

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

LIGHT THROUGH DARKNESS.

I.

Up! sorrowing one;
Shake off this gloomy weight of doubt and fear:
Trust, though dark clouds may lower, that yet the sun
With gladness shall appear.

II.

Man was not made to mourn
For aye o'er blasted hopes and withered joys.
Sorrow bides for a night; at dawn's return
Joy spreads her rosy skies.

III.

Much thou hast suffered. Pain
And disappointment, weariness and care
Have closed thee round, with all the dismal train
Of grief and wild despair.

IV.

And evil unbelief,
With dark, rebellious thoughts and words of sin,
Has added to thy outward weight of grief
The pang of guilt within.

V.

Yet up! thy griefs forego;
Nor founder more, clogged with the weary mire
Of this thy slough of dark despair; for lo!
Help comes at thy desire.

VI.

Eternal, tireless love
Still bends compassionate o'er thy sad distress,
With power divine commissioned from above,
To aid, to cheer and bless.

VII.

Disconsolate no more
Then croke in gloom bewailing thy sad plight.
What boots it cureless evils to deplore?
Nay—bid thy griefs good night.

VIII.

And hope thou for the dawn.
At duty's silvery call arise and go:
Forget the past, the pain, the sin; and on—
Forward is ease of woe.

IX.

Forward is hope, is joy—
Reach forward then—yea, press towards the prize.
Fixed on the author of thy faith thine eye,
Earth's evils all disprise.

X.

So from this darkness phase
Of lower life, emerged to purer air
Joy's gladdening beam again shall greet thy gaze,
And peace thy bosom share.

JAMES McLACHLAN.

THE COMMISSARY OF POLICE.

FRANÇOIS DUMONT, a painter of Lyon, espoused, in the spring of 1843, Euphrosyne Lamont, a youthful damsel about his own age, and equally poor, enthusiastic, and unreflecting. Both were orphans; and Euphrosyne was a charming brunette, of local celebrity, whose dark southern eyes shone with such brilliancy as she emerged, a blushing bride, from the church of St. Thomas, that the spectators were fain to acknowledge it was not surprising the young artist should have preferred the graceful and blooming Euphrosyne to middle-aged Mademoiselle Médard, the daughter and heiress of the rich silk-merchant in the Rue du Nord, whose sole attractions were *les beaux yeux de sa carotte*. The favour of this lady he was reported to have won by painting her portrait so cleverly, that although it was impossible not to recognise the likeness, the coarse, dry, parchment complexion, vixen eyes, and altogether crabbed aspect of the original, were so judiciously modified and softened, that a very pleasant result—*an achievement* which elicited from more than one shrewd observer the remark, that if François Dumont were not the great genius he believed himself to be, he, at all events, possessed a skill in likeness-painting, which, diligently cultivated, could hardly fail of realising a fortune. Unfortunately, young Dumont looked down from the exaltation of his vanity with supreme contempt upon that branch of his art; his genius had wings for a far loftier flight, and next to Euphrosyne, the fame which could not fail to accrue from the exhibition in Paris of his great historic painting—a glittering mass of effulgent uniforms, fiery steeds, and crimson cannon-flashes upon a background of universal smoke, the fanciful representation of a battle in Algeria—lent brightness to the future, upon which, with love, beauty, youth, for his companions, he was now about to enter. Euphrosyne, herself a graceful flower-painter, as well as *artiste en fleurs*, participated the illusions of her lover and husband, but could not for all that repress a start and exclamation of alarm, when, on the evening of the seventh or eighth day of married life, François, who had been for some time profoundly immersed in money-calculations, said abruptly:

"It is plain, *ma belle*, that after paying for our places in the diligence, and the carriage of the picture, we shall have only about two hundred francs left when we reach Paris."

"Two hundred francs! No more! Ah, François, that is a very small sum to begin the world with."

"True, *mon amie*; but what then? Guguénard writes me that Vernet sold a picture, decidedly inferior to mine, a short time since, for twelve thousand francs. Twelve thousand francs, Euphrosyne! If mine does fetches half that sum, it is already a fortune."

"You know Guguénard, François, much better than I do, and have, I am aware, confidence in his judgment."

"Entire confidence, Euphrosyne. Have you forgotten the compliment passed by Monsieur Le Vicomte de Parrans upon Henri Guguénard's engraver's taste in the fine arts?"

