ROSE LEBLANC; OR,

THE TRIUMPH OF SINCEPLTY

CHAPTER V .- Continued .

The storm was still going on; the rain beating against the panes. The noise of the torrent increasing every moment. Henri came in at last. Supper was on the table.

'Well, sir,' said M. Dumont, 'perhaps you will have the kindness to inform me if I am to be at the expense of paying for a substitute."

No, father. I have drawn a good number, answered the young man, without raising his eyes from the plate which had been set before him.

The good bourgeois rubbed his hands, thrust them into his pocket, and walked about the room with a thoroughly happy expression of countenance. Then stopping opposite his niece, he said, ' You shall have a spleudid wedding dress, little girl. The best that can be found at M. Barton's. Won't she be pretty on her wedding day, Rose?' he smilingly added, and chucked her under the chin. 'Come now, children, as that business is settled, and we have something in hard for the wedding feast-ay, Rosy, the two hundred and eighty francs you said you wanted. girl-we must lose no time and get you married before the end or the month. To-morrow I shall speak to M. le Cure, and to get him to publish the names on Sunday. Come, Henri, what art thou thinking of, man? Jump up and give your bride a kiss.' The young man sat stock still, his head leaning on his hand. Rose was crying bitterly. 'What Joes all this mean?' cried M. Dumont angrily. 'Have you been quarrelling again? Come, let's have no more nonsense. I am tired of the child's play that is always going on between you two. Come, make it up, and behave like sensible people. What! no answer? Am I to understand there is something serious in all this? Oh, then, I can be serious too, I assure you. Sir, I shall give you up for ever. I shall turn you out of my house if you don't marry my niece.,

· It is not his fault, uncle, it is not his fault, cried Rose, clasping her hands. 'It is I who

won't marry him.' · Yau!' cried her uncle in such astonishment

that he seemed ready to drop.

' You!' re-echoed Babet, lifting ap her hands You don't mean that.'

But I do mean it, burst out Rose, worked up into a fit of exasperation. 'Il you care for a man you care for him, and if you don't you don't .-There is no use in marrying to be wretched ever afterwards, and I had a great deal rather not marry at all, than be made to accept a man against my will. I will not do it.'

'Hey day,' cried Babet. 'Did any body ever hear the like of that?'

'Henri!' roared out M. Dumont. 'Henri, speak! What does she mean? what does it all mean? Is this some foolish whim? some senseless love quarrel? Is she giving herself airs?-Have not you made pretty speeches enough to

her lately?" · She has taken a fancy to another man,' Heari coldly replied, and resumed his former at-

. Taken a fancy to another man! repeated M. Dumont, clenching his fist and striding up to Rose as if hardly able to command himself .-And what right have you to such fancies, Mademoiselle? How dare you dream of such a ting? I shall teach you to go and disgrace your-

Gently, gently, father, interposed Heuri, placing himself between the enraged M. Dumont the little stoop at the foot of the ved and sprin- of it? and his weeping niece.

she had been my own child. She has been made dream, and bursting out laughing she said,—much of, and petted and dressed like the daugh. Go to bed, go to bed, Aunt Babet. You will ters of the wealthiest tradesman in Pau, and she has now the audacity to stand up and tell me she will not marry you. I have a great mind this not,' muttered the good old lady between her very moment to turn her out of doors.

always understood things in their most literal sense. Then raising her voice she added, 'Not but that she would richly deserve it;' for Henri's deadly paleness and look of intense misery went to her heart far more than Rose's tears.

'May we mquire,' said M. Damont, in a constrained and ironical tone, may we be permitted to inquire who it is Mademoiselle has fallen in my shawl round my head, get into bed, and shut love with?

I never said I was in love with any body. Rose answered in a voice broken by her sobs ;but I like M. Andre Vidal, and he is coming to asleep, regardless of the romantic troubles of her propose for me, unless indeed he has changed his neighbors. mind since this morning.

'Only let him come, only let him come,' exclaimed M. Dumont, striking the table at the insolence to tamper with the affections of my ciently apart to draw notice upon themselves. - And I mix up what is gay with what is sor-

son's bride! Behind our backs too, the sneaking hypocrite!

It is very unjust, it is very unkind to speak me !" and Rose fell on her knees with her head | Pau. leaning against the table. When she looked up again her uncle and her aunt had left the room. Oh, dear, dear,' she again exclaimed, 'how dreadfully angry they are with me.'

'There now, don't cry so bitterly, Rose' said Henri, wiping her eyes and drawing her bair off ber face as if she had been a sobbing child .-You are as white as a sheet; drink a little wine,' and he poured some out for her.

'I can't, it chokes me.'

'Wait a bit then. Sit down in the arm chair.' 'It is not fair to say that I deceived you, Henri.'

