus," which cost them, possibly, \$40,000, has already (and it is now but in the sixth week of its run) realized nearly \$100,000, and the advance sale of places is for performances far into October. It is estimated that, up to Thursday evening, 117,000 people had seen the play, or an average of \$3,000 a night, and the presence of so many strangers in town, either on the way to or from the Centennial Exhibition, gives promise of increasing business.

SOTHERN thus explained to a reporter why he wears a moustache in "David Garrick." "When I play Garrick for a 'run' I invariably shave, but if I have to jump back to *Dundreary* in a few nights and then back to Garrick I do not, simply because I cannot act *Dundreary* with a false moustache. It irritates me to that extent that I lose all facial expression. Of course I am fully aware that I might as well wear a helmet in Garrick, but I think you will admit that it is an unavoidable drawback under the above-mentioned circumstances."

SAYS Dion Boucicault: The American public have been so accustomed to see the scenes of their plays laid abroad, that they have almost come to the belief that there is nothing dramatic in life in that country. Show them a scene abroad and they are spectators to be pleased; put upon the stage American life, and you convert your friendly spectators into analytical critics. The dramatist who lays his scene there handicaps himself severely. All that the Americans seem to recognize as