"No; I remember it well, and that Guguénard was himself the relater of the anecdote."

"Is not that a little ungenerous, Euphrosyne?"

"Perhaps so," said the young wife, covering with an effort her natural gaiety of tone; "and what is certain is, that I have full confidence in your genius and fortunes, François."

The conversation thus terminated, Dumont proceeded at once to the Messageries to secure places in the diligence, and Euphrosyne fell into a reverie, from which she was roused by the announcement of "Monsieur Bouis," and an elderly gentleman, in deep mourning, and wearing the ribbon of the

Legion of Honour, presented himself. He was from Paris, and the sternly sad expression of his pale features was doubtless caused by the death, about three months previously, of his only son in an apparently motiveless duel with a French officer *en retraite*—Le Capitaine Regnaud. The unfortunate young man had been on a prolonged visit at Lyon, at the time of the catastrophe, a circumstance well-known to Euphrosyne, who appeared to be as much startled as surprised by the words "Monsieur Bouis, of Paris." The gentle mournfulness of his greeting, however, quickly reassured her.

"I am the father, Mademoiselle—I beg pardon, Madame Dumont, of the unfortunate Charles Bouis, who, I hope, still lives in your friendly remembrance."

"Assuredly, monsieur," replied Euphrosyne; "and this notwithstanding my acquaintance with your amiable son was of the slightest kind."

"So I understand," said her visitor; "and yet, but for that slight acquaintance, my son would now be alive."

"Comment, monsieur?" exclaimed Euphrosyne, blushing and trembling; "I do not comprehend."

"Not clearly, you mean, my dear madame; but pray do not agitate yourself: a few words will explain my meaning, and justify, or, at least, excuse my presence here. During the night previous to the duel with Captain Regnaud," added M. Bouis, "so inexplicable as having arisen from the few sharp but meaningless words said to have provoked it, my son, foreboding it might be the last time he should address me upon earth, penned a long letter, which after his death was of course forwarded to me. It is only about a fortnight ago," continued the speaker, with increasing emotion, sternly as he strove to preserve a simulated stoicism of tone and manner, "that I found courage to open and read it. One paragraph alone related to you, madame; a brief one, but written with a hand which trembled more at those few lines than all the rest, informed me that he had passionately loved the beautiful *orpheline* of the Grande Rue, Lyon, Euphrosyne Lamont, *artiste en fleurs*; but chiefly from knowing that I would not consent to the alliance, had never disclosed his passion to the said Euphrosyne—in words, of course, is meant," added M. Bouis, "as it is scarcely possible that a sentiment so vivid should not have found interpretation, though that of the lips was withheld."

"Have the kindness, monsieur," said Madame Dumont, "to confine yourself to what it is needful I should hear. For the rest," she added, with a slight tinge of pride, "a young woman *bien élevée*, and well taught and nurtured, does not permit herself to interpret the demeanour of young gentlemen in whose society she may chance to find herself."

"Excuse me, madame; I would not willingly offend you. I have, however, a few more words to say. Le Capitaine Regnaud was, I have reason to believe, keener sighted than you, and he, moreover, I am informed, greatly admired Mademoiselle Euphrosyne Lamont, declared his preference, and was repulsed—contemptuously repulsed."

"Monsieur Bouis," said Euphrosyne, rising and speaking with vehemence, "this is extreme impertinence on your part. Forgive me," she added, quickly checking herself; "you have, I recognise, a privilege of grief as well as of age, justifying remarks that from others would be intolerable. I can appreciate, moreover, the motive of this questioning. Well, then, sir, the current report you speak of is not precisely correct. Monsieur Le Capitaine Regnaud insulted Euphrosyne Lamont, and was by her indignantly spurned and defied. That is the simple truth."

"And this was known to my son?"

"I cannot speak positively as to that, but I have sometimes feared it may have been so."

"And that knowledge, conjoined with Regnaud's surmise that Charles might prove a formidable rival, infused venom into that else slightly irritating words that passed between them at the Café Royal?"

"I can only repeat, monsieur, that I fear it may have fallen out as you suggest."