'Hush, don't talk of that now.' After a pause. he said in a husky, broken tone of voice, 'Why did you pretend not to care when Andre told you

of his bad luck." I thought .... I telt .... You know you said yesterday that you would kill any one who'....

Henri pressed his hands against his temples as if to still their throbbing, and his lips quivered as he answered, 'Oh, if it had not been for this,' and taking the crucifix from his bosom, he devoully kissed it, if it had not been for this, who knows what I might have done?"

'You would have killed him,' said Rose, shud-

Who can answer for himself? I was mad for a while; but God did not forsake me.'

'And now you are grown quite reasonable?' 'I hope so,' he answered in a tone of the deepest dejection.

'It is all very sad,' ejaculated Rose with a

sigh. A long silence ensued. Do you feel any better now?' be abruptly in-

quired.

' My head aches very much.' 'I dare say it does; you are tired to death; go along to bed. Come, lay hold of my arm, 1 will help you up stairs. And Babet,' he called out as they passed her room, come here, will aunt,' he added in a whisper, 'mind you don't scold her to-night. She has gone through quite enough for one day.'

Henri closed the shutters and fastened the door of the house, extinguished the lights in the kitchen, and then slowly went up to his bedroom. Babet, who slept in the next attic to his, heard hun sighing and groaning through the night till she felt her heart ready to break. This heightened her indignation against Rose to such a pitch that she would have willingly given her a beating, but the next moment her feelings were softened by the thought of the poor child's head ache, and the wetting she had had. 'If she should have taken cold,' she suddenly exclaimed, over the sleeping girl. 'Was there ever such a pretty creature?' she thought, as the light of her candle fell on the lovely face of her young mece —' does not she look just like a picture with the tears lying on her cheeks just like the rain-drops on our damask roses; and that lock of hair curling so prettily on her white neck as if it had strayed there on purpose? The little minx! - bad cared for me such a long time. Not that it How she sighs in her sleep-sobbing too, I dewith young people! always making trouble for is only since last outnumthemselves, and other people too.'

Rose woke up at that moment screaming so violently, 'Don't kill him, Henri, don't kill bim,' that Babet, terrified, took some holy water from that it was not that story that was the beginning kled her with it. Seeing her aunt's face close "I have brought her up from a baby, just as if to her own, a change over the spirit of her

catch cold.' 'I dare say I shall. It would be odd if I did ery moment to turn her out of doors. teeth. 'Every thing is upside down in the Lit is raining too hard,' whispered Babet, who house. Night turned into day. Nothing but groaning and crying and calling out murder. But Heaven torgive me, the child is oft asleep again. Rose. Well, if girls are not queer articles to deal with. There she is snoring away as if nothing was the matter. Ab, well, I am not going to stop here any longer, catching my death of cold (the goad lady forgot that it was summer); I'll just wrap my ears to all their sighings and groanings .-Charity begins at home.' So saying, Babet withdrew to her chamber, and was soon fast find for the centre.'

CHAPTER VI.

One Sunday evening after vespers, a short because the leaves drop off so soon.' time after the drawing of the conscription, Andre same time with the utmost violence. 'I will Vidal and Rose were sitting together under a fall off as I proceed.' speak my mind to him if he dares set his foot in tree at a little distance from the green where the Then I mix together the most opposite this house. A wretched penulless beggar who villagers were dancing, not near enough for their colours: the purple with the yellow; the pink conscription. Must you go, M. Andre! Is her knowledge. pretends to be a gentleman, and who has had the conversation to be overheard, and yet not suffi- and blue with the white.

with the wild flowers within her reach, and tying said with a sigh. them up with as much care as those she had been so. On, dear, oh, dear! what will become of in the habit of arranging for the market-place of

'So you are no more to go to market with your nocle's flowers and fruit?' said Andre, as he helped her to collect the rosy tipped daisies and shining buttercups with which the grass about them was studded.

council held three days ago in M. Dumont's par- | parting.' lour. He has engaged a substitute for me in the person of M. Ronjeant's niece, and there is to be an end of my daily journeys to town and my walks home across the meadows. It will be rather dull sitting at home all day with Aunt Babet, especially as you are going away so soon, M. Andre, and I shall have nothing to look forward to, or to think of in the mean time. Do you really mean that you will be absent seven years? Dear me, may all be dead and buried by- the garden for ever so long that night. Aunt that time.'

'Oh, no, we shall live to meet again; you must not be so downhearted, Rose; and in the mean time we can dwell on the recollections of the past and bright hopes for the future."

'That is all very fine; but though the past and future are very well in their way, it is rather like telling a person to think of their breakfast and their supper at the time when they want to be eating their dinner.'

This simile made Audre smile, and he said, 'I have sometimes been obliged to have recourse to you. that system when things have gone very hard with us at home.'

'Indeed!' said Rose thoughtfully. 'Who would have supposed that you had ever suffered from —'

'Real hard poverty, you would say. Well, there are harder things to bear than that. We bave always kept our heads above water, and, please God, I may work my way some time or light. other to a position in which I may venture to claim you as my wife.'

But you will in the mean time be making a you, and get this child to bed, she is dead with lot of new acquaintances in Bordeaux and other fatigue and can hardly stand. And hark ye, places you will be staying at. If you were to forget me!"

Forget thee, Rose! I can say with the Scotch poet:-

"The monarch may forget the crown That on his brow an hour has been; The bridegroom may forget the bride Was made his wedded wife yestr'een. The mother may forget the child That smiles so sweetly on her knee, But I'll remember thee, 'dear Rose, And all that thou hast been to me.

'That is very pretty, M. Andre; but if the bridegroom can forget the bride that is really married to him, that is just the reason why you may forget me who am not yet your 'wedded wife.' That's way I don't like poetry. There and in an instant she was out of bed and bending is no common sense in it,' and Rose began to pout a little.

Andre took her hand and said gently, 'Do you really think a man is likely to forget a girl whom he has loved since his childhood?

'Have you really loved me so long? Well now, I must tell Sister Theresa so. She wanted me to marry Henri for that very reason, that he is true. I don't believe a word of it, but I should clare. Oh, dear me, dear me ! what work it is like her to know that you had. For my part it cheeks and sparkling eyes. 'It was too had of

'That you have returned my affection, Rose?' 'That I have a regard for you, M. Andre,' Rose answered with dignity. 'I am not sure

'That story that I wrote on purpose to amuse you.'

'Yes; it was always running in my nead, and at last by dint of thinking of the story 1 began to think of you.'

'It was my first attempt to give life and form to the vague imaginings that had haunted my mind for years,' murmured Andre in an abstracted manner.

'Is it very difficult to write a tale?' asked

Rather more difficult than to make a bouquet,' he answered gaily: 'but both tales and bouquets may be colorless and scentless, or beautiful and sweet, according to the skill of the maker. How do you set about it, Rosy, when you want to produce a very charming

First I select the most lovely flower I can

'And I choose the best subject I can find for my tale.'

'I take care not to use the full-blown flowers 'And I try not to let the interest of any story

'Ah! that is very true,' exclaimed Rose, re-

echoing the sigh, and already losing sight of the literary and pictorial side of the subject, in the realities which his last words had recalled to her mind. 'It is pleasant to think that we care about each other, and that we hope some day to be married; but it is very sad to think that you must go away, for such a long time too. It is 'No; so it has been decreed in the family a great blessing that we have made it up before

' Indeed I was on the point of giving way to despair; of leaving this place at once without a word of explanation. I was so hurt, so wounded by what seemed to me your inexcusable cenduct, your beartless indifference, I felt as if I could never forgive you. The whole of that evening I kept waiking up and down the road in a state of perfect distraction.'

'Dear! how strange! Henri stayed out in Babet said he must be mad to go out for a walk in the pouring rain.'

'No words can describe what I went through that day, and during the long sleepless hours of the night.'

'What, did not you go to sleep at all, M. Andre ?

'Did you sleep quietly, Rose, after having made me so wretched.'

Not very quietly, M. Andre, for I was always dreaming that Henri was going to kill

At break of day Jules Bertrand managed to slip into our garden. I heard him throwing sand against the panes, but for a long time I would not attend to him; at last, however I was obliged to open my window, as I was afraid he would awaken my mother.'

"He is the sharpest little fellow, that Jules!" exclaimed Rose, clapping her hands with de-

'He had noticed,' continued Andre, 'be had suspected and he had understood everything that bad happened the previous day, and succeeded after a while in making it clear to me. I shall always feel grateful to that boy. The relief was mexpressible. It was as if a mountain was removed from my heart. I could not bear to think of my dear Rose as of a selfish, heartless

Good little Jules; he has always been very fond of me; and then he hates Henri. good gracious, how he did frighten me the next day by running into our kitchen and saying to me all of a sudden, 'M. Andre is close upon my heels. He will be here in a minute!' Don't laugh, M. Andre; if you had seen my uncle the night before thumping the table and roaring out, Only let him come! only let him come! you would not think it a joke I can tell you.'

I must own that I did not meet with a very cordial reception from him or from that good lady, his sister, the day that I ventured to call upon them. It is impossible to imagine two more frozen visages than theirs when I unfolded my tale of love and of poverty. They did all but show me to the door. There was bitter irony also in their allusions to my claims, my pretensions they called them, to nobility of descent.2

it can't torgive them for being so rude to you, M. Andre,' exclaimed Rose, with flushed them.'