M. Bouis seemed to reflect for a short time, and then resuming with greater vivacity, said:

"In the presence of so much frankness, madame, I cannot choose but be equally sincere and open. I have been, as you may perhaps have heard, a *commissaire de police*, in the department of the Seine at Oise, residing usually at Versailles, and only lately at Paris, where I am not much known. A considerable succession that fell to me not very long since—of slight value in my estimation now—enabled me to retire from the service—with honour, madame, as the decoration I wear assures you. I have not, however, lost the craft of my profession in abandoning its exercise; and my chief purpose in visiting Lyon was to satisfy myself of the truth or falsehood of a rumour that had reached me, to the effect that Charles had met with foul play at the hands of Regnaud—a villain who had before three murders, by duel, on his head."

"And he glories, I have heard, in those frightful crimes," interjected Euphrosyne with a shudder; "but the day of retribution will surely arrive for him."

"At the hour when I fully satisfy myself that my boy was unfairly dealt with—apart from Regnaud's practised skill with the small sword, which itself converts such encounters into a means of legal assassination—that day, be assured, madame, will have dawned for his slayer. I am now entering upon this duel, as it may fairly be called, with Regnaud, and I foresee, Madame Dumont, that you will be in a greater or less degree instrumental in bringing about the catastrophe."

"Me, monsieur! You jest surely."

"On the contrary, I am perfectly serious. Regnaud is not one to relinquish easily a base purpose; and he, I know, leaves Lyon to-morrow by the same diligence as yourself and Monsieur Dumont for Paris. He would follow you to the world's end, to avenge the wound you have inflicted on his vanity."

"*Mon Dieu*, can it be possible!" exclaimed Euphrosyne with much emotion; "but it is not possible, monsieur. Le Capitaine Regnaud's pretended passion was a fleeting caprice, nothing more."

"That may be; but I am not the less convinced that you, or your facile-tempered husband—madame will excuse my frankness—will require, and not long, first, protection or redress against his machinations. Either or both will be readily afforded you by me, upon application at the address inscribed upon this card. And now, madame, with many thanks for your complaisance, adieu, though but for a short time only, I am pretty confident. Meanwhile, you will not refuse acceptance of this trifle from Charles Bouis's childless father; it is a *souvenir* from the tomb."

He was gone, and upon opening the paper placed in her hand, Euphrosyne found it contained a note of the Bank of France for one thousand francs.

As M. Bouis predicted, Captain Regnaud did in fact quit Lyon by the same diligence as the Dumonts, and he, Regnaud, rightly concluding that his duellist reputation would deter Euphrosyne from hinting anything to her husband which might lead to a quarrel, openly courted the artist's acquaintance during the journey, and so successfully, that upon taking leave of each other at the bureau of the diligence, Paris, a meeting at the *Rocher Cancale* was arranged between them, without the knowledge of the wife, for the next day but one.

The Dumonts settled themselves temporarily in lodgings at Numéro 9, Grande Rue Verte, near the Pont Neuf; and but a few weeks elapsed before the ambitious aspirations of the self-deceived artist were utterly dissipated, not only by the judgment of competent critics, but his own, which, enlightened by comparing his work with those of masters in the art, was fain to admit that whatever genius or aptitude he might possess, long and severe study in the mechanical part of painting must be undergone before he could hope to realise worthily upon canvas the crude idealisations with which his brain throbbed and sparkled. François Dumont was incapable of resigning himself to the laborious self-discipline required; with the collapse of his soaring visions, the little mental energy he possessed abandoned him; and he yielded, almost without resistance, but not without remorse, to the seductions of his now intimate friend, Captain Regnaud, by whom he was introduced, first to the wine-shops, next to the gaming-tables of Paris. His 1,200 francs were early squandered in those orgies; and two months after her arrival in Paris, Euphrosyne learned from the lips of her husband, rendered frantic by the utterly desperate circumstances in which he was involved, that their last franc was gone, his painting pledged at the Mont de Piété, and that he had, besides, incurred debts of honour to Captain Regnaud, amounting to more than a hundred Napoleons, for which he had given promissory-notes at short dates, one whereof would fall due on the following day. One may imagine the shock of this revelation to poor Euphrosyne, who had been in some way completely blinded to the nature of her husband's pursuits during his long absence from home; but she was of a courageous, elastic temperament, and soon rallying from the blow, all the more quickly that the recollection of M. Bouis's words and promise flashed hopefully upon her mind, she was, before an hour had passed, on her way to that gentleman's house, armed with a written statement of her husband's liabilities, and his solemn promise, that if extricated from the ruin he had brought upon himself and wife, he would never enter a gaming-house again, nor as long as he lived pollute his hands with the touch of dice or cards.

M. Bouis was at home, and Euphrosyne was immediately ushered into his presence. He looked much older and sadder than when she last saw him; but he was unchanged towards herself, judging by his kind recognising smile, and the goodwill with which he took her trembling hand and pressed it with both his.

"Be seated, Madame Dumont," he said; "I can guess the purport of your visit pretty well; but let me hear it from your own lips."

Euphrosyne complied as well as her agitation and embarrassment would permit, and finished by placing the memorandum drawn up by her husband in the hand of her attentive auditor. M. Bouis glanced over it, and presently said:

"The amount required is a considerable one, but"—and his eyes were for a moment raised to a full-length portrait of his son—"you were commended to my kind offices by that poor murdered boy, and I will not fail you in this strait. You shall take the money with you, and a moderate sum besides."

"Ah, monsieur," broke in the weeping wife, "you are too good—too generous."

"And a moderate sum besides," continued M. Bouis, "which will enable your husband to prosecute his studies, if he be sincere in his vows of amendment. But let him perfectly understand," added that gentleman with severe emphasis, "that I do this, and will yet further assist him, upon condition only that he never again plays or associates with Regnaud, and especially that he never again accepts bills or obligations for him or any other person on any pretext whatever. Can I, madame, reckon upon your husband's rigorous fulfilment of these terms?"

"Oh, certainly, monsieur," sobbed Euphrosyne, "François has been imprudent, thoughtless, but his heart, believe me, is uncorrupted; the promise he has given, together with the pledge you require, will be sacredly kept."

"Enough, my dear madame," said Monsieur Bouis, with respectful kindness. "There is a draft for the amount required. One moment," he added, as Euphrosyne was leaving the room; "your husband's promissory-notes have, I happen to know, been discounted by Lemaire, No. 12 Rue Favard; you can therefore withdraw them without Regnaud's intervention, or waiting till they are presented for payment. Au revoir, madame; I shall call and see your husband one of these days."

About six weeks after this occurrence, and rather late in the evening, a middle-aged man entered an *etaminet* in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and bade the attendant *garçon* inform Captain Regnaud, if he called, that his friend Gabriel was waiting for him in the back-room. Gabriel was, it is true, the name given to this person by his acquaintance, though it was shrewdly suspected by at least one of them, in consequence of some half-revelations made under the influence of wine, that he was no other than a certain Jacques Le Maître, an escaped *forçat*, who, by means of a luxuriant black wig, whiskers, moustaches, and beard, and altogether artistic make-up, with the further precaution of never leaving his den, wherever that might be, till after night-fall, had hitherto managed to evade the vigilance of the Paris police. Evidently from his sometimes gloomily preoccupied, and at other times restless, unquiet demeanour, an individual at odds with the settled order of the world, and on this particular evening he seemed more than usually nervous and impatient, which was not surprising, a full hour having passed before Captain Regnaud, himself in a state of great mental disquietude, and flustered, moreover, with drink, entered the small dingy apartment.

"Ah, there you are, sacré night-owl," exclaimed Regnaud, seizing as he spoke the wine ordered, but untouched, by Gabriel, and swallowing it at a draught. "If I could have

He was gone, and upon opening the paper placed in her hand, Euphrosyne found it contained a note of the Bank of France for one thousand francs.

As M. Bouis predicted, Captain Regnaud did in fact quit Lyon by the same diligence as the Dumonts, and he, Regnaud, rightly concluding that his duellist reputation would deter Euphrosyne from hinting anything to her husband which might lead to a quarrel, openly courted the artist's acquaintance during the journey, and so successfully, that upon taking leave of each other at the bureau of the diligence, Paris, a meeting at the *Rocher Cancale* was arranged between them, without the knowledge of the wife, for the next day but one.