" Well, we must be just, my dear Rose, and I am ready to admit that a proposal of marriage or rather a declaration of attachment on the part of a man totally without fortune, and who to make things better had just drawn a bad number for the conscription, did not really deserve any other treatment. But considering the promises we have made to each other, I felt myself bound in honor to lay the state of the case before your relations, and not to sneak away as it were in silence without revealing to them the secret of my attachment to you." 6 Oh, as to its being a secret, there was an end

of that on the evening after the ballot. I got into a passion with Henri when he joined me on the Place du Chateau, and I let it all out. And so when my uncle wanted to insist upon fixing the day of our marriage, he repeated to him what I had said. My uncle would have scolded me dreadfully, indeed I think he might have beat me, he was in such a rage, if Heori had not prevented bim. Henri behaved very well. He said at once that he did not wish any longer to marry me. That there was no occasion to be angry with me on his account; and that since I had made up my mind to have you, they had better leave me alone. That it was bad enough deep sigh. for me your going away, and as to the future, why it must be as God pleases, and many other things which pacified them a little. It is really very fortunate that he took it in that way. All would be right now if it was not for that terrible of the army, I shall enlist some fine day without

there no possible way out of it?

Rose was making a variety of little nosegays rowful, light thoughts with serious ones,' Andre too poor to pay a substitute, which is the only alternative.

'You will come home sometimes on leave of

absence? 'If we are not sent to Algeria.'

'Is that far from here?'

'It is in Africa, my dear Rose.'

'Oh in Africa! one of the four or five parts of the world, I suppose. I forget how many there are. We used to learn them at the Convent School, but I have never thought of it since.'

'Don't you ever read, Rose?'

Sometimes, a little; if I had an amusing book, with nice short stories in it.'

'You will write to me every week when I am gone?

'I will try, M. Andre. But, dear me , it is such a bore writing letters. It is not at all like talking to each other.'

'Well, at to that, I have sometimes found it essier to pour forth the deepest and strangest feelings of my heart upon paper than to give utterance to them in conversation. Can you understand, my love, that it has happened to me to leave your side in order to muse in silence on the thought of what you have been to me, to summon up your image amidst the solitary woods and bills of this beautiful land of ours, to engrave your name, your sweet name, on its wild rocks and majestic trees, thus associating my love for you with my intense worship of nature."

'Well, that is very beautiful,' ejaculated Rose, with a puzzled look, 'I suppose it is what you call poetry. But, M. Andre, if you will not be argry with me for saying so, are you quite sure that it is a proof of love to like to go away and think about people instead of liking to be

always with them?" 'Do not misunderstand me, my dearest Rose. I have no dearer wish on earth than to spend my ife with you. You have been for a long time past the joy and the brightness of my sad existence. If it had not been for the interest you have taken in me, and the books which our good Cure has supplied me with, I must long ago have died of melancholy.'

Books and little Rose Leblanc! Who would have ever thought they could have served the same purpose?' said Rose laughing.

'It is quite true,' rejoined Andre; ' your loveliness and gaiety, the fascinations of eloquence, and the charms of poetry-

What, are you going to find some likeness between me and poetry?" exclaimed Rose, still more amused. 'Who ever heard the like of that as Aunt Babet would say?"

Why, what is there so poetical on earth, my sweet Rose, as youth, beauty, and innocence ?

"Oh, I am very glad of it, M. Andre, if it can give you pleasure. But if we could only get a substitute. How much would it cost.'

'Did not your uncle agree to give fourteen hundred francs for one in case M. Lacaze had drawe a bad number.

'Yes, I believe so. That is not such an immense sum after all,' said Rose thoughtfully. 'It is an immense sum for poor people,' he an-

swered with a sigh. But, M. Andre-' ' How long do you mean to call me M. Andre Rose ?'

' Well, Andre, I am going to show you my treasure. Shut your left eye and peep through the hole into this box. Don't you see in it several pieces of five francs, presents from my uncle? I used to be always asking him for money for one bit of finery or another, which I don't care a pin about now. I can see a substitute just beginning to grow up at the bottom of this box. Won't it be nice, M. Andre when he steps out of it and takes you all by surprise ?'

'You are an angel, Rose; and I too will try to save out of my pay.'

'No, no; I will not bear of that; your pay will only just enable you to live respectably, and you must keep up appearances in the regiment. Leave it all to me. I shall have plenty of time to work, and work will keep me from fretting."

'Oh, Rose, how I love you!' he exclaimed,

with tears in his eyes. She shook her head reprovingly, rattled the little savings' box close to his ears, and then oined a group of young girls who were joining hands for a dance.

CHAPTER VII.

'So M. Andre is gone.'

'Indeed be is Jules,' Rose answered with a

'He looked very well in his uniform, observed Jules, who had military tastes which his relations did not encourage. It Madame Bertrand persists to ber narrow-minded notions on the subject

For shame Jules, you ought to know better