The Dumonts settled themselves temporarily in lodgings at Numéro 9, Grande Rue Verte, near the Pont Neuf; and but a few weeks elapsed before the ambitious aspirations of the self-deceived artist were utterly dissipated, not only by the judgment of competent critics, but his own, which, enlightened by comparing his work with those of masters in the art, was fain to admit that whatever genius or aptitude he might possess, long and severe study in the mechanical part of painting must be undergone before he could hope to realise worthily upon canvas the crude idealisations with which his brain throbbed and sparkled. François Dumont was incapable of resigning himself to the laborious self-discipline required; with the collapse of his soaring visions, the little mental energy he possessed abandoned him; and he yielded, almost without resistance, but not without remorse, to the seductions of his now intimate friend, Captain Regnaud, by whom he was introduced, first to the wine-shops, next to the gaming-tables of Paris. His 1,200 francs were early squandered in those orgies; and two months after her arrival in Paris, Euphrosyne learned from the lips of her husband, rendered frantic by the utterly desperate circumstances in which he was involved, that their last franc was gone, his painting pledged at the Mont de Piété, and that he had, besides, incurred debts of honour to Captain Regnaud, amounting to more than a hundred Napoleons, for which he had given promissory-notes at short dates, one whereof would fall due on the following day. One may imagine the shock of this revelation to poor Euphrosyne, who had been in some way completely blinded to the nature of her husband's pursuits during his long absence from home; but she was of a courageous, elastic temperament, and soon rallying from the blow, all the more quickly that the recollection of M. Bouis's words and promise flashed hopefully upon her mind, she was, before an hour had passed, on her way to that gentleman's house, armed with a written statement of her husband's liabilities, and his solemn promise, that if extricated from the ruin he had brought upon himself and wife, he would never enter a gaming-house again, nor as long as he lived pollute his hands with the touch of dice or cards.

M. Bouis was at home, and Euphrosyne was immediately ushered into his presence. He looked much older and sadder than when she last saw him; but he was unchanged towards herself, judging by his kind recognising smile, and the goodwill with which he took her trembling hand and pressed it with both his.

"Be seated, Madame Dumont," he said; "I can guess the purport of your visit pretty well; but let me hear it from your own lips."

Euphrosyne complied as well as her agitation and embarrassment would permit, and finished by placing the memorandum drawn up by her husband in the hand of her attentive auditor. M. Bouis glanced over it, and presently said:

"The amount required is a considerable one, but"—and his eyes were for a moment raised to a full-length portrait of his son—"you were commended to my kind offices by that poor murdered boy, and I will not fail you in this strait. You shall take the money with you, and a moderate sum besides."

"Ah, monsieur," broke in the weeping wife, "you are too good—too generous."

"And a moderate sum besides," continued M. Bouis, "which will enable your husband to prosecute his studies, if he be sincere in his vows of amendment. But let him perfectly understand," added that gentleman with severe emphasis, "that I do this, and will yet further assist him, upon condition only that he never again plays or associates with Regnaud, and especially that he never again accepts bills or obligations for him or any other person on any pretext whatever. Can I, madame, reckon upon your husband's rigorous fulfilment of these terms?"

"Oh, certainly, monsieur," sobbed Euphrosyne, "François has been imprudent, thoughtless, but his heart, believe me, is uncorrupted; the promise he has given, together with the pledge you require, will be sacredly kept."

"Enough, my dear madame," said Monsieur Bouis, with respectful kindness. "There is a draft for the amount required. One moment," he added, as Euphrosyne was leaving the room; "your husband's promissory-notes have, I happen to know, been discounted by Lemaire, No. 12 Rue Favard; you can therefore withdraw them without Regnaud's intervention, or waiting till they are presented for payment. Au revoir, madame; I shall call and see your husband one of these days."

About six weeks after this occurrence, and rather late in the evening, a middle-aged man entered an *etaminet* in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and bade the attendant *garçon* inform Captain Regnaud, if he called, that his friend Gabriel was waiting for him in the back-room. Gabriel was, it is true, the name given to this person by his acquaintance, though it was shrewdly suspected by at least one of them, in consequence of some half-revelations made under the influence of wine, that he was no other than a certain Jacques Le Maître, an escaped *forçat*, who, by means of a luxuriant black wig, whiskers, moustaches, and beard, and altogether artistic make-up, with the further precaution of never leaving his den, wherever that might be, till after night-fall, had hitherto managed to evade the vigilance of the Paris police. Evidently from his sometimes gloomily preoccupied, and at other times restless, unquiet demeanour, an individual at odds with the settled order of the world, and on this particular evening he seemed more than usually nervous and impatient, which was not surprising, a full hour having passed before Captain Regnaud, himself in a state of great mental disquietude, and flustered, moreover, with drink, entered the small dingy apartment.

"Ah, there you are, sacré night-owl," exclaimed Regnaud, seizing as he spoke the wine ordered, but untouched, by Gabriel, and swallowing it at a draught. "If I